

No Temple for David

I completely understand why David wanted to build a house for the Lord. First, there was simply the point he made in **II Samuel 7:2**. It just didn't seem right that God had brought David into Jerusalem, set him up, and allowed him a house of cedar, but God was still dwelling in a tent. I can even understand why David believed it was alright for him to do so and why Nathan initially said, "Go, do all that is in your heart, for the LORD is with you" (**II Samuel 7:3**, ESV). After all, they had both no doubt read **Genesis 28:20-22**. Israel, the man, had promised if God brought him safely into the Promised Land, then his pillar would be the house of God. In parallel, God had brought Israel, the nation, into the Promised Land. What would be more natural to show that Yahweh was their God and they were His people than building a house for Him? As His people were no longer the wandering people, He was no longer the wandering God. It just makes sense to me.

Besides, what better legacy could David leave than a temple to His God? It could forever be known as David's temple. It would be a monument to what God had done for David and what David had done for God. But, God said, "No." In **II Samuel 7:4-17**, God refused to let David build the temple. He promised that David's son would build the temple. He did remind David that He was building a house for David, however.

Here is what amazes me. David didn't whine, pitch a fit, or complain. Instead, in **II Samuel 7:18-29**, David praised God for the grace that was shown him. Additionally, David didn't get jealous and try to sabotage Solomon's temple building. Rather, David did everything he could to help Solomon. He wanted Solomon to succeed. Even though it would go down in history as Solomon's temple, David wanted it to be great. Thus, in **I Chronicles 22, 29**, we see David making great preparations for the Lord's house.

Why was David able to do this? Because, for David, the issue was not making a name for himself because of his building exploits. David wanted God honored and glorified. He didn't care what human hand got to build the Lord's house, he simply wanted it to be as God-glorifying as it could be. If Solomon was the one who got to build, David was fine with that. So, he paved the way for Solomon to build the best temple he could possibly build.

What a great example David sets for us. Let's face it. We can have a tendency to be territorial, protective, and self-promoting. We can lose sight of the fact that this is really all about God, not us. We can become jealous and envious when God allows someone else to accomplish things for Him that we wanted to do.

Has this ever happened to you? You had an idea about some class, activity, work in or connected to the congregation. But before you gave the big reveal, someone beat you to the punch, stole your thunder, and announced their own plan to do almost exactly what had been on your mind? How do you respond? Do you come alongside, build up, and make it the best it could be? Or do you sulk and sabotage?

Or what about this? Did you ever have an idea for some great God-glorifying statement, article, or tweet, and then hop online only to find someone else had already said the thing you wanted to say? How do you respond? Do you like it, share it, promote the one who said it? Or do you ignore it, announce you had thought of it first, or seethe that someone else is getting followed?

Or perhaps something even harder. Have you ever worked hard to accomplish something? Maybe you were trying to get a study started, a group going, a person baptized, a fallen brother/sister restored. You worked for days, weeks, months, maybe even years and it just wasn't getting off the ground. Then along comes someone else who with seemingly minimal effort gets the job done. You watch as others give praise and accolades to that brother or sister. How do you respond? Do you join in the praise, thankful that what you had hoped would be accomplished has finally happened to the glory of God? Or do you grouse about the other person, perturbed that folks followed them instead of you, looking for a chink in their glorious armor that you can expose to knock them down a notch or two?

Here is the key. The church is the Lord's house. The work done in it is ultimately for the glory of God. Can we be like David? Can we be satisfied with the blessings God has given us, grateful and humble? Can we be thankful for the blessings He gives others and rejoice with them in their use in His kingdom? Can we support others in their successful work for the Lord's glory because we are working together for the same goal?

This is how the God Filled work together. Let's work together and bring glory to God.

—Edwin L. Crozier