Your Covenant is Trustworthy

2 Samuel 7:18-29, Key V. 28 “Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.”

Last week we learned that David wanted to build a house for the ark of God. The prophet Nathan had told him, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it for the Lord is with you.” But the word of the Lord came to Nathan with a different plan for David(16), “Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.” This reminds me of difference between a master and a novice in a chess game. The novice moves his pieces using some basic strategies. His moves are shortsighted. The master responds with great expertise and wisdom. Of course, the outcome of the game never in doubt. Perhaps God is the Master and David is a complete novice. Likewise we make our choices freely, but our Lord God who is the Master responds with wisdom, reacting in such a way to ensure that our moves are coordinated into his overall plan. Of course the outcome is never in doubt. We learned that His house and Kingdom endures forever, that should be our focus! Today’s passage is David’s prayer. I come up with 3 parts.1. David thanks God for being sovereign over him and his family 18-21) 2. David thanks God for being sovereign over Israel (22-24) 3. David asks God to fulfill his trustworthy words of the covenant (25-29)

Part 1. David thanks God for being sovereign over him and his family (18-21)

Look at v 18a. “Then king David went in and sat before the Lord, and said:” When David’s offer was rejected and he heard about God’s promise, he went into the tent in which the ark of the Lord was set. (6:17a) At this time, the ark is the symbol of God’s presence with his people. (Exo 25:22) We can learn one thing from him that he had a personal love relationship with the Lord.

Look at v. 18b-19. “Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant—and this decree, Sovereign Lord, is for a mere human!” Here he refers to God as Sovereign Lord. In these two verses it is repeated 3 times and 7 times in his prayer. So I’d like to think about David’s perception about the Sovereign Lord. What does it mean? According to a dictionary, ‘Sovereign’ means ‘One that exercises supreme, permanent authority, like a king or queen.’ Recent daily bread come from the book of Ezekiel, where the phrase, “Then you shall know that I am the Sovereign Lord” is used more than 70 times. This shows God’s deep desire for his people to know Him properly. The Bible says that God is sovereign and knows what is best for us. Isa 48:17b reads, “I am the Lord your God, who teaches you what is best for you, who directs you in the way you should go.” God has led David to the best way to this point. In all things, David recognized that God had been sovereign. So he could confess in 4:9, “As surely as the Lord lives, who has delivered me out of every trouble.” 5:12 reads, “Then David knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.” David realized God’s place in his life as the Sovereign Ruler. That being said, let’s read v 18b-19 again. “Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And as if this were not enough in your sight, Sovereign Lord, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant—and this decree, Sovereign Lord, is for a mere human!”

Let’s look at v. 20 and 21. “What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Sovereign Lord. 21 For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.” Another word catches my eyes here, “servant.” David refers to himself ‘your servant’ 10 times in his prayer. It express his humility. Have you ever been appraised your car or house? Until we have an objective appraisal, we do not know their true dollar value. Likewise David went through self appraisal thanks to God’s words in the first part of this chapter. David could have become caught up by his recent successes, by his own position and power, and even by the splendor of his own palace. The Sovereign Lord who knows him truly responds to David, having his eyes open, “Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?” It means, “Who are you to build Me a house?” No matter how good his plan for God seems to be, it falls short of God’s glory. It is God who must accomplish great things for and through him. David’s attitude here was not “I am so great that even God gives me gifts.” Instead his attitude was, “God is so great that He gives even me gifts.” Likewise we should receive God’s every blessing with the same attitude. God’s giving reflects the greatness of the Giver, not the receiver. In v 8, 9, God has reminded David to begin with, “I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, and appointed you ruler over my people Israel. 9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.” David now sees his standing as Israel's king as the result of God's sovereign grace, and not as the recognition of his potential greatness. David is now starting on the right foot. He sees himself as he really is in God's eyes. He recognizes his weakness and his insignificance. He is not puffed up with his power as king of Israel, but humbled by the awareness that God uses him as His servant. He’s full of thanks to the Sovereign Lord. So he is able to evaluate his life according to or within the boundary of God’s will and words. That being said, let us read again v 20, 21. “What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Sovereign Lord. For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant.”

Part 2. David thanks God for being sovereign over Israel(22-24)

Now, look at v. 22-24, David further thanks and praises God, for who He is, as demonstrated by His marvelous works on behalf of Israel in the past. Let’s read all together v 22. “How great you are, Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you, as we have heard with our own ears.” Here David says, “as we have heard with our own ears.” He emphasizes his personal experience. In brief, let’s think about how he went through in knowing God in his own life. What would be David’s personal experience with the Lord lately? For example in chap 6, as we recall, when he tried to move the ark of the Lord to his place, he was very enthusiastic to bring it with 30,000 men and a new cart. But it didn’t work and he miserably failed for God struck Uzzah on the spot. Until that time he could’ve assumed that he knew God well and presumptuously and proudly do something for God according to his own good will or self righteousness. However since it’d happened, he might wonder who God really is. He must have newly inquired of the Lord through prayer. According to 1 Chro 15, there is one possibility that he went back to the scripture and studied the words of God for three months. In this way he could have been directed to look at what is written already carefully and figured them out. He came to his conclusion by saying, “It was because you, the Levites, did not bring it up the first time that the Lord our God broke out in anger against us. We did not inquire of him about how to do it in the prescribed way.” 14So the priests and Levites consecrated themselves in order to bring up the ark of the Lord, the God of Israel. 15And the Levites carried the ark of God with the poles on their shoulders, as Moses had commanded in accordance with the word of the Lord.” Discovering the correct way that the ark was supposed to be carried could have reminded David that God has been with Israel since they were rescued out of Egypt when Moses had written the process for moving the ark.

Look at v 23, 24. “And who is like your people Israel—the one nation on earth that God went out to redeem as a people for himself, and to make a name for himself, and to perform great and awesome wonders by driving out nations and their gods from before your people, whom you redeemed from Egypt? 24 You have established your people Israel as your very own forever, and you, Lord, have become their God.” David then further reevaluates Israel, according to what God has done for her. It is not due to Israel’s greatness and not because of Israel’s size or merits. But it’s thanks to God who chose to bless her. It’s His sovereign grace and His works. Deuter 6:10-13 read, “Then it shall come about when the LORD your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you eat and are satisfied, 12 then watch yourself, that you do not forget the LORD who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 13 “You shall fear only the LORD your God; and you shall worship Him and swear by His name” Thanks to God’s words, David could sense that he could’ve almost fallen into the same trap that God warned Israel to avoid. He could take credit for what God has done. When David sees life from God's point of view, he sees life clearly, as it is. He sees life as Israel was supposed to see it. Now he’s thinking clearly, and when he does, he recognizes that his people, Israel are great by the grace of God and nothing else. Then David humbly praises God for what He has done for the people of Israel.

Part 3. David asks God to fulfill his trustworthy words of covenant (25-29)

Here David asks God to do as He has promised in v. 10-16 as we had learned last week. Now let us read only verse 16 all together as a conclusion. “Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’” That being said, let’s read responsively v 25-27. “And now, Lord God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, 26 so that your name will be great forever. Then people will say, ‘The Lord Almighty is God over Israel!’ And the house of your servant David will be established in your sight. 27 “Lord Almighty, God of Israel, you have revealed this to your servant, saying, ‘I will build a house for you.’ So your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to you.”” David picks up on the words of promises which God has just made and makes this the basis for his prayer. In short, David does not pray according to his own feeling or opinion but does pray by remembering God’s words of promise. It is important in that David personally believes and accepts deeply its fulfillment first. David now is courageously asking God to fulfill these promises, not for his name but for God's name sake. Again this isn’t passive prayer that says, “Well God, do whatever You want to do - I don’t really care one way or another.” This isn’t arrogant prayer that says, “Well God, let me tell You what to do.” This is bold prayer that says, “God, here is Your promise - now I trust You to fulfill it and to be faithful to Your word.” Nothing pleases God more than to see us believe his promises and put them in our prayers. Simply this is a prayer God is guaranteed to answer! This prayer appropriates God’s promise. If we don’t appropriate in faith, God’s promise is still left unclaimed.

Now let us read v 28, 29. “Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy, and you have promised these good things to your servant.29 Now be pleased to bless the house of your servant, that it may continue forever in your sight; for you, Sovereign Lord, have spoken, and with your blessing the house of your servant will be blessed forever.” David says here, “Sovereign Lord, you are God! Your covenant is trustworthy.” Let us think about “Your covenant is trustworthy.” Recent daily bread passage(Rev 4:3) reads, “And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and ruby. A rainbow that shone like an emerald encircled the throne.” A rainbow around the throne is a remarkable thing, showing that God will always limit Himself by His own promises. The rainbow is a reminder of God’s commitment to His covenant with man that God has placed a reminder of His own promise to never destroy the earth again with water. (Gen 9:11-13) Although God is sovereign and has a right to do whatever he wants with almighty power, but he will never let that sovereignty get out of the limit of the covenant. So his rule isn’t capricious but certain and predictable according to his covenant. This is the kind of God we serve proudly. In the same way here we see that the reason for David's confidence stems from God and His trustworthy words of covenant, and not himself. David’s self confidence in the early verses of this chapter is now gone and it’s replaced by his humility based in the Sovereign Lord who made such covenant.

Like David’s prayer, we can learn that the greatness and glory of God's presence and power are not to be interpreted in the light of how spectacular the surroundings and setting are, but in terms of God’s trustworthy words of covenant. Long ago Elijah was taught that God's presence was not to be assumed in the midst of spectacular phenomenon. God was not present in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in a gentle whisper. (1Kings 19:11-13) The disciples to some extent, and the Jews in large measure, expected the Messiah to be revealed in a spectacular way, and thus frequently made demands for a sign. The Corinthians of the New Testament came to regard those with style and sensationalism as the most spiritual, while at the same time they came to despise those who were less spectacular, like the preaching of apostle Paul. But the true glory comes not in the external surroundings such as magnificent building, but in the fact that God Himself is among us and God is present in his trustworthy words of covenants. So David does not need a temple nearby in order to worship His God. In fact, David is drifting away from worship when he jumps to the conclusion that he better propose the construction of a temple. It is after David has been reminded of who God is and what God has done that he begins to worship Him properly. He then acknowledges his own insignificance and praise God for His greatness, power, and presence in his life. This is where all true worship begins in focusing on the greatness and the grace of our God himself.

We then need to be on guard against prideful thoughts of our own contribution to the kingdom of God. It is always He who will be carrying us, rather than us carrying Him. How easily we begin to focus on what we have done and can do for God, rather than on all He has done and will do for and through us? David's prayer also serves as a lesson to every believer. Have you ever thought that if you could ever grow up, ever gain maturity and wisdom as a Christian, that you would somehow become exempt from temptation, and from sin? But in reality growth, maturity, and success do not insulate us from sin. Often, these things can easily become new ground of temptations for us to sin. David could be in more danger in his palace than he was fleeing from Saul and hiding out in some cave. Too often we Americans take our “successes” far too personally. We should be reminded that there is no success that we can honestly claim as our own, for every spiritual success is a gift of God's grace and we can go further into the will and the glory of our Sovereign Lord God through the help of the Holy Spirit. As you know, my name is Paul. I am very thankful to the Lord for this name. I used to live to achieve worldly success for the honor of Lim’s family. But it turned out to be meaningless life. God sent me a Bible teacher and through studying Genesis, I came to know God’s bigger and better plan for me to be a source of blessing. Sometimes I had hard time achieving what I had dreamed for, but I am thankful to Him who has blessed me in His way and named me as Paul, small one for my true master and Sovereign Lord. Apostle Paul says in Philip. 3:7-8. “But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. 8 What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ.

Also I can not miss one more thing through this prayer of David, that is God’s everlasting promise. Even David would fail in the following chapters due to his own sins. His son Solomon will also fail miserably due to his sins of idols. But God’s righteous branch, Jesus Christ will never fail because He is the true God. So in David’s prayer the word “forever” is repeated more than five times, in particular the last part. It shows that David deeply accepted God’s own righteousness by faith. He personally knows that his own earthly kingdom is fragile. But God’s kingdom is eternal. David’s desire had been to build an improved building for the ark of God, but he now realized that the content of the ark was secured by both the name and the will of eternal God and His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. So thanks to God’s words of covenant, he was led and came to know God’s core value and His desire. May the Lord help us to increase our faith in the same way instead of thinking of alternatives. As you may already know me, I like real estate a lot. I recently went through the unpleasant experience of foreclosures in my investment properties and my credit is ruined. I can not get a loan to acquire any real estate for a while. By God’s grace I am so blessed with plenty of time to open the Bible than ever before. I’ve learned how valuable it’s to serve the enduring words of God through serving messages and helping students through Bible study. May the Lord help me to give my whole heart to his word.

In conclusion, May the Lord help all of us to firmly believe God’s words and continue to serve his will just as David who acknowledges God’s eternal will served Him faithfully in his own times. (Acts 13:36) Like David who called God as “O Lord Almighty, God of Israel,” we can pray boldly with a right perspective for America to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. May the Lord help us to trust in God’s words so that we may continue to live victorious lives for God’s glory. Amen. One word: Your words are trustworthy!