

Advent 4 - December 21, 2014  
Text: 2 Samuel 7:1-16  
Theme: "Not Us, But God"

**The fourth Sunday in Advent falls just days before the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord, or as we have come to call it, Christmas. However, the texts today, as with most of the Advent texts, have little to do with a baby being born at Christmas and more about that baby's return at the end of time. Mary was all caught up in the fact that she was about to have a baby when she was a virgin. Now that is a bit odd, but that was not really the point the angel was making. The real point the angel was making was not that this baby would be born to a virgin, but that this baby would finally build the house Mary's great-great grandfather, King David, had wanted to build centuries before.**

**David wanted to build a house for the Lord because he was living in a palace of cedar and the Lord had a tent of cloth. David saw the obvious disparity and wanted to fix it but God said no. In the coming years, it would become obvious that David could barely manage his own house much less tend to God's house in any real way. No, God would be building his own house according to his own plan and at his own time.**

**God's house would not be made of cedar and gold. His house would be flesh and blood. As usual, David missed the point that**

**God called him as King not because of anything David could do, but that he called him as King and then gifted him to be who God wanted him to be to further his plan for the salvation of all mankind. Don't you find that story of King David slaying Goliath just a little incredulous? A little shepherd boy brings down a 9 foot giant with a sling and 5 smooth stones? Yet, it is no more incredulous than Jesus being crucified, dying, being buried and then rising from the dead three days later. God does what he does for his own purposes. He does not explain it to us and we have to remember that we are just his instruments. We are the clay. He is the potter. We don't build houses for him. He builds us from the inside out and then dwells in us.**

**Now as we approach the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord, remember that we are still in the midst of the build. We stand on a continuum with King David, Mother Mary alongside Martin Luther, Moses and my mother and father. We are all marching onward toward Paradise and being built into God's house. All the saints before us played their parts in the build and now we play ours. But we never for a moment think that it is we who are building this house. It is all God. What we do is live faithfully and obediently, listening for his next instructions which for the last 2,000 years has been summarized with the phrase, "go and make disciples of all**

**nations by Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them everything Jesus taught us.” That is how God is building this house. He is using us as his tools but he is the carpenter.**

**So we look around us and moan about the deficit, the roof that is wearing out, the boiler that is being held together with matchbooks and chewing gum and we are prone to complain. We sin constantly. We treat others badly. We lie, cheat and steal and then try to justify our behavior. All of this gets in the way of God’s work and sometimes even derails it for a time, but God is the builder. We are only the tools. Sometimes we are excellent tools and oftentimes we are not the sharpest tool in the shed, but when we need to be fixed or when new tools or new materials are required, God will provide for all of that. He is building this house, not we. We have only to be faithful and obedient until our Lord returns for us. He has provided all the power we need in his Word. He has left behind his holy supper for our nourishment. In a few days, we celebrate his first coming into the flesh, which was promised hundreds of years before it happened. Now we wait for the fulfillment of the last promise, his return for us, and finally, the completion of God’s house.**