

17. I give you this land

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[0 : 00] Well, we're going to be looking at 2 Samuel this evening, so perhaps you'd like to turn with me to the Old Testament, to the second book of Samuel, nearly said the second letter of Samuel, but the second book of Samuel.

It's page 260 if you have one of the church Bibles, and I'm going to read chapter 8 and chapter 9, and you'll remember a few Sundays ago Bob was preaching on chapter 7, that magnificent chapter, that great turning point in not just the book of Samuel and Kings, but indeed the whole Old Testament story, one of the great high points of the covenant God makes with David about his offspring and his future progeny.

But now we read chapter 8. After this, David defeated the Philistines and subdued them, and David took Methagamah out of the hand of the Philistines, and he defeated Moab, and he measured them with a line, making them lie down on the ground, two lines he measured to be put to death, and one full line to be spared.

And the Moabites became servants to David and brought tribute. David also defeated Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to restore his power at the river Euphrates.

David took from him 1,700 horsemen, 20,000 foot soldiers. And David hamstringed all the chariot horses, but left enough for a hundred chariots.

[1 : 44] And the Syrians of Damascus came to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah. David struck down 22,000 men of the Syrians. And then David put garrisons in Aram of Damascus, and the Syrians became servants to David and brought tribute.

And the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went. And David took the shields of gold that were carried by the servants of Hadadezer and brought them to Jerusalem.

And from Betah and Berotai, cities of Hadadezer, king David took very much bronze. When Tori, king of Hamath, heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hadadezer, Tori sent his son Joram to king David to ask about his health and to bless him, because he'd fought against Hadadezer and defeated him, for Hadadezer had often been at war with Tori.

And Joram brought with him articles of silver, of gold, and of bronze. And these also king David dedicated to the Lord, together with the silver and the gold that he dedicated from all the nations he subdued, from Edom, Moab, the Ammonites, the Philistines, Amalek, and from the spoil of Hadadezer, the son of Rahab, king of Zobah.

And David made a name for himself when he returned from striking down 18,000 Edomites in the valley of salt. Then he put garrisons in Edom. Throughout all Edom he put garrisons, and all the Edomites became David's servants.

[3 : 17] And the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went. So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to the people.

Joab, the son of Zeruiah, was over the army, and Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was recorder. And Zadok, the son of Ahitob, and Ahimelech, the son of Abiathar, were priests.

And Zeruiah was secretary. And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over the Cherethites and the Pelethites. And David's sons were priests. And David said, Is there still anyone left of the house of Saul that I might show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

Now there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Zeba. And they called him to David, and the king said to him, Are you Zeba? And he said, I am your servant. And the king said, Is there not still someone of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness of God to him?

And Zeba said to the king, There is still a son of Jonathan. He's crippled in his feet. And the king said to him, Where is he? And Zeba said to the king, He's in the house of Machia, the son of Amiel, at Lodabar.

[4 : 32] And king David sent and brought him from the house of Machia, the son of Amiel, at Lodabar. And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage.

And David said, Mephibosheth. And he answered, Behold, I am your servant. And David said to him, Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the lands of Saul, your father.

And you shall eat at my table always. And he paid homage and said, What is your servant that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?

And the king called Zeba, Saul's servant, and said to him, All that belong to Saul and to all his house I have given to your master's grandson. And you and your sons and your servants shall till the land for him and shall bring in the produce that your master's grandson may have bread to eat.

But Mephibosheth, your master's grandson, shall always eat at my table. And Zeba had fifteen sons and twenty servants. And Zeba said to the king, According to all that my lord the king commands his servant, so will your servant do.

[5 : 48] So Mephibosheth ate at David's table like one of the king's sons. And Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micah. And all who lived in Zeba's house became Mephibosheth's servants.

So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, where he ate always at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet. Amen.

May God bless to us this his word. Now could we have our Bibles open please at page 260 and we'll ask the Lord's help as we look at this passage.

God our Father, as we turn from the praising of your name to the preaching of your word, we ask indeed that the living spirit who once gave that word to people and circumstances very different will use that word to speak to us now, that we will indeed hear your voice and that when we hear we will obey and that by obeying we may rejoice.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. The poet Blake once said, When the sun rises, what do you see?

[7 : 14] Do you see a golden disc that looks like a guinea? Or do you hear a multitude of the heavenly host crying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty?

When we read these chapters, what did you see? Did you see a few accounts of battles, some rather dull administrative details, and the story of this guy Mephibosheth, who seems to have just come into the story out of nowhere?

Or did you see, and I hope this is what we will see, glimpses of the coming kingdom of God? The light shining in the darkness of the ancient world and the light shining in the darkness of our world as these chapters anticipate the coming of the kingdom.

Now let me make a couple of introductory points. I've given this sermon the title, I give you this land. Now these are words from Genesis 15.

I'm not going to ask you to turn it up, but let me read them to you. God's covenant with Abraham. And God says to Abraham, To your offspring I give this land.

[8 : 28] From the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates. And this is what's beginning to happen in these chapters. David effectively destroys Philistine power.

There never again a trouble during David's reign. And David goes right to the south of Philistine country, the very borders of Egypt. And then in chapter 8, verse 3, David also defeated Hathadizah, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to restore his power at the river Euphrates.

The ancient promise to Abraham is being fulfilled through David. Remember, Abraham was promised that kings will come from you. Now many of the things I'm going to say this evening will echo things that Willie said this morning.

That's hardly surprising. It's part of the same story. The big story of God's covenant. The God who gives. The God whose promises cannot be affected by the passing of time.

That's the first thing. And the second thing is where this story fits in. You notice the word after this at the beginning of chapter 8. Now that doesn't necessarily mean chronologically after chapter 7.

[9 : 46] Because if you later on read chapter 6 and 7, you'll discover they are about the Ark of the Covenant. David brings the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, establishing the centrality of Yahweh, the Lord, at the heart of his people's life and worship.

This story probably picks up from the end of chapter 5. David did as the Lord commanded, struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer. And we're taking up the historical account again.

The Ark of God, the presence of God. And in chapter 7, verse 8, if you glance back to this, the chapter we looked at a week or two ago. Chapter 7, verse 8, just on the previous page.

Now therefore, says the Lord, and he says this to Nathan the prophet. Now therefore, thus shall you 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.

Now what we are seeing in these chapters is that promise being fulfilled. David is shepherd. David is prince. David is consolidating the kingdom.

[11 : 02] So, there are two main points we're going to look at tonight. We're going to look, first of all, at the victories which establish the kingdom.

That's lastly, chapter 8, and going on into chapter 10, which I'll maybe refer to briefly. At the end of chapter 10, the Syrians were afraid to save the Ammonites anymore.

David, once again, has control over the whole area. The victories which establish the kingdom. And secondly, the grace which exemplifies the kingdom.

Chapter 9, David is prince. David is shepherd. David wins victories. And David shows grace. So, first of all, the victories which establish the kingdom.

The first thing I want to say, this is a real picture of the coming kingdom. An awful lot of fighting and killing. It seems awfully macho, this.

[11 : 59] Indeed, this sounds like men behaving badly. And that, indeed, is the title of one commentary on 1 and 2 Samuel. Men behaving badly. And there's an awful lot of this.

And we shudder at it all. Very nice to hear about Moabites lying down on the ground and being put to death, horses being hamstringed, and so on.

But the enemies of the kingdom need to be fought. They're not just going to go away and disappear. And sometimes there's a kind of sentimentality in our thinking.

Soul by soul and silently, kingdom shining bounds increase. Now, there is truth in that. There's wonderful truth in that. We'll see that in chapter 9. But that suggests the kingdom will come if we start being nice to each other.

The kingdom will come simply by kindness. But we forget who the enemies of the kingdom are. And in particular, we forget who the enemy, capital E, of the kingdom is.

[13 : 07] The arch enemy who wants to destroy the kingdom and whom we need to resist. See, the kingdom will come when Christ reigns. What does Paul say in 1 Corinthians 15?

He must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The kingdom will come when all the enemies, including death itself, are destroyed.

So it's a real picture of the coming kingdom. However gruesome, however indeed unprofitable it may appear, this is a real picture. You'll notice, secondly, there is mercy in the middle of the fighting.

You see, it may not be, we may not like very much in verse 2, two lines he measured we've put to death. But notice one full line to be spared. Not indiscriminate slaughter.

And don't ignore this little bit here, verses 9 and 10. When Toi, king of Hamath, heard that David had defeated the whole army of Hedadezer, he sent his son Joram to ask about his health and to bless him, because he fought against him and defeated him.

[14 : 16] There is peace. There is reconciliation for those who will lay down their arms, who will surrender to the king. He makes peace and avoids destruction.

And this is the picture of the true king who captures people's hearts. Now, I'm not pretending that Toi, king of Hamath, went home singing, Happy day when Jesus washed my sins away.

That's not what I'm saying. What I'm saying is, this is a real picture of how the king, who will put all his enemies under his feet, is gracious to the returning sinner.

That's the point. That's the gospel, isn't it? So you see how these two things are balanced. The real picture of the coming kingdom, where there has to be fighting and resisting evil. But also the mercy in the midst of the fighting.

And you'll notice too, I want you to notice the phrase repeated twice. Verse 5 and verse 13. The Lord gave victory to David wherever he went.

[15 : 23] And that's repeated, as I say, in these two verses. In all victories for the kingdom, we must never forget that. Now, we're not going to win the kind of victories for the kingdom that David did.

We belong in a different part of salvation history. Not to us, Lord. Not to us. But to your name be glory, as one of the Psalms says.

So, how do we do this? How is it that we acknowledge that it all comes from the Lord? Well, always thanking God, first of all.

Always saying, this is what the Lord has done. This is the Lord's doing. And it's marvelous in our eyes. Always realizing. And I've read a lot recently the story of King Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, facing a vast army.

He said, we have no strength, but our eyes are on you. Now, that is the Lord giving victory. And that's where we can understand verse 13. See, verse 13 stood on its own.

[16 : 30] David made a name for himself. An awful lot of that in the Church of God, isn't there? In our evangelical celebrity guru culture. David made a name for himself.

But you see what the author is saying. He's sandwiching that between the Lord gave victory to David. And what's happening is that David becomes well known as someone who is formidable, a formidable soldier for the Lord.

But our author will allow no detraction from the real leader. He will not allow people to say, David did all this on his own. Read the story of the kings of Judah and Israel in Kings and Chronicles.

You read the story later on, perhaps, in 2 Chronicles 26. Uzziah wins many victories like David. He's a great warrior.

He's a great warrior. He's also a great consolidator and peace lover like Solomon. There's a phrase there. Uzziah, we are told, was marvelously helped until he became strong.

[17 : 43] He was marvelously helped until he became strong. We want to be marvelously helped. And we have to be like Jehoshaphat and say, we have no strength in ourselves.

If we start talking about our strength and our accomplishments, then we're going to stop being marvelously helped, because God will not give his glory to anyone else.

And really, none of our work for the Lord, none of our ministries, this side of glory, are really all that impressive.

But we're being honest with ourselves. That's why we need grace. We need the Lord to win the victories for us. That's echoing once again Exodus. Stand still. You will not need to fight.

The Lord will fight for you. And then these verses, which don't instantly fill us with wonder, love, and praise, verses 15 to 18, Mount Jehoshaphat, Ahilud, Zadok, Ahimelech, and all the rest of them.

[18 : 44] This shows us that David consolidates these victories by just rule. That's the point of these little verses here. He doesn't just win victories.

He's not just a warlord. He rules peacefully as well. This anticipates 1 Kings 4 and 5, where Solomon, not having to fight, is able to develop that kind of rule.

I want you to notice the phrase, he administered justice and equity to all his people. David had a great and generous heart.

That flowed out to everybody. He cared for all his people. And he remembered that he was not really the king. He was only the one appointed to be king.

We don't rule the kingdom. We won't bring it in. But, wherever God has put us in our lives, we can learn lessons from this.

[19 : 51] We fight the battles of the Lord. If we win victories, we win them in his strength. The old hymn says, stand up, stand up for Jesus.

Stand in his strength alone. The arm of flesh will fail you. You dare not trust your own. When I've trusted my own, the arm of flesh has failed me dramatically and drastically.

And I'm sure many people here have had that kind of experience. When we try and win the battles, when we try and do the fighting in our own strength, then we find how weak we are.

We have no strength. But our eyes are on you. That's the first thing then. The victories which establish the kingdom. Now, secondly, in chapter 9, the grace which exemplifies the kingdom.

And, indeed, into chapter 10. Look at chapter 10 for a moment. After this, the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun, his son, reigned in his place. And David said, I will deal loyally.

[20 : 57] That word would be better put kindly, as it is elsewhere. Several times in this chapter, in 1, verse 1, verse 3, and verse 7, and then in chapter 10, verse 2, we have this word kindly.

This is the great covenant word, the Hebrew word *heseth*, which means the particular love that God has for his people. Now, you see what the author is saying. The author is saying David's life had been deeply touched by grace.

And because it had been deeply touched by grace, then he is behaving with grace to others. I think that's the point that's being made. Because covenant love dominates this story.

The word and the idea drives this story. Now, notice verse 3, is there not someone still of the house of Saul that I may show the kindness, the covenant love of God to him?

Doesn't it say, is there anyone left whom I can show how generous and how kind I am, whom I may show the love of God? And notice the human side in verse 7. Do not fear, I will show you covenant love for the sake of your father, Jonathan.

[22 : 18] Taking us way back to 1 Samuel 20, where David and Jonathan had made a covenant. Made a covenant to love, to support, to cherish each other's friendship.

You notice David's honesty. David is not pretending things about Saul that were not true. Some weeks ago, we looked at that great passage where David laments Saul and Jonathan.

And we noticed David's integrity there. He respected Saul as the Lord's anointed. But he didn't praise him for qualities he didn't have. And so here, the strong and deep friendship between two strong men in whom the grace of God had done a deep and radical work.

Both of these men were warriors. Both were fighting men. But the grace of God had done a deep and a radical work. And covenant love dominates this story.

The love which is there when the human side fails. Next time we take up the story in a week or two's time, we're going to be looking at that sad and tragic episode in chapters 11 and 12, where David spectacularly goes wrong.

[23 : 39] The love of the covenant does not fail there because God is committed by promises that he will not break. So covenant love dominates this story, a grace which exemplifies the kingdom.

The second thing I want you to notice is this is covenant love for an enemy. Is there anyone left of the house of Saul? Chapter 9, verse 1.

Now, Mephibosheth, when he comes, is probably jealous and suspicious. Mephibosheth comes in conscious of his lowly status. Verse 6, he fell on his face and paid homage to the king.

So, this is covenant love for an enemy. And as I say, Mephibosheth, no doubt, is suspicious, wondering what's going on. Heard of the victories of David, knew that his own father's house is now in disgrace, and that all the fighting men of Saul had gone.

What's going to happen to him? But this is more than just a royal pardon. This is grace abounding. You notice that David does two things.

[24 : 54] David says, verse 7, I will show you the kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul, your father.

You see, he's going to give Mephibosheth freedom and an independent status. Mephibosheth is not just simply going to be a royal pensioner, so to speak, enjoying the royal favor.

He's going to be given lands and the ability to work out his own future. That indeed is what 1 Peter says. 1 Peter says in chapter 2, verse 16, Live as people who are free.

That's what David has done to Mephibosheth. He's set him free. Free citizens in the kingdom of the Father, won for us by the Son of his love. This is grace abounding.

But the second thing he does, still in the same verse, I will restore to you the land of Saul, and you shall eat at my table always. Several times, verse 7, verse 10, verse 11, and verse 13, we are told that Mephibosheth sat and ate at David's table.

[26 : 13] You see what's happening? He's adopted into the royal family. That's what's happened to him. He's not just pardoned. He's not just given his freedom.

He's adopted into the royal family. This is grace abounding. This is extravagant grace. Can we read this without the words of Romans 5, echoing in our ears?

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. What did he die for? He died so that he could set us free. He died so that we could eat at his table.

He died so that the anger of God would be turned away. He died so that on the last day, bold, we could approach the eternal throne, justified and forgiven.

He reconciled his enemies to God. Now, of course, this was also probably a shrewd diplomatic move. Remember, there is no contradiction between David's generosity, David's covenant love, and David, the shrewd ruler and the good diplomat.

[27 : 21] Remember, the Lord Jesus Christ said, be wise as serpents, as well as being harmless as doves. Trust in God and keep your powder dry, said Cromwell.

So, that's what's happening here. We mustn't be cynical about it. Commentary I mentioned called men behaving badly is totally cynical and sees David simply as playing games here.

He doesn't like David very much this guy. And therefore, he doesn't understand an awful lot about him. So, grace, which exemplifies the kingdom.

Covenant love, which runs through the story and dominates the story. Covenant love, which reconciles enemies. Covenant love, which is grace abounding.

But it's also time-defying grace. Because, I mentioned 1 Samuel, chapter 20, when David and Jonathan made a covenant.

[28 : 19] That was probably at least 20 years before this. Mephibosheth himself now has a young son. As we can see, I mean, in verse, well, I can't find the verse, but it's there anyway.

Never been any good at numbers. 1 Samuel 20 was about 20 years before this. See, grace is not just a passing fancy.

Grace is for richer and for poorer, for better and for worse, in sickness and in health. That's why, that's why the metaphor used for God's grace, right, Scripture is consistently the marriage one.

Not a passing fancy, not a whim, but that deep covenant love. The promise in the past which results in faithfulness in the present.

Do you realize what that means? That means God isn't going to go off you. He's not going to get tired of you. He's not going to decide, oh, this one hasn't turned out the way I had hoped.

[29 : 29] Because God shows you in Christ before the stars shone in the sky when the continents or before the continents were molten lava.

You were chosen in Christ. If you're not a Christian and you're worried you can't keep it up, remember, it's not about you keeping it up. It's not about your faith and the strength of your faith.

It's about God's faithfulness. It's about luxuriating in his love, which is not turned away by the bad in you and also before we get above ourselves it's not going to be overly impressed by anything.

You know, sometimes I think we think God's rather lucky to have us. I remember once hearing Dick Lucas talking to a group of students and I'm sure he thought they were a bit conceited and he said this to them, you think you're the hope of the side.

This kind of speech day nonsense says, you're not the hope of the side, you're mainly problems. I think we've got to remember that as well. We're mostly problems. The hope of the side is in heaven.

[30 : 42] The hope of the side, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ is in heaven. And I will say to the Cornhill students, don't volunteer for the post of Messiah because there isn't a vacancy.

This is time defying grace. He loved us from the first of time. He loves us to the last. So, two things as we finish. We need to fight the enemies of the kingdom.

We need to resist the world, the flesh, and the devil. And what James says, resist the devil and he will flee from you. And Peter, of course, uses similar words.

Your enemy, the devil, goes about like a roaring lion. Resist him, firm in the faith. So, we need to fight and we need to fight right to the very end of our days.

But secondly, we need to rejoice in grace. It's grace, actually, from which flows graciousness. Sometimes the word gracious is simply used if it meant kind of synonym for nice.

[31 : 46] It's not. Graciousness, if a person shows graciousness, it's because the grace of God has done a deep and radical work in their heart. It's not a natural aptitude.

It's a gift, a God-given appreciation of the wonderful things he has done for us. I heard about a great conductor who was conducting one of Beethoven's symphonies.

Now, this conductor was a virtuoso of the first water and at the end of the performance, so magnificent had been this conductor's performance and the audience stood up and applauded.

The conductor realized they were not applauding the music, they were applauding him, so he flung down his baton and said, you are nothing, I am nothing, Beethoven is everything.

Brothers and sisters, we are nothing, Christ is everything. Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[32 : 51] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. God, our Father, how we need your grace, the grace that will help us to fight, the grace that will help us to stand, the grace that saved us, and the grace which will bring us home.

So help us, Lord, to be inspired by these glimpses of your kingdom and to remember that one day all enemies will be destroyed and that one day grace will reign supreme in the new creation where where everything is in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we praise him for this. Amen.