

The Second Sunday after Trinity – Pr. Faugstad sermon
2 Samuel 7:4-16: “You Need the Gifts of God.”
June 29, 2025 | Saude, Jerico, & Redeemer Lutheran Churches

In Nomine Iesu

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Merciful and gracious God and Father, who would have us make known our requests unto You by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, we humbly ask You, with Your peace, which passes all understanding, prepare and adorn our hearts to be holy habitations of Your Son, that we may receive Him with joy, abide in blessed communion with Him, and continually praise You with songs of gladness; through the same Your dear Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, ever one God, now and forever. Amen. (*The Lutheran Liturgy*, p. 54)

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen. (Rom. 1:7, etc.)

The sermon text for today is written in the seventh chapter of the Second Book of Samuel. We read selected verses in Jesus' name:

But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan, “Go and tell My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD: Would you build Me a house to dwell in? I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for My dwelling. In all places where I have moved with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd My people Israel, saying, “Why have you not built Me a house of cedar?”’ / “Now, therefore, thus you shall say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over My people Israel. And I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you. And I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. And I will appoint a place for My people Israel and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly, from the time that I appointed judges over My people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. / “Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your Offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be to Him a father, and He shall be to Me a Son. When He commits iniquity, I will discipline Him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but My steadfast love will not depart from Him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before Me. Your throne shall be established forever.”’ (ESV)

These are Your words, heavenly Father. Sanctify us by Your truth, Your Word is truth. Amen. (Joh. 17:17)

In Christ Jesus, who invites you to sit at His banquet in His house and receive His gifts, dear fellow redeemed:

You might enjoy watching the television shows about home renovation. Some shows even feature the total gutting and rebuilding of a home's interior with only the essential structure of the house staying the same. Maybe you are already living in your "dream house," but you probably have ideas how it could be updated and improved. And if someone offered to remodel your home at no cost to you, you would likely jump at the chance.

King David thought the LORD would appreciate a better "house," so to speak. After all, David was living comfortably in a "*house of cedar*," while the Ark of the LORD sat "*in a tent*" (2Sa. 7:2). He made his intention known to the prophet Nathan that he wanted to build the LORD a house, a great temple. It seemed like a good, right, and salutary idea.

But the LORD did not respond as David expected. First of all, the LORD said that He did not ask for a temple. If He wanted one, He would have commanded it done. Second, He reminded David that He took him from tending sheep in Bethlehem to ruling over all Israel. Whatever the all-powerful LORD wants to accomplish will happen. Third, He promised to make David's name great and prosper the nation. Fourth, God said He would make David a house, but not one made out of cedar or stone. He said that David's throne and kingdom would be established forever. This was a reference to the Savior Jesus who would come from David's line.

So David had a wonderful gift planned for God, and God's response was to direct David back to His gifts, particularly His gift of salvation through His only-begotten Son. It was a gentle lesson that was not meant for David only, but for us too. We can think so much of the gifts we give to God that we fail to honor Him in the best way, which is to believe what He says and to humbly receive what He offers.

Now this does not mean that the gifts we offer to the LORD and the sacrifices we make are meaningless to Him. God desires that we pray, praise, and give thanks to Him, that we live holy lives according to His Commandments, that we love one another out of love for Him, and that we give generously for the work of His kingdom. He loves all these gifts.

But it can happen that even these good things become sins. We can have a wonderful habit of Bible study and prayer each day, but then we find ourselves going through the motions or thinking that we are righteous because of what we are doing. We can watch carefully how we live and how we speak, but then we judge others for not being as good as we are. We can give generously toward the work of the church, but instead of giving humbly and quietly, we want to have our gifts be known and recognized.

When we think too much and make too much of our works, our view of God's grace becomes clouded. We start to think that we are among the "good people," who are nothing like the "bad people" who don't do these nice and beneficial things. This self-righteous attitude ignores the fact that by nature we are no better than anyone else. Even as Christians, we still sin all the time, as Luther's explanation of the Fifth Petition reminds us: "we daily sin much and deserve nothing but punishment."

No matter how good and right our gifts to God may seem, they are always tainted by our sin. They are never perfectly holy. This is why the LORD's message to David was so important for him and for us. God doesn't need a magnificent temple. He doesn't need beautiful, ornate

church buildings. He doesn't need us to save His kingdom. He brings His kingdom to us; He saves us; He meets us in our lowliness and sin; He gives His gifts to us. One of our hymnwriters puts it like this:

Surely in temples made with hands
God, the Most High, is not dwelling,
High above earth His temple stands,
All earthly temples excelling.
Yet He whom heav'ns cannot contain
Chose to abide on earth with men—
Built in our bodies His temple.
(*Evangelical Lutheran Hymnary* #211, v. 2)

The almighty God "chose to abide on earth with men." The eternal Son of God was born of Mary, a descendant of King David. This was just what God had promised David. The LORD said to him, *"I will raise up your Offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of His kingdom forever. I will be to Him a father, and He shall be to Me a Son."* Some of the Jews interpreted this and other prophecies to mean that the Messiah would reign over an earthly kingdom. This is why the crowds were so excited to welcome Jesus to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Their Messiah-King had finally arrived!

But Jesus did not come to rule over an earthly kingdom like David's. He came to redeem all sinners and to take His place as God and Man at the right hand of His Father. The way He would redeem sinners was also conveyed to David. God said regarding the Christ: *"When He commits iniquity, I will discipline Him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but My steadfast love will not depart from Him."* Jesus never committed any sin of His own, but *"For our sake [God] made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God"* (2Co. 5:21). Jesus was punished as if He were the one who committed all sin—the sin of every human being in every time and place.

This punishment from God for sin was carried out on Jesus by the hands of sinners. Jesus was punished *"with the rod of men"* and *"with the stripes of the sons of men."* This is exactly the way the prophet Isaiah described it after David: *"He was wounded for our transgressions; He was crushed for our iniquities; upon Him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with His stripes we are healed"* (53:5). When Jesus was being struck with the rod and whip and nailed to the cross, this was really God the Father meting out punishment on His Son for our sin.

The LORD did not require something from us before He would do something for us. He did not demand gifts before He would give gifts. The Son willingly went to the cross to save us, and the Father accepted His sacrifice on our behalf. It was a truly perfect offering that covers over the imperfections of our offerings, and it was the sufficient payment for all our sins. After His death and resurrection with His work complete, Jesus ascended into heaven in order to *"[give] gifts to men"* (Eph. 4:8).

In His position at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, Jesus invites you to partake of the banquet that today's Holy Gospel describes (Luk. 14:16-24). This banquet is served wherever

God's powerful Word and Sacraments are found. Jesus warmly invites you here in this humble house to be His honored guest. You have been washed clean in the holy waters of your Baptism. You are clothed in the garments of His righteousness. By faith, you are prepared to receive His gifts.

"Everything is now ready," He says. The rich food and drink He sets before you is the free forgiveness of all your sins. Whatever those sins may be, such as your inclination to trust in your own righteousness, your judgmental attitude toward others, or your pride because of what you have accomplished—all of these sins are blotted out by Jesus' precious blood. He gives you to feast on His life, His salvation, His love, His peace, His joy. These are the gifts you receive at His banquet.

You Need the Gifts of God far more than He needs gifts from you. David said, "I will build you a house," and the LORD replied, "No, I will build you a house!" Every good gift comes from God, as the Book of James says, *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights"* (1:17). When you offer gifts to God, you are simply returning to Him a portion of what He has given you, whether it is your money, your strength, your intellect, or your time. It all comes from Him.

When you feel as though you have done something great for God, remember what He has done and continues to do for you. Like a house that needs work, your life on earth always needs renovating and improving, and your gifts to God will not be perfect. But His home and His gifts are. By the gifts He gives you through His Word and Sacraments here, He prepares you to enter His heavenly home where you will live with Him forever.

Now we may gather with our King
E'en in the lowliest dwelling;
Praises to Him we there may bring,
His wondrous mercy forth-telling;
Jesus His grace to us accords,
Spirit and life are all His words,
His truth doth hallow the temple.
(ELH #211, v. 4)

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, forevermore. Amen.

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