



Unit .11

Session .03

A Servant Receives God's Promise

Scripture



**2 Sam. 7:8-13,
15-16**

8 “So now this is what you are to say to my servant David: ‘This is what the LORD of Armies says: I took you from the pasture, from tending the flock, to be ruler over my people Israel. **9** I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will make a great name for you like that of the greatest on the earth. **10** I will designate a place for my people Israel and plant them, so that they may live there and not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not continue to oppress them as they have done **11** ever since the day I ordered judges to be over my people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies.’ The

LORD declares to you: The LORD himself will make a house for you. **12** When your time comes and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He is the one who will build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ... **15** But my faithful love will never leave him as it did when I removed it from Saul, whom I removed from before you. **16** Your house and kingdom will endure before me forever, and your throne will be established forever.”

Intro Options



Main Point:
God doesn't need
us—we need Him!

Option 1

Ask your students which they would rather choose:

- A) Receiving \$10,000 right now; or
- B) Starting with one penny and having their money double every day.

They have five seconds to decide (in other words, don't give them time to do the math). See what they would choose and why.

Afterward, explain that option B gives them much more money in the end: a little over \$5 million.

This question serves as a good analogy for what we'll see in the lesson today: God will not grant David's immediate request, but will instead give him a promise. While it might seem like David is not getting the best, just like with the penny option, the later good God will give David (and us) through his promise is far, far greater.

Option 2

You can do the following activity as an entire group, as individuals, or in small groups: you decide which would work best for your crew.

Tell your students: Good news and bad news. The bad news: you've been abducted by aliens! The good news: they're good aliens! They have been monitoring humanity for centuries and have finally learned everything there is to know about us biologically. They have complete knowledge of our biological make-up; they have unlimited resources from their home solar system. They have come because they see how unhappy many people on Earth are, and their goal is to make the entire human race happy. They only thing they need is someone to tell them how to make the human race happy.

That's why they've abducted you. They want you to tell them how to make people happy with these unlimited resources. You can give them up to ten things that they must do (e.g., give people perfect health, give everyone abundant food, give everyone enough entertainment, etc.), and they'll do them. You should now put together your list of up to ten things for the aliens to do to make humanity happy.

Have students share their lists. What similarities and differences emerged? What problems do people see with each other's lists? Could we ever make all of humanity happy?

Use this exercise to point out that humanity is restless, and always will be until Jesus satisfies us. We'll see in this lesson that part of the promise to David was this rest that all people long for so very much.

TEACHING PLAN

After bringing the ark of the covenant into Jerusalem, it struck David that there was no place for the ark to dwell—other than a tent. While David lived in a house of cedar, the Lord had no house for His name to dwell (2 Sam. 7:1-2). At first, Nathan affirmed David's implied plan to build a temple, even declaring that the Lord was with David. But that night, God spoke to Nathan and set him straight. Because he had been a man of war, David would not build a temple; another would. But God had more to say to David than just “no.” So He gave Nathan a message to deliver to the king.

Read 2 Samuel 7:8-11a.



Before God issued one of the most notable promises in the Old Testament to David, He referred back to recent history to remind David how he got where he was. God reminded David that, every step of the way—from the pasture to the palace—He was orchestrating David's steps. In keeping with a common pattern in Scripture, God reminded David of His faithfulness before He made His promise.

- **Why is remembering God's past faithfulness in our lives important when it comes to trusting His faithfulness to us in the future?**

God promises to give rest to His people. If we dig a little deeper, we realize that the rest we long for is not just physical. Neither is it just emotional. We need a more profound rest: one that gets beneath the surface and refreshes our very soul. We need a spiritual rest: one in which we find complete peace for every facet of our lives. A rest that is rooted in the Lord and in Him alone. God recited the promise of a coming rest—a future rest, a complete rest—once again. God was not done offering rest for His people. Because His people still did not have the rest He desired to give them.

- **How can we be physically at rest but still spiritually restless?**
- **What are some of the causes of the restlessness we feel?**

Read 2 Samuel 7:11b-13.



The promise made here came to fruition through Solomon but only partially. Solomon would be the one to build the temple (1 Kings 6–8). Solomon would be the one to advance the kingdom beyond what David would do. And Solomon would be the one to execute in elaborate building projects.

99 Essential Doctrines (p. 48, DDG)

The Church and Kingdom

The church and the kingdom of God are closely related, though not identical. When the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God, it is referring to the reign of God in the world. The church is the people of God who live under His loving rule now, anticipating the full manifestation of God's kingdom in the future. The church's mission is to witness to God's kingdom, proclaiming His message of salvation through Christ and demonstrating the power of the gospel through good works so that others may be brought to live under His reign.

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God doesn't need
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2 Samuel 7


8-11a. The promise of rest should have come as no surprise to David. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt centuries before, God promised that He would take them out of a land of slavery, a land where there was no rest, and lead them into a land flowing with milk and honey, a land that had rest on every side. God would bring them out of a place of work and enslavement to a place of safety and freedom. We see this promise reiterated time and again when Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years (Deut. 12:9-11). As they wandered in the wilderness, God's people were out of slavery, but they had not yet entered their promised rest.

Now, generations later, David was living in the midst of God's unfolding fulfillment of this promise to the nation. Through Joshua, God had brought His people into the land and given them victory over their enemies. Through the judges, God had preserved His people and disciplined them so that they might turn from their evil ways and pursue Him alone. And now, through David, God's chosen king, God had brought rest to the battle-scarred, blood-soaked land. But, as we see in God's promise to David, God had something much more profound in mind for His people. The rest that they were experiencing (v. 1) was incomplete. It was just a shadow of the substance that was yet to come.

Even though God had already provided His people a good land, a good king, and rest from their enemies, He was not finished. Reading between the lines of God's promises, we see that rest would come through someone in David's lineage, a rest that would begin in this life and reverberate into the next. We know that the descendant who would provide this rest was Jesus Christ, the son of David (Matt. 1:1). And we know that Jesus did not come just to provide this rest only for the nation of Israel but for all who trust in Him as Savior and King.

Jesus referred to Himself as the Lord of the Sabbath (Luke. 6:1-5) and in doing so declared that the rest that God promised, the rest that we need, is found in Him. As the Lord of all rest, Jesus provided the rest that we long for and need by dying in our place to redeem us from all that enslaves us in this world.

In Defense (p. 50, DDG)



This important passage (2 Sam. 7:16) is the Bible's earliest full statement about the enduring Davidic dynasty. (See also Gen. 49:10.) Did God break His promise when He allowed the Babylonians to conquer Judah in 586 B.C., ending the independent political rule of the Davidic kings? Although the line of David continued during Israel's exile (2 Kings 25:27-30) and afterward (Matt. 1:12-16), the family dropped into obscurity after the governorship of Zerubbabel (Hag. 1:1). But this passage can be understood as a messianic prophecy fulfilled by Jesus, who was of the line of David (Matt. 1:17; Luke 1:32; Rom. 1:3). God had promised through several OT prophets that the line of Davidic kings would one day be reestablished (see Isa. 11:1; 9:7; Jer. 23:5; 33:15-17; Ezek. 34:23-24; 37:25; Hos. 3:5; Amos 9:11). With the coming of Jesus the Christ (Messiah, "anointed"), the ultimate descendant of David and King of the Jews (Matt. 27:11, 37; Mark 15:2, 26; Luke 23:3, 38; John 18:33-34; 19:19-22; Rev. 17:14; 19:16), God fulfilled His promise eternally.


TEACHING PLAN

But there was more to this promise than even Solomon could achieve. His throne was not forever. In fact, as we will see in the weeks ahead, Solomon's throne unraveled around him as he disobeyed God, married a multitude of wives, and worshiped their pagan gods. Before Solomon's life ended, God told him that the kingdom would be torn in two because of his sin, and only the promises God had made to David would lead Him to preserve part of the kingdom for David's son.


Solomon's name may have meant peace, but he would not be the one to bring it. No, a greater king was needed, one who would bring about perfect peace and establish the eternal kingdom God spoke of. This promise could only be fulfilled in Christ Jesus. He was the Prince of peace who brought lasting peace with God. He was the King of kings who ushered in His kingdom on earth, a kingdom that would have no end (Isa. 9). And He was the sinless Savior who unites all those who trust in Him—people of every tribe, tongue, and nation—as one redeemed people, the family of God.

Read 2 Samuel 7:15-16.



Of all the promises God made to David concerning his house and line, none of them make sense apart from this one: God promised to raise up a son in the line of David who would reign forever. Ostensibly, Solomon is the obvious person in mind here. Solomon rose to power after David's death and built a temple where God's name would dwell. He possessed wisdom, wealth, and power like no other king in Israel's history (1 Kings. 3:1-15). But we also know that Solomon's heart turned aside from following the Lord. 

Solomon's reign came to an end, and the nation was divided under Rehoboam and Jeroboam (1 Kings. 12). Did this mean that God's promise to David failed? By no means! We know better. While God was speaking about Solomon, He was not only speaking about Solomon. He was also speaking about someone much greater than Solomon. This promise did not rest upon Solomon's shoulders. There was another one who would come through David's line to accomplish all that God had promised. Biblical scholars agree that this is one of the clearest prophecies of Jesus Christ from the Old Testament. All of the kings in the history of Israel—as great as many of them were—do not compare with the wisdom, power, and worth of the one who would come after them.

How amazing is this promise God made to David? Now, because of Jesus, we can be sure that God has our best in mind. We can endure any sorrow, walk through any valley, and persevere until the end, knowing that God is for us and with us (Rom. 8:31-32). If God gave us His own Son, then He will stop at nothing to give us all that we need to live in a way pleasing to Him. We can be certain that God is never working against us. Instead, He is shaping all the details of our lives, including difficulties, and working them for good (Rom. 8:28). This should fill us with hope, joy, and a deep abiding trust in God whose promises always find their yes in Jesus (2 Cor. 1:20). 

- **What particular promises of God have you found most helpful during difficult times?**
- **When have you struggled to believe these promises?**

COMMENTARY

Main Point:
God doesn't need
us—we need Him!

2 Samuel 7

15-16. It is helpful to remember that most biblical prophecies have a dual meaning. There is an immediate meaning, and then there is an ultimate one. From the perspective of the prophets it was often difficult to untie the two, but they remain distinct. Think of it like seeing a mountain range in the distance. When you first spot it, you might see two distinct peaks, seemingly right next to each other. Only as you get closer do you see that these peaks are miles apart.

The first fulfillment of the prophecy was David's biological son, Solomon. Solomon's name means rest, so in many ways he would exemplify this promise. His reign would extend rest throughout Israel, and it would be on his watch that Israel constructed the temple. And yes, Solomon would do some foolish things—some Saul-like acts, as God puts it here—like having 700 wives and worshipping idols. Even so, God will keep His promise, and will not strip the kingdom from him.

This prophecy points through Solomon to another King: Jesus. He was the descendant of David whose kingdom would last. He was the descendant who would establish a real temple, not a building constructed with human hands, but the temple of His own body. And after His ascension, He would send His Spirit to make us, His people, the temple of God.

Activity

Split your group in half. Ask each half to come up with a list of as many Bible promises as possible. These can be promises from the Old or New Testament. They should write down their list.

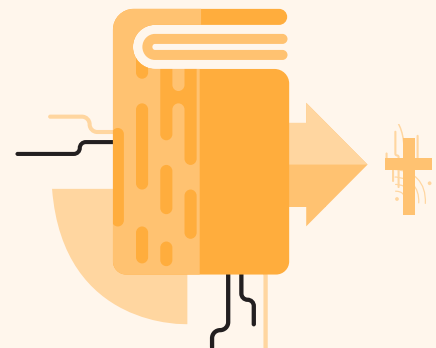
Have each side switch their lists. With the new list each group has, they should go through the promises and figure out how each promise is fulfilled in or by Jesus. Give them some time to think up their answers, and then have each group share their thoughts.

As you go, or after everyone has finished, ask if students can think of other ways Jesus fulfills these promises, or if they can think of other promises in the Bible and how Jesus fulfills those for us.

Ask a few students if they'd be willing to voice prayers of thanksgiving to Jesus for being the fulfillment of God's promises. After you pray, ask the students for specific application on how they can live out these promises in their lives this week.

(p. 49, DDG) Christ Connection

God promised David that future kings of Israel would come from his family and that his kingdom would last forever. God kept this promise by sending Jesus as one of David's descendants. All of history is driving toward the day when Jesus, the Son of David, will be recognized as the King whose kingdom is everlasting.



Our Mission

God's Story has always been designed to connect with our story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own. Suggested answers to these questions can be found on the right-hand side of the page for leaders.

Head



What dangers come with the faulty mindset that God needs us?

Why might humility come easier to the person who recognizes that God doesn't need him or her?

Heart



What are some graces and mercies in your life that stir up gratitude in your heart?

Why should this gratitude lead you to follow God on mission?

Hands



How can we encourage and challenge one another to live with an eye on eternity, rather than merely on today?

Who do you know who is enduring a time of restlessness? How can you share about the rest provided in Jesus this week?

Main Point: God doesn't need us—we need Him!



Head

We should remember that God does not need us. God is not now, nor has He ever, looked for “helpers” to assist Him in saving the world. That doesn't mean He isn't calling us to give ourselves generously to that mission, just that He's not looking for people to supply His needs. He's not short on money, talent, or time. He never commands us to go save the world for Him; He calls us to follow Him as He saves the world.

The danger in thinking God needs us is the mindset that one's salvation depends on our ability to share the gospel and persuade others or the prideful mindset that “I” am a necessary part of God's plan to save the world. By recognizing that God doesn't need us but instead has invited us to play a part, we are in a better position to think of ourselves less in relation to God's plan, resulting in personal humility.



Heart

Even though God does not need us, we should want to give back to God as an overflow of our gratitude for Him. After all, David wasn't rebuked for his attitude. David wasn't trying to buy God off; he wanted to do something great for God because of God's great love toward him. David's heart overflowed with the desire to give of itself back to the God who had given so much to him. That's precisely how we should be in response to the gospel.



Hands

In reading 2 Samuel 7, we are able to see the riches of God's promises, all of which are fulfilled in Christ. What He has promised exceeds anything we could ever ask or imagine. What we might hope for as the greatest fulfillment of the rest God promises pales in comparison to what He intends. And this makes Him worthy of our complete trust and whole-hearted obedience.

Furthermore, these promises do not extend to us and then stop. They move beyond us and through us. We are called on, and granted the privilege, to bear witness about this God and His glorious promises that rest in Christ Jesus. We live in a world filled with restlessness, broken promises, and unmet expectations. People all around us constantly face the pain and hurt of broken dreams and crushed aspirations. They are let down, betrayed, and shunned by this world. But we have a better story. We have a God who never fails us (1 Tim. 2:13). We have a King who fulfills His promises and always makes good on His word. We can trust Him and lean on Him when it seems like nothing else is certain in this life. May we offer our entire lives to point people to this eternal Son and His glorious kingdom and exhort them to enter into the rest only He provides. And may we fix our eyes on the eternal things above (Col. 3:1), so that we do not grow weary as we persevere in this life and hope for the future God has prepared for us.