

Topic: "When God Says, No" **Text:** II SAM 7:1-13 (Context 14-27; I Chron. 17) HPC 4/18/10

INTRO: One of the most important words in a parent's vocabulary is the word "no." At any moment, it may need to stop a toddler about to touch a hot stove, run in front of a car, or step into dangerous water. When we had teen drivers, we used "the club" on the steering wheel of their car when privileges were abused. In fact "the club" still has saw marks on it 17 years later from when one of our sons tried in vain to saw it off! But "no" isn't always a reprimand given to stop a child from harm. Often it is the answer to an innocuous request or an innocent plan. You see the parent has something better in mind for the child. We have friends who advised their grown son and wife against buying a condo. They bought it anyway and are now upside down in the value, desperately want to move, and can't sell it. Had they listened to mom and dad, the scenario could have been different!

Likewise, God occasionally tells His children "no." Usually His "no" is to stop us from sinning. At other times He says "no" to our plans and dreams to save our energies for his greater purpose. The hard thing about these kinds of no's is that the why is often left a mystery. It seems that God is giving us the enigmatic parental answer that clangs in the ear of every child: "**Just because I said so.**" As one person put it: "Just what is it about this word NO you don't seem to understand.

Segue: Today we will look at time when God stamps the box of David's dreams with a big, bold NO! We will see how David handles it - whether he runs from God in disillusionment or to Him in contentment.

I. PEACEFUL INTERLUDE

- A. Domestic Peace** - To this point David's life as king has been a continuous succession of battles. But here, an element of tranquility enters. The courageous warrior of Israel is allowed to rest. David lives in a new home constructed of cedar. His children are growing up. Etched over his fireplace is the word Shalom. The fire crackles with the sounds of peace and well-being.
- B. National Rest** - There are no Philistines with which to contend. There are no strategic battle plans to be made for the future. There are no blasphemous giants to kill. There are no rumbling chariot wheels. The Lord has given David rest on every side from all his enemies.
- C. Personal Desire** - Nestled in his beautiful cedar house, David begins to entertain a dream. Not yet 40 years old, he becomes concerned about the disparity between his own lovely home and the tent that houses the Ark of God. David tells the prophet Nathan of his desire. Nathan assures him that his plan is aligned with God's will. He encourages David, perceiving his motives are pure - not motivated by ambition or desire for fame and recognition. But the prophet spoke too soon, putting words in God's mouth. We do this sometimes! It happens to the apostle Paul (Acts 16).

ILLUS: Paul has difficulty discerning God's answer on his 1st missionary journey. He wants to go west to the Roman province of Asia but is blocked by the Holy Spirit. Then he turns north to Bithynia with the same result - he is hindered once again. Finally he travels west to the port of Troas, & at last receives clear guidance through a vision to catch a boat to Macedonia. (Acts 16:6-10)

APPLY: It's often during the quiet interludes of our lives -- times when we slow down enough to reflect on our past and find new direction, new hope for our future - that we seize new dreams. Sometimes new dreams come out of the ashes of a tragedy. Nine-year-old Amber Hagerman was abducted and murdered in Arlington, Texas in 1996. That is how **AMBER ALERT** got started. Kristy and I saw the moving T.V. movie "Amber's Story." Amber is gone, but her name is known nationwide thanks to efforts by her parents and others that ultimately led to an "**Amber Alert**" system in Texas and then to \$25 million Federal bill and grant and to launch a Nationwide Amber Alert system in 2002. In his quiet interlude, David asks God to build a house for the ark.

II. DIVINE RESPONSE

- A. Refusal of the request** - God responds to David's plan with a gracious refusal & a Prophetic word. To his surprise, God puts a halt to the expression of David's dream. He affirms him for having the concern, but his answer is "**no**." God's refusal isn't a rejection, but a redirection. He has a different dream for David. His response is a fuller vision, not punitive.

Illus: During Jesus' ministry, 4 men lowered their paralyzed friend through the roof to bring him in front of Jesus. Their prayer for healing, but instead Jesus instead forgave his sins. With his sins forgiven, he picked up his pallet and walked. Sin not illness was causing his paralysis – fortunately, Jesus didn't answer the prayer of the friends but redirected their concern so it could be addressed with a profound result.

- B. Plans for the future** - God expresses His thoughts to David through Nathan. He reminds both of them of His past blessings – of His presence to give them many victories in battle. God's focus is on what he has done and will do for David - not what David can do for him.

- David is not chosen to be a builder, but a king (v. 8)
- God sees David as a notorious warrior who is famous in history for his victories and conquests over their enemies - his name will be great.
- David's throne will be established forever.
- David's son will fulfill his dream to build a temple (v. 13)
- David's throne will never be forgotten (v. 16)

APPLY: God has A Better Plan - God doesn't gift David as a builder, but blesses him as a soldier and a king. There is nothing wrong with David's dream.

- His motives are pure – the operative word used 10x is servant.

- His intentions are pleasing to God.

But he isn't the right man to carry out the plan. God wants a **man of peace** to build his temple. Has God ever said “no” to one of your dreams?

- Going into a ministry?
- Marrying a certain person?
- Taking a special job offer?
- Making a move? Having a child?
- Buying something big? Usually our spouse tells us men when we go wrong with some large purchase that becomes a burden not a blessing!

This kind of mysterious “no” is hard to handle. But if you believe that God really loves you, really wants what's best for you - if you trust him with your life-- He will show you the better plan He has for you.

Ex. Jesus was admonished by Mary, Martha and the disciples time again to come because Lazarus was very ill. Jesus continued his ministry where he was even as they brought news of Lazarus dying and then his death and funeral. Only 4 days later did he go – their concern was legitimate but their timing was cause for his “no” to their prayer request. In the Father’s time, Jesus went, raised Lazarus from the dead, and gave the disciples a preview of greater things to come that they could not yet begin to comprehend.

ILLUS: In my first church, Hopewell Presbyterian, our young adult class conceived of a plan for a multi-purpose family life center. At the time, the mid 70's, it was a bold, preposterous idea to the elders. The idea was right, but the timing was wrong. Eventually, the timing became right, and a lovely million-dollar FLC in the spot we conceived it was added in 1998. Though I had no part in it, I share the joy of the current pastor who has the privilege and joy of using it. Sometimes, we have to relinquish to God's plan as Paul did.

EX: Paul: I Cor. 3:6: "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase."

APPLY: Where do you run when God tells you no - To the arms of disillusionment or to the embrace of God? I heard a moving testimony by one of the wives of the three Missionaries from the **New Tribe Mission** kidnapped in 1991. Even though the request for the safe return of their husbands was not answered – a 2001 fact finding mission pointed to their deaths in mid 1996 by the **Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia** - these 3 women of faith continue to have a wide impact for God's kingdom purposes. It was an inspiration to hear their story & abiding trust in God that His "no" is working together for good. They continue to embrace God, not disillusionment. When God told David “no” David ran to Him & sat at His feet - thankful, tenderhearted, trusting (7:18a). Note 3 things David did in response to God's "no."

III. TRIUMPHANT PRAYER (2 Sam: 7:18-29)

- A. His Posture** - David sits down. He has just heard God say "no" but he doesn't just sit down. Rather, he "sits before the Lord." The king of all the land appears to be gentle and tender, as well as pleasingly responsive. Even though he is king of all the land, he defers to God, king of the entire world who has called him to be king via Samuel.
- B. His Grateful Questions** - David is amazed that God has brought him and his family so far. "Who am I? What is my house? What more can David say to Thee? Moreover, he is humbled that God has extended his promises into the future, even eternity. He did this in Jesus, a descendant of David.
- David's son Solomon would build a temple made of hands.
 - David's descendant Jesus would build a temple made w/o hands. All who believe in him shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.
- C. His Praise and Adoration** - There is none like You God. There is no God besides Thee. Your words are true. May your words come to pass?

APPLY: David's response to God's "no" is godly, gracious, & full of trust. Perhaps louder than the words he spoke is the sound of his heart beating in sync with God's. In our efforts to become people after God's heart, we should observe 2 truths:

1. **When God says no, He has a better way** - He never intends to frustrate or disillusion us when He says no to one of our dreams. He only wants to show us something better. It is often during these interludes in life that we seize the dream.

EX: In the spring of 1990 we spent a solid week looking for our first house to buy for our family in the Dunedin area. Our prayer was that by careful searching, we would secure a home and know what we were moving into prior to coming to Florida. The answer was "no" on the house we finally made an offer on. Only two months later, less than three weeks before we were to pack the moving van, did we get a call at camp in the NC Mountains that our realtor had found a house for us to rent.

Puzzled God had said "no" to a purchase and equity, we still felt his Hand was in it and said "yes". Within 6 months of moving, the owner was hit hard by the recession and forced to sell. By that time, Kristy was employed and we had the combined income to be approved to purchase the home. It met our needs much better than the one we lost the offer on. In the end, our heavenly Father knew best. It was a timing issue for everything to work out. In the end we gained enough equity in that home to buy the one here 13 years later. He works His plans for good, but often they don't make sense at the time.

2. **When God says no, our best reaction is humility and cooperation** – Like

David, who trusts God even when He takes away his dream, we need to humbly submit to His will for us. Kristy and I went through this again with our home here – for no sane reason our first offer on a house was refused. Later the party begged us to resubmit our offer but God had already helped us find the one we are in for less money, great neighbors, and closer to the church. In the end his plan was better!

- Sometimes our dream is from God; sometimes it is not. It may not be coming into reality because it is not from him. God doesn't call everyone to build temples.
- When God says "no," it's not necessarily rejection or discipline for sin. It may simply be redirection. Humility, trust and patience are what He is looking for from us.

CLOSE - Friends, when God says "no," what is your response? It's tempting to charge ahead but God's "no" may be the same reason you scream "no" to your children to prevent them from disaster. Just as you expect your child to listen, God expects we will listen to him. He loves us and has our best interests at heart. Stop, look, and listen!