



SERMON OF THE WEEK

First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu at Ko'olau
September 7, 2014

Disappointment: When God Says No" (Facing the Giants Series)
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One of the giants we face in life is disappointment—when things don't go the way we hope or think they should. There are times when we want something, but God doesn't give it to us. There are times we think that we deserve something, but God says no.

There are times when we have worked really hard on something and we think God will take what we have and take it further, but God says no. Someone else will take what you have done and give it to someone else. We can feel that God owes it to us, but God says no. And to all of that we can say, "That is a real bummer!" Depressing, isn't it? What and how are we supposed to feel when God says no?

2 Sam. 7:1 When King David was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies,

2 Sam. 7:2 The king summoned Nathan the prophet. "Look," David said, "I am living in a beautiful cedar palace, but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!"

2 Sam. 7:3 Nathan replied to the king, "Go ahead and do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you."

2 Sam. 7:4 But that same night the LORD said to Nathan,

2 Sam. 7:5 "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD has declared: Are you the one to build a house for me to live in?'

2 Sam. 7:6 I have never lived in a house, from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling.

2 Sam. 7:7 Yet no matter where I have gone with the Israelites, I have never once complained to Israel's tribal leaders, the shepherds of my people Israel. I have never asked them, "Why haven't you built me a beautiful cedar house?"'

2 Sam. 7:8 "Now go and say to my servant David, 'This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel.

2 Sam. 7:9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth! (NLB)

This is the Word of God!

Here's the setting. King David has time on his hands. He is

not at war, and he comes up with this big idea that he will build a big temple where the Ark of the Covenant will reside, which—if you remember from last week—is where the Jews believed God was more present. The Ark of the Covenant was a 3-foot by 2-foot by 2-foot box.

King David talks to Nathan the prophet, his prime wise counsel, who agrees with his idea to build a big, magnificent-looking temple for God.

David's rationale is sound. He figures that all these centuries the powerful Ark of the Covenant, a three-foot box which had in it the Ten Commandments, a bowl of manna, and the rod of Aaron, has been wheeled around in a cart and moved and stolen and recovered. For a long time it has been housed in a movable tent. And since God is so mighty and holy, why not build a huge edifice to house the ark befitting of the God of the universe?

"And who else should build it," asks David, "but me, the great King David through whom God has blessed and performed many miracles? If anyone builds this new Temple, it should be me. After all that I've been through and have done for God, I have earned the privilege of building a big temple for Him."

Is it not true that in life you can feel that you deserve something and God ought to give that thing or person to you? You deserve a promotion, you deserve a raise, you deserve to be married, have children, and have perfect health, a car, an apartment, a condo, or a house.

But as we read further in this passage, we discover that even the most special King David—the man after God’s own heart, the apple of the Lord’s eye— doesn’t get what he wants. After Nathan the prophet supports David’s idea to build the temple, God speaks to Nathan. And what does God say? “Nathan, tell David, this is the Lord of the Heavenly Host, the Heavenly Armies speaking.”

I’m not sure why God chose to start out in that “commander-in-chief” way, but maybe it was to remind Nathan and David that though David might think he is the all-powerful king of Israel, there is a King that is way more powerful than he—the Almighty God, the king of kings, the Lord of Lords.

Then God adds, “And let’s remind David that I was the one who pulled him out of being a shepherd boy and made him the most powerful king in the land.”

To some we might say that is piling on, but that’s reality. When we are disappointed with God, let’s remember who He is and His position of being the giver of all good things and our being the recipient of all of the blessings and answered prayers.

God is saying, “Tell David, I was with you wherever you went; I helped you win wars and I made your name famous forever. But for this new glorious temple that will be built in my name, you are not going

to do it. It will go to one of your offspring. But I will make your house live on forever!”

It turns out that King Solomon, King David’s son, built the Temple, and it was of the finest cedar and timber and gold.

Ten years ago, we felt strongly that God wanted us to move from Makiki to another site. We were sure that we were to find a plot of land and build a new church campus. So we researched more than 300 properties on Oahu, and actually walked around 50 of them. For years we looked and looked for the place where we were going to build a church for God.

But as it turned out, we were wrong. God said I am going to give you a church building that is already built! God said, “Dan, I am going to give you a golf club.” And I said, “I could use a new club. Maybe a putter or a driver.”

And God said, “No I mean a different kind of golf club. A golf club campus already made, with a sports bar.”

Whereupon I said, “That’s my kind of church! Go to church, play some golf or maybe watch football on TV at the bar while enjoying ginger ale with three cherries.”

I once told God that if we built a new church that it would be elegant but not opulent. Then one day as I was praying at the atrium beneath the large cross, I said to God, “You know, this main lobby, the marble floors, the marble columns and the restrooms all look so nice. Maybe this is more opulent not just elegant.”

And then seriously I had one of the few supernatural times when I felt I heard God’s voice

almost like as if one of you were talking to me today from the first row. The voice said, “Dan, this IS MY HOUSE!”

And immediately, I apologized for bringing it up for I instantly remembered that the temple King Solomon made for God was of the finest cedar, timber, and gold. And more importantly, we didn’t build this from scratch. If we did we probably would have taken a lot of heat to put in marble, but God gave us this building to be His house of worship. It was His choice.

And it’s HIS building; not ours. He owns it. He chose it. He liked the design. And He wanted it big. He liked the large parking lot and the potential to build more parking spaces because He loves people and wants thousands of them to come.

It’s a nice place. Who am I to complain? Could be worse. Now please remember this story and I will come back to it. So let’s talk about the issue of this sermon. When God says no, how do we handle the disappointment?

All of us have had tremendous disappointment in areas of health, wealth (or lack of it), relationships, and jobs. We can get angry with God.

But we shouldn’t get angry if we have given our lives to Him. We need to learn to trust Him in the midst of things going wrong because to go against Him is bad news. When things go wrong, trust Him; don’t go away from Him. It’s may be normal to want to run away from Him or to get angry at Him, but it is only because we don’t understand His will. We cannot see how His way might be better, and He is choosing for us not to know for a good reason.

The model for handling disappointment or when our plans disappear is King David. Observe! There is no evidence in the Scripture that David got upset at God. Notice how he takes it in stride. He goes into a long prayer of praise later in response to God's no. He had every reason to be upset. He could have asked, "Why not me?"

In another passage, in 1 Chronicles 28, God actually tells David why He didn't choose him to build the temple. It's because David has blood on his hands. He is a warrior and has killed too many people. But David could have said, "You ordered me to kill them, and now you don't want me to build your Temple?"

However, you don't see that in Scripture. David takes it in stride because he trusts God. He hears the news that he is not going to build the Temple and immediately goes to prayer.

2 Sam. 7:18 Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and prayed,

2 Sam. 7:19 "Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And now, Sovereign LORD, in addition to everything else, you speak of giving your servant a lasting dynasty! Do you deal with everyone this way, O Sovereign LORD?"

2 Sam. 7:20 "What more can I say to you? You know what your servant is really like, Sovereign LORD."

2 Sam. 7:21 Because of your promise and according to your will, you have done all these great things and have made them known to your servant.

2 Sam. 7:22 "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you!"

We must learn to take things in stride with praise! The job is harder, the marriage is harder, the friendships are harder, and trying to be in shape is harder. We must trust God for there really is no other healthy option. We have to know when to trust God in spite of what we can see or feel at the time.

So let me break down what happens when we get disappointed with our future. We think what we want to do is what God is telling us to do. When we make decisions in life, we take our best shot after much prayer, deliberation, and counsel from friends, but we could still be wrong. Our biggest statement about life goals should be "I am probably right, but I might be wrong."

I'm being realistic. That is as good as it gets in terms of life goals. God is God, and He can turn things around, so pay attention to Him or we might miss His leadings.

I really wanted to work in radio when I graduated from college. I went to every radio station here to find a job. No luck. I then went to every TV station except one, but no luck either.

The only TV station I didn't apply at was KGMB-TV because it was the top news station, and I didn't think the executives there were going to hire a guy who just literally graduated the week before. But I went anyway, and I interviewed with news director Bob Sevey who hired me right then! He was a man who made gut decisions, and I was on the news the next day. A rookie! It wasn't my plan, but God's plan was so much better! I was in the midst of local, national, and

international news. I got to meet and interview famous and important people.

As Proverb 19:21 says, *"Many are the plans in a person's heart, but it is the Lord's purpose that prevails."*

One of the ways we miss it is that we can get too religious. The worst thing in the world for Christians is to get religious, and when I say religious I mean that we do things because it seems like it's the right thing to do even though God didn't say He wanted us to do it. It's like thinking we need to build a big temple because it looks good or because it's tradition, instead of build a temple because THAT is what God wants us to do.

One of the greatest things about our church community is that the people knew in their hearts that in order to reach more people for God and to help more people, we had to be open to move to a campus that did not look religious, like a golf club! No steeple, no pews, no stained glass windows. It's not a nearby community church for many either.

But Ko'olau was where God wanted us to go, and so we went. Never in a million years would we have guessed that is what God wanted us to do. It was a risk we were willing to take not because we were religious in terms of having to follow tradition but because we had faith in God.

To King David, God said, "You will not build me a Temple, but your son King Solomon will after you die." We might think what we want to do is logical and probable but remember that we don't have God's point of view from the 30-thousand foot level. David felt that to build a Temple for God was logical.

If King David lives in a big temple and God lives in an ark, a box with a movable tent around it, then God should live in a bigger box, a bigger tabernacle, a big temple. That makes great human sense. But then God comes back and says:

2 Sam 7:5-6 : Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? I have never lived in a house, from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling.”

God asks, “David, did I ask you to build me a house to live in? Did you ever hear me complain about being in a mere tent? Did I ask you to build a big religious Tabernacle?” The answer was no, no, no.

David and Nathan missed it. And to be honest, often in our minds we miss it too. But the bottom line is that God has His reasons for saying no.

As I mentioned earlier, the reason David could not build the Tabernacle is that he had blood on his hands. As a soldier, he had killed people. It doesn't sound fair. David killed as a warrior because God told him to go out and killed the enemy. And now he doesn't get to build the Tabernacle.

But the point is, God loved David. He loved him as a warrior and a king. For some spiritual reason, God could not have David, who had killed people and had other people killed, use the spoils of war to build His holy temple. God had a good reason.

And we might say, “But we have good reasons for expecting something we think we deserve—like a promotion, for instance.

Promotion means more money to pay my bills and to put food on the table. We can feel horrible that we missed the promotion after all of our hard work.”

Was God really in the middle of your prayer for that promotion? Was the promotion going to prolong His goals or YOUR goals?

King David said, “You need, Lord, to have a Tabernacle, and get out of that box and tent.” And God said, “Did I ever complain I was present in the Ark of the Covenant and a tent?”

We say, “But I want that job. And God says, “Did I ever say you should have that job?”

When we planned to build a new church on a new campus, we literally surveyed more than 300 locations and actually walked around 50 of them to figure out where God wanted us to go to buy and build. And God kept saying, no, no no no at least 300 times. He had a better idea. He was going to give us Ko'olau.

God gave us a club so that we could become the church He wanted us to be. If we stayed at our old church with no parking, we would have been just a club for members only. God's idea was bigger and grander than we ever imagined.

In the end, King David's son Solomon built the Tabernacle that David wanted to build. Listen to the rest of the passage for today where God is speaking, and notice a parallel world thing happening. God speaking:

2 Sam 7:11 “Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings!

2 Sam. 7:12 For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong.

2 Sam. 7:13 He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.

2 Sam. 7:14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do.

2 Sam. 7:15 But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight.

2 Sam. 7:16 Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.”

Several things are happening in this passage. God actually was talking to David about two dynasties. When God said “your house and your kingdom would endure forever before me” (v. 16), He wasn't talking about David's earthly dynasty. That wouldn't last forever. David's dynasty actually ended four centuries later when Jerusalem was destroyed and Josiah, the last King to reign from David's line, was fatally wounded in a war between the Assyrians and the Babylonians.

What God was saying was this: King David's kingdom would go on and be blessed. And his son Solomon would build the Temple. But what God meant from His 30-thousand foot level perspective was something much bigger and grander. God would send His only son Jesus to be part of the line of the House of David that would last forever and ever.

Luke 2:11-12 “For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior who is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you you shall find a child wrapped in cloths lying in a manger.

Jesus would come to be the real ruler of a heavenly nation that would go on forever and ever. In fact, in Him not only does God come but also the true Tabernacle comes. Jesus’ body is the Holy Shrine of God the Father.

Remember how I once said that all of the Old Testament Scriptures point to Jesus Christ? Today’s passage is no exception. Thousands of years after the Temple in Jerusalem was built, Jesus comes into the Temple courtyard and gets upset when He sees all the moneychangers doing business in the house of the Lord. He gets a whip and chases them all out and says this seemingly cryptic words:

John 2:16 He told those who were selling the doves, “Take these things out of here! Stop making my Father’s house a marketplace!”

John 2:17 His disciples remembered that it was written, “Zeal for your house will consume me.”

John 2:18 The Jews then said to him, “What sign can you show us for doing this?”

John 2:19 Jesus answered them, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.”

John 2:20 The Jews then said, “This temple has been under construction for forty-six years, and will you raise it up in three days?”

John 2:21 But he was speaking of the temple of his body.

John 2:22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the scripture and the word that Jesus had spoken.

Jesus was talking about His own body that would be resurrected three days after He dies.

After Jesus the Messiah came, we receive this shocking news through the Apostle Paul. He said no longer would God need any kind of earthly Tabernacle:

1 Cor 6:19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?

You ready for this? God called your body the Temple of God. That’s you! Your body is the temple of God, the holy Tabernacle! So when you eat, drink, sleep, exercise (or not), know that, if you are a follower of Christ, your body is the Temple of God. So take care of it. It’s holy ground. If you’ve committed your life to Jesus, you house the Holy Spirit in your hearts. Where you go, the Ark of the Covenant goes.

Remember what God said to David in verse 14 about the son who will build His Temple? We think it’s about Solomon. but it is also pointing to Jesus:

2 Sam. 7:13 He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.

2 Sam. 7:14 I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do.

What is this rod? Jesus is on His throne but He comes to earth as a man. And while there, he takes on our sin, and God has him disciplined or killed with a rod, actually two beams of wood forming a cross.

When Moses was leading the Israelites in the wilderness, there was a time when he hit the rock with his rod, and water flowed out of it so the people could drink. In a parallel way, when Jesus was struck and killed for our sin, He—the living Water—was made available to us so we can be cleansed and forgiven of our sin.

Did He not say to the Samaritan woman at the well, “I offer you Living Water,”

John 4:14 “But those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.”

Let’s remember than as we come to the Communion table.