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## Advent Devotional "David's Song"

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Advent Devotional  
December 24, 2015  
David's Song  
2 Samuel 7:18-29

David endured many vicissitudes in his early life and kingship. Now he has “rest on every side from all his enemies.” He’s in his palace, enjoying the fruits of God’s pleasure. He shares an idea with Nathan the prophet. It goes something like this: “I live in a palace; God lives in a tent. God needs at least as good a house as I have; I want to build Him one.”

Nathan responds positively to David’s generous thought, only to hear a different word from God. Next morning, Nathan returns to the palace. “David,” he says, “God doesn’t think that you’re the one to build a house for Him. He reminds you that He brought you from pasture to palace and prospered you. He promises to continue caring for you and to build you another, different kind of house: your line will continue after your death. As proof of that, your descendant will build His house.”

David offered something good to God, only to have God refuse the gift. Worse, God gave his idea to another to accomplish. God then offered David new and greater gifts than ever before. But His refusal could have easily overshadowed those promises.

Think how David could have felt. Ever had someone spurn your gift or great suggestion? Ever seen it happen to another? Ever give a gift that you thought was really great, only to watch the recipient try to fake a positive response? My mother’s life offers an example.

For weeks, we discovered later, Mother had been telling her caregivers that God was coming to take her home, and that He was bringing Sam (her husband of 65 years who predeceased her by six) with Him. Off and on since a bout with temporal arteritis in the mid-1990s, Mother had said that same thing. He did come on this day last year, early in the morning just before the nurse shift changed. It was, her caregivers said, a peaceful death, her life ending with a slight smile.

When I read this Scripture and thought of the date, Mother's predictions immediately sprang to mind. During the first iteration of her certainty of God's impending visit, she gave away her collection of perfume bottles. With each recurrence came a new wave of gifts or promised bequests. She wanted to give people things that meant much to her—and she wanted those things to mean as much to them. The gifts were accepted, the bequests duly noted. But the new owners certainly never invested any item with the same meaning that it had held for her.

So it was with David. He enjoyed his “house” and it meant much to him. He wanted the same for God. Unlike Mother's experience, his was of a good offer refused. David leaves Nathan, enters the tent, sits down before the Ark of the Covenant for which he had pitched the tent in Jerusalem, and says his piece to God. Even after being told “No,” David unleashes a paean of praise and thanksgiving, thanking God for His care and bounteous mercies.

How glorious to be able to speak unrestrainedly with God! And how infinitely more glorious to speak thanksgiving even in the face of disappointment!

Perhaps as he focused on the praise, any disappointment evaporated like mist. Both Old and New Testament writers hold this up as the model for believers to follow. And yet how often we spend our time talking to God about our disappointments, slights, and failures—focusing on the negative. Perhaps as we look toward tomorrow's celebration of God's greatest gift to us, as we contemplate the past and future advents, we can practice a different approach and sing David's song of thanks and praise.

Ray Granada