

# Sermon Note: Call to Worship

## Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

### Introduction

The call to worship is an invitation to come before God with hearts open and ready to experience God's presence. It is a moment that transitions us from our everyday lives into a sacred space where we can connect with the Divine. In 2 Samuel 7:1-14a, we see King David, settled in his palace, expressing a desire to build a house for God. This passage highlights the importance of intentionality and reverence in our approach to worship.

As we continue our series on the elements of our traditional worship service, we focus this week on the "Call to Worship." Through David's story, we explore how our desire to honor God and God's presence calls us into a deeper relationship with the Divine. Let us consider how we can respond to God's invitation to worship with hearts full of gratitude and reverence.

### Illustration Video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COiLnBhVdkY>

In the 2012 film version of *Les Misérables*, Jean Valjean (played by Hugh Jackman) sings "Bring Him Home." In this prayerful moment, Valjean is calling out to God with a deep sense of reverence and compassion.

### Video Discussion Questions

1. How does Valjean's prayer reflect the elements of a call to worship?
2. What emotions and intentions does Valjean bring to his prayer that can inspire our own approach to worship?
3. How can we relate Valjean's deep sense of reverence and compassion to David's desire to build a house for God?
4. In what ways can our worship be a response to God's presence in our lives, similar to Valjean's heartfelt plea?
5. How does this scene challenge or affirm your understanding of what it means to be called to worship?

### 2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19 (NRSVue)

<sup>1</sup>Now when the king was settled in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, <sup>2</sup>the king said to the prophet Nathan, "See now, I am living in a house of cedar, but the ark of God stays in a tent." <sup>3</sup>Nathan said to the king, "Go, do all that you have in mind, for the Lord is with you."

<sup>4</sup>But that same night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, <sup>5</sup>"Go and tell my servant David: Thus says the Lord: Are you the one to build me a house to live in? <sup>6</sup>I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent and a tabernacle. <sup>7</sup>Wherever I have moved about among all the people of Israel, did I ever speak a word with any of the tribal leaders of Israel, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'

<sup>8</sup>Now therefore thus you shall say to my servant David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel, <sup>9</sup>and I have been with you wherever you

went and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and I will make for you a great name, like the name of the great ones of the earth. <sup>10</sup>And I will appoint a place for my people Israel and will plant them, so that they may live in their own place and be disturbed no more, and evildoers shall afflict them no more, as formerly, <sup>11</sup>from the time that I appointed judges over my people Israel, and I will give you rest from all your enemies. Moreover, the Lord declares to you that the Lord will make you a house. <sup>12</sup>When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come forth from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. <sup>13</sup>He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. <sup>14</sup>I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me.

### **Scripture Discussion Questions**

1. What did David want to do for God according to verse 2?
2. Why do you think David wanted to build a house for God?
3. What does this reveal about David's character and relationship with God? How can we examine our motives in serving God?
4. Nathan initially told David to proceed with his plan to build a house, as the Lord was with him. Then God told Nathan to tell David that he was not the one to build a house for God. Have you ever felt like you've heard conflicting messages from God? How did you respond?
5. Imagine you are tasked with communicating God's message to David today. How would you convey this promise in a way that is relevant to contemporary believers? What elements would you include to ensure the message is clear and effective?
6. Verses 12-13 say that God will have David's offspring make a house for God. Knowing how willing David was to build the house, how do you think David felt hearing that he was not the one to build the house for God?
7. Think about a time when your plans didn't align with God's plans. How did you respond? What did you learn from the experience? How can we better align our actions with God's will?
8. What specific action will you take this week to deepen your relationship with God and trust in God's call in your life? How will you ensure you stay committed to this call?

### **Add'l (Optional) Discussion Questions**

1. What did God promise to David in the passage?
2. Why do you think God made these promises to David and his descendants?
3. How can you prepare your heart and mind for worship before you come to church?
4. What is the call to worship in the LJUMC service? How does it look in your context? Is this something you've done a lot? You've never done in another church?
5. Do you think the call to worship helps people feel more connected to the service? Why or why not?
6. How would you improve the call to worship to make it more meaningful for you and your community? In other words, what words or actions, to you, demonstrate that it is time to worship and prepare yourself to be open to what God might do during worship?

**Weekly Action**

This week, take time to reflect on your own “call to worship.” Before attending the service, spend a few moments in quiet reflection or prayer, asking God to prepare your heart for worship. Consider how you can bring a sense of intentionality and reverence to your worship experience. Share your reflections with a friend or family member, and encourage each other to approach worship with hearts ready to honor God’s presence.

**Prayer**

Holy One, we thank you for the promises you made to David and for the ways you guide us in our lives. Help us to trust in your call and to serve you with pure hearts. May we always seek to align our actions with your wise guidance and find strength and purpose in your love. Amen.