

II Samuel 7:18-22 ¹⁸Then King David went and sat before the LORD and said: Who am I, LORD God? And what is my house that you have brought me to this point? ¹⁹Yet this was a small thing in your eyes, LORD God. You have also spoken about the house of your servant for a long time into the future. Is this the law for the man, LORD God? ²⁰What more can David say to you? You know your servant, LORD God.

²¹Because of your word and according to the plan of your heart, you have carried out this great thing in order to make your servant aware of it. ²²Therefore, you are great, LORD God, because there is none like you. There is no God except you, in keeping with everything we have heard with our ears.

It's amazing the things that my mind retains—a lot of which I wish I could just dump into the mental recycling bin and be done with it. One applies to Thanksgiving. It's from a Captain Kangaroo record that I had when I was in grade school. If you're under 40 or so, Google it. But there was a song on there that encouraged good manners. I believe it was sung by Mr. Moose. One lyric was, "A 'please' and a 'thank you,' a 'How do you do?'" can do magic that sweeps people right off their feet. Honest."

Now I didn't need a record to teach me about manners. My parents took care of that. But it is amazing how much impact little expressions of gratitude can have. Wait staff at a restaurant will be very happy with a nice tip, but it's much easier for them to do their job if you show you are grateful and just say, "Thank you." The last time I saw one of our members before the Lord took him home, he said to me, "I'm so thankful to God that you are our pastor." I can't explain the feeling that those simple words gave me.

We aren't good at showing thanks. On our own we think people owe us that service. Unfortunately we can do the same thing with God. His blessings to us are so constant and so overwhelming that after a while it is easy to take them for granted. This service reminds us that It Is Always a Good Day to Thank God for showering us with his blessings and because there is no one like him.

To understand this text, we have to see where we are in David's rule as King of Israel. He was a man of war. God used him to wipe out the nations that they were supposed to have wiped out in the time of the Judges, most notably the Philistines. Now at the beginning of this chapter we read, **"It happened that when the king was living in his palace, and when the LORD had given him rest from his enemies all around."** The man of war was finally able to enjoy some peace.

That's when David looked around himself. He had built a magnificent house to live in, one fit for a king. He had also brought the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, but there was no Temple yet. It was still under the same kind of tent that had covered it for years and years, going back to the time of Moses. David didn't think that that was right. He thought that his God was worthy of better than that.

So he talked with the Prophet Nathan about building a glorious Temple for God in Jerusalem. David's heart was certainly in the right place. He was the rare king who was at least as concerned about God's business as he was about his own. But God sent the Prophet Nathan back to him to say that he wasn't going to build anything for God. Instead, God was going to build something for him.

God listed some things that he had already done for David, **"I took you from the pasture, from following sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel. ⁹I have been with you wherever you went."** David didn't come from famous, wealthy parents. No one ever would have heard about his hometown, Bethlehem, unless that didn't also become the birthplace of the Savior. He was not a prince. He was a farmhand.

Now God said, **"I will set up a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them there. They will dwell there, and they will not be disturbed again. Violent men will not afflict them again as they did at the beginning."** After being in the Promised Land for so many years, God was finally going to give his people rest. It wasn't his fault that it had taken this long. It would have happened a long time ago if they had just listened to him.

Even more than that God was going to establish David's line as king. He would have a son, Solomon, who would rule after he died. He would be the one to build the Temple. God looked even farther into the future and talked about how one of David's descendants would rule on his throne forever. That would be fulfilled in our Savior Jesus. He lives and rules over everything to this day and he will for the rest of time.

Now you might hear all of this and think that this is just a nice history lesson where we can hear about how God richly blessed someone. But hold on. This isn't just David's history. This is our history. God was doing all of these things not just with David in mind, but with all of us in mind. God was preparing the world so that he could send his one and only Son to be our perfect Savior.

When Jesus was on this earth, he didn't look like much of a king, even though that's what he was and is. He was born in a humble village like Bethlehem and grew up in an even less important town called Nazareth. The remarkable thing about him was not where he was from or what he looked like, but how he lived. He lived

a life of absolute perfection in every thought, word, and action. He didn't do that to show off. He did it for us, in our place, because we couldn't do it.

King David won many decisive battles by sword and shield. Jesus won the greatest battle of all time by being hung on a cross. Satan thought he had ruined God's creation and had given God no other choice but to kill everybody. But Jesus died in our place. He suffered for our sin. Because of that death has lost all meaning for believers. It is only temporary. We heard on Sunday how Jesus will raise all the dead on the Last Day. Death is simply the way that God takes us to eternal life.

David was almost struck speechless by everything that God had said, "**Who am I, LORD God? And what is my house that you have brought me to this point?** ¹⁹**Yet this was a small thing in your eyes, LORD God...Is this the law for the man, LORD God?**" That last part is hard to get into good English. It seems like David is saying, "Is this the way that you typically deal with people, God?" It is! God always deals with people in his grace, that is, his undeserved love.

When we think about all the different ways God has blessed us, we have to be just as amazed as King David. God didn't make us his own because we were the best looking people on the planet. My mirror works. It's not because we had something that he needed from us. The only thing we can give him is our sin. Yet God in his mercy, wisdom, and love has showered us with more blessings that we can possibly count.

It is very fitting that we would take a day like today to stop, put everything down, and give God the thanks that he deserves. It shows that we understand and appreciate everything he has done for us. Of course, he doesn't just bless us on the fourth Thursday in November, so we shouldn't just thank him today. Say a prayer of thanks everyday. Live your life to show you are a thankful child of God.

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David continued, "²⁰**What more can David say to you? You know your servant, LORD God.**" He didn't find it necessary to go on and on with a prayer that would drone on for hours. As I said he was nearly speechless from all the amazing promises God had made. Instead he appealed to God's omniscience, that is, that he knows all things. God knew what was in David's heart already.

The fact that God knows everything can be both good news and bad news, can't it. It's bad news because that means that God knows what goes on in our heart of hearts—things that nobody else knows, not even those who are closest to us. People sneak around under the cover of night and think that they are getting away with something. They aren't getting away with anything. God knows and he's keeping score.

So certainly God knows that we are sinners. That also means that he knows just how much we need a Savior, so he provided the Savior that we need. In those times when emotion is getting the best of us and we can't even come up with the words to say in our prayers, God already knows our situation and our hearts. He understands. So today he knows how thankful we are even if we can't put it into words.

David was amazed by what God had done for him, but he knew exactly why God did it. He gives two reasons. The first is, "²¹**Because of your word.**" There has been a certain amount of debate as to which "word" that David was talking about. Some think it was God's command to Samuel to anoint David as king. Certainly God had made him king and was providing for him as king.

But this seems much bigger than that, especially since God had promised to send the Savior through his family. So that "word" would include the promises of the Savior. Go back to when Jacob was dying and he blessed his sons. About Judah he said, "**The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until the one to whom it belongs comes.**" David was from the tribe of Judah. Jesus is the king who would hold the scepter forever.

Another comes from an unusual person, Balaam, someone who had been hired by the King of Moab to curse Israel. God wouldn't let him do it. Not only did he bless Israel, but he gave a prophecy of Jesus, "**I see him, but not now. I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob. A scepter will rise up out of Israel.**" God made many more promises than these, and he was going to keep them. His name "the LORD" reveals him as the one who makes promises and keeps them.

The other reason why God did these things is this, "**according to the plan of your heart.**" God did all of these things simply because he is God and it pleased him to do all of these things. This is what we mean when we talk about God's grace. Grace is one aspect of God's love for us. It emphasizes the fact that God's love is completely and utterly undeserved.

A lot of people don't like to hear that. We don't like to think that we can't take any of the credit at all for being God's children who are bound for heaven. I mean, I'm at least a little better than some people. I'm not

one of the people making the whole city smell like a skunk. I've been a believer my entire life. I've faithfully served God's church. That's got to count for something, doesn't it?

Well, remember why you can do anything good. It's because God made you his own through the Word and Sacraments and that same Word and Sacraments guide and strengthen us to live like believers. Instead of getting upset we should thank God for his grace. If my salvation depended on me, even a little bit, I would constantly have to be terrified. What if I wasn't good enough today? But since it is all God's doing from beginning to end, I don't have to worry. Sounds like a good reason to give thanks.

David ends this beautiful prayer with these words, **“²²Therefore, you are great, LORD God, because there is none like you. There is no God except you, in keeping with everything we have heard with our ears.”** Every other religion has one thing in common: they all demand something from its worshipers. You have to do something to appease their god. Sometimes they will have it spelled out with long lists of rules and regulations. Sometimes you just have guess, try your hardest, and hope for the best.

The one true God is not like that. At all. Actually this is one of my main logical arguments for the truth of God's Word. Christianity is unique. It is the only religion that has ever existed or will ever exist where God does all of the work and we get all of the benefits. It is an entirely one-sided relationship. God reaches out to us in his mercy and lifts us higher than we could ever have dreamed.

So enjoy your Thanksgiving celebrations. I know I will, at least once I'm through driving. It'll be great to enjoy a good meal with friends and family. But as you are doing so, look around. Thank God for the food. Thank God for the people he has brought into your life. Thank God for those whose lives have been changed for the better with the good news of Jesus. Thank God for the opportunities to reach out to people who are celebrating today but don't have a real reason to be thankful. Through you, they can.

It Is Always a Good Day to Thank God for showering us with his blessings and because there is no one like him. I'm going to conclude this sermon in a way I never had before, but it seems fitting for Thanksgiving. Let's sing the Common Doxology: Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow. Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; Praise him all creatures here below; Praise him above, ye heavenly host; Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.