

St. David's Presbyterian Church
St. John's, NL
“Real Estate Investments”
Dr. J. Dent

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8th Sunday after Pentecost

I'm not sure if you have been following the real estate market in the last few months, or the last few years. We noted on the weekend how many brand new homes there are in places like Holyrood, which are then advertised as half way between Long Harbour and St. John's. Things have gone from quite inexpensive cabins to homes being listed at hundreds of thousands of dollars. It struck me a couple of years ago when a young professional couple both with good jobs, told me they were looking for a two story home, but couldn't find anything less than \$400,000 in what they were looking for... They decided to stay in their bungalow and add on.

I hadn't looked at the real estate section in the *Telegram* for quite a while and was amazed at how prices have climbed. Five, six, seven, eight hundred thousand dollar homes and many of them are attached. I was flabbergasted and wondered if had gotten the Calgary real estate newspaper by mistake. And I had met a real estate agent friend who told me about eight months ago that the market was going down. I frankly don't see it. And they keep building, certainly out our way. Who buys them and what young families do for their first home, I just don't know.

But it makes me think we should have bought two homes when we came to St. John's in 2007. That kind of thinking of course is easy in hindsight.

What kind of real estate investments are you choosing to risk? That's the question that comes to us from the Scriptures today. It begs the question of what truly is *real* estate. We certainly are talking about more than immovable property, what the French call *immobilier*. It is a spiritual question we face almost every Sunday we open our ears to the Lord. That question is: What are you and what am I investing in the Lord's program, community and kingdom? This is much more than what you put in the offering plate or what is automatically debited from your account; although the discussion certainly includes your financial commitment to this church or whatever congregation is your regular place of worship.

It is about wanting to invest in that which lasts. David felt that way about God and what God wanted to do in his country. He felt poorly about living

in a fine home literally fit for a king, and yet God was in a tent, in the tabernacle which he directed Moses and his team to build for him. David wanted God to have something even nicer than what he had. And God heard his heart. God heard that David cared about or at least wanted to care about what was good for God.

And you heard the reading from 2 Samuel 7. God turns it around. God says, "You know, heaven is my throne; earth is my footstool, what kind of house do you want to build for me." And David says, "Cedar is nice." But God says, "No, you won't be building me a house." In fact, later on, he says someone without blood on their hands like David the warrior king will be the one to build a temple. But in this passage in 2 Samuel 7, David is told by God that not only will he not build a house for God, but that God will build a house for him. And before David has the chance to say he already has a nice house, God explains that he will build this house through his offspring, and that this house will last forever. So we know it's not a physical house, but a person and a kingdom to whom God is pointing. He is pointing to his Son Jesus Christ, who will be the descendent of David, the fulfillment of all the real estate imagination that could be mustered. Through Jesus, a house will be built that will be able to hold billions. This is the Father's House, mentioned in John, chapter 14, where we all have a room, who trust in Jesus, who believe he is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. And more than the coming real estate is the movement, the kingdom right now.

Paul calls it a house, with a foundation of the apostles and prophets, but a cornerstone who is Jesus, the central piece of the foundation. In Ephesians 2, Paul describes us as the building God is building. We are the building. We are the real estate. We as believers in Jesus Christ are the building which is growing into the Holy Temple of God here. That means that we carry the presence of the Lord. We are the vessels in which God shows Himself to be real. The Holy Spirit is in us and we display God to the world. Now if that doesn't take you by surprise, then think about it some more. Because it begs the question of the proof of the reality of God being in our lives. So what is that reality in your life? How would you report what God is doing in you these days? Not just a long time ago, or when you were a child. How is God on the move in your life today?

As we invest in the Lord's work and building, so he invests in us his reputation and his reality. This has a lot to do with us personally, but I would like to turn to the history of this congregation just for a moment.

I still am amazed that those in the Queen's Road congregation over fifty years ago chose to buy some land out here in the country, and build a church. And not long after, they built a hall. And some of them are some of you. They trusted God. They had little money to do so, or so it was thought. It was more than getting out of a building that could no longer be maintained or renovated. It was a leap of faith.

We need to carry on that legacy, and I am not just referring to the legacy of this property, buildings and grounds. It is about the legacy of a ministry that is unique in this city, which goes back to the 18th century. I encourage you to watch the 22 minute video on the history here of St. David's, the congregational, the dissenting congregation planted here in this city so long ago. I urge you to watch the history not just for learning about the city through its many eras. Rather I encourage you to think about ministry through difficult times, horrific weather, devastating fires, world wars. We have come through all this and we need to invest boldly in what this place will be in the next ten to fifty years. We need to dream about what we can do and be in the community. We also need simply to ask the Lord what he wants us to do and be.

This is about investing ourselves, in one another, in the community, for the Gospel, to see results in the community that transform and heal, just like Jesus' ministry which we read about in the Gospel. We need to be in a place where we know God is among us and say so. And this is not only this church, but many such places of faith and trust in God. We are the stewards of this place and this movement. There are no others out there. We need not look too far. We need only look in the mirror for what we can do and be.

I don't have all the answers for what your investment looks like. I challenge you and me to stretch our vision and invest in ways that will surprise others. I know we often invest in our children with sports and music and all kinds of things that produce wonderful results. We need to make the spiritual investment that marks us and makes a people who longs for God's ways here and now.

Do you want to join me in this? Or as I often ask, am I the only one that thinks this way? Perhaps you don't see yourself as a person of deep faith

and trust in God. What would make you such a person? What would change you forever?

Ask the Lord. He knows. He cares. There is more going on in this era of the city and province than the real estate boom or the oil jobs. There are also many spiritual opportunities. What are yours?

Let us pray.