

## The only Son from Heaven - but not the only son

### VI - Solomon

#### II Samuel 7

Obviously it is a good thing to do good things for God; so Nathan thought, when first he heard about David's decision to build a house for the Lord.

And it is, obviously, a good thing to do good things for God. No doubt that is part of the reason why it is so confusing to some, and particularly to Christians who are not Lutheran, when Lutherans are so concerned and cautious about preaching and teaching and perceptions of the faith that focus on Christians doing good for God, rather than the goodness of God and the good *He* has done, and does.

Obviously it would be a good thing for David to build a house for the Lord; so Nathan thought immediately, when he heard about David's decision to do so - until he heard from the Lord Himself.

But the truth is that is not a good thing at all to do good things for God in a such manner as to set His own Word and will aside, to do good things that He Himself has not taught us to do, or to do good things in a manner in which God has forbidden for good things to be done. Even an obviously good thing such as preaching and teaching the Word of God, for example, can be a bad thing to do, and sinful and ungodly. It is that when done by someone whom God has not sent and set to do so, someone not called by His Church in accordance with His ordinance, or by someone He has *forbidden*, in Holy Scripture, to do so, such as a woman; that is disobedience and ungodliness!

It is a bad thing, also, to good things for God, and to teach others to do so, in a such manner that His *Gospel* is set aside, and His First Commandment: *I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me, that is: in my presence, which means: in your worship of me; in other words: that He alone is Saviour, and we should have none other.*

And this happens when Christians are made to focus on doing good things for God and lose sight of that which is the heart of our life with God: *His* goodness and the good He Himself has done, and does, for the salvation of sinners.

*Unless the Lord builds the house, says the Psalm, those who build labour in vain. God alone is the Giver of all things truly good, and all true goodness. This lesson He taught David by having His Prophet prohibit David from building a house for Him.*

David, of course, did not want to build a house for the Lord in order to earn His favour. Rather, he wanted to do so to honour Him and thank Him for the favour He had already shown to David; as Christians focusing on the good they themselves do for God will often point out that *we are not doing good in order to be saved, but because we have been saved already*. But even though they say that, the fact remains that the focus of true Christian faith is never the good sinners do for God; that is not how God wants to be served, or worshipped. His will is done when His goodness is known and acknowledged, so that sinners are saved. That is His will. And any good sinners do for Him, even *Christian sinners*, is *nothing* compared to His goodness, the good He has done for us, and does.

*Unless the Lord builds the house, says the Psalm, those who build labour in vain.* This lesson He taught David by having His Prophet prohibit David from building a house for Him.

David did understand this, once he was told. *Because of Your promise, and according to Your own heart, he said, You have brought about all this greatness, to make Your servant know it.* He saw that it was in full accordance with the ways of God that God would build a house for David rather than have David build a house for Him.

And David also remembered that this was the lesson the people of God had learnt, or should have learnt, from their history with God altogether; that God gives His gifts out of His goodness and grace alone, and for no other reason. Out of His goodness and grace alone had God chosen the people to be His own, and made her to be that, and given her His promises, not because there was anything good or great about the people. And it was *by faith* that the people was to be His people, by hearing His Word and remembering His promises and believing in His goodness.

*Therefore You are great, O Lord God, as David said it, for there is none like You, and there is no God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears. Your name will be magnified for ever, saying: 'The Lord of hosts is God over Israel', and the house of Your servant David will be established before You. For You, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to Your servant, saying: 'I will build you a house.'*

And it is also by living in the goodness of God, in His Word and worship, that His Christians are to serve Him.

*Know that the Lord, He is God, says the Psalm that calls the people to worship; it is He that made us and we are His, we are His people and the sheep of His pasture.*

The heart of all true worship of the only true God is knowing and acknowledging that *He is God*, that He alone has made us, and that is why we are His, *His people and the sheep of His pasture*, whom He feeds with His salvation and shepherds, by His Word, by which we were made to be His to begin with. In His Word and worship He keeps us as His own, and makes us to believe in Him, and live with Him and serve Him with confidence. This is how His will is brought to completion in us.

It was also from the Word of God David had received the confidence to seek the blessings from God that He had promised: *Therefore Your servant has found courage to pray this prayer to You, as we hear it tonight that he said it. And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant. Now therefore, may it please You to bless the house of Your servant, so that it may continue for ever before You. For You, O Lord God, have spoken, and with Your blessing shall the house of Your servant be blessed for ever.*

There was still much David did not understand, though: *You have spoken also of Your servant's house for a great while to come*, he said. But the truth is, is it not, that God had not spoken at all of a *long while*; rather, He had spoken of *for ever*.

*When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, God had His Prophet proclaim, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His Kingdom. He shall build a house for my name.* Now, we know of which son of David the Prophet spoke; or we think we know. We know that Solomon would succeed David, and exceed him in greatness. His reign would be a long period of peace and prosperity. *O, and he would build a house for the Lord.*

Solomon's reign would not remain forever, though. And he would not remain faithful to the Lord. Instead he would do his own thing, as sinners do; he would take heathen wives, and several of them, and as such his heart would be turned away from the Lord.

*Unless the Lord builds the house,* says the Psalm, which is actually written by Solomon himself, *those who build it labour in vain.* It speaks both of those who build, and of the need for the Lord Himself to build the house. This is how things work in this world: God and Man work together. If Man builds alone, if God will not bless the work, no work will work out well in the end.

But that of which God spoke to His Prophet was that which is greater than this world, that which is and must be the work of *God alone*, His eternal Kingdom, and the salvation of sinners.

*I will appoint a place for my people Israel, the Lord said, and will plant them, so that they may dwell in their own place and be disturbed no more. And violent men shall afflict them no more. He spoke of perfect peace and prosperity. And He spoke of eternal peace and prosperity: Your house and your Kingdom shall be made sure before me for ever. Your throne shall be established for ever. This was not the reign of Solomon; his reign was but a sign that another Son of David would establish the eternal Kingdom.*

*When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, the Lord said, I will raise up your Offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish His kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of His Kingdom for ever.*

This Son of David would be none other than the eternal Son of God, who is Himself God from eternity. He would have Himself born of a daughter of David, and adopt for Himself a son of David as His earthly father. *He would in all things abide by the will of the Father, in love, and submit to His will. I will be to Him a Father, the Lord said it, and He shall be to me a Son. Or as He would have His holy Apostle Paul write it: He became obedient to the point of death, even death upon a cross.*

He would fulfil what the Father wills and demands of us all, in a life of full and complete love and obedience; a such life as we all owe to God. And He would have Himself baptised with the Baptism of sinners and take upon Himself the sin of sinners to suffer for us, and bear the judgement of God against all sin, in our stead and on our behalf.

*When He embraces iniquity, as the Lord said it, I will discipline Him with the rod of men, with the stripes of the sons of men, but my steadfast love will not depart from Him. Although He was cursed and condemned by God for the sin of sinners, God would restore Him to glory, and the greatest glory of all, as Saviour of sinners.*

*I will make for you a great name, God said to David. He would indeed. We mention the name of David together with Him to whom God has given the name above all names; in fact, in the Psalms, the two are often identified and spoken of as if they were one; as those who belong to Christ are also actually made to be one with Him.*

In His own Son God has made a house for David, and for all the faithful. We shall dwell with Him in the house of the Lord for ever, all on account of what He Himself has done for us, when He comes to judge the living and the dead.

Blessed is He that comes, in the name of the Lord. *Amen.*