

## **Introduction**

The people around you can shape you in a thousand ways. Sometimes for good. Sometimes not for good. Sometimes they will bring out the royalty in you. Sometimes they can help you become the person you always wanted to be but never could be. David was ancient Israel's second king. He started out as the youngest son of a sheep farmer. He wrote poems and put them to music on his harp. David became a dedicated shepherd defending his flock from bears and lions. Then he became a giant slayer, a great warrior surrounded by fearless men. Together they subdued all of Israel's enemies.

## **David was a blessed man.**

2 Samuel 7:1-3 NLT

When King David was settled in his palace and the LORD had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies, the king summoned Nathan the prophet. "Look," David said, "I am living in a beautiful cedar palace, but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!" Nathan replied to the king, "Go ahead and do whatever you have in mind, for the LORD is with you."

## **Something's Not Right Here**

2 Samuel 7:4-17 NLT

But that same night the LORD said to Nathan, "Go and tell my servant David, 'This is what the LORD has declared: Are you the one to build a house for me to live in? I have never lived in a house, from the day I brought the Israelites out of Egypt until this very day. I have always moved from one place to another with a tent and a Tabernacle as my dwelling. Yet no matter where I have gone with the Israelites, I have never once complained to Israel's tribal leaders, the shepherds of my people Israel. I have never asked them, 'Why haven't you built me a beautiful cedar house?'" "Now go and say to my servant David, 'This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth! And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won't oppress them as they've done in the past, starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. "Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do. But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight. Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.'" So Nathan went back to David and told him everything the LORD had said in this vision.

## **We're part of a blessed church.**

This local church was organized in October of 1921. Our church family is over 90 years old. Like a few of you, I'm blessed to have met some of the earliest members, like Almira Britton, Naomi Pake and Blanche Silvernale. The church moved from meeting in a living room not too far from here to a building at the corner of Catherine and Jenney Streets. (That building is still there.) Almost 60 years

ago, plans were made to build the house and this building. Unfortunately, congregations have a life cycle. Churches grow, mature and begin to decline. Our church is declining too. It started at least 30 years ago. When we decided to resist the changes brought on by two busloads of kids, we began to decline. When one of the leading members declared she didn't want those kids tracking dirt into our church, we started to decline. Declining churches show all kinds of symptoms. One common warning sign of decline could be called "my-it is."

### **You are NOT the man but...**

2 Samuel 7:8-16 NLT

"Now go and say to my servant David, 'This is what the LORD of Heaven's Armies has declared: I took you from tending sheep in the pasture and selected you to be the leader of my people Israel. I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before your eyes. Now I will make your name as famous as anyone who has ever lived on the earth! And I will provide a homeland for my people Israel, planting them in a secure place where they will never be disturbed. Evil nations won't oppress them as they've done in the past, starting from the time I appointed judges to rule my people Israel. And I will give you rest from all your enemies. "Furthermore, the LORD declares that he will make a house for you—a dynasty of kings! For when you die and are buried with your ancestors, I will raise up one of your descendants, your own offspring, and I will make his kingdom strong. He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son. If he sins, I will correct and discipline him with the rod, like any father would do. But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight. Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.'"

### **How do you respond?**

2 Samuel 7:18-29 NLT

Then King David went in and sat before the LORD and prayed, "Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? And now, Sovereign LORD, in addition to everything else, you speak of giving your servant a lasting dynasty! Do you deal with everyone this way, O Sovereign LORD? "What more can I say to you? You know what your servant is really like, Sovereign LORD. Because of your promise and according to your will, you have done all these great things and have made them known to your servant. "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you! What other nation on earth is like your people Israel? What other nation, O God, have you redeemed from slavery to be your own people? You made a great name for yourself when you redeemed your people from Egypt. You performed awesome miracles and drove out the nations and gods that stood in their way. You made Israel your very own people forever, and you, O LORD, became their God. "And now, O LORD God, I am your servant; do as you have promised concerning me and my family. Confirm it as a promise that will last forever. And may your name be honored forever so that everyone will say, 'The LORD of Heaven's Armies is God over Israel!' And may the house of your servant David continue before you forever. "O LORD of Heaven's Armies, God of Israel, I have been bold enough to pray this prayer to you because you have revealed all this to your servant, saying, 'I will build a house for you—a dynasty of kings!' For you are God, O Sovereign LORD. Your words are truth, and you have promised these good things to your servant. And now, may it please you to bless the house of your servant, so that it may continue forever before you. For you have spoken, and when you grant a blessing to your servant, O Sovereign LORD, it is an eternal blessing!"

**Sermon in a Sentence:**

Without Jesus as the foundation, the church has no duration. With Jesus as the foundation, it has eternal duration.

**All Is Not Lost**

Unlike our physical bodies, the Body of Christ can be restored. We can be healed of our My-itis. All we need to do is follow the example of David and Nathan. We must surrender . A healthy church is one in which the members' attitudes reflect that of Christ. Other-centered members can fill our church family again. Citation: Autopsy of a Deceased Church, Thom S. Rainer

**Time to Turn from Me to God**

We all have ideas about what needs to happen in our church. We all have dreams, plans and wishes. Unfortunately, most of us are like David and Nathan at the beginning of their story. We have not asked God about his dreams, plans and wishes for his church. It's time to surrender and receive the blessings the Lord promises. For a long time now, 20 to 30 of us have gathered on a Sunday evening, just about once a month. We have been asking one question, "What does God want to do through Bay City Wesleyan Church?" God is revealing his plan. All is not lost. He is turning our hearts to those who need Jesus. But we can take more steps as we follow in David's footsteps.