

Day 38 – Mar. 22

Well, it was a good idea. But even good ideas with the best of intentions are not what God wants, and therefore what God will bless.

David has finally solidified his kingship over the whole of Israel and Judah, and, in the words of scripture, “The Lord finally gave him rest.” With his foreign policy (“conquer them all!”) in place, David now turns to internal policy as any good leader should. And this includes infrastructure. David has a gorgeous palace from which he rules, but his reflection turns to God and specifically the Tabernacle. God, represented by the Ark of the Covenant, sits in a tabernacle, a tent, and David doesn’t feel this is respectful enough for God who has saved, protected, fed, provided, and conquered for them. So David has a great idea: to show his worship, his respect, for God, he should build God a Temple, glorious, resplendent, and permanent.

David calls upon his friendly neighborhood prophet Nathan and asks God through Nathan whether this is ok. Nathan says Yes, so David is all set and begins the planning. But Nathan has spoken out of turn and God lets him know it.

“Why would I need a temple? A tent has been good enough for me since we left Egypt, so why would I need a temple now?” Perhaps God knew that this Tabernacle theme would prepare his people well for the coming of his Son, who would “tabernacle” with us according to John 1. What a beautiful image of Jesus coming among us, not to permanently reside and rule here, but only to dwell with us for a while and then move on.

But God is not angry at David’s plans. He makes it clear that all He has done for David will not stop now that David has settled down to rule, and it won’t increase if David builds Him a House, a Temple. In fact, God says in a beautiful turn of phrase, God will build a House for you, David! It is a house meaning a dynasty, where his sons will rule once he is gone. And God will continue to protect, provide, and dwell with His people.

It is always a danger in the church today to run ahead with plans for good ministry and furthering God’s mission, but without stopping to ask God if this is what He wants, or better yet, taking the time to listen for His direction in the first place. We hire staff, plan programming, set mission statements, all without asking God if this is what He wants. How different would our churches look if we waited patiently for God’s direction before moving, waiting the years and even lifetimes God might require before we put our plans into action? Perhaps it is not our hands God has planned to build our mission; perhaps it is our children, or theirs. Can we be patient enough for God?