IT’S CALLED, “GRACE”

2 SAMUEL CHAPTER 7

This morning we’ll be reading and discussing the covenant that God makes with David commonly known as the Davidic Covenant. The parallel passage to this is in 1 Chronicles 17. Some people have the idea that the Old Testament is about Law while the New Testament is about Grace. But that’s just not the way I read the Bible. I contend that from Genesis thru Revelation runs a continuous thread of grace. I’ll explain further in a minute but let me define grace first. Grace has NOTHING to do with me and what I do. Grace is ALL about God – what He did in the past, what He is doing now, and what He will do in the future. Grace is having something good given to us which we do not deserve (flipside of mercy). The most obvious example of grace for us is the gift of our salvation. Paraphrasing what Paul says in Ephesians 2:8-9: “For by grace we have been saved thru faith in Christ. And that was not our own doing. No, it was a gift from God, not the result of our works or self-effort so that none of us can take credit for it (become prideful or self-righteous).

Go back to Genesis. Adam and Eve sin, God announces the punishment for their sin. Instead of striking them dead on the spot, God lets them live for a few hundred more years; He clothes their nakedness with the skin of an animal; He gives them a fertile area to live in and cultivate crops and raise livestock; and then, in Gen 3:15 God announces a plan of redemption that will come thru Eve’s seed. From her offspring will come One who will eventually defeat the serpent (Satan) and make all things in the world ruined by sin right. Later in Genesis God chooses Abram, just a rancher from Ur of the Chaldeans, to be the father of a great nation. As far as we know Abram had done nothing to deserve this. God told him, “I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you – thru your offspring – all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” And God reiterates this promise, this covenant, a couple more times to Abram, changes his name to the covenant name Abraham. God repeats this same covenant promise later in Genesis to Isaac and then to Jacob. As we read thru the Old Testament we see where God spares the world from famine thru Joseph. We see God deliver His covenant people out of bondage in Egypt. We see God part the Red Sea allowing His people to get to the other side on dry land while drowning their enemies. We see God provide food and water for His complaining people while they traveled in the wilderness to the land of promise. We see God dwelling among His people and leading them. We see God’s provision to deal with the sins of the people. We see God giving His people a rich land, “a land flowing with milk and honey” and fighting their battles for them as they conquer that land. And all the way thru the narrative from Adam and Eve thru the patriarchs, the conquest, the judges, Samuel and King Saul we see the faithfulness of God over and over again to a faithless, disobedient, complaining, undeserving people. The nation of Israel didn’t deserve God’s favor and blessing, yet time and again God bestowed His riches on them because of the promises He had made to Abram. That’s all grace, my friends! Undeserving people become the recipients of God’s blessings.

So now we come to 2 Samuel. As we learned last week David is the king of Israel. By and large David is a good king. He’s described as a man after God’s own heart. David has moved the ark to Jerusalem back into the tabernacle, and he has re-established the worship of God. He has led his nation in spiritual revival. David’s heart is in the right place at this point in history. And as we begin Chapter 7 David has a vision, a plan, a great idea…

READ 2 Sam 7:1-3

David observes that he’s living in luxury in a house built out of the cedars of Lebanon. And over there he sees the tabernacle – a portable tent structure which has now been permanently erected within the city walls of Jerusalem. And inside the tabernacle is the ark representing the presence of God. Somehow this just doesn’t sit well with David. The ark of God deserves to be in a better structure, not just a flimsy tent! Nathan the prophet, lacking any other word from God up to this point, presumes that what is in David’s heart to do is from God (after all the Spirit of the Lord is upon David, 1 Samuel tells us this). So David has this strong desire to build God a house.

READ 2 Sam 7:4-7

God speaks to Nathan giving him a word for King David. He reminds David thru the prophet that at no point in history since the days of Moses when He told him to build the tabernacle had He ever directed anyone else to build a different house for Him to dwell in. It was never His direction, never His expressed will. God had told His people a lot of things, but never that.

READ 2 Sam 7:8

God’s grace to David in the past was what? He took David, a lowly shepherd boy from his father’s fields in and around the little hamlet of Bethlehem and elevated him to be the prince, the ruler of Israel, living in a king’s house in Jerusalem. Did David deserve this? No, it’s called grace. God’s undeserved favor had been poured out on David. He’s reminding David what He did for him in the past – pretty amazing!

READ 2 Sam 7:9a

God’s grace is being shown to David in the present while David systematically subdues all the enemies of God and His people. Who are these enemies? They are listed by name in Chapter 8, v 12 – the Edomites, Moabites, Ammonites, the Philistines and the Amalekites. These are formidable opponents, but they are no match for David’s great God!

But God’s grace to David is not just past and present but future…

READ 2 Sam 7:9b-11

God promises to give David 3 things that are still future at this time but that David will realize in his lifetime, over the next 30+ years. By the way these are all fulfilled in Ch 8 (1) “a great name,” fame, honor, an enduring legacy (see 8:13); (2) “a place for My people Israel” (Ch 8 mentions the garrisons David put up to protect his people and to keep them from being constantly disturbed by their enemies; (3) “rest from all your enemies” (Ch 8 summarizes all of David’s victories after which time there was relative peace).

But God makes more promises to David which will be fulfilled after his lifetime…

READ 2 Sam 7:11b

God says, “David, you wanted to build me a house but instead I’m going to build you a house.” In other words your family will become a dynasty. You’ve heard the expression, “the house of David.” That simply means that David’s descendants would rule and reign for many, many years. In fact the Davidic dynasty which began with David and Solomon would extend for 418 years thru Zedekiah. David became king of a united Israel in 1004 B.C. and the fall of Jerusalem, the temple’s destruction and exile of God’s people by Nebucchadnezzar was in 586 B.C.

READ 2 Sam 7:12-17

So Nathan goes and relays God’s message to him – it’s all good news!

“I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” “Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before Me.” “Your throne shall be established forever.” Hmmm. We just established that the Davidic line lasted only 418 years. Now granted that’s a long time, but it’s not forever. Yet in the passage we just read God tells David that David’s house and kingdom and throne will last forever. So what’s God talking about? Could He possibly be mistaken when He said “forever”? Could God have just changed His mind? Would He later neglect His covenant with David?

No, God would not do that!

But if you are Jew and you see the people of Israel defeated and taken into captivity and then later returned but under the rule of another government – Persia, Greece, Rome, etc – you might be a bit discouraged by what has transpired. But there is a glimmer of hope in the N.T.

READ Luke 1:31-33

So the fulfillment of God’s promise to David in 2 Samuel 7 is Jesus, God’s Son, the Son of the Most High. If you read the genealogy of Jesus Christ at the beginning of Matthew Ch 1 it refers to Jesus as “the son of David. And that genealogy runs from Abraham thru David thru Joseph the earthly father of Jesus to Jesus. If you read the genealogy of Jesus in Luke Ch 3 it runs from Adam thru Abraham thru David thru Mary his earthly mother. So both of Jesus’ earthly parents are descendants of King David.

So what does all this mean? The words of Psalm 89:3-4: “You have said, ‘I have made a covenant with my chosen one; I have sworn to David my servant: “I will establish your offspring forever, and build your throne for all generations.”’” The covenant that God made with David in 2 Sam 7 extended to his descendants. The throne that God promises guarantees that the rightful heir to the throne will always be a descendant of David. That rightful heir to the throne who will reign again forever is King Jesus. In Psalm 89:35 God says, “Once for all I have sworn by My holiness; I will not lie to David.” God promises that David’s throne will be established forever. The ultimate fulfillment, still future even for us today, will be thru Jesus Christ when He returns to rule and reign in the millennial kingdom (Rev 20) followed by His eternal kingdom (Rev 21).

Well when Nathan tells David everything God said, what is David’s reaction? What is his response to such overwhelming grace? David knows he doesn’t deserve any of this…

READ 2 Sam 7:18-21

Simply put, David is overwhelmed. He’s at a loss for words. “What more can I say to You?” And for the rest of the chapter he gathers himself and begins praising God for His amazing and abundant grace to the nation of Israel and to himself personally.

READ 2 Sam 7:27-29

David, just like Adam and Abel and Enoch and Noah and Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Jacob and Joseph and Moses and Joshua and Rahab and Gideon and Samuel before him. He believes God. That’s what God wants from us. For us to believe Him, to have faith in Him, to trust Him completely, to obey Him. He wants our hearts to be completely devoted to Him.

God’s grace to us – just think about all that He has given you, spiritually and physically, relationally, etc. Did you or I deserve any of it? Did David? No, that’s why they call it grace. That kind of love demands a response from us.

Phillips Craig and Dean put out a song several years ago entitled, “Your Grace Still Amazes Me.” – the chorus says, “Your grace still amazes me. Your love is still a mystery. Each day I fall on my knees 'cause your grace still amazes me.” Does God’s grace still amaze you? When you come to this place every Sunday, when you open your Bible to read it, what is the attitude of your heart? Is it one of overwhelmed gratitude for what God has done, is doing and will yet fulfill in your life as His child, as His humble servant?

If God doesn’t do anything more for us the rest of our lives, isn’t what He has done enough? May we, like David, say, “O Lord God, I don’t have the words to express my gratitude. Please accept my humble praise and may my life honor and please you.”