

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and from the one who still sits on the throne of King David, our Lord Jesus Christ, amen.

When I read through these stories in the Bible I love to imagine how they depict God. In today's scripture reading King David has established his throne and the Lord God of Israel has gone before David and all of his armies to defeat every tribe and enemy of God's chosen people. David always made sure that the Arc of the Covenant was marched out front of the Israelite armies because the Arc was the box that held God's glory. In our text this morning David is feeling a bit of guilt because he's living in a beautiful mansion where he rests, safe and secure from all his enemies, while poor God still has nothing but that small box that's stored in a tent out back with the other relics. David decides it would be a grand idea to build a house for God where God can also rest and be safe.

There's a line in Disney's movie Aladdin where the Genie is let out of the bottle Genie says, "It's all part of the whole genie gig: PHENOMINAL COSMIC POWER...itty bitty living space." I always chuckle when I think about God being contained in the Arc of the Covenant, or within a tent for that matter, because I've also read the story of the calling of another prophet, Isaiah. Isaiah was called during the reign of King Uzziah, some 300 years after King David and his prophet Nathan. By that time the first Temple had already been built in Jerusalem. It was the largest building in all Israel and Judah. It was so grand, having pillars that

were gilded with pure gold. Despite the Temple in Jerusalem being the largest project undertaken up to that time by the Hebrew people, the book of Isaiah says the Temple couldn't even contain the hem of God's robe. How much the image of God had changed in those 300 or so years! What's your image of God? The Bible says the Universe is God's home and the earth is God's footstool.

I understand David's desire to do something for God. He had been the recipient of so many blessings. Right from the beginning God chose David from all others, even over his own older brothers. God had promised David he would be the one to lead Israel into an unprecedented era of peace and prosperity. God was with David when he stepped up and slayed the giant Goliath. God was with David when he evaded King Saul for all those years. God was with David when he set out to squash all those pesky enemies who were constantly attacking his borders. Now David wants to do something to show God his thanks for all God has done for him. So, David says to his friend and prophet Nathan, I'll build a house for God. I feel so guilty living here in this lap of luxury, while God only has that itchy-bitsy living space out back in the tent...

I imagine God smiling when he heard that conversation... Just think about it and let it sink in... The almighty God who created the entire universe, who put the stars in the night sky, who fashioned the birds, the fish, the land animals and even created you and me, that God, is contained in a wooded box, guarded by

cherubim and seraphim and kept in a tent. Our Triune God who brought these same Hebrew people out of slavery in Egypt and into the freedom of the promised land, that almighty, omniscient, and omnipresent God cannot be contained in any living space designed by humans even one as close to God's heart as King David.

How do you limit God in your life? We all do it. God's people have been trying to put limits on God almost from the beginning. David thought God was safely contained in the Arc of the Covenant, later the people thought God was tied to their great Temple in Jerusalem. Even in our most private prayer time with God, we still hold back from confessing our deepest sin, afraid God will forget his promise of forgiveness. Here's a news flash for you, God already knows everything you've done, failed to do, and all your secret thoughts and desires. There's no reason not to confess them to God. Keeping your deepest evil thoughts from God is as silly as thinking God lives in a tiny box or a giant temple.

The entire universe belongs to God. So, when David offers to make a house for God the answer back from God is thanks but no thanks, for now. Instead, I'll make a house for you. Your house shall reign forever. This is clearly a reference to or foreshadowing of Jesus Christ, whom we commonly call the Son of David, because Jesus' heritage comes through King David's genealogy. Instead of David offering a blessing to God, God turns it around and gives King David yet another

promise and blessing for his family to come. God assures David his legacy will live on long after David in resting with his ancestors.

Today we commemorate a very important day in the lives of four of our own young adults from this congregation. Aiden, Bell, Layni, and Trudy, you are today taking your stand of faith. You are answering for your self all those same promises that your parents and Godparents made for you when you were just a tiny baby and could not speak for yourself. Today you are promising, and I quote from the Lutheran Book of Worship, "...to live among God's faithful people; hear the word of God and share in the Lord's Supper; proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed; serve all people following the example of Jesus; and strive for justice and peace in all the earth." In short you are promising to build God a spiritual home within your lives. You are following the same impulse that led King David all those years ago to want to build a physical house for God. I'm certain that as you make these promises, God is smiling, just as God smiled on King David. As solemn and sincere as you are in making these promises to God, God knows you inside and out. God already knows all the times in your life when you will choose someone or something over God. Yet, God loves you more than ever because you are making this declaration today. Because of God's great love for you, God will build your house of love that will last into your future. God has already grafted you into the family of King David, into the family of Isaiah and

Mary and Joseph. You are part of God's eternal promise to David 3000 years ago and God's promise still holds true today and tomorrow and forever. In fact Jesus told his first followers long ago that he was going away to build them a room within His Father's mansion. That's what Jesus is doing for you right now.

God's promises include so much more than just a place to go in the by and by after you're dead. God's promise, first and foremost, is God's promise of loving kindness toward you. God will never leave nor forsake you. God will never abandon you or leave you, even in your darkest hours. God's promise is as true for you today as it was all those years ago for David. I know God's promises are true and God is faithful to make good on those promises because I've read the rest of King David's story. He's the same person who lusted after another man's beautiful wife, a woman by the name of Bathsheba. David is the same man who ordered Bathsheba's husband to the front lines in the battle and then secretly ordered all the other soldiers to retreat, leaving poor Uriah exposed to enemy fire. That's abandonment and murder. Yet after David's confession, God forgave his servant and never withdrew his promise to David. A promise from God is forever and irrevocable. We mortals can't make those kind of promises. We break our promises all the time, but God never does.

So, Aiden, Bell, Layni, and Trudy, wherever your life leads you, never forget these promises you are about to make today. Even when you fail to keep

them, always remember God's promise of forgiveness, Grace, and mercy are yours forever, no matter what. P E R O I D! May God's constant love always draw us back to God's heart. May our promises, our gifts and our offerings to God always bring a smile to God's face. May we realize our attempts to limit God are folly and God will be and go whenever and wherever God decides. For our part, let us always see God at work in our lives and in God's world so that we can join God in God's loving embrace of the entirety of creation. May we all follow our paths into the world, knowing God is with us and will never leave us. Amen.