

SERMON FOR DECEMBER 20, 2020

TEXT: 2 SAMUEL 7: 1-11, 16

THEME: GOD'S WAYS ARE NOT OUR WAYS

And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

In the name of Jesus:

As I read our text for today in preparation for the sermon, I began to think of some maxims, some earthly, pithy sayings that we have in our society, sayings that express some sort of truth. For example: The bigger the better, good things come in small packages, opposites attract, actions speak louder than words, and birds of a feather flock together.

Just as there are earthly maxims or sayings, there are also churchly maxims or sayings. We see one of these in our text for today, and while this maxim isn't specifically said it is implied. It is the maxim that is spoken by the Lord elsewhere in Scripture, but it is personified in the life of David, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, and My ways are not your ways.”

To set the scene, Samuel tells us that David is sitting in his office, reflecting on all of the blessings and achievements that Yahweh has given him. Victory over Goliath, crowned as king of Israel, victory over all of his enemies. Quite a list of accomplishments! And as David is in this reflective state, he begins to think what can he do for Yahweh, the Lord God who has given to him

all that he possesses? His heart burns with the desire to build a Temple in honor of and to the glory of Yahweh. David calls his pastor, Nathan, in to discuss his plans and Nathan agrees. What a splendid idea! Build a magnificent Temple for Yahweh! Nathan even blesses David and says: "Go and do all that is in your heart, for the Lord is with you!"

But later that night, Yahweh speaks to Nathan and tells him to go to David and tell him, wait, not so fast, I, the Lord do not want you, David, to build Me a Temple! I got along just fine without one thus far, all throughout the times when I led Israel in the wilderness, I never had a need for one, I never asked for one. And I am not asking for one now." The Lord puts the old kibosh on David's noble plans. Even though David thinks that this is the right thing to do, the Lord gives him an emphatic NO! Moses didn't build Him a Temple, the judges never built Him a Temple, and David was not about to build Him a Temple either!

Woah! Talk about life coming at you fast, and then going in the opposite direction! David's thoughts were not Yahweh's thoughts, and David's ways were not Yahweh's ways.

You have experienced something similar in your life, haven't you? The plans and designs that you thought were God pleasing never materialized. The prayers that you offered in faith to Jesus weren't answered in the ways

you thought best. The dreams you had when you were younger fizzled and evaporated when you grew older and you saw that the Lord was taking you in a different direction. We all have been there, and have experienced what David experienced, when God says: “My thoughts are not your thoughts and My ways are not your ways.”

Thanks be to God that God’s ways are higher than ours! For the Lord goes on to explain to David that even though David was not to build the Temple, David’s son would build the Temple. And in a strange twist, it would be David’s second son, Solomon, who would build the Temple. David’s first son died, that son was the product of an adulterous relationship with Bathsheba. So the Lord in His Wisdom proclaimed that David’s second son, Solomon, would build the Temple. But even more than that, the Lord promised to David something greater, that “your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”

About a thousand years later, a young virgin girl was living a simple, ordinary life, minding her own business, she probably had dreams of her own of what her life might be. She found a good man to marry, he had a steady job with a steady stream of income coming in. They would marry, settle down, and eventually have a family. But much to her surprise, God had other ideas!

The Gospel writer Luke writes about her: “ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a virgin whose name was Mary. **28** Gabriel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. **31** And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. **32** He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, **33** and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

Now Mary was perplexed, not knowing how this happened because she was a virgin. The angel then said to her: “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. **37** For nothing will be impossible with God.”

Talk about a change in plans! God’s thoughts were not Mary’s thoughts, and His ways not Mary’s ways, but listen to how this godly woman answered the angel! She said: “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. Even though God denied David’s request to build Him a Temple, God gave to David more than he ever imagined! A Descendant of His would establish an

everlasting Kingdom. He would be David's Son and David's Lord. And even though Mary's storybook dreams might have been upended, the Lord provided to her and all of humanity more than what she could have asked for, a Son who would be the Temple of the Lord, the One in whom the fullness of the Godhead would dwell. He would be given the name Jesus, for He is the long promised Savior who will take away the sins of the world. Jesus' name would be greater than David's, Jesus' reign would far exceed David's. Jesus' victories would be over sin, Satan, and death. Sinners would be saved by a free gift of God's love, through faith in David and Mary's Son. And on the Last Day, every knee will bow and every tongue confesses that Jesus is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus is your King, your Lord, and your Savior. Jesus is here, present today for you! He forgives you. He strengthens you. He gently leads and guides you. He is the Son of David, the Good shepherd who not only laid down His life for you, He protects you from your enemies. He casts out your fears. He takes on your burdens. He hears your prayers. And He answers your prayers. Nothing in heaven or on earth will ever be able to separate you from His love. God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways. Thanks be to God! For God gives to David, to Mary, and to each of us more than what we can imagine in Jesus! And just like David and Mary, we

many times do not know what God is doing, or where He is leading. Things don't turn out the way we want or even in ways we expect. But we know this: Jesus loves us. And He leads us to everlasting life. And that is enough+. So that we can say with Mary: "Behold, I am your servant, Jesus. Your will be done, to Your honor and glory." Amen