

- Try to find moments of the day in which you can worship and praise God, and work at offering Him praise in all kinds of new situations. You will be blessed!

Final Prayer

Give us truthful hearts Lord God, which rejoice to be fruitful for You in love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness and self control. May we not fail to show this fruit, but submit our hearts and minds to the power of Your Holy Spirit which produces this fruit in us. Thank You Lord God: AMEN

Prayer

Your Love, O Lord Jesus, saves us from more than we can imagine, if we give Your Spirit free reign in our lives. Your Love will save us from bitterness, from fear, from hopelessness, from aggression, and from all the enemy's work to draw us back into sin. Praise You Lord Jesus for Your love, shown in death, which conquers all. AMEN

Other Prayer Suggestions

Weekly Theme: The Cross

Pray for the church, and ask the Lord to pour His blessings and His Spirit on His people so that they witness to the truth of the message of the Cross; that love is victorious over evil.

On-going prayers

- Pray for all who are affected badly by the world recession
- Pray for all who seek to solve the world's troubles in peace
- Give thanks to God for people who do good in our midst

Meditation

How blind!

The God who gave our world liberty and freedom of speech
Through the faithful work and integrity of godly people in the past
Is mostly rejected by those who rule and think they know what's best for all.

How deaf!

The voice of the poor, the marginalised and the suffering
Is drowned within our aggressive world in which the rich benefit
Because they make the rules, but have no place for the love of God for all.

How dumb!

The church watches quietly as the world wallows in its mess;
Its prophetic voice muffled by self-centredness and faithlessness
Its preaching and witness quashed by lack of zeal and freedom in the Spirit,

How awesome!

If the Spirit were to heal the church's broken bones again,
Restore its flesh and voice, and make God's presence known to all
Within a world that needs to hear its Maker's voice again restoring moral order!

Bible Study - 2 Samuel 7:18-29

¹⁸ Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and said, 'Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house, that You have brought me this far?' ¹⁹ And as if this were not enough for You, O Lord God; You have also spoken of Your servant's house for a long time to come. Is this Your plan, O Lord God? ²⁰ What more can David say to You? For You know Your servant, O Lord God! ²¹ For the sake of Your Word, and according to Your will, You have done this great thing and revealed it to Your servant. ²² How great You are, O Lord God; for there is no one like You, and there is no God except You, just as we have been told. ²³ Who

is like Your people Israel? Is there any other nation on earth; redeemed by God to make Himself known, doing great and awesome things for them by clearing away other nations and their gods before his people? ²⁴ You established your people Israel as You very own, and You, O Lord, became their God.

²⁵ And now, O Lord God, confirm forever the prophecy You have spoken about your servant and his house. ²⁶ So that Your name will be great forever. People will say, "The Lord of hosts is God over Israel"; and the dynasty of Your servant David will be established before You. ²⁷ For You, O Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, have revealed this to Your servant, saying, "I will build You a house"; so your servant has found courage to offer this prayer to You. ²⁸ And now, O Lord God, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this good thing to Your servant. ²⁹ Now therefore please bless the house of Your servant, so that it may continue forever before You; for You, O Lord God, have spoken, and with Your blessing the house of Your servant will be blessed forever.'

Review

The beginnings of this great prayer lie in David's simple request to build a house for the Ark of the Covenant. The issue seemed to be a foregone conclusion; it was what David and all Israel wanted, and it would be a true sign of the unity of God's people. But it was right to consult Nathan, the senior prophet in Jerusalem at the time, in order to be sure this was acceptable to God, but the result of this consultation was not what was expected. God intervened dramatically through Nathan, who prophesied God's will to build through David not a Temple, but a dynasty through which He would establish an eternal Kingdom (2 Sam 7:12f.). The anointing of David would be a spiritual, not a physical heritage.

These great scriptures in 2 Samuel 7 are not a 'blueprint' for God's work of salvation through Christ, but they do identify the human lineage through which this plan would work within history. God promised He would use someone 'of David's line' to lead His people for ever (7:16,17). In our passage today, David immediately accepted the message given him by Nathan, even though it was not expected, and he showed great humility in accepting the authority of the Lord and recognised God's right to plan and guide history according to His will (7:20-22). David understood that the Lord had special long term plans for his lineage and dynasty, and immediately went to the Ark of the Covenant to pray (which is the meaning of 'went in and sat before the Lord' – see 7:18).

David's prayer David's prayer (7:18-29) is full of worship to Almighty God, and it is an extraordinary insight into the mind of the man and his spiritual life. It is a prayer of obedience and it does not question God in any way; but it highlights David's sense of awe at the magnificence and mercy of God. Any questions David may have had about a Temple or the future of the Ark are left hanging, for once God has revealed that He will make a dynasty out of David, every other issue becomes insignificant and leaves the stage of this drama!

David praises the Lord for His guidance and protection (18:18), and then goes on to give God the glory for His plan (18:19,20). He offers a personal version of classical Israelite praise in which he thanks God for choosing and redeeming Israel, and also leading them (vv21-24). The climax of the prayer is David's own acceptance of the Lord's favour upon his own life and his future 'dynasty' (18:25,26,27), finishing with an affirmation of his faith in the truth and faithfulness of Almighty God.

A truly spiritual prayer It is very difficult to summarise in any specific way the spiritual nature of such a prayer. You could say that it demonstrates an extraordinary 'piety', but that sounds as if the prayer makes David out to be a more 'saintly' figure than his life in general would suggest. Some think that the prayer was a later composition, 'made up' to

suit the occasion, or like the formal prayer of his son Solomon at the opening of the Temple (1 Kings 8). However, David's prayers in our passage today are fluid and lack any sense of formality apart from their general outline and the overwhelming sense of personal praise to Almighty God. There seems little doubt that the prayer is a genuine expression of David's spiritual life, and it gives us extraordinary insight into David's heart and mind.

The praise of God It is best to sit lightly to all theories about the origins of this prayer of David, because it is an example of what happens when the human soul pours out love and thanksgiving to God. If you read the prayer several times, you will find that you lose any sense of contact with the earthly issues of David's day, such as the building of the Temple or David's immediate family; you become totally caught up in the praise offered to God. This passage of scripture invites the reader to be lifted up in a spirit of praise and wonder at the mighty works of God and His plan for the salvation of humanity.

True praise is highly infectious, and the worship of God in some churches today is sometimes, unfortunately, a poor reflection of the quality and spiritual intensity of praise offered here. Scripture shows us here and in many other places that true worship happens when the wonder of God takes hold of the believer. Worldly things are seen in a different light, and the awesomeness of God's presence is expressed in the simplicity and beauty of the words used in praise. It is little wonder that David is seen as the author and sponsor of praise within the Old Testament, and the psalms ascribed to him lie at the very heart of the Old Testament.

For all the wars and battles David fought and the testing court intrigues he endured during his long life and reign over Israel, here is evidence of the true spiritual nature of the man chosen and anointed by God to found the lineage from which our Saviour Jesus would come. David would only ever see a glimpse of this, but it was enough for him to be 'lost in wonder love and praise'!

Questions *(for use in groups)*

1. Which part of this great prayer caught your attention when you first read it? What stands out and inspires you?
2. Which features of the life of Israel are recalled by David in this prayer, and why?
3. How is the dynasty of David preserved throughout the ages? From your general knowledge of scripture, trace this lineage through to Christ.

Discipleship

Personal comment:

Praise is the most wonderful gift of God. Indeed, when our spirits feel down and we are trapped by the troubles of life, the Holy Spirit's gift of praise will often lift us out of our place of grim unhappiness, and transport us into a place of spiritual confidence and peace. We cannot do such things for ourselves. They are only possible by the divine work of the Spirit and only our Lord God can lift and change the heart in such a manner. Personally, I give thanks to God for this wonderful gift of praise. It is not so much what I do to give it, but what God does in me to release my soul to praise and adore Him who is my Maker.

Ideas for discipleship programme

- *What prevents you from praising God? Think and pray about this for a few days and then ask the Lord the other question, what enables you to praise God? Your prayers will hopefully spur your heart to consider with due care both your own obligations to praise and the Almighty's desire to help you praise.*