

*Then King David said to the whole assembly: “My son Solomon, the one whom God has chosen, is young and inexperienced. The task is great, because this palatial structure is not for man but for the LORD God. <sup>2</sup> With all my resources I have provided for the temple of my God—gold for the gold work, silver for the silver, bronze for the bronze, iron for the iron and wood for the wood, as well as onyx for the settings, turquoise, stones of various colors, and all kinds of fine stone and marble—all of these in large quantities.*

*David praised the LORD in the presence of the whole assembly, saying,*

*“Praise be to you, LORD, the God of our father Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> Now, our God, we give you thanks, and praise your glorious name.*

*<sup>14</sup> “But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand. <sup>15</sup> We are foreigners and strangers in your sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope. <sup>16</sup> LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and all of it belongs to you. <sup>17</sup> I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you. <sup>18</sup> LORD, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you. (1 Chronicles 29:1-2,10-18)*

### **Remember Who You Are and Who the Lord Is**

He was getting old. He had enjoyed a long life, a good life. Through the years he had become quite successful gaining wealth and honor among his people. He looked back at how God had blessed him, the beautiful home that he had built himself, and he started thinking about God’s house. It was a tent. It was still beautiful. Designed by God it had served the people for many years. It still had a very special place in the people’s heart. But David wanted to do more. But when King David told the prophet what he was planning to do the Lord told David through the prophet Nathan, “Nope!” So for his remaining years the grizzled warrior king made extensive preparations for his son who the Lord promised would build the Lord’s house, the temple.

At this point Solomon is still young and inexperienced while the task at hand was great. There wasn’t going to be anything “good enough” when it came to God’s house, the temple because it wasn’t for man but for the Lord. From everything that David willingly offers some wonder if he gave everything that he had left to the Lord to have this temple built. And it wasn’t just David either. The leaders and people also gave willingly, freely, and wholeheartedly to the Lord. It had to have been an incredible thing to witness! While he’s

praising the Lord for all of this, David asks an interesting question: **“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand”** (v.14).

Who was David? Well, he was the King of the people of Israel. At the same time, had it not been for the Lord raising him up he would have been a lowly shepherd. Being a shepherd is a fine occupation, at the same time not nearly as noteworthy or glorious as king. Who was David? You see everything that he gives to the temple—gold, silver, precious stones—and it’s quite obvious he is very wealthy. At the same time too, he recognizes that too comes from the Lord. David was the youngest son so his inheritance would not have been as great if the Lord had not blessed David the way he did. David perhaps recalled other times when he was on the run for fear of his life and reliant of others to take care of him. Who was David? He was a very successful individual. But he still had enemies all around him, family issues that would have made the most scandalous headlines and best soap operas. Who was David? He followed the Lord and was after the Lord’s heart. But he also was well aware of his failures and his sins. He was a murderer, a cheater, adulterer, and prideful. David knew he was completely at the Lord’s mercy. So when David sees all of these offerings brought by himself and by the people it gives him chance to reflect. He recognizes everything he has, has done, accomplished, was came from the Lord. Everything they gave only was possible because the Lord had given it to them first.

Do you recognize this? It’s a good question that David asks, one that we can personally ask ourselves: who am I? This isn’t an existential crisis or anything like that but a chance for us to self-reflect. Who am I? Who are you? Where do find and rest your identity? Who am I? Of course we might respond with our name and even last name to let someone we are part of this family. With that we follow with what we do—retired, not much, farmer, rancher, truck driver, nurse, etc. Maybe your reply is mom, dad, grandpa, grandma, or something like that. But, think about it more deeply: who are you? What makes you, you? Perhaps you are well off or have little to none. We might think of our accomplishments and achievements, the type of person that we are or, at least, hope we might be. Perhaps you want to be known as a hard worker. Kind. Determined. Do your best with what you have. You might be generous and even help where you can.

But who am I? Who are you? We might even recognize with David that everything is from the Lord. At the same time, you did put in all that time and effort. You were the one who pushed hard and know how to work! You put in the hours and the sacrifice all while taking care of your family too! Look at what you’ve been able to do for yourself! We know everything comes from the Lord and, yet, how quickly we seem to critique the Lord to let him know how he could be doing better and maybe hasn’t quite given you enough. We still grumble and complain when it’s not like they have or you’re not in the position that you wish you had. Oh, we know we deserve nothing. And still our pride wounds easily when we don’t

receive the recognition, compensation, salutation or appreciation that we feel is only fair. Would it hurt to be able to have the experiences and life like she lives?

Who am I? Who are you? Not as talented as he is or outgoing like she might be. Who am I? How much of what you do is simply because you tell yourself you have to, or you should, otherwise it won't be done? You do it because you are afraid of looking like a failure while trying to uphold someone's expectations; maybe it's just your own. You do it because your conscience is bothering and are hoping this might make you feel a little better. Who am I? Busy and often too busy, you feel, to consider time with God because you have all this other stuff going on. Who am I? You might feel wore out and tired, burnt out and exhausted from all the demands and responsibilities. Who am I? Not able to do as much and afraid of being on burden on other people? Maybe you feel like a failure who didn't live up to your potential and a disappointment to yourself.

Who am I? Who are you? David answers that question. **We are foreigners and strangers in the Lord's sight, as were all our ancestors. Our days on earth are like a shadow, without hope.** You have an expiration date from the moment of conception and there's a not a thing you can do to add another minute to it. Our days are numbered and as you age time seems to slip by more quickly. We are simply foreigners and strangers in this world passing through to the next spot. We are passing shadows, here one moment and the next all those accolades and accomplishments will be forgotten. Your treasures and stuff sold or thrown in the garbage. Memories of you will fade like a shadow, it's here and then it's gone as if it was never there.

Notice how all of that is "me" focused; it's focused on yourself! The thing is, none of that belongs to you. The only reason why you have any of it is because the Lord gave them to you. Remember who you are and remember who the Lord is.

David said it: "Yours, LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendor, for everything in heaven and earth is yours. Yours, LORD, is the kingdom; you are exalted as head over all. Wealth and honor come from you; you are the ruler of all things. In your hands are strength and power to exalt and give strength to all" (vv.11-12). Everything belongs to the Lord. He is beyond time and space unable to be contained or put into place; from everlasting to everlasting he is God. No one and nothing lifts him up; he does the lifting. All the greatness, strength and power, glory, majesty, and splendor is his and his alone. He doesn't need anyone and is dependent on nothing. Nothing is out of his control or beyond his capability. He is ruler and controller of all things.

And it's the same Lord who placed himself within our time, in our space, taking on our muscly flesh with blood flowing through his veins and was made truly human. Still being fully God from eternity, he sets aside that majesty and splendor, wealth and honor, strength and power for a time. He made himself nothing taking the very nature of servant to serve. After all, that's why Jesus came. He came not to be served but to serve knowing full well that he would be rejected by those he came to save. And still he goes to give us up his life to pay

the ransom price for you. He becomes obedient to death even death on the cross. Because this is who you were: slave to sin and bound by the devil; by nature corrupt, enemy of God and chained by death. But you've been bought with his precious blood that flowed through his veins. You are free in Jesus! You've been washed by Jesus' blood removing sin and its stain. You are right with God and this Lord with all that power, might, and glory is on your side. You've been set apart by the Spirit who works through God's Word to create in you a new heart. He did all the work for you and even works that gift of faith that believes this is most certainly true. All this he did because he had already chosen you from before the creation of the world to be his own. He shares your flesh and blood so that you might call him brother and are welcomed into God's family. Yes, we remain strangers and foreigners in this world, but not before the Lord. No, heaven is your home. All this Jesus does, not for himself, but for you that you might be his own and live with him. You are heir God's kingdom and his inheritance is yours.

So who are you? Who am I? You are God's baptized child! You've been washed with water and the word and raised with Christ made a new creation free from Satan's grip and sin's chains. So this is who you are: you are invited into God's presence while he comes down to you. He's not a faraway and distant God. He's here in Word, water, bread and wine for you. He welcomes you before his throne where he hears your prayers and gladly answers while he comes to you assuring that in him you find rest. This is who you are: you are his guest at His feast, his Holy Supper where Jesus gives you himself—his body and blood—in, with, and under the bread and wine to strengthen and keep you in the one true faith. Who are you? You are forgiven. Go in peace.

This is who you are: we are God's servants that he sends out to do his work. And grace upon grace, he works in us hearts that joyfully give and willingly serve. God doesn't need your money. He doesn't need your stuff. He doesn't need your time or service or you. But he chooses to. And he chooses you to go because your neighbor needs you. He blesses us with every good thing we need for body and life to enjoy and then to use to serve and love those he puts in our lives so that the name of Jesus may be glorified in you and you in him. And I thank the Lord, as David did so long ago, and praise the Lord because I see how he works in you and through your willing and joyful generosity, your love, your support with your offerings, your prayers, your time and talents. And with David I pray: **“Lord, the God of our fathers Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, keep these desires and thoughts in the hearts of your people forever, and keep their hearts loyal to you.”** Amen.