

2 Sam. 23:5 The Everlasting Covenant: The Believer's Support Under Distress

(Sermon Title taken from a sermon preached in 1669 by John Owen)

On the night before Jesus was betrayed he said, "***This is my body, which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.***" When we take the Lord's Supper we remember the death of Christ. His body was broken as a sacrifice for sinners. Today, as we remember, I want to focus on the cup . . . the cup of the new covenant. In the same way after supper he took the cup and said, "***This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.***" Brothers and sisters, ALL the blessings of God, ALL the promises of God, are secured for us by the blood of Christ, who ushered in a NEW covenant, which is the fulfilment of all the Old Covenants: Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David.

Our text will be 2 Sam. 23:5. "**For does not my house stand so with God? For he has made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure. For will he not cause to prosper all my help and my desire?**" Let me say from the beginning, the ESV translation is a bit difficult. After studying, I think the KJV and NAS translations are better, especially for the first part of the verse, which reads, "***Although my house be not so with God, yet, He has made with me an everlasting covenant.***" And this fits the title of the sermon. These are the last words of David, just before he died. And I think he is considering the state of his house. Let's consider his house for a moment.

I believe he is looking back at his life, his legacy, and what is going on in his family. And what do you think he sees? From the beginning of his influence when Saul became king, he remembers what kind of men gathered around him, foreigners and fugitives and scoundrels. He remembers all the blood he shed and all horrible circumstances surrounding his ascension to the throne, all the people who hated him while the kingdom was still divided. He remembers the wars with foreign nations. He remembers all the sins against God, the census he took against God's command and the punishment that came as Israel suffered sickness and disease (70,000 men). He remembers his sin with Bathsheba; and worse, his sin and murder of Uriah the Hittite, one of his most faithful friends. He remembers the death of his child with Bathsheba.

And now, at the end of his life, he remembers the great revolution brought on by his Son Absalom, the son who entered Jerusalem and had his way with all David's wives and concubines in front of all Israel. I am sure he thought of his failures as a father. (He loved Absalom from his heart and wanted to see him follow the Lord.) He remembers his failures as a husband, (multiple wives?), his failures as a king. And from what I've read of David, these things are the tip of the iceberg when he considers his own heart! I think of his words in Ps. 25:16-18: "**Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted. ¹⁷ The troubles of my heart are enlarged; bring me out of my distresses. ¹⁸ Consider my affliction and my trouble, and forgive all my sins.**" Brothers and sisters, here we have the great, king, David. And, at the end of his life, he considers his house. And it is not good!!!! And now fast forward through the history of Israel. Every king must say the same about his house.

What about your house? What do you see? I will speak for myself! I see a lot of mess and a lot of sin! I see all the ways I have failed God with my hands and with my heart! I see my failures as a

son. Oh, how I have not always been obedient to my mother and father. I see my failures as a young single man. Oh, how I wish I could go back and change soooo many things about the decisions I made in high school and college! I see my failures as a husband. And Kristen can testify (though she is way too gracious to me!). I see my failures as a father. I have dropped the ball in family worship (especially these days). I have failed my kids over and over and over! As a pastor, I fail every day. Oh, how I have not prayed as I ought! I have not studied as I ought! I have not made disciples as I ought! On and on I must go . . . If I consider my house!

What about your house? How does it look? It is full of failures. It is full of wasted times. It is full of bad decisions. And, if we delve deeper, we also see as parents that our house is often filled with disobedient rebellious children and grandchildren (think of Absalom with David). And worse, what if our children never come to the Lord! May it not be! Nevertheless, it is sometimes true. Our lives are full of the circumstances of sin. I really believe these are the thoughts David was having at the end of his life. But . . . by faith, David does not keep his thoughts on the failures of his house. **“Although my house is like this . . . God has made an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and secure.”** The NAS captures it best: **“For all my salvation and all my desire, will he not indeed make it grow.”** Truth: Our salvation, our good, our peace, our rest, all blessings, are rooted not in the circumstances of our house, but in the goodness of God in keeping his covenant. (Jesus says, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . .”)

In this verse we see three truths about the covenant. Today, we will only focus on one.

1. It is eternal. David’s house was earthly. David’s house was temporal. It was made up of the things of this world; things that will pass away. And the thought of it caused great distress to David. For he knew he had not been completely faithful. And I am sure as he thought about the state of his house, by the Spirit, David looked to something greater, something eternal. He looked to the promise of God to save him from his sins.

I am sure he thought of Noah who also a sinner, a man whose house wasn’t in order (Ex: Ham). Gen. 9:16: God says to him: **“When the bow is in the cloud, then I will look upon it, to remember the everlasting covenant between God and every living creature of all flesh that is on the earth.”** As a descendent of Abraham, I am sure David remembered God’s covenant with him, who fell into great sins. Yet, God said to him, **“Behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ⁵ No longer shall your name be called Abram, but your name shall be Abraham, for I have made you the father of a multitude of nations. ⁶ I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make you into nations, and kings shall come from you. ⁷ And I will establish my covenant between me and you and your offspring after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. ⁸ And I will give to you and to your offspring after you the land of your sojournings, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession, and I will be their God”** (Gen. 17:3-8). The same can be said of Moses! Because of his sin, he was not even allowed to enter the Promised Land! Yet, Heb. 11:10 says, **“For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.”**

Now, as we think about David and his comfort at the end of his life, we see this great delight and ease of mind, did not come from the things of this world, from his descendants, from the thought

of his own accomplishments, from the state of his physical house. It came from something eternal. More specifically, it came from SOMEONE eternal! Look with me to 2 Sam. 7. In this chapter, the prophet Nathan spoke to David the promises of God to bless him and the people of Israel physically. Verse 9: **“I have cut off your enemies . . .”** (also v. 11) And, **“I will make for you a great name,”** which David has to this day. Verse 11: **“I will make for you a house.”** But notice what he says in v. 12: **“When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.”** Clearly, he is speaking of Solomon. Verse 13: **“He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom . . .”** But notice the next word: **“Forever.”** And look down at the end of v. 16: **“And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me. Your throne shall be established forever.”**

Now, doesn't this sound funny to you as we look back on the house of David and the house of Solomon, as it continues through the splitting of the Kingdom and the rebellion of the people and the end of the monarchy (722 B.C. in the north; 586 B.C. in the south). Now, you might say, *“God will establish this kingdom again in the future through David's descendants.”* Maybe so. But, as long as there is sin on this earth, the kingdoms of men will not last! So, what's the connection with the eternal?

It is eternal because it was established from eternity between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, finding its foundation in everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 says, **“I have loved you with an everlasting love.”** This covenant did not find its beginning when we were saved, but from eternity.

It is eternal because it will never cease! The things of this earth, even sin, does not nullify this covenant. David knew he would see God face to face and the that *“Surely, goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever”* (Ps. 23:6).

It is eternal because of the matter of it: the things that make it up. It is not a covenant about the growing of our houses on this earth, the increase of wealth, the accumulation of power and thing—but it is a covenant about everlasting things, things which are not seen (2 Cor. 4:18). Grace is eternal. Mercy is eternal. Joy is eternal. Comfort is eternal. It is not about the Land of Canaan, thrones, or kingdoms, but about “everlasting things.”

And the Key to this everlasting Covenant, brothers and sisters, is Christ! **“*This cup is the new covenant in my blood, as often as you drink it, remember me.*”** EVERYTHING this covenant promises to us, is dependent upon the person and work of Christ! For He is eternal! Possibly the day before he died, Jesus said these words: **“Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do”** (John 17:1-4).

Today, as we take the Lord's Supper, as David looked forward, we look back. And we remember his death, his blood that was shed. And his death accomplished ALL the blessings of God

promised in the eternal covenant. Brothers and sisters, when we consider our houses, they will pass away. And when we look to ourselves and our accomplishments, and even on our best days, we see sin and death and disappointment and heart ache and distress. But, when we look to Christ, we see the ETERNAL Son of God, who established a better covenant, a new covenant in his blood. Look unto Him today!

Col. 1:15-19: “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things were created through him and for him. ¹⁷ And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. ¹⁹ For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell.”

Heb. 1:1-3: “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. ³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high . . .”