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Living in HisStory:Revealing the True Wonder of Who God is
Sitting in God's Presence
2 Samuel 7
February 4, 2018, Jeff Germo

God is up to something. This has been a major theme in our current sermon series, and as a matter of fact, in every sermon preached from this pulpit. God is doing something on this earth. He is all about restoring the *shalom* that was lost at the fall of humanity at the beginning of time when Adam and Eve chose to believe the lie of Satan that they didn't need God. We are just part way through this series and we have seen some pretty phenomenal God-ordained events sprinkled throughout history revealing how truly powerful, awesome (in the true sense of the word), and sovereign God is.

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He is purposefully moving history towards a final conclusion where all sin, evil, corruption, disunity, Satan and death will once and for all be vanquished, and God's truth and love will finally win the day.

We are going to see that very clearly in today's sermon. By the way, if you are just joining us for this sermon series, make sure you go back and watch some of the other sermons. We try to fill in as many blanks as we can along the way, but there is a lot of background that is impossible to retell each Sunday.

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Today we are continuing on with the narrative of King David. Remember, in Genesis 12 God set his plan in motion to gather a people for himself who would be all about partnering with him in his project to restore his *shalom* to the earth. He called Abraham and Sarah who had their first son, Isaac, in their senior years. Isaac and Rebecca had Jacob, who had lots of kids including a dozen boys who became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Through a bunch of drama they ended up in captivity as slaves in Egypt. It was there that they grew in number to about two million people over about a four hundred year period. They were brutally oppressed by their Egyptian slave masters and called out to God who raised up Moses to deliver them from captivity. They ended up wandering in the wilderness for forty years because of their whining and complaining and disobedience to God.

While they were wandering they camped out at Mount Sinai for just over eleven months. It was here God gave Moses the law to teach the Israelites how to love each other and God once they settled in the land he promised them on the west side of the Jordan River.

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In that law God gave them meticulous instructions on how to build a tabernacle and all the articles of worship including the Ark of the Covenant which represented the awesome power and the presence of God. God chose to dwell temporarily in the tabernacle. Last week we saw that God became man and dwelt temporarily on the earth until the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost in Acts 2. We also noted that, now, the Holy Spirit dwells in us. We are, the Bible says, the Temples of the Holy Spirit. We have the same power living in us that created the heavens and the earth and raised Jesus from the dead.

While we are on this earth, the Holy Spirit is effecting change in us, if we let him. As we spend time with Jesus, the Holy Spirit will work a change in our hearts and minds so we ache for the things God aches for, love what God loves, hate what God hates, and manifest more of the fruit of the Spirit in greater measure each year so that others will see Jesus in us and join him in gathering a people who will be all about restoring God's *shalom* to the earth.

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Back to the Old Testament narrative. After Moses died Joshua took over the leadership and led the Israelites across the Jordan River to take possession of the land God had promised them. Once they got

settled they looked at the other nations around them and noticed that they had kings to lead them. All they had were judges and prophets like Samuel who got their direction from God. God told Samuel to tell his people that if he gave them kings, they would be oppressed by them. They wanted one anyway.

Their first king was Saul who, by outward appearances, looked very kingly. He was tall and very handsome. He was, however, also very insecure and proud, which led to his downfall. I confessed to you that I have suffered from many of the same insecurities as King Saul and it has only been through the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit that I have been able to overcome. As, we previously noted, pride and insecurity go together. A proud person may look confident, but that facade of confidence derives from insecurity.

Saul reigned for about forty years and for most of those years he lived a tormented life because of his jealousy of his young protégé, David, who had been eclipsing him in both skill and popularity. He continually compared himself with the young shepherd boy, lamenting how many “likes” David had compared to him. He spiralled out of control and eventually took his own life. David then took his rightful place on the throne and led the Israelites to thirst after God and his righteousness.

While *Saul* was king, he had neglected the tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was captured by the Philistines. Last week we looked at 2 Samuel 6 where David brought the Ark back, with great pomp and celebration, to God’s people and to Jerusalem, the City of David. He constructed a special tent to house the Ark, but felt like it wasn’t good enough. He was living in a beautiful palace and the Ark was housed in a tent. Let’s pick it up from there. Pay careful attention because within this passage is what is known as the Davidic covenant where God makes a promise to David that his descendants will have a permanent place on the throne. This is a very important part of God’s plan to bring his peace to the earth.

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2 Samuel 7 (NLT)

1 When King David was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies, 2 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!” 3 Nathan replied to the king, “Go ahead and do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you.”

David had some pretty big plans for the Lord. He had been living “high on the hog” in his luxurious palace. He had had lots of success. He was feeling very good about his accomplishments, but it wasn’t enough. He had a bigger vision for God. He wanted to make a permanent dwelling place for him rather than the tent that housed the Ark.

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4 But that same night the Lord said to Nathan, 5 “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? 6 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.

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7 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?” ’

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8 “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. 9 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!

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10 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, ¹¹ 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!

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12 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. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house—a temple—for my name. And I will secure his royal throne forever.

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***14 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. ¹⁵ But my favor will not be taken from him as I took it from Saul, whom I removed from your sight. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will continue before me for all time, and your throne will be secure forever.' "** ¹⁷ So Nathan went back to David and told him everything the Lord had said in this vision.*

There are a couple things going on here. First, David gets hit with the news that his big plans for the Lord will not come to fruition in his lifetime.

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You can read the detailed parallel account of this part of the narrative in 1 Chronicles 15-29. I would imagine that he is, partly, feeling devastated. He had some dreams of doing big things for God and they were crushed.

So, immediately upon hearing from the prophet Nathan, he went into the tent where the Ark of the Covenant was and he sat before the Lord. I imagine him sitting down, breathing a heavy sigh, giving everything over to the Lord. He sits with the Lord, opens his heart to him and gains some perspective in prayer and meditation.

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What he discovers is that **God is more interested in relationship *with* us than he is in us accomplishing great things *for* him.**

There is a danger in our lives with Jesus, that we can feel like we have more value when we are accomplishing great things for God. I can fall into this rut very quickly. God has called us into a very real authentic relationship with himself and I can get so busy trying to please him and do great things *for* him that I miss the relationship with him. It's easy for me to compare myself with others and think that my sense of worth goes up with the more seats we have filled in the church, the more likes we have on our Facebook page, or whatever.

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When I am feeling that temptation to compare myself with the accomplishments of others I need to do what David did. He went and sat with the Lord and marinated in his love. Seven times he addressed God as the "Sovereign Lord."

His prayer is a good model for us when our hopes are dashed, or when life doesn't turn out the way we expected, or during times of failure, and even in times of success, or when we are tempted to compare ourselves with others. We need to remember that God cares more about our relationship with him than whether or not we are accomplishing things *for* him.

Pete Unrau was one of the pastors at CRBC many years ago. Five days a week he sends me a text message with a word of encouragement and a note that he is praying for me. I just remembered this text this morning while I was going through this sermon.

January 22nd he quoted 1 John 2:3: “We know we have joined him in an intimate relationship because we live out his commands.” Then he wrote: “**True success isn't about being amazing; it's about being obedient.**”

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God has not called us to be amazing. He's called us to be faithful and grow in intimacy with him. Here is David's prayer:

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18 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? 19 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?

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20 “What more can I say to you? You know what your servant is really like, Sovereign Lord.

21 Because of your promise and according to your will, you have done all these great things and have made them known to your servant.

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22 “How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you! 23 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.

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24 You made Israel your very own people forever, and you, O Lord, became their God. 25 “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. 26 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.

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27 “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!’ 28 For you are God, O Sovereign Lord. Your words are truth, and you have promised these good things to your servant. 29 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!”

So, David acknowledged God as sovereign. He is in charge.

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He harkened back to how God led the Israelites out of slavery, and out of all God's people, chose David, a young shepherd boy, making him king of all Israel, and promising that he would always have a descendant on the throne — for eternity. This is the Davidic Covenant. He was blown away and completely humbled by that revelation from God.

He would not be the one to build the Temple, but his son Solomon would. During the rest of David's life he worked at drafting the plans and gathering all the materials for the Temple so when Solomon was crowned king he would be ready to fulfill what God promised. He had to be okay with the fact that his son, and not him, would fulfill his dream.

Near the end of David's life, he crowned Solomon king and set him up for success. Next week we will look at Solomon. He was, from a human perspective, a very successful king - wealthy beyond imagination. Kings and queens from other nations would travel from afar to see the wealth he had amassed and check out his kingdom. But really he failed miserably. He forgot God in a lot of ways.

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1 Kings 11:1–6 (NLT)

¹ Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. ² The Lord had clearly instructed the people of Israel, 'You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods.' Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway.

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³ He had 700 wives of royal birth and 300 concubines. And in fact, they did turn his heart away from the Lord. ⁴ In Solomon's old age, they turned his heart to worship other gods instead of being completely faithful to the Lord his God, as his father, David, had been.

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⁵ Solomon worshiped Ashtoreth, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. ⁶ In this way, Solomon did what was evil in the Lord's sight; he refused to follow the Lord completely, as his father, David, had done.

I don't want to spend a lot of time on Solomon because we will look closer at him next week. What I want us to see, however, is the fallibility of the kings who came after David. Every single one of them fell in one way or another. Some moved very decisively away from God, and others had good starts, but then fell away. None of them completely did what was right in God's eyes.

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The big difference between David and the rest of the kings in Israel's history was David had his heart set on God. He purposefully developed intimacy with God. You just need to read through the Psalms to see that. He guarded his heart and worked on his relationship with his God. He didn't let his heart go wherever it led him. He took time to sit with God and gain his perspective.

He tried to pass that same mindset on to Solomon to no avail. Here is what David said to Solomon before he died.

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1 Chronicles 28:8–10 (NLT)

⁸ "So now, with God as our witness, and in the sight of all Israel—the Lord's assembly—I give you this charge. Be careful to obey all the commands of the Lord your God, so that you may continue to possess this good land and leave it to your children as a permanent inheritance.

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⁹ "And Solomon, my son, learn to know the God of your ancestors intimately. Worship and serve him with your whole heart and a willing mind. For the Lord sees every heart and knows every plan and thought. If you seek him, you will find him. But if you forsake him, he will reject you forever. ¹⁰ So take this seriously. The Lord has chosen you to build a Temple as his sanctuary. Be strong, and do the work."

There are some important lessons here.

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What's the most important task in life? Is it accomplishing great things for God? Is it becoming excellent at whatever it is you do? No. The most important thing we can do in life is develop intimacy with Jesus. What he wants to do with each of us as we spend time with him, and marinate in his love, is chip away at the rough edges of our character so we look more and more like him.

As with David, when we sit with Jesus and spend time in his Word he will show us just how much he loves us as well as things that need to change (Matthew 11:28-30). He will reveal areas of our lives that are offensive to him and to others. He will then invite us to exchange our perspective for his, as Paul said in Romans 12:1-2. We will have a metamorphosis of our minds. If we are honest and courageous and allow him to mold us, he will make us bear lots of good fruit: more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,

goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We will become more and more like Jesus. That is the goal.

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All of that **change comes out of intimacy with Jesus**, and from the fruit that flows from intimacy with him he will build his kingdom. That is what David learned in his moments with God. He wanted to accomplish great things for God. God slowed him down and said, “Not so fast. Let’s start with the important things first. Grow in your intimacy with me and out of that intimacy I will work.”

None of the kings after David were totally sold out for God. David’s kingship, though, foreshadowed Jesus and the time when he would take his permanent place on the throne as King of kings, and Lord of lords. God promised David that he would have a descendant on the throne for eternity. That was fulfilled in Jesus the Messiah.

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What God wanted David to know was that *he*, not David, would establish God’s Kingdom. We are on dangerous ground when we think we can somehow do God’s work *for* him. Jesus said that *he* would build his church and the gates of hell would not prevail against it. In other words, nothing would be able to hold back the church from pushing back the gates of hell.

That is what Jesus has called us to, as his church. He wants to so change us that when others see us they would see the reflection of Jesus in us. Jesus is on the throne forever. He is the king. He is the Messiah who has bridged the gap between us and a holy God so we can have intimacy with him. That is the Good News. The important thing Jesus has called us to is to spend time with him. Marinate in his love so he can change us.

Remember the story in Luke 10 when Jesus was in the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. Martha was busy working in the kitchen, preparing the meal and cleaning while Mary was spending time sitting at the feet of Jesus, not a care in the world, learning from him. Martha came to Jesus all ticked off and asked Jesus to tell Mary to come and help her. Here was Jesus’ response to Martha.

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Luke 10:41–42 (NLT)

⁴¹ ...“My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! ⁴² There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”

It’s not that Martha was doing anything wrong. She was doing good things. There are lots of good things God has for us to do. Those good things, however, need to flow out of our intimacy with Jesus. That’s what Jesus said in John 15. Spend time with him and let him spend time with you and lots of good fruit will be produced.

We are going to celebrate communion in a few minutes. Before we do that let me remind you of the genealogy of Jesus in Matthew 1 that very clearly shows that Jesus is in the line of David. Remember when the angel Gabriel showed up to Mary and announced to her that she was going to give birth to the Messiah even though she was a virgin. She was, of course, taken aback by this pronouncement so Gabriel consoled her with these words:

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Luke 1:30–33 (NLT)

³⁰ “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. ³² He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. ³³ And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!”

Jesus is still on the throne. Two thousand years ago he defeated sin, death, and Satan to bridge the gap between us and a holy God so we could enter into intimacy with him. That is the Good News.

Let's take a couple minutes of silence and marinate in the love of Jesus, and allow him to change our minds, before we receive communion together.

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Romans 8:35; 38 (NLT)

³⁵ Can anything ever separate us from Christ's love? Does it mean he no longer loves us if we have trouble or calamity, or are persecuted, or hungry, or destitute, or in danger, or threatened with death?

³⁸ And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today nor our worries about tomorrow—not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love.



***Living in HisStory: Revealing the True Wonder of Who God Is
Sitting in God's Presence***
2 Samuel 7
Week of February 4, 2018

Objective of this study: To understand the importance of building intimacy with Jesus.

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read **Psalm 30** meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you. **Did anything “jump out at you”?**

Welcome (5 minutes)

Slow◊Fast, Quiet◊Loud. Which describes you best, and is the opposite uncomfortable for you?

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to *your* heart.]

Word/Work (60-90 minutes)

1. What stood out from the sermon?
2. Read 2 Samuel 7.
 1. Review what's happened in King David's narrative up to this point.
 2. What is the setting of 2 Samuel 7?
 3. Why did David go in and sit with God?
3. Look at verses 18-29, where David sat with God. What happened there?
4. Look closely at David's prayer.
 1. What does he say about God?
 2. What does he say about himself?
 3. What surprised David?
 4. What is his response to God when God changed his plans?
5. Read the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42.

What stands out to you from this passage?
6. What changes do you need to make in your life to make sure you have time to sit with Jesus?

Sermon quote: “As with David, when we sit with Jesus and spend time in his Word he will show us just how much he loves us as well as things that need to change (Matthew 11:28-30). He will reveal to us areas of our lives that are offensive to him and to others. He will exchange our perspective for his, as Paul said in Romans 12:1-2. We will have a metamorphosis of our minds. If we are honest and courageous and allow him to mold us, he will make us bear lots of good fruit: more love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. We will become more and more like Jesus. That is the goal.”

Prayer

1. Spend some time in prayer. Start by worshipping God for who he is and what he has done. Focus on being grateful. Pray about the things you discussed in the study.
2. Here are some things you can pray about for the church:
 - A. Praise God that he met all our needs financially last year.
 - B. That, as a church, we would actively and purposefully engage in the mission of Jesus in Campbell River.
 - C. Our church board and staff as they lead us to live out the mission of Jesus
 - D. River Kids ministry as they reach out to kids in our community.
 - E. **Our missionary of the month:** Aaron and Julie Gole at Camp Homewood
 - F. **Our missionary of the week:** Mike and Karen Livingstone: Power to Change in Saskatoon
 - G. **Local CR church:** Christian Life Fellowship: Pastor Blair and Angela Phibbs