

August 20, 2017     “Destiny”     2 Samuel 7:8-11a

The Movie “Forest Gump” starring Tom Hanks is based on the novel by the same name. It is one of those movies which does two things at the same time. On the surface it tells the story of an intellectually and physically challenged boy who becomes a man, and a very successful business man. In telling us the life story of Forest Gump however the movie also takes some one of my age through the days of our lives. Childhood evolves into teen years, into the college/university days, the Kennedy years, the Vietnam War and the music in the background makes those years feel like personal memories.

There is a very touching scene in which Forest has come home to his mother’s bedside because she is ill. Forest asks her what’s wrong. And she replies, “I’m dying sweetheart. It’s my time. It’s my destiny.” Forest takes a moment to absorb this emotionally charged news. Then he asks this question. “What’s my destiny, Momma?” She smiles and then she shares that word that has the ring of wisdom because it is the truth, “I don’t know Forest. You’re going to have to figure that out for yourself.” She died of the cancer on a Monday.

Our late friend and brother in Christ, Eugene Burrell used to tease me, “I’ve never heard you mention predestination. I thought all Presbyterian ministers preached on predestination at least once a year.” And he would smile that smile of his waiting to see if he would get the rise he was looking for. Shakespeare’s Hamlet contains this line. “There is a

## 2.

divinity that shapes our ends.” You see, we learn early in the play that Hamlet has just returned from Wittenburg where he has been going to University at the height of the Luther inspired Reformation. He has been exposed to that Biblical strain of teaching that states very clearly having chosen to follow Jesus, we enter upon a journey that God has purposed for us. Secularists talk about fate. Christians talk about destiny. They are not exactly the same. Destiny is a Biblical concept, a faith filled concept and we find it spoken of here in 2 Samuel 7.

The Word of the Lord comes to the prophet Nathan, and he in turn is to tell David this Word of the Lord. It begins in verse 8 and flows through the little portion I read to you this morning from verses 9-11. “This is what the Lord Almighty says: I took you from the pasture, and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel.” If David did not know it before (and in fact David saw glimpses of this before) but in this revelation to Nathan David is about to get a clear picture of his eternal destiny.

What we learn as we read 2 Samuel 7 is that the greatest King of Israel is not a self made man. Were he filled with pride, the deadliest of the 7 deadly sins, that is what he would claim, that he had worked for everything he has gotten, that he did things with his own hands, following the insight of his own mind. And he would not be the man of faith that David was. God reveals to David in this chapter of the Samuel

3.

chronicles, how he has gotten to be King. God has been leading him all the way.

As a shepherd serving his father, playing his harp, singing praise songs that he composed God was shaping him and preparing him for the greater works of his life and for the work of shepherding Israel. The insight gained here is that when David was shepherding his father's flocks of sheep it was not about sheep care at all. He was learning about his personal limitations. And he was learning that he was capable of courage. He faced the bear and the lion and he protected the lambs and the grown sheep as well. He made provision for them, finding quiet pools of water and fields of sweet grass. He was learning to lead. He was learning to care. Most important of all, David was learning to depend on God and to use his head no matter what was happening.

God's word to David through the prophet Nathan was the equivalent of "you are not stupid. You can connect the dots. I the Lord God was with you in the field. I brought you into friendship with Jonathan and the courts of Saul. I nurtured you and lead you step by step. In my time, that is in God's time you became King of Israel. David was aware when he faced Goliath that it was not just that he was a good shot with that sling of his that brought Goliath down. It was God's presence that gave him the courage to try. It was God's presence that blessed the flight of the stone. It was God's presence that caused the

4.

troops to respond when Goliath fell to the earth before a boy that could not wear armor or swing a sword like a trained soldier. It was a miracle. Over night David was a celebrity. A warrior. A leader of men.

The word of the Lord is “I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have cut off all your enemies from before you.” God was there, God was leading the way. His Spirit of power prepared the ground and guided David’s steps. Now there is another side to that coin. This does not mean David did nothing. He applied himself to following where God was leading. He practiced with the sword and the spear until he mastered what a soldier has to know, the skills of fighting and the strategy of war. He used his head to be creative in the faces of genuine challenges. He worked hard at being a good leader. As important as any single thing David did, was this. He worked at practicing the presence of God.

He surrounded himself with men like Nathan the prophet. A holy, faithful man of God. He trusted Nathan to honestly tell him what God was doing, and what God’s will was. David prayed. He prayed a lot. He sang a lot. The whole of the Book of Psalms is testimony to the devotional life of David...man of prayer, man of praise. A man and then a man who was King who sought the blessing of God and the leading of God. God has said David will not be the one to build the Temple in Jerusalem. Notice this...there is no speech in which

## 5.

David says 'that's not fair! I served you faithfully and I don't get to do this?' David seeks the leading hand of God and he follows where God leads. He applies himself in faithfully doing what really needs to be done.

David is discovering what Forest Gump asked his mother to tell him. David is discovering his destiny. And it is not just the simple reality of surviving time in the wilderness when Saul treated him unfairly as an outlaw. His destiny was not and is not just being king. That's chapter one of David's story. David's life is going to have implications far beyond the years of his serving as the administrator of Israel in the throne room of Jerusalem. "Now I will make your name great," says God. "like the names of the greatest men on earth." You're not just a king, David. You are going to become a legend. The greatest King Israel ever had. The people of Israel are going to be as they never have been before. They will be at peace, and I mean will have peace in their hearts and souls. They will know who they are, because David knows who he is....servant to God and God's people.

So how great did God promise to make David, his legacy and his name? Greater than the royal palace in Jerusalem which had impressed David. Verse 11..."the Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you." On the surface of those words it seems that a dynasty is being born. A line of kings. But that is not the end of this

6.

promise. The point was not lost on one physician, a fellow named Luke... “In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world...So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and the line of David...he went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him....and while they were there the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son, and she wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger....Jesus of the house and the line of David....Glory to God in the highest.”

Destiny. It involves David. And it involves you and me....because it involves Jesus, the Son of the living God, the Saviour of the world.

Let us pray;

Lord, Creator, Shaper of our lives. We give thanks for the story of King David. We gives thanks for the promise that YOU made to him, a promise that you kept and which involves us in these times and this place. Like David, we praise your name and worship you. Thank you for shaping our destiny, even as YOU forged the destiny of Jesus. Amen