



This week at Magdalen Road church we continued our series in Chronicles as we looked at Gods interaction with King David in chapter 17. This is a key promise at the heart of the bible story.

At the start and at the very heart of this passage is a truth that doesn't naturally sit well with us, but when we grasp it, it is actually incredibly liberating news. It's the simple idea that God does not need us. Our problem is there something within our human condition that means we constantly curve in on ourselves such that we sit at the heart of our own reality. We think it's about us and that God does need us! That means God shrinks and we get magnified (we can get anxious and stressed out when we think it's about us). It's almost as if our daily battle is to remember that.

v1-2: we are not in charge

As with last week, it seems that David has a great idea but fails to enquire of the Lord. His desire for a temple is a good thing as he wants to lead his people in worship (see Deuteronomy 17 again) and yet he has been presumptuous such that the prophet Nathan is given a message to say to David that is not to be the one who will build the Temple. (~ Later in chapter 22 we read something of why - It's because his hands are too bloody)

As the passage unfolds God both correct David's plans but also blows them apart as he makes promises beyond what David can imagine. We'll see in David's mind he was just talking about building a house for God, the plot twist at the heart of the passage today is it is God will build an eternal household for David.

v3-15 Gods response: remember who needs who!

God corrects David by firstly (v4-6) reminding David that God does not need him and then reminding him that David needs God (v7-15).

As he outlines David's need God he initially points him back to all that God has done in and through him. Starting off as a shepherd, the smallest in the family, and then being chosen and appointed by God, and finally cutting off his enemies before him. David is able to look back with thankfulness. God's track record then means David can look forward with humble confidence. Here it's as if God reiterates the promises to Abraham from the start of the Bible

and then weaves them in, magnifying and expanding them again, so that v8 David's name would be like the names of the greatest names on Earth, v9 there will be a secure land with plenty and v10 there will be leadership and protection.

As God makes promises to David they start off 'manageable' but then as the passage develops make it more and more confusing. So for example in v10 we read that one of David's sons will end up building a house for God (Solomon), but then the switch from the v11 to v12 is confusing because his throne will be eternal one and there will be an extraordinary intimacy enjoyed too (v13).

It's only in Jesus that we see these promises finally fulfilled. He is the one who would establish an eternal and forever kingdom (because he is the one who defeats sin and death on the cross) and he is also the one who enjoys an incredible intimacy with his father such that the baptism and transfiguration God specifically says that he loves him.

v16-27: David's response: wow!

David's immediate response to God's beautiful promises are those of prayer and thanksgiving. It's a great reminder for us both of the privilege that we have in hearing God's voice through the Bible and preaching, but also of a need for us to press pause and go back to God in prayer after he has spoken to us, rather than crashing on with life.

The shape of David's prayer back to God follows the shape of God's revelation to David, as he initially looks back with thankfulness and then looks ahead with humble faith. You sense a genuine humility that comes from the lips of David as he described himself as the Lord's servant (v17, v18, v21, v23 etc). David knows he doesn't deserve this. It seems the mild rebuke at the start of the passage has hit home!

David then thanks God for his promises. We noted from v24 that God has made these promises so the world might know who he is. God's saving works are his revelatory works. They show us who God is. We finished the talk by considering how we long as a church that God would work in and through us in such a way that a cynical and sceptical watching world can't help but notice. Through the little daily acts of life and the interactions that we have with people, especially perhaps through our hard times, we long they might see who he is and praise God - from v20 saying there is no one like you Lord, and there is no God but you.

Here are some questions to start your group going

- How does it make you feel when we say that God does not need you? Why?
- If God does not need us, then why does he work through people like us?
- What do you make of David wanting to build a temple? Do you think the Lord is harsh with him?
- How does God respond to David's request? What does he remind David of? What are God's plans?
- Where are they fulfilled? How do they relate to us?
- What is David's response then to God? How is this a model for us?