

# Sermon Text for December 20, 2020

By Rev. Robert K. Bronkema

*II Samuel 7:1-11, 16 Luke 1:26-38*  
*“Advent and Salvation”*

We come to the end of our Advent journey. Over these past four weeks we have seen Advent and the second coming of Jesus. We believe Jesus is coming, that he is literally coming back and so we have to be ready for his coming. We saw Advent and baptism and recognized that the initiative of God is what is driving all that we have around us and baptism is the proclamation to all the God has loved us even before we are able to love God. We looked at Advent and repentance and we saw that as disciples of Jesus Christ and as his workers here on this earth we are called to first and foremost repent in order to be prepared for coming. We eliminated the wiring that is a part of most of us which requires those receiving ministry to repent before we will reach out. That is not how God works. Even while we were yet sinners God died for us, how can we do any less with what we have to reach out to others?

This Sunday we look at Advent and Salvation as we look at our Savior who came upon this earth, God who came in the flesh to be one of us, so that he could save us from our sin. Advent is a time that we proclaim that salvation is not just at hand, but it is here, our salvation is here and now. We don't have to wait and anticipate the coming of our salvation, it is here. But that was not the case for Mary and that was not the case for King David as they were told, each by God, to wait for salvation was at hand. Today in our Scripture readings we move away from Isaiah and John which we have been looking at for the past two Sundays and nestle into new characters for us this Advent, King David, you know, the one who killed Goliath and Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Advent, we will find in our two Scriptures today, requires us to be aware of the salvation story in which we participate. Let's read.

## **READ**

There is a lot going on in our first Scripture. King David is at a point in his life where things are fairly peaceful. Through wars and conquests he has positioned the nation of Israel in a place where those nations surrounding him are pretty much at bay. He decides that it is not right that he lives in a palace and God does not have yet a home, a temple, a church, in which to reside. So he wants to build a palace for God. It's a nice thought, God appreciates it, but God comes back to him and says, I am going to give you a promise now that will last for all eternity.

I am going to establish a covenant with you, make a promise, that you will be able to count on for all eternity. Look at vs. 16 and the promise is found there.

Your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me, your throne shall be established forever. David didn't ask for this but God takes the initiative and says David, your house will be saved forever and established forever. I promise you this. In vs.14 he states on top of that all of the generations that follow David: "I will be a father to him, and he shall be my son to me." The offspring of David, the lineage of David is tied to this promise. No other person in Scripture, no other family in Scripture gets this promise. God basically says that through you and those who follow you, your family, salvation will travel.

We know that as David's life is not linear so the salvation story is not linear. In just 4 chapters David will commit adultery with Bathsheba. This salvation promise is not jeopardized, but the people of Israel face a road that leads through captivity and slavery in Babylon, to the scattering of the Jewish people throughout the world, to the Holocaust and its atrocities, to today. The promise of David was not broken, and when God comes as one of us in the flesh, that promise is fulfilled, finished, and this is the most important aspect of that, is extended to all of us even if we are not born in the family of David.

It is important to understand that the salvation story before the coming of Jesus, was told through the house of David, was told through the family of David. This is where we find ourselves in Luke 1. We pick up the salvation story in vs.26 and 27 with the introduction of Mary to all of us. These verses give us a lot of information. We read that Mary is engaged to a man from the house of David. Mary is going to marry into a really, really good family. She is joining a family through which the salvation story of all of humanity runs. She knows that, her family knows that, when we read this in Luke we now know that. It is not insignificant. I know that often at Christmas we read those genealogies in Matthew and the one in chapter 3 of Luke and we think what a waste of time. It is not a waste of time unless we fail to realize that the salvation story that was principally located in the ancestors of David now runs through Jesus and his act upon the cross.

Mary is engaged to Joseph, whom, we read in vs.27, is of the house of David. Don't skip over this. I love the dialogue between Mary and the angel here, it gives you a little insight into how this teenage girl was thinking. The angel tells her that she is going to conceive, bear and name a child. This child will be called the son of the Most High, remember vs.14 of II Samuel 7, he is the one who will receive the throne of David. He will carry out the salvation story that was handed down from David on. He is the next in line. The kingdom of this child will have no end.

Jesus' birth will mark a brand new chapter in the salvation story. It is through Jesus that all will be saved. All of humanity, not just those of the house of David, will find salvation through your child Mary.

Mary responds by basically saying, you know, I didn't really hear anything you said after the whole conceive, bear and name statement that you made. Are you saying I'm going to conceive, I'm going to bear and name a child? How is this going to be possible. I'm engaged, but I've never been with a man, you know, like that, and I don't know if she added EEWww, as a teenage girl might do. But she was clearly not getting past the whole vs.31. The message of who Jesus was was much less important to Mary than how Jesus was going to come about through her. But we don't have to get hung up on her virginity, because we are able to understand the message of the angle that has an impact upon us that is life changing. Salvation history now runs through our Savior Jesus Christ is the result of the promise that God made with David and now the promise that God makes with Mary. Jesus, which means God saves, will be the savior of all humanity and you no longer need to be in the house of David, you just need to be a part of the human race.

For this fourth Sunday in Advent we don't have to wait for salvation. It is here now, through Jesus. While the salvation story was passed down through the house of David in the past, it is now passed on to all of us through the birth, life, suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus. But this faith still needs to be passed down from generation to generation. Now, I know that our children can't inherit our faith, but we must put them in a position where they are exposed to and hear the faith that is the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the one in which we stand.

This week we gathered to celebrate a life and a resurrection of one of God's children. Lisa Fisher, then Frackman, was born in this church, was baptized in this church, was confirmed in this church 50 years ago, was married in this church, her children either were married here or had their children baptized here, some of them both, and then on Friday she spent her last days here in this church as we buried her. People, the legacy of faith matters. You can't pass faith on from generation to generation, it isn't genetic, but you can put yourself and you family in a place where you know that for generations, for nearly 190 years the Gospel of Jesus Christ as been proclaimed as salvation for all of humanity.

The church, this church and the church universal, is next in line for the house of David. I know that we each have to accept and receive Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, but when you find yourself in a place where families over these many, many generation have been giving of their lives over to Jesus, it makes you realize how this promise made from God to Mary, that of

his kingdom there will be no end. Jesus has chosen his church to establish and build up the kingdom. That is why we are called his bride.

There is a movement in Christianity to move away from mainline denominations and churches. I have to admit that some have lost their way, but I believe that God will remain faithful and bring us back to him. Like the nation of Israel whose faith journey was never a straight line and meandered, so it is true with churches. Your children and you yourselves have been exposed to the church and its teachings and its desire to reach souls with the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the many forms that takes from VBS, to social justice, to ministry with the food bank, to a generous budget for relief work around us. To Sunday morning messages that focus on Jesus and the need for each one of us to love him as our Savior and that without him we are lost and not saved at all. A church that proclaims that salvation is found in Christ and in Christ alone. No one comes to the Father except through him.

Some would prefer to allow their children to choose for themselves and so don't expose them to the church and its teachings. Then the history and the legacy of salvation is robbed. Of course, God can take their lives and change it and breathe into it, but God would much more prefer that His children remain in His home, his family, so that they can work out his kingdom together. Folks, here at First Presbyterian we are in a position to impact the world when it comes into contact with us.

I know this from an experience I had this past week, on Friday actually. As I was getting ready for the funeral service a young man and woman walked in, they looked very out of place. The young man said, hello pastor Bob, do you remember me? I didn't he had a mask on, he told me his name, which was vaguely familiar, he took down his mask and he was one of our youth from years ago. Remember those biker boys, those neighborhood kids? Well, he was homeless with his girlfriend and they spent the night outside and could they come in and warm up for a bit? Here was a kid now an adult who was homeless, no longer welcome at home, and came to the church because it was probably the only place in his life where he felt welcomed. The impact we have on this community and on this world cannot be underestimated. We are making a difference. People see this church as a refuge, as a sanctuary, as a home. This is our legacy.

Advent and Salvation reminds us that we are entrusted with carrying that legacy on from generation to generation. This church is filled with generational families. In spite of pastors who have been more or less constructive and effective, you have persevered through all of them. I might be your biggest test to date..., but you have remained and you have identified this church as the place where you want your child to be exposed to the salvation history identified in Jesus

Christ. We have seen seasons of growth and seasons of atrophy in this church over the 190 years.

But the family remains and you are a part of that family and you will want to provide that faith for your family as well as the generations before you have. Amen.