

19 Jul 2015 Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

2 Samuel 7: 1-14

Psalm 89

Ephesians 2: 11-22

Mark 6:30-34, 53-56

[Proper 11B/Ordinary 16B/Pentecost 8 July 19, 2015](#) Textweek

There is an obvious question that comes out of the first reading as we read of the debate as to whether David or his offspring should build a house for the Lord; and the obvious question is "who cares?"

King David is living in a comfortable house and wants to build a house for the Lord; Nathan the prophet is fine with the idea but is then told that it is God building David's house and who will also appoint a place for all the people and 'plant them'; then when all that is accomplished, and when there is rest from all their enemies the offspring of David will be the one to build a house for the Lord.

Quite possibly this dialogue, between David, Nathan and God, was written to provide divine authority for the temple in Jerusalem; and at the same time to provide a rational explanation for the timing of its construction; and in that regard the text holds minor historical significance, and so for most of us 'who cares' is a quite understandable response.

There is however, within the text, an interesting ordering and reordering of priorities; and that perhaps raises another question for us in regard to the reality of being 'Church'.

David's apparently honourable desire to build a temple almost camouflages a reality of self priority that David himself is likely unaware of.

David already has a "*house of Cedar*"; and only when he himself is comfortable and satisfied does he consider an honouring and a giving toward God.

It's also worth noting that he looks to god and not to his own people from his place of satisfaction.

David, without thinking and even unconsciously, is linking his own sense of power with another higher power, with little or no concern, attention or consideration of the powerless. In the narrative, and through the prophet Nathan, we are given a reversal of this self-centred power play.

Nathan points out, and gives voice to the orientation of God:

God does not live in a house; but rather moves about "*among all the people*".

God has not asked for anything; rather God has given power to David, raising him from shepherd to prince.

God has been 'with' David "*wherever you went*".

God has defeated David's enemies and made him great like "*the great ones of the earth*."

And, God, not David, has appointed a place and planted all the people; then finally:

God has given David rest from his enemies and to David "*the LORD declares to you that the LORD will make you a house*."

Within the first reading and through the prophetic word of Nathan we have an understanding of the dynamic of God, an orientation of the Divine that is actioned in giving.

we see that only when enemies are defeated, only when all the people are given a house, planted in an appointed place, only then is the true Kingdom established and the true relationship between God and king, Divinity and Humanity, realised.

We can adopt a similar approach to the second reading; and know that through Paul we're looking at the same Old Testament wisdom but in a new and enlightened way.

As we read of the uncircumcised and the circumcised we're probably already forming another 'who cares' response; however, as with the first reading the very process of life is being illuminated in a new light.

Paul sees that new order revealed in and through Christ: "*He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity*".

The old order is no longer for in Christ is revealed "*one new humanity*". The gaps of division are brought together into one new humanity.

Paul sees revealed in Christ what Nathan spoke to David; the end of hostility, "*peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near*"; and a unity of all in relationship with God "*access in one Spirit to the Father*".

Paul identifies the true house that is being built: "*members of the household of God*" and identifies that same household as the true temple; "*the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord*"; Paul no longer sees the temple in Jerusalem, rather a holy temple, and a reality that we are built together into the dwelling place of God.

To fully appreciate what these texts offer, we need to heed the gospel; "*Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves*" and reflect on the gap that keeps us from the reality of being fully in Christ and realising ourselves as "*members of the household of God*".

We can each reflect on the gaps that prevent unity and peace within our own lives;
circumcision and uncircumcision

Muslim and Christian

Male and female

Strangers and citizens with the saints

Rich and poor

Refugee and negatively geared home owner

Eagle and Docker

Labor and Liberal

Gay and straight

Australian and alien

We hear in the gospel that the healing that takes place in that deserted place, the place of inner reflection, is birthed in compassion.

We should therefore mind the gap, and be mindful of the gaps; more than that we might become aware of the unconscious and unthinking view, the 'David view', which looks compassionate and yet camouflages another reality.

Where do we each sit in the gap between rich and poor; how often do we speak of our poverty without realising the reality of our wealth?

When we become mindful of the gaps, we see the primitive nature of a binary world view, we see only the compass of North and south or East and West.

Revealed in Christ is the world that is seen from the singularity of eternity; rather than seeing the poles the wholeness and the roundness of life is discovered in our being "*one new humanity*".

Paul glimpses a world in which "*the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; 22 in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God.*"

Paul sees what Christ reveals, and we; perhaps if we could reach and "*touch even the fringe of his cloak*"; we too might be healed