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Title: When God Says “NO!”

Text: 2 Samuel 7:1-29

What is your favorite word? (There were a mixture of answers.) This is the more important question for today's message: What is your least favorite word? How many said, “no?” It's one of the first words we learn to say, and probably the least favorite word we like to hear.

Our text describes what were possibly the best days in the life of King David. David had good days, bad days and VERY bad days, AND our text speaks of some of King David's VERY good days. He was the King of Israel. His nation was united and at peace. His enemies were at bay. King David was enjoying a time of rest, after all the problems he had been forced to endure. For David, these days were a time to meditate and reflect on the blessings and the grace of God. As David meditated, a dream was born in his heart. He wanted to build God a permanent dwelling place. Does that sound good or bad? Since the time the Tabernacle had been built during the days of Moses, God's presence had dwelt in the Holy of Holies of that temporary building. King David wanted to give the Lord what he deemed a proper and permanent place to manifest His glorious presence. The only problem with this dream is that God said “No!”

David's reaction to God's “No” is something we should all take to heart. Perhaps you had a desire to be a preacher of the Gospel. You told God you would do it, but it hasn't worked out. Perhaps there was a dream in your heart to be a missionary or to give your life in some other form of service, but that didn't work out either. Perhaps there was a dream in your heart to make a lot of money so that you could give to others and to the work of the Lord, but that dream has never come to pass. It is as if God said, “That is not what I have planned for your life. I want you to take a different path.” There may be those here today who will hear God say “No” to your dreams in the future. What do you do when and if God says “No?” I think David shows us what we are supposed to do when God looks at our dream and says “NO, that is not MY plan for YOUR life.” Let's examine this chapter together and consider the lessons that are taught here.

- 1. The Desire David Expressed (v. 1-3).** It was a good desire. As David sat in his palace, he felt guilty that he lived in the lap of such luxury when the presence of God lived inside a tent. David believed that a God of such glory should have a house befitting His majesty. This was a good desire and David was praised by the Lord for having this dream. *“Now it was in the heart of David my father (Solomon speaking here) to build a house for the Name and renown of the Lord, the God of Israel. But the Lord said to David my father, ‘Since it was in your heart to build a house for My Name and renown, you did well that it was in your heart. Yet you shall not build the house, but your son, who shall be born to you – he shall build the house for My Name’”* (2 Chronicles 6:7-9). Note: The Lord's house and these grounds ought to look the best that they can. When people come here – inside and outside – what they see reveals what we believe about the glory of God. The Lord's house does not have to be adorned with gold and glitter, but this should testify to a passing world that the people who attend here believe that we serve a God who is worthy of the best we can give Him. How you treat this place may even reveal the depth of your commitment to the Lord! **It was a Gracious Desire.** David was not asking for anything at this point. His desire was NOT to receive, but to GIVE. He wanted to give something back to the God who had given him everything. Note: That ought to be the desire of every believer's heart. We can never repay the Lord for all that He has done for us. He has not asked us to! But, there should be a desire within us to see Him honored and glorified, regardless of the cost. After all, *“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver”* (2 Corinthians 9:7). **It was a Godly Desire.** David had no ulterior motives in wanting to build the Lord a house. His desire was to see the Lord glorified and honored. He wanted God to be exalted. He wanted the Lord to receive the glory and honor that He deserved. Note: It is good to have a dream! But, we need to be certain that our dreams are FROM THE LORD. While David had a good, gracious, Godly dream, his dream was NOT from the Lord. He is even encouraged to follow the dream by the man of God (v. 3). Who was the man of God? Nathan. What was Nathan? A prophet. You will notice that Nathan didn't even pray about this matter. It sounded good to him. Apparently, he thought the dream was of the Lord too. Apparently, David's dream had all the earmarks of a desire impressed upon him by the Lord. But, his dream turned out to be HIS OWN CREATION and NOT the will of the Lord. Thank God for a dream and a desire to serve the Lord! There is nothing wrong with having a dream; we simply need to be sure that our dreams are from the Lord and that they are part of His plan for our life. When our dreams are from the Lord, they will come to pass in every detail (Example: Joseph – Genesis 37:5-11 – Joseph dreamed a dream. In verse 9

it says he dreamed another dream. They both came to pass.) When our dreams are merely our own, they will likely come to naught. Thank God for the desires that HE places within our hearts.

2. The Denial David Experienced (v. 4-17). When Nathan returned home, during the night, God spoke to him and told him to return to David and tell him that his dream was not of the Lord (v. 5-7). God seems to be saying in these verses that David's dream to build a temple was not from the Lord. It had originated within the heart of David. As I said, his motives were right, but the dream was his and not God's. But, when God says "No" to David, He does not just shatter David's dream and leave him with a broken heart. When God says "No", He tempers His no with some very precious words that are designed to soothe the heart of David. Let's look at those words and get some help for our own times when God says "No". **It was tempered by God's Provisions (v. 8-11a).** Instead of allowing David to give to Him, God turned everything around and gave to David. God reminds David of His great grace in taking him from leading sheep. God, in His grace, took a nobody and made a somebody out of him (v. 9). God tells David that He has made him a celebrity! Everybody knows who David is. David is reminded that he has been made the partaker of God's rest, God's peace, God's victory and God's power. **It was tempered by God's Promises (v. 11b-15).** David had a desire to build a house for the Lord, but God tells David that He (God) is going to build David a house (v. 11). In verses 12-15 the terms of the Davidic Covenant are given: God promises David that he will have a son. This son will walk with the Lord and he will be treated as a son by God. He will be established in his kingdom and he will be chastened when necessary. God tells David that this son will build a house for God. Surely these promises brought peace to the heart of King David. **It was tempered by God's Plans (v. 16-17).** God is saying, "David, you want to build me a house, but I am telling you that I am going to build your house. I will establish your throne forever!" What a promise! Note: David discovered that our dreams that we have for our lives are not always part of God's plan for our lives. What can we glean from these verses? Sometimes God says "No" to our dreams and our plans. When He says "No", it is not to defeat us or to discourage us. In David's case, God did it because He had something far better than he could have ever imagined planned for him. That's often the case with us as well. David thought he would build a temple and that would be the end of it. He found out that it was not God's will for him to build a temple. He also found out that God had some things planned for his future that he never could have dreamed up on his own. Some of you have witnessed the death of your dreams. You have watched as life has altered the plans and dreams of your youth. But, I think if you will take the time to look at all the Lord has done through your life, you will see that He had something far better in mind for you than you could have ever dreamed up on your own. God ALWAYS has the best plan! His ways are higher – much, much higher. Illustration: In Scotland a family by the name of Clark had a dream. This husband, wife and their nine children wanted to immigrate to the United States. To make that dream a reality, they struggled, scrimped and saved. Finally they managed to accumulate enough money and obtain all the paperwork they needed to take the trip and begin a new life in a new land. Ship reservations were made and the family was ecstatic. Then, as often happens, tragedy struck. Seven days before they were to leave, the youngest of the children, a little boy, was bitten by a dog. The bite wasn't thought to be serious; the doctor stitched the lad up in no time at all. The tragedy was the doctor also had to hang a yellow sign on the Clark's front door. The yellow sign warned everybody to stay away. There was a possibility, a very small chance, that the boy had contracted rabies from the bite of the unknown dog. The ship was to sail in ONE week; the family was quarantined for TWO. They would have to stay behind as their ship, AND THEIR DREAMS, sailed into the sunset. The father, outraged at what he felt was the unjust, unfair hand that he had been dealt, went down to the pier to stare as the ship set out. Furious at God, frustrated with his son, he cried and he cursed. He stomped home in a foul mood. He stayed that way, too. Then only a few days after his vessel had left port, he got word that on April 15th the very ship which was to have brought them to a new life, had sunk! The Titanic had gone down. It had taken with it the lives of over 1,500 passengers. Hearing that news, Mr. Clark's attitude was instantly transformed. Excitedly, enthusiastically, eagerly, he HUGGED his son. Plainly, powerfully and prayerfully he THANKED his God. Their lives had been spared. Their TRAGEDY (smashed dream) had been turned into a TRIUMPH. God's plan was MUCH better. Likely some of you have watched as your plans for your life have been shattered and broken. You've wondered why God would refuse to allow you to see your dreams fulfilled. Maybe you are even disappointed with the way your life has turned out. Let me challenge you to look at what the Lord has done for you! You may not have gotten all you wanted out of life, but hasn't God given you so much more than you imagined? Has He not saved you by His grace? Has He not used your life to accomplish His will in the world? Some of you have been blessed to raise godly children and even preachers of the Gospel. What an incredible honor! Some of you have been privileged

to teach children who are now godly men and women. When God says “No” to your dreams and plans, it is because He has something far better in mind for you. This was David’s discovery. This was the experience of the disciples. They thought their dreams were shattered when Jesus died on the cross. They soon found out that God had something far better in store. It was Paul’s experience as well (Read 2 Corinthians 12:7-10). Many others have had this same experience: Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego; Daniel; Elijah; Naaman the leper; etc. It will be your experience and mine as well. The Lord always has the best plan!

3. **The Devotion David Exhibited (v. 18-29).** What was David’s response to God’s “No”? These closing verses reveal that his response was one of devotion to the Lord. I believe that these words reveal what our response should be when our dreams are shattered as well. **It was a Humble Devotion.** Notice what David did. In verse 18, he went in and “*sat before the Lord.*” He acknowledged the fact that he was unworthy of such a blessing. In verse 20, like a little child, he referred to himself in the third person. In verses 19-22, David praised the Lord for His blessings, His grace and His wonderful love for His children. David, the mighty king, assumed the place of a humble child before the presence of the Lord. **It was a Holy Devotion.** Even though David did not get his way in the matter, he readily accepted God’s plan for his life. His words are filled with praise for the God he loves. Unlike some folks who pout when they do not get their way, David just PRAISED the Lord because He trusted God to know and to do that which is best! **It was an Honorable Devotion.** David accepts God’s promises and acknowledges God’s ability to bring them all to pass. In his prayer, David reveals a heart that is willing to accept God’s plan, even though it WAS NOT what he originally wanted to do (verses 27-29). The thrust of David’s prayer is “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done.” No wonder David is called “*a man after God’s own heart.*” What should our response be when God says “No”? We should first remember that we are who we are and have what we have because of His pure, perfect grace. We should remember that He is the Potter and we are but the clay. We should assume the place of a humble child before His presence and trust Him to do that which is best. Paul’s attitude in Philippians 1:21 – “*For me to live is Christ [His life in me], and to die is gain [the gain of the glory of eternity].*” Our goal in life should not be to reach our dreams, but to see GOD’S PERFECT WILL carried out in our lives. There is no greater honor than being used by the Lord to bring glory to His name, even if it isn’t the way we hoped it would happen. “*So then, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you may do, do all for the honor and glory of God*” (1 Corinthians 10:31).
4. **Conclusion.** David was not allowed to build the Lord’s Temple. But, he was allowed to make preparations for the fulfillment of the dream. In 1 Chronicles 22:1-19, David prepared all the materials necessary for the construction of the building. In 1 Chronicles 28:1-17, David gave Solomon the plans and the instructions necessary to fulfill the dream. So, in the end, David was still a part of seeing the dream accomplished. It did not happen as he planned it, BUT he got to be a part of God’s plan, AND I’d say that that was a dream come true! If there is anything for us to remember from this message, it is this: sometimes you will not see your dreams fulfilled until you are willing to let them go forever. You have to be willing to adopt God’s dream as your own. When that happens, you will get to see all your dreams come true! Let me conclude with a poem.

Treasures

One by one He took them from me,
All the things I valued most,
Until I was empty-handed;
Every glistening toy was lost.
And I walked earth’s highway, grieving,
In my rags and poverty.
Till I heard His voice inviting.
“Lift those empty hands to Me!”
So I held my hands toward Heaven,
And He filled them with a store
Of His transcendent riches
Till they could contain no more.
And at last I comprehended
With my stupid mind and dull,
That God could NOT pour His riches
Into hands already full.

Do you have some shattered dreams in your life today? Have things not turned out as you thought they would? Is there the possibility of a measure of bitterness in your heart because you haven't gotten your way? Wouldn't today be a great day to bring those shattered dreams before the Lord and let Him show you how to place those dreams in His hands and get past the pain of God's "No"? Pray to the Lord about it today. He can take what you perceive as a broken dream and impart a better dream. Let God use it to bless your life and bring glory and honor to His name.