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Scripture

2 Samuel 7:1-17

¹ Now when the king was settled in his house, and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him, ² the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." ³ Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind; for the LORD is with you."

⁴ But that same night the word of the LORD came to Nathan: ⁵ Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the LORD: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? ⁶ I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. ⁷ Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, "Why have you not built me a house of cedar?" ⁸ Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the LORD of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel; ⁹ and I have been with you wherever you went, and have cut off all your enemies from before you; and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. ¹⁰ And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place, and be disturbed no more; and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, ¹¹ from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel; and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house. ¹² When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever. ¹⁴ I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me. When he commits iniquity, I will punish him with a rod such as mortals use, with blows inflicted by human beings. ¹⁵ But I will not take my steadfast love from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I put away from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever. ¹⁷ In accordance with all these words and with all this vision, Nathan spoke to David.

Devotional

Every Sunday growing up, I looked at a quilt that hung in the sanctuary of my 200-year-old home church. Depicting the congregation's history, it traced the story from a frontier congregation meeting in a tent, to a growing assembly worshipping in a log cabin, to a church housed in a succession of brick buildings. The story was one of growth and God's faithfulness. However, the Church in America today has much in common with those that gathered in tents in the woods. There is uncertainty and a wide open horizon, but God's promises remain. Because God was never really satisfied with just hanging around in stone buildings. God is always on the move. God will not sit still. And God continues to invite us to look beyond

the houses of cedar or brick or stone where we worship, recognizing that we were and always will be sent as a pilgrim people.

Prayer

Holy God, you are always on the move. Prevent us from being satisfied with sitting still. Embolden us with pilgrim hearts to follow you on this Advent journey. Amen.