

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

A Prayer of Praise II Samuel 7:18-29

Intro: We've all been in that dreaded position: 2nd in line at the traffic light. The light's red, then it changes. Yet, the car in front remains unmoved! OK, not a problem. I mean, it's not a drag race & sometimes it takes a few seconds for the green light to register. But then, 3 seconds drags into a long 6 seconds & a decision must be made. You hate to blow your horn for fear of seeming impatient or rude but then real love for all those behind you compels you to act. The point: it's *ridiculous* to be **unmoved** by a green light. But, it's also *ridiculous* to be **unmoved** by God's revelation!

David knew this. In the 1st half of **ch7**, **YHWH** had unceremoniously shot down David's plan to build a house (**temple**) for Him in Jerusalem. Then, He turned around instead & promised to build an eternal house (**dynasty**) for David. This promise not only assured David that as long as there was a nation of God's people, his dynasty would always rule over it; but it also informed him that the long awaited Messiah would eventually be 1 of his descendants. There's no way that David could remain unmoved by **YHWH's** plans as revealed in **vs5-16**. So David goes in & sits **before the Lord** in **happy frustration** searching for adequate words to convey his astonished praise & urgently pleads w/ the Lord to fulfill His word. **YHWH's** revelation spurred David's devotions; His promises fired up David's praises & prayers.

That's as it should be. God doesn't declare His promises & plans to us or reveal His agenda for the preservation of His people just so we can let it sit here in cold print. On the contrary – we should welcome His words, revel in His plans, delight in His promises & consistently plead for their ultimate fulfillment. The divine promises in God's Word are a **green light** to spiritual life & Christian service. It would be *absurd* for God's people to be **unmoved** by them.

David's response is twofold: **1)** he responds in **praise**, marveling at the grace of God towards him; **2)** he responds in **petition**, praying for the word of God to be accomplished in him, thru him & for him for the eternal glory of God.

18-22- David decides to have a personal prayer meeting w/ **YHWH**,

probably near the tabernacle. We should note: David's prayer doesn't begin w/ **petition** but rather w/ **wonder**; not w/ **supplication** but w/ **surprise**! He is flabbergasted by **YHWH**'s grace & he begins his prayer staggering under the amazing weight of it. It would be impossible to accurately define or explain David's ecstasy but we can at least point out the highlights of his joyous rapture.

1) He marvels over **previous grace** (18b). Gratitude can never *forget* the past, nor can it *explain* it. David is clueless as to why **YHWH**'s plan ever focused on him to begin with: "**Who am I?**" There is no adequate answer to that question except what God said in vs8b "**I took you...**" Yet, David doesn't just praise the mystery of God's choice but also the miracle of God's preservation: "**that you have brought me this far**" (8c). Samuel anointed David as king in Bethlehem, which was only 6 miles from Jerusalem. But for David, the distance between these 2 cities covered 21 chapters and nearly 2 decades filled w/ **danger, escapes, treachery, foolishness & despair**. Yet, here he is! He knows beyond a shadow of a doubt that it was nothing but the amazing grace of **YHWH** that had brought him **this far**.

2) He marvels over **promised grace** (19). David knew it was nothing for God to preserve his life, even a 1000 times. But now, **YHWH** had committed Himself to an eternal promise on behalf of David & his descendants. As fantastic as that sounds, David seems particularly excited over the role his house will play in all human history. A better translation of the last phrase would be "**Such is human destiny**." This explains David's excitement. He perceives that the forever kingship **YHWH** guarantees his dynasty will not only bring **rest** to Israel but will ultimately extend **YHWH**'s presence & divine blessings to all humanity. David sees his dynasty as the mechanism for fulfilling **YHWH**'s promise to Abraham that "**in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed**" (Gen 12:3b). What God has promised to David & his seed will eventually work out for the benefit of all mankind! David doesn't know how; he just knows it will!

3) He marvels over **sovereign grace**. The word **know** in vs20 isn't just a reference to God's omniscience but should be translated in the past tense – **have known: to discriminate** (ie; **choose, select**). David is basically saying that **YHWH** Himself had singled David out & that's exactly what happened but not b/c David was such a great guy but "**for Your word's sake...**" (21). God's kingdom plan arises solely out of His choice & desire, not from any

human ingenuity or merit, least of all David's. Of course, vs21 teaches that part of the reason for God's choices is to be faithful to previous promises. God's current work will always be guided & limited to the parameters of His previous word.

David opens his prayer by marveling at YHWH's gracious plan & why not! He's blown away that God has brought him *this far* but then on top of that, God makes a binding, eternal promise concerning David's family: that it will survive the ravages of death, sin & time; that it will endure the treacheries of history & embrace the entire world & yet, YHWH has done this simply b/c *He wanted to do it!* YHWH's grace has swept David off his feet; it has taken his breath away. Listen to the helplessness of his praise in 20a. What can David say? Notice the happy frustration he feels being the recipient of God's fathomless grace; it has doomed David's worship to inadequacy! What can he do but begin w/ "Who am I?" (18) & end w/ "There is none like You" (22). This is the perfect combination of frustration & faithfulness. God had impressed David! When we understand God's grace in our lives, it leads us to the same place!

23-24- David's praise continues but it takes a different focus. He describes Israel as a people unique among the nations but, for David, this only reflects Israel's unique God: YHWH. Let's see how he describes Israel in his praise.

David knows Israel is unique b/c she's a **redeemed people** (23). Israel is the 1 nation that YHWH has redeemed *for Himself*. This phrase contains both aspects of redemption: redeemed *from* & redeemed *for* (or *to*). When YHWH redeemed Israel, He liberated them *from the bondage of Egypt* so that they might belong *to a new Master*. Biblical redemption always involves both elements: **liberation** & **possession**. The Lord revealed His power when He smashed Egypt's chains but He revealed His purpose in binding Israel to Himself as His own possession. Herein lies a spiritual principle we would all do well to grasp: **YHWH grants His people freedom but not independence**; they are to **belong** to Him! This doesn't change when we move into the NT: (**I Peter 1:18-19**) If we have been ransomed out of our empty way of life (*aimless conduct*) by Jesus' costly blood then we no longer belong to ourselves – we've been bought (purchased) w/ a price (**I Cor 6:19b-20**). We've gone from being slaves to **sin & Satan** to slaves of **God**. "What's changed?" you might ask. Everything: our past is redeemed; our present is restored; our future is revealed!

David also knows Israel is a **preserved people** (24). There are 2 code words here: **made** (established) used 4Xs 12-16 where **YHWH** promises to **establish** David's throne & **forever**, used 3Xs 13-16 to show the unlimited duration of David's dynasty. So David recognizes that Israel is just as permanent as his dynasty, not b/c they are a hardy people but b/c **YHWH** is determined to keep them. Israel & David's dynasty are sure things.

Don't misunderstand: this fact in no way implies that every Israelite was or would be a faithful follower of **YHWH**. There will be plenty of kings in the Davidic line that will forfeit the benefits of the Davidic covenant thru his sin. Likewise, any individual Israelite could place himself outside the realm of covenant blessings by their own unbelief. Yet regardless, **YHWH** always insists on preserving a faithful people for Himself, even if its just a remnant.

Again, we have the same reality in the NT (**John 10:27-29**). B/c the Father attaches the highest value to His flock (purchased by blood of the Lamb), He'll look after them to the end. It seems the Lord never tires of reassuring His people & since we live in this world of conflict, we should never tire of hearing the Shepherds voice!

Finally, David knows Israel is a **privileged people**. The phrase **have become** relates to a marriage contract formula. In Hebrew, it's used for securing & belonging to a marriage partner. Israel is a people who have **YHWH** as their God!

He redeems them from bondage to Himself & keeps them thru the ravages of history & time but that's not enough for **YHWH**. He also gives Himself to Israel as a spouse, to belong to them, to be their God! So, here is Israel: redeemed, preserved & privileged – this is the fuel that ignites David's praise: realizing what God has done, is doing & will do. David cannot look at the flock w/o praising the Shepherd. Can we do any less?

25-29- David now moves from praise to petition. "What more could he ask for than what **YHWH** has just promised?" Nothing really, except 1 thing – that the promise be fulfilled. David simply asks that these astounding promises be turned into historical reality. What does David put right up front? "**The word which You have spoken.**" (12-16); this is the starting point of David's prayer but what is his petition: "**establish it forever.**" The primary lesson David teaches us here is: prayer pleads promises or as

David says in 25c, “**do as You have said.**” There’s a whole theology of prayer in that statement. Notice how all David’s petitions are grounded in YHWH’s promises: 25, 28 & 29

This is still the primary job of prayer today: to take God’s promises as revealed in His word & pray that He will bring them to pass. Of course, we must be sure that the promise is 1 that applies to us. Certainly David’s promise does. It’s the promise we ask God to fulfill every time we pray that His name will go out into all the earth, when we ask for God’s kingdom to come & His will to be done on earth. The final king of David’s eternal dynasty has already come but His authority & reign must still be fully, publicly displayed. That’s our responsibility & the Lord’s desire – He has promised to assist us in this endeavor. You might be wondering when all that assistance is going to kick in.

What do you do when the promises of God are denied by the fact of experience? Turn the promises of God into prayers & plead them before God. Since God’s promises are reliable (28a) then the petition is sure to be granted. “**Do as You have said** (promised)” (25c) this should be the focus of all our prayer. God’s promises give prayer **passion** (John 14:13), **boldness** (Heb 4:16) & **confidence** (I John 5:14-15).

Are you struggling in your Christian walk today? There are promises in God’s word that deal with this: I John 1:9, Rev 3:20. The Lords desires intimate communion w/ each of His children & promised to provide it if we cooperate.

Are you struggling in your Christian service? Mt 16:18 Jesus said **He** will build His church, pray that He would continue to fulfill this promise at Grace Chapel.

The promises of God are a green light to victorious Christian life & effective Christian service. We can’t just sit there think about how wonderful they are. We must respond to them, in wondrous praise, yes but also, in fervent prayer, confidently believing in the power & the plan of the One who made & gave us all those promises!

David might be sitting before the Lord but he is standing on the promises of God. 😊