



THE LIFE OF DAVID

Santa Barbara Community Church
Summer 2010



Sources & Abbreviations

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Abbreviation	Source
ESV	English Standard Version of the <i>Bible</i>
Evans	Mary J. Evans, <i>The Message of Samuel</i> , Intervarsity Press, 2004.
Meyer	F. B. Meyer, <i>David: Shepherd, Psalmist, King</i> , Fort Washington Christian Literature Crusade, 1970.
NIV	New International Version of the <i>Bible</i>
Peterson	Eugene Peterson, <i>Leap Over a Wall</i> , Harper Publishing, 1997.
Swindoll	Charles Swindoll, <i>David: A Man of Passion and Destiny</i> , Word Publishing, 1997.
Waltke	Bruce K. Waltke and Charles Yu, <i>An Old Testament Theology: An Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach</i> , Zondervan Publishing, 2007.
Woodhouse	John Woodhouse, <i>1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader</i> , Crossway Books, 2008.

The Life of David study guide has been written by our pastoral staff. Studies 1 and 12 were written by Reed Jolley; studies 2 and 3 by Susi Lamoutte; studies 4 and 5 by Bonnie Fearer; study 6 by Steve Jolley; studies 7, 8 and 9 by Benji Bruneel; and studies 10 and 11 by Mike Willbanks. Original illustrations have been contributed by several talented artists in our church community including Kat McLean (studies 1 and 12), Taylor Gray (study 2), Rafael Perea (study 3), Micah McWilliams (study 4), Alexis Ireland (study 10), Ryan Ethington (studies 5 and 11), Julieanne Faas (study 6), Brigitta Van Der Raay (studies 7 and 8) and Ron Davis (study 9). Cover, study design and layout were created by Carolee Peterson. Summer 2010.



Map of David's Israel

THE LIFE OF DAVID





Table of Contents & Study Schedule

THE LIFE OF DAVID

study no.	title/text	page	teaching date
Study One	A Man After God's Own Heart 1 Samuel 8	1	6/13/10
Study Two	Chosen and Anointed 1 Samuel 16:1-13	9	6/20/10
Study Three	A Man of Faith 1 Samuel 17	15	6/27/10
Study Four	David In The Cave 1 Samuel 21-22; Psalm 56	21	7/4/10
Study Five	Sparing Saul 1 Samuel 23:15-24:22; Psalm 57	27	7/11/10
Study Six	David: Compromise and Consequences 1 Samuel 27, 29, 30	33	7/18/10
Study Seven	Pursuing Proper Worship 2 Samuel 6	39	7/25/10
Study Eight	A Tale of Two Houses 2 Samuel 7	45	8/1/10
Study Nine	An Uncommon Kindness 2 Samuel 9	51	8/8/10
Study Ten	David and Bathsheba 2 Samuel 11-12, Psalm 51	57	8/15/10
Study Eleven	David and Absalom 2 Samuel 15-18, Psalm 3	63	8/22/10
Study Twelve	Death 1 Kings 1-2	69	8/29/10

THE LIFE OF DAVID

1

Study One

A Man After God's Own Heart

1 Samuel 8



I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.
Acts 13:22

In Florence, Italy, stands one of the most memorable and impressive statues in the history of art, Michelangelo's David. The 17-foot marble carving took four years to create and was unveiled in September of 1504. Art historians differ in their interpretation of what Michelangelo was trying to depict. Is David preparing for battle with Goliath? Or has he just defeated the giant? Either way, he stands confident, handsome, bold, and

ready. If he is preparing for battle, there is no sign of fear. If David has just defeated the Philistine, there is no sign of relief. This David has no doubts or flaws. David's hands are disproportionately large, as is his head and torso. Again, art historians differ when interpreting the sculptor's intent, but many suggest the Italian master was presenting David not as we find him in the pages of the Bible, but as the fully-realized Renaissance man, a man of power, and seemingly limitless capability.

How different Michelangelo's David is from the David of history. The real David, the biblical David, the actual person who lived about 1,000 years before the time of Jesus, is a real man, and the pages of Scripture present him warts and all. It is accurate to say that the Bible reserves a special place for this man. The sheer volume of material devoted to his life (and his writings) is staggering when compared with other biblical figures.

Genesis devotes fourteen chapters to Abraham. Joseph gets the same amount of space. Jacob has 11 chapters, and Elijah ten. David, though, has a staggering 66 chapters that recount his life in minute detail. On top of this, he is thought to have written over half of the book of Psalms. Can anyone deny that David is the second most important person in the pages of the Bible?

The David story includes everything from poetry to warfare, from adultery and murder to heartfelt devotion to God. We meet David as a youth and follow him until his death.

Eugene Peterson has written a fine book on the life of David¹. He summarizes the value of the narrative in 1-2 Samuel and 1 Chronicles.

¹ The complete bibliography for *Leap Over a Wall*, is found in the front of the study guide on the Sources page.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

2

Study One

The David story, like most other Bible stories, presents us not with a polished ideal to which we aspire but with a rough-edged actuality in which we see humanity being formed—the God in the earth/human conditions. The David Story immerses us in a reality that embraces the entire range of humanness, stretching from the deep interior of our souls to the farthest reach of our imaginations. No other biblical story has this range to it, showing the many dimensions of height, depth, breadth, and length of human experience as a person comes alive before God—aware of God, responsive to God. (Peterson, p. 5)

David, indeed, is the hero of the Old Testament. Israel's golden era, if the nation had one, was during the reign of King David. Yet even this king has his flaws and commits his sins. He, and the nation he leads, pays dearly for his transgressions as we will see in subsequent studies.

David doesn't arrive in a vacuum. After the Exodus, the nation had been led by judges for centuries. The history of Israel in her own land was a history of chaos and conflict. In the book of Judges we find the repeated refrain, *Everyone* did what was right in his own eyes. Samuel was the last of the judges and the book that bears his name tells the story of the end of his life. By the time Samuel is passing from the scene, the people of Israel are tired, they want a king.

The Call for a King

Read 1 Samuel 8 while considering the following questions:

What is the immediate problem that causes the people to want a king (8:1)?

You should be able to find three reasons why the elders state that they want a king. What are they (8:5)?

1.

2.

3.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study One

As John Woodhouse notes, the request for a king is astonishing in its unfaithfulness.

God's intent in bringing his people to their own land was to establish them in a unique arrangement. Yahweh¹ himself was to be their king! They were to be his treasured possession, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. They were to be different, separated . . . from the peoples, a people set apart for God!² When the people ask for a king this is the political equivalent to pursuing foreign gods and Ashtaroth! (Woodhouse, p. 144)

All of the above becomes explicit in this verse. In asking for a king the people have rejected God (8:7).

What does Yahweh promise the people they will receive from their new king (8:10-17)?

What does the people's request for a king tell us about ourselves? Jacques Ellul, a French professor of law and economics, wrote a book called *The Political Illusion*.³ In it he points out that in trying times there is a temptation to vest increasing power in politicians and government. Examine your own political temptation. In what ways are you tempted to place your hope in politics or in government?

From Saul to David

1 Samuel 9-10 records the choosing, anointing and coronation of Saul as King of Israel. The first potentate of the nation begins well but his pride and insecurity get the better of him. His reign is nothing short of a disaster. From one vantage point, the reign of King Saul might have lasted only two short years, though he occupied the throne for another 40 years.

Notice 1 Samuel 13:1. The NIV reads,

Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned over Israel forty-two years.

1 Yahweh is God's covenant name.

2 See Woodhouse, p. 144 along with Exodus 19:5-6; Leviticus 20:26; Deuteronomy 4:6, 26:19.

3 Jacques Ellul, *The Political Illusion*, 1967.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

4

Study One

The ESV reads,

Saul was . . . years old when he began to reign, and he reigned . . . and two years over Israel.

The reason for the awkward ellipsis in the ESV is that the Hebrew text is awkward. Literally the passage reads,

Saul was a son of a year when he reigned, and two years he reigned over Israel.

What is going on here? Either the text was mangled over the centuries by scribes and copyists, or, perhaps this is what the author of 1 Samuel really wrote. Woodhouse argues for the latter and explains its meaning.

Taking the Hebrew text as it stands, “a son of a year” may point not to Saul’s actual age, but to the unusual circumstances whereby Saul became the one designated to become king. For Saul, this was not his birth (as would usually be the case for a crown prince), but only when Samuel anointed him (in 1 Samuel 10:1). It is possible, then, that the “year” of which he was a son was the time between that day (when, we might say, he became the crown prince) and the day he began his reign at Gilgal in 1 Samuel 11:15 on the terms so clearly spelled out by Samuel in 1 Samuel 12. It is then likely that the “two years” that 1 Samuel 13:1 tells us Saul reigned over Israel (which seems too short for all that happened while Saul was king, through to his death in 1 Samuel 31) refers strictly to the period between his becoming king (1 Samuel 11:15) and his being finally rejected as king, which happens as soon as 1 Samuel 15:28. (Woodhouse, p. 228)

With either translation (NIV, ESV), the reader soon understands the complete disaster of the reign of King Saul.

If Saul is the anti-hero of 1 Samuel, David is his opposite. Where the first king failed, the second succeeded. David becomes something of the gold standard in all Scripture.

In your homegroup have various group members read the following verses. Notice together the importance of David. The idea here is not to have a Bible drill, but to read these passages aloud and hear but a sampling of the breadth of biblical passages that speak of David’s role in God’s plan of salvation.

1 Samuel 15:3-4

1 Samuel 15:9-11

2 Kings 8:19

2 Kings 14:3

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study One

2 Kings 16:2

Matthew 1:1

Matthew 9:27

Matthew 12:23

Matthew 21:15

Mark 12:35-37

2 Timothy 2:8

Revelation 5:5; 22:16

The son of Jesse got off to a mighty start in life. As a young man David defeated one nemesis of Israel, the gargantuan Philistine named Goliath. David served in the courts of King Saul playing music. He was an accomplished warrior and leader. Yet, the future King David spent most of his twenties living as an outlaw and fugitive in the wilderness.

When Saul became king, David was ten years old. Though David was anointed as king early in life (1 Samuel 16), it was not until the young shepherd was 36, after spending most of the decade of his twenties as an outlaw on the run, that Saul died and David begins his actual reign.¹

Read 1 Samuel 13:14 in the context of the entire paragraph (13:8-15).

The phrase, *a man after God's own heart*, is part of many Christians' everyday speech. This verse is its origin. As Yahweh rejects Saul, he is looking for a man after his own heart. The phrase, literally reads, The Lord has sought for himself a man according to his own heart. Woodhouse explains,

This is about the place this man had in God's heart rather than about the place God had in the man's heart. It was a way of saying God had chosen this man according to his own will and purpose. (Woodhouse, p. 235)

1 The Books of Samuel present a sustained comparison of the two kings. Consider the following from the ESV Study Bible:

Saul

Holy Spirit removed; evil spirit given (1 Samuel 16:14–23)
Jealous and treacherous (1 Samuel 18)
Attempts to kill David (1 Samuel 19)
Failed holy warrior (1 Samuel 15)
Kingdom torn away (1 Samuel 13:13–14; 15:11, 26)

David

Anointed with Holy Spirit (1 Samuel 16:1–13)
Faithful friend (1 Samuel 20)
Protects Saul's life (1 Samuel 24, 26)
Mighty holy warrior (1 Samuel 17)
Kingdom promised forever (2 Samuel 7:1–17)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

6



Study One

The people had asked for a king and made their own choice. They chose a good looking, strapping man named Saul (review 1 Samuel 8:10, 18; 10:19; 12:13). The people made their choice and they got King Saul. Here, though, God makes his choice. He chooses a man according to his own heart!

In a sense, then, this famous verse means the opposite of how it is usually quoted. We tend to cite this verse as proof of the goodness and fidelity of David's heart. David's heart yearned for God and the things of God. Instead, the emphasis of the verse is on God's sovereign choice of David. God's heart was set on David. . . David was God's choice for Israel's king.

The stunning truth in the pages of the New Testament is that we are called God's children for the same reason. We are sons and daughters after God's own heart. Read and ponder together Ephesians 1:3-10. Notice God's sovereign choice of his own children. Make a list of the actions of God in your salvation. Paul is saying that God set his affection on you before the foundation of the world. If you love Jesus, that is because he first loved you! In other words, in the New Testament economy, believers are men and women after God's own heart.

What difference will this make in the way you live your Christian life? How does the affection of God's heart toward you motivate you to live for him?

Rightly understood these verses should lead us not to arguments about predestination versus free will, but to praise and adoration. Spend time as a homegroup thanking God that you worship the Son of David. If you've been transformed by Christ, praise him that you are a man or woman after God's own heart.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

sermon notes

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Two

Chosen and Anointed

1 Samuel 16:1-13



What does God look for in a person's life? What does God expect from us as his followers? Does it matter how a Christian lives and makes decisions?

1 Samuel 15-16 covers an important series of events in Israel's history. These chapters tell the story of how God rejected Saul, Israel's first king, and chose David to be his successor. Before we study 1 Samuel 16:1-13 it is crucial to understand the story of Saul's rejection in 1 Samuel 15.

Saul was Israel's first king. When he was selected, Samuel proclaimed to the nation of Israel, *Do you see him whom the Lord has chosen? There is none like him among all the*

people. To which the people replied, *Long live the king!* (10:24)

Woodhouse succinctly portrays Saul's accomplishments and failure as king:

King Saul might have been able to win battles (1 Samuel 14:47-48). He might have been able to rally the nation (1 Samuel 11:1-11). He might have been able to provide a focus for political strength and stability (1 Samuel 11:15). But he *disobeyed* God (1 Samuel 13,15). He was therefore an *unmitigated disaster*. How can you live as *God's people* with a king who is disobedient? (Woodhouse, p. 282)

Samuel speaks God's message to Saul in light of his disobedience in 15:22-23.

Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king.

Now read 1 Samuel 16:1-13. What are the important points in this story? Which verses stand out to you?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

10

Study Two

Read 16:1. The Lord essentially says to Samuel, *I have rejected Saul, get over it and let's move on. Bring your anointing oil and let me show you the next king.* What was Samuel's role in selecting a king? What was God's role?

When Saul was rejected by God Samuel says, *The Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought a man after his own heart...* (13:13-14) We looked at this in study one, but let's review. What does it mean to be *after God's own heart*? Consider the following quote.

It helps us to understand the end of 1 Samuel 16:1, which literally reads, "I have *seen* for myself a king among [Jesse's] sons." God has *seen* a king for himself because God sees with his *heart*. In verse 1 God was therefore saying precisely what Samuel had said in 13:14: "The Lord has sought out a man *after his own heart...*"

"A man after God's own heart" has been taken in popular Christian jargon to mean a particularly godly man, a man with a heart like God's. But I do not believe that the words can mean that. "A man after God's own heart" means *a man of God's own choosing*, a man God has set *his heart* on. "A man after God's own heart" is—if I can put it like this—talking about a place the man has in God's heart rather than the place God has in the man's heart. (Woodhouse, p. 287)

Think about your own life. As a believer you are a man or woman *after God's own heart*. What does that look like in Santa Barbara in the 21st century? How should this affect your life both day-to-day and in the big picture?

In 16:2-5 Samuel looks for Jesse and his family in order to assemble them and sacrifice to the Lord, but he does not tell them the reason for the sacrifice. In verse 5, Samuel personally consecrates Jesse and his sons. Consecration probably entailed being washed and putting on fresh clothes, which would leave them in a state of ritual purity.

What is the significance of these actions in the process of God revealing his next king?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Two

What does it mean for a Christian to be consecrated, or to be in a state of purity, and worship the Lord? Contemplate the following New Testament passages.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

2 Corinthians 7:1

Hebrews 10:19-22

Romans 12:1-2

Is purity something we do or something we receive? How do we remain in a state of purity? Explain.

In searching for God's anointed, the sons of Jesse passed before Samuel one by one (16:6-12). When the first one, Eliab, arrived Samuel immediately assumed he was God's chosen king. The first king Samuel anointed, Saul, was characterized as being *taller than any of the people from his shoulders upward* (9:2, 10:23). It is understandable that Samuel would make this mistake. Eliab appeared the same. God corrected Samuel.

Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7)

This verse points out that people are limited in how they see. All we can see is, well, all we can literally see. One person cannot see into the heart of another. We can see each other's outward appearances and behaviors, a surgeon can even see internal organs, but we cannot see deep within one's heart. God is not so limited. He sees all. And God's *seeing* is more than just that. Woodhouse explains:

...when God sees, he does not just see things with the eyes, as we do, taking in only impressions. God sees according to *his heart*. That is, God's point of view is determined by his own will and purpose. He sees according to his own intentions, his heart. (Woodhouse, p. 286-287)

With this in mind, how does God see you? How does he see the rest of your homegroup? The people you live with? The people you work, or study, or spend your days with?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

12

Study Two

All of the sons of Jesse who were present went before Samuel. God did not choose any of them. Samuel asked if there was another. Yes, David was out in the fields tending the sheep.

Read 16:12-13. When David arrived, what happened?

God chose David, Jesse's youngest son who had been relegated to watching the sheep. In verse 13 we read about one of the most significant moments of Israel's history. God anoints this David to fulfill his purpose, to be king! And, *the Spirit of the Lord rushed on David from that day forward*. In doing so, as we will see over the next several weeks, God prepares David to rule the great nation of Israel.¹ David lives as God has purposed him to live. And through David's lineage, God provides the Messiah!

Although no one else will ever fill the role God chose David for, God does choose and *anoint* all believers for his purposes, in many different ways. All Christians are baptized in and gifted by the Holy Spirit. What is God's purpose in your life? What has he anointed you to do? (Important rule: do not compare yourself to others!)

While David was king he prayed the following prayer. As people who are also called by God and enabled by his Spirit to carry out his purposes, pray through this Psalm as a homegroup.

Psalm 61

To the choirmaster: with stringed instruments. Of David.

*Hear my cry, O God,
listen to my prayer;
from the end of the earth I call to you
when my heart is faint.
Lead me to the rock
that is higher than I,*

¹ David is anointed as king two additional times. First he is anointed to be king over the house of Judah (2 Samuel 2:4) and then anointed again to be king before all of Israel (1 Chronicles 11:1-3).

THE LIFE OF DAVID

13

Study Two

*for you have been my refuge,
a strong tower against the enemy.
Let me dwell in your tent forever!
Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!*
Selah

*For you, O God, have heard my vows;
you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name.
Prolong the life of the king;
may his years endure to all generations!
May he be enthroned forever before God;
appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!
So will I ever sing praises to your name,
as I perform my vows day after day.*

sermon notes

A Man of Faith

1 Samuel 17



David and Goliath. A story which most Christians and many non-believers would at minimum be able to encapsulate in simple form. Strong versus weak. Big versus small. Rich versus poor. This story appeals to us because the seemingly weak, small person wins the battle. David instills hope that the average man or woman can triumph over the monumental battles of life; relationships, finances, employment, health, marriage, parenting, or determining what step to take next regarding education or career. These issues and others have the capacity to become overwhelming. Is it the best stones and a good aim that we need? Is it the right equipment and the expertise to operate it? Or is there more?

As we begin to study the story of David and Goliath, we must first understand Saul in this scene. Saul was Israel's first king. The people of Israel insisted that the prophet Samuel provide a king for them. They wanted a king in order to be like the nations around them, reflecting their waning faith in God.

It is important to remember that one reason...that the people asked for a king in the first place was that their king might "go out before us and fight our battles" (1 Samuel 8:20). The people felt the need for a king because of the threat from their enemies... What Israel seemed to have forgotten was that their God had always been there to deliver them from their enemies. Only when they abandoned *him* did their enemies gain the upper hand. (Woodhouse, p. 302)

Although Saul both fought and won many battles as King of Israel, in this chapter we find him cowering in his tent, no more courageous than any other Israelite.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

16

Study Three

Slowly and carefully read 1 Samuel 17. Enjoy the story. Notice the intricate details. Look for the setting, main characters and the key circumstances. Make a list of things that stand out. If this is a familiar story to you, search for details that you may not have noticed before.

Read the description of Goliath in verses 4-7.¹ When Saul and the Israelites encountered Goliath, what did they see, both literally and figuratively?

How did Saul and the Israelites respond? (17:11, 24)

Keep in mind that Israel made Saul king, believing that he would *go out before us and fight our battles*. (8:20) David, on the other hand, was young and had never been to war. Rather, he was a shepherd who ran errands for his father. David approached Goliath with no armor, with only a staff, a sling and five smooth stones.

How did David see and perceive Goliath, both literally and figuratively?

How did David respond, both in word and in action? (17:31-37, 43-49)

What is the difference between how Saul and David responded to Goliath's threat?

¹ Goliath was probably around nine feet, nine inches tall. *His upper body was covered with "a coat of mail" weighing 126 pounds! Clearly he would not be susceptible to any weapon aimed at his chest. His legs were also protected by bronze armor. In other words the man's defenses gave all the appearance of being impenetrable. He stood there like a one man, indestructible fortress.* (Woodhouse, p. 306)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Three

Read 1 Samuel 16:7 from last week's study. In this passage the Lord is instructing Samuel how not to consider the men he was evaluating to be king. What does this passage say about how Saul and David saw Goliath?

Often we *look at the externals and we form opinions that are usually erroneous*. (Swindoll, p. 35) How would God have you see the people in your life: neighbors, co-workers, family members, etc.? How might that affect how you treat and respond to people? Give specific examples.

When you have gone up against threatening giants in your life, have you experienced them more like David did or more like Saul and Israel did? What are specific examples? How did you respond to these experiences?

Christians throughout the world live with varying challenges; poverty, war, famine, disease, racism, abuse, slavery, corrupt governments, and the list goes on. These believers have neither the power nor the ability to change their situations.

List as many specific examples as you can in which believers in other countries experience seemingly insurmountable circumstances. For each of these situations, what do these people need to have and/or do to combat the *Goliath* in their lives?

What can you do to be prepared for the most severe trial (or the next severe trial) you might encounter as you go through life?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

18

Study Three

Later in life David wrote Psalm 18 on a day when the Lord had rescued him from Saul's attempt to murder him. These verses would aptly express David's response to God in his victory over Goliath as well. Read this passage slowly, pausing with each image. What is David saying?

I love you, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies. (Psalm 18:1-3)

Describe David's faith. Consider this Psalm and the story in 1 Samuel 17. Use as many words and phrases as you can think of. What exactly is faith? Is it a thought? An emotion? An action? An attitude? What exactly is David proclaiming?

Does David's faith in God resonate with you or not? Explain.

As you read this excerpt from Woodhouse, consider what he is saying about God working in unexpected ways. Read and respond.

God is the God of the unexpected. No one in the Valley of Elah that day (with possibly one exception) had any idea that this young man was the one through whom God would deliver his people.

God is the God of the unexpected. What he was doing in the Valley of Elah was the beginning of a sequence of events that can be traced through the Biblical record over about ten centuries. It came to its climax when a descendant of David [Jesus] appeared speaking words more provocative and apparently presumptuous than anything David said on that day in the valley. Those who knew him best, or who thought they did, those from his hometown said:

"Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?" And they took offence at him. (Matthew 13:55-57a)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Three

It may be an understandable mistake, but it is a great mistake nonetheless to take offense at the unexpected ways of God. Who would think that Jesus, the teacher of parables, the healer of the sick, who was executed for blasphemy, is the King who saves his people and will rule the world? It is as unlikely as the boy from Bethlehem doing anything for the people who faced Goliath.

To trust God you must be prepared for the unexpected. (Woodhouse, p. 322-323)

How has this study impacted your concept of faith? What can you take from the story of David and Goliath that will spur you on in your Christian walk? Share this with your homegroup.

Pray for one another that your faith and confidence in God would deepen to the point that by faith you will stand firm regardless of what situation you face. Use some of the images you looked at earlier in Psalm 18. May God be your strength!

sermon notes

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Four

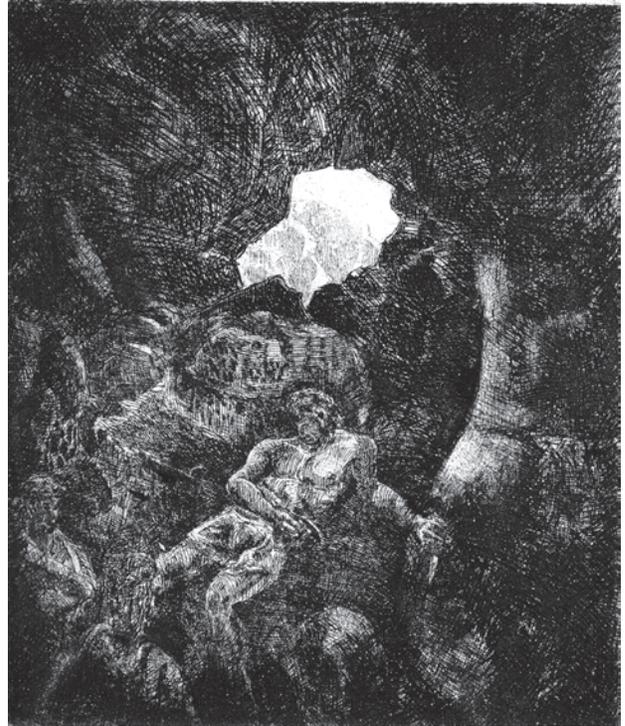
21

David In The Cave

1 Samuel 21-22; Psalm 56

Saul's episodic mood swings have settled into full-time paranoia, and he has turned his jaundiced eye to David, the fixed object of his jealous rage. David, once again, finds himself fleeing from Saul's presence – this time, for good.

As David literally runs for his life, with nothing in hand and no preparation for the journey, he will go to three primary places: Nob, Gath, and the caves of Adullam. (Gath is located on the western side of Israel and was part of the Philistine territory. The Caves of Adullam are at one end of the Valley of Elah, and Nob is on the eastern slope of Mt. Scopus northeast of Jerusalem.)



Read 1 Samuel 21. Jot down anything that stands out to you below:

Nob

As he frantically seeks sanctuary, note that David does not run to the house of Samuel – perhaps because he thinks it may be the first place Saul might look for him. Instead, he flees to Nob. Located one mile north of Jerusalem, Nob was known as the “city of priests.” After the capture of the Ark, and the destruction of Shiloh¹, the Jewish priests fled to Nob, establishing a settlement dedicated to carrying out the sacred functions of the tabernacle.

¹ The tabernacle was set up by the Israelites in Shiloh after they entered Canaan, making it a city of religious significance. However, the Philistines destroyed the city and captured the Ark (1 Samuel 4:10-11) and later, what remained of the city burned to the ground. It became a picture of devastation described by Jeremiah some 450 years later. (Jeremiah 7:12) Interestingly, Danish archeologists discovered the lost city of Shiloh in the 1920's. They found remains dating from the 13th to the 11th centuries B.C., and then from the period between 1050 and 300 B.C. The gap between the two periods exactly parallels the biblical record of this period of desolation after the capture of the Ark.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

22

Study Four

When the priest, Ahimelech, asks David why he comes alone, David lies. Why do you think he did this? Do you think this deception is justified? Why or why not?

What is the first thing David asks of Ahimelech?

What does Ahimelech give him (21:4-6)?

What is the significance of this scenario? Look up Matthew 12:1-5 for your answer.

David is about to make his second request of Ahimelech, but there is an interesting fact inserted in the text. Verse 7 reveals the presence of another – Doeg, the Edomite, Saul's chief herdsman.

We are told that Doeg was *detained before the Lord*. The interpretation of this phrase is unclear, but it is thought that he was at the temple to carry out some rite of penance or purification. Doeg and David would have been familiar with one another as members of Saul's court. (It might even be fair to assume that David felt safe speaking in Doeg's presence.) Reading the passage, we are aware that Doeg hears everything – he hears David lie; he knows that David leaves with food; and he also knows that David leaves with something else... Goliath's sword.

Gath

Once supplied, David flees to Gath, ruled by the King Achish. Some notable facts about Gath:

- 1) It was outside of Saul's kingdom;
- 2) It was one of five Philistine cities; and
- 3) It was the hometown of Goliath.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Four

The ironies of David's trip to Gath are many. David has grown into stature as a military commander by doing what? *Fighting the Philistines*. And what is he carrying with him? *Goliath's sword*. For David to flee to this particular city is an act of utter desperation.

Why do you think David feigned insanity when he entered the city? Read 21:10-13 from as many translations as possible.

While we do not learn how David was treated from the 1 Samuel account, we can turn to Psalm 56, which is subtitled, *A Miktam of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath*. From this we can assume that there was some period of captivity and questioning.

As he so often does, David turns the emotions of his situation to prayer. Read Psalm 56, and write down some of David's feelings as he endures his captivity in Gath.

Returning to 1 Samuel 21, we see in verses 14-15 that David's ruse of insanity works. King Achish is repulsed by him, and demands to have him removed from his presence. One commentary notes:

The joke was on Achish and the Philistines. Achish himself testified that he was surrounded by idiots. The fact that "Philistine Enemy Number One" managed to escape from their grasp by just a bit of dribbling and scratching showed how right he was. (Woodhouse, p. 421)

Yes, David's cunning has helped him to escape calamity. However, David knows the true Deliverer. What does David say to God at the end of Psalm 56 (56:13)?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

24

Study Four

Read 1 Samuel 22. What stands out in this chapter? What questions come to mind?

The Cave of Addulam

On the run once again, David flees from Gath, and turns to Adullam. Thought to be on the eastern side of the Valley of Elah¹, the area is laced with caves, caverns and deep crevices in the rocky walls of the valley. It is thought that this network of caves was a popular hiding spot for many who were persecuted, outcasts, etc.

Who joins David in this place?

Describe some of the company that Jesus kept. See the following verses:

Matthew 11:19

Luke 7:39

Luke 19:7

The ones who have made their way to David are not those who are benefiting by Saul's leadership. They are the hopeless, the disenfranchised. Respond to this quote by John Woodhouse:

Who would want to be a Christian in today's world? is a question very like, *Who would want to join David in Saul's world?* ...If you held any hope that Saul would do you any good, you would not make your way to the cave of Adullam. The call of the gospel of Jesus Christ is no less radical. It is not at all surprising that not many of those who have great prospects in this world find themselves called into the kingdom of Jesus Christ. ...Have we forgotten that if you hold any hope that this world will provide you with security and hope, you will not make your way to Jesus? (Woodhouse, p. 430-431)

¹ The Valley of Elah is the place where David slew Goliath.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

25

Study Four

As Saul followed David's trail, pure evil was unleashed. Write down the order of events from verse 6 and following.

Undoubtedly, it is difficult to end our study with a story of wholesale slaughter, the scale of which is staggering. It has been said that David's time in the cave of Adullam marks the lowest point of his life. This point in the text, however, seems several levels lower.

Think of the lowest point in your own life. Perhaps you are in the middle of it right now; perhaps it is years behind you. Where did you seek refuge? How did God meet you?

In summary, David goes from royal blessing, to being hunted like an animal. He goes from being the commander of a large and successful army, to commanding a ragtag band of 400 malcontents. What is God's purpose in this? Is it to *ruin* David's life? –Or, to *redirect* David's life?

Consider the following quote by Charles Swindoll:

That cave was no longer David's escape hatch. If you can believe it, the smelly, dank cave became a place of training for those who were the beginning of the army that would be called, "David's mighty men of valor." That's right – this motley crew would become his mighty men in battle, and later they would become his cabinet when he took office. ...David was beaten all the way down, until there was no way to look but up. And when he looked up, God was there... (Swindoll, p. 75)

Think of a challenging season in your own life where you might have asked the same question. In hindsight, can you say that it was a period of God *redirecting* your life? How?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

26



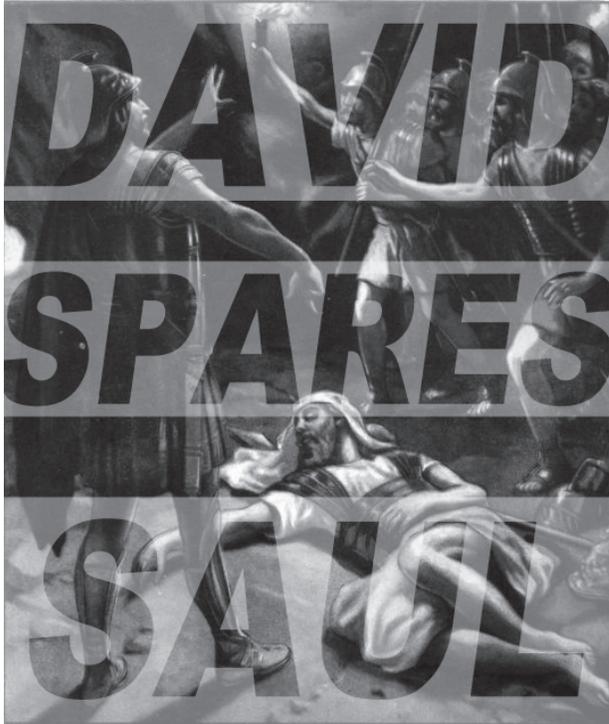
Study Four

sermon notes

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Five

27



Sparing Saul

1 Samuel 23:15–24:22; Psalm 57

The chase continues... David continues to flee from Saul's jealous wrath, and Saul continues his hunt for David. While in the Desert of Ziph with his army (now numbering near 600), David must have been at the end of his tether. An army with no plan of attack is simply an army in constant retreat. Morale must have been low as David and his men ran and hid – again and again. David is once more in the wilderness – both literally and figuratively.

Read 1 Samuel 23:15-29.

At this low point, David's closest friend, Jonathan comes to him. Write down all that Jonathan does for David.

Do you have a friend who not only helps you to cheer up, but also consistently points you to God? What is it about his or her approach that keeps you encouraged in the Lord?

Jonathan begins with the words, *Do not be afraid...* Woodhouse comments:

Have you noticed how often in the Bible we hear the words "Do not fear"? They are always spoken in terrifying circumstances, when fear is the natural and reasonable thing to do. The words, as we hear them in the Bible, are never an empty attempt at comfort but an expression of a reality that is more powerful than the terrifying circumstances. (Woodhouse, p. 455-456)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

28

Study Five

Look up Matthew 17:22-23. Write down the current reality of which Jesus was speaking, and the subsequent promise he made:

Current Reality

Promise

Can you think of a time when the fear of your current circumstances was lifted by promises from God? Share with your group any Scripture that God used to encourage you during that time.

Jonathan's visit to David was the last time the two friends saw each other.

On the heels of Jonathan's departure, David is betrayed by his current neighbors, the Ziphites, who volunteer detailed information to Saul about David's location. Word had probably gotten around to them about what had happened to the priests at Nob (see previous study), and the Ziphites' fear made them excessively helpful to Saul.

From here, the chase ensues. This will be the closest Saul will have ever come to capturing David.

What interrupts this near-capture (23:27)? What ironies do you see in this?

Read 1 Samuel 24:1-2, and stop there.

When Saul returns, we are given two details in verse 2 that would have made David's heart sink. What are they?

Think about the word, *justice*. Before going on in the reading, write down your definition of the word below.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Five

Now, read 1 Samuel 24:3-22.

The story now goes into great detail, and the picture painted of these events is vivid, a little grotesque, and comical as well. As one commentator points out:

Saul moves from sun glare into a dark cave to respond to a call of nature. His eyes are not yet used to the darkness and so do not pick out the figures in the shadows. There he is, the king on his “throne” viewed from the backside, outlined against the deep blue of the Dead Sea and the red mountains of Moab in the distance. Saul has thrown his garments and weapons aside, and so is defenseless and vulnerable. (Evans, p.117)

Here we come to one of the most dramatic moments in the life of David. This is the point at which David – at the most personal level – must define *justice* in the context of his relationship with God.

After years of being pursued by a madman, David was literally inches away from being able to end the misery by taking Saul’s life. The agitated whispers of the men in his army surely added to the temptation, as they goaded David on by saying, *This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, “I will give your enemy into your hands for you do deal with as you wish.”* (24:4)

Instead, David cuts off a corner of Saul’s robe and then retreats back into the dark recesses of the cave. Verse 5 says that David was then *conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe*. Why? Why do you think David regretted this action?

Woodhouse comments:

There was something very unusual going on here. David understood that the kingdom, which would certainly be his one day, was not for him to take by his own power. The kingdom had been given to Saul by God (in this sense “he is the Lord’s anointed”), and it was up to God to take it from him, in his own time and in his own way. (Woodhouse, p. 465)

In what ways do you see David’s refusal to take power by force illustrated in the life of Jesus? Can you find supporting Scripture verses to share with your group?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

30

Study Five

At this point in the text, the action of pursuit ends but the drama does not, as David reveals his presence to Saul. Both give dramatic speeches. List the notable ingredients in each of their speeches:

David

Saul

In our study this week, we see David resist one of the most subtle temptations in the Christian life. What is it?

How do the following verses inform your answer?

Romans 12:18-19

2 Corinthians 10:4

Charles Swindoll suggests three principles to live by from this event in David's life:

- 1) Since man is depraved, expect to be mistreated;
- 2) Since mistreatment is inevitable, anticipate feelings of revenge; and
- 3) Since the desire for revenge is predictable refuse to fight in the flesh.
(Swindoll, pp. 90-91)

We live and breathe in a "rights" saturated society. Defending those rights feels second-nature to us and, consequently, to surrender those rights to the Lord, can feel counter-intuitive.

God used David's time in the wilderness to prepare him for this kind of surrender. He used the wilderness to prepare David to be a king. It was in the wilderness that David became a man of prayer, a man who listened and sought after God's will. Eugene Peterson notes that the wilderness story of David is bracketed by two other wilderness stories in the Bible: that of Moses, and that of Jesus. He comments, *Wilderness is the place of testing, the place of tempting.* (Peterson, p. 75)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Five

Has God ever used a challenging “wilderness” time in your life to prepare you for something? Explain.

Read Psalm 57. As a homegroup, celebrate the two parts of this psalm – seeking God in the wilderness and challenges of life; and the majesty and power of God’s love and faithfulness!

sermon notes

David: Compromise and Consequences

1 Samuel 27, 29, 30

The Bible is always realistic when it comes to reporting the successes and failures of God's people, and even it's greatest heroes. We have only to think of the descriptions of the twelve disciples in the Gospels to know that biblical leaders often had feet of clay. As we are learning in our study of the life of David, this giant of faith was at times, like all of us, prone to spiritual missteps. John Woodhouse has pointed out, *If you come to the Bible looking for sentimentality or romantic heroism, you will be disappointed. The Bible is about real people and a real God. Real people have weaknesses as well as strengths, failures as well as successes, defeats as well as triumphs.* (Woodhouse, p. 497)



David spent about ten years and most of his twenties living as an outlaw on the run from King Saul. 1 Samuel 26 chronicles the second time that David had an opportunity to kill Saul and take the throne that was to be his. In spite of being encouraged to kill Saul, David shows a steadfast trust in God to orchestrate the events that will lead him to being the ruler of Israel. By refusing to lay a hand on the *Lord's anointed* (1 Samuel 26:11,23) we see a young, soon to be king, who has a deep confidence in the sovereign designs of God. Then we come to the deep failure and second-guessing of 1 Samuel 27. Read that chapter. What stands out to you in this rather unusual story? If you could speak to him, what questions would you like to ask the narrator of this story?

In reading this story of compromise it is important to remind ourselves of the severity of David's scandalous decision to live under the protection of the Philistines. The Philistines were the archenemies of Israel. It was the Philistines who captured the Ark of the Covenant in battle with Israel. It was the armies of the Philistines, with their champion warrior Goliath, who taunted the armies of the living God. Ironically, Goliath was from Gath, the very city we now find David fleeing to in chapter 27.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

34

Study Six

Verse 1 gives us a glimpse into the thinking process of David. Outline his reasoning process. Why did David seek refuge with the Philistines? What was he afraid of?

How is David's compromise a rejection of God?

Our chapter begins with the ominous words, *David thought to himself . . .* What follows is a series of bad spiritual decisions. Can you think of times in your life when you have been under stress that you have thought to yourself and it has led to decisions that have taken you away from God?

David's life, like most of ours, was a perplexing mix of spiritual triumphs and failures. It appears that David succumbed to a crushing spiritual doubt in God's ability to fulfill his promises. This is not the first time David has wavered. He had been to Gath before. Read 1 Samuel 21:10-15. What happened on his first visit to Gath? What lessons did David not learn from his first Gath experience?

Spiritually speaking, when do you tend to run to *Gath*? How has doubt in God's faithfulness caused you to compromise in your spiritual decision-making?

Respond to this statement by Eugene Peterson.

I know scores of men and women who are living under the patronage of Achish of Gath. Many of them feel terrible about it. Many of them feel guilty but quite honestly don't know what else they can do. They have jobs with companies that do business in defiant contempt of the Kingdom of God. They're married to spouses who hate

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Six

the name of Jesus. They seem to be inextricably tangled in an economic system that exploits the poor and ignores the oppressed. They're doing their best to honor parents who dishonor God in thought, word, and deed. There's hardly a Christian I know who hasn't put in time, sometimes far more than David's sixteen months, under Achish of Gath. (Peterson, p. 99)

Look again at 1 Samuel 27:2-4. David and his men *went over* to King Achish. Woodhouse points out that, *David crossed a boundary that day, and not just a geographical one. He went over to the other side.* (Woodhouse, p. 500) What is implied is that David and his men changed allegiances. David and his fighting men could be very useful to King Achish, as he most likely reasoned; the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

The narrative is told in a flat manner with no evaluative comment. David is now under the authority of a pagan Philistine King, in a land of idols amongst a people who are the enemies of Israel. How would you describe this situation? Add your own comments to this fascinating turn of events.

How have you found yourself in allegiances with either people or institutions that stand opposed to God and the truth of the Bible? How did you go about extracting yourself from these allegiances?

When you count fighting men, wives and children we are talking about a group of somewhere between 2,000-3,000 people who move to the city of Ziklag. Personal decisions, especially those that involve spiritual compromise, have an effect on those around us. How extensive were the consequences of David's compromise? How have you seen your spiritual decisions—good or bad—have an effect on you family, friends, and church?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

36

Study Six

In verses 6-12 we learn that David lived for 16 months in Ziklag. During this period he spent his time raiding and plundering various towns and villages in the area.¹ Notice again that the storyteller doesn't say this is the right thing to do, he simply reports what David and his men did.

Naturally, King Achish wanted to know what David was doing, and asks him in verse 10, *Where did you go raiding today?* David's response is less than forthcoming. In fact, it was a clear-cut lie. David's response was that he went raiding in the *Negev*. Negev is a broad Hebrew term referring to the south. What David is doing is leading Achish to believe that he was fighting in the southern part of Judah against his own people, when in fact he was raiding and killing Amalekites, Geshurites and Girzites. Eugene Peterson sets the stage for us.

He [David] not only joins the enemy, he double-crosses the enemy. He pretends to have turned traitor to his own people, pretends to be marauding and looting Israelite villages on a daily basis, while in fact he is massacring tribes to the south, longtime enemies of Israel, bringing back the plunder—plunder identified to Achish as coming from Israelites—and sharing it with the king. Achish, of course, is pleased to have such an enterprising and loyal military associate. (Peterson, p. 97)

What do you make of David's actions? How would you interpret what is taking place in this narrative?

Have there been times in your life that you have compromised and then found yourself trying to cover your tracks or even lying? What spiritual lessons can we learn from David's predicament?

¹ One of the more troubling aspects of the Old Testament is the killing of the people who were already in the land. Here in our passage we find David killing men, women and children as he attacks the surrounding peoples. The commands to utterly destroy the people of the land are found often in God's instructions to Israel as they come into the promised land. These instructions are always framed in the language of God's judgment on their idolatry. See Numbers 33:50-56; Deuteronomy 7:1-5, 20:16-18. God is using Israel as an instrument of his wrath for the horrific idolatry of these nations. Ironically, and sadly, at a later period of Israel's history God will use the surrounding nations as an instrument of judgment on Israel for her own rejection of God and embrace of idols.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

37

Study Six

Read I Samuel 29¹. Here we find David and his men actually marching with the Philistine army against Israel! Providentially, David and his men are sent back to Ziklag. We are only left to wonder if David would have actually joined the Philistines in battle against Israel. Why are David and his men sent back to Ziklag?

How does David respond in verse 8?

At the very least 1 Samuel 29 paints a picture of a very confused David. His compromises have lead him to this state of mind. Again, apply the lessons from David's predicament to your life. Can you think of times in your life that confusion and poor spiritual decision-making have brought you to a place where you are lining up with enemy troops?

Read 1 Samuel 30. The situation is bleak to say the least. How do David's followers respond to what they find at Ziklag?

It is in the darkness of this moment that for the first time in 16 months that we find David turning once again to God. In 30:6 we read that, *David found strength in the Lord his God.* The crisis of Ziklag is a turning point that drives David back to trust in God. In verses 7-8 David now looks to God for guidance and direction.

Has personal crisis in your life driven you back to trust in God to direct your life? How?

¹ We pass over chapter 28 at this juncture of our study. It tells the odd story of Saul and the witch of Endor which is an embedded story that is out of place chronologically.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

38



Study Six

These 3 chapters are a whirlwind of compromise, conflict and confusion. Think about your relationship with God and Jesus. What are one or two lessons from this story that you can apply to your life this week? Be prepared to share these with your homegroup and then pray together about these things.

sermon notes

Pursuing Proper Worship

2 Samuel 6



Imagine arriving at SBCC for a Sunday worship service and entering the Sanctuary only to discover that not a single copy of the Scriptures was available. This would, undoubtedly, have a dramatic effect on the practice of worship at SBCC.

Although, in one sense, this is just a book fashioned out of commonplace materials, in its proper context, the Bible takes on immeasurable significance. This is a small glimpse of the relationship of the people of Israel with the Ark of the Covenant.

For the people of Israel, the Ark of the Covenant served as the centerpiece of worship and religious life.¹ The Ark called to mind the

Lord's deliverance of his people out of their slavery in Egypt, the demands of the Law, and the centrality of Yahweh among his people. Peterson comments,

The Ark contained three items: the tablets of stone that Moses had delivered to the people from Sinai; a jar of manna from the wilderness years of wandering; and Aaron's rod that budded. These objects were the continuing and reminding evidence that God worked among them: commanded them (the tablets), provided for them (the manna), and saved them (the rod). (Peterson, p. 148)

Yet, by the time we reach 2 Samuel 6, the Ark had been missing from Israelite worship for years.² Lost during a battle, the Philistines had held on to the Ark for seven months, but after the Lord afflicted them (you can read more about that in 1 Samuel 5-6), they got rid of it, sending it instead to Kiriath Jearim (Baalath of Judah).

As any good king would, David decides to bring the center of worship together with the center of political power and return the Ark to the place it should have been all along: with the people of God.

With that background in mind, read 2 Samuel 6:1-11.

¹ It was the most venerable and venerated object of [David's] people's past: the Lord's Ark—repository of the covenant, locus of atonement, throne of the invisible Yahweh. (Youngblood, p. 867)

² Estimates of the length of time the Ark had been missing range from 30 to more than 60 years!

THE LIFE OF DAVID

40

Study Seven

What stands out to you after that first reading? What questions do you have of the text?

At first blush, this passage may seem to paint God as a vindictive and petty deity, looking down upon his people just waiting for them to go astray so that he can punish them. Yet, the text reveals that Uzzah was, in fact, in *error*. How? A fuller understanding of God's concern for proper worship helps fill in the picture. Although David, Uzzah, Ahio and the rest of the Israelite company set out with good intentions, they also ignored God's own commands for handling the Ark (see 1 Chronicles 15:11-13)¹ and approaching his presence.

Read and respond to the following verses:

Exodus 19:10-13

Numbers 4:1-15

1 Samuel 6:19

After reading these verses, what importance would you say God places on proper worship? What parallels do you see with our current practices of worship?

Paul makes clear in 1 Corinthians 11:23-32 that the central act of Christian worship—celebrating the Lord's Supper—should not be taken lightly. Read these verses.

What would it mean for us to approach the Lord's Supper—or worship in general—in an unworthy manner?

Uzzah learned a hard lesson about the fear of the Lord and the need to worship God appropriately. Yet, in the rest of 2 Samuel 6, the reader is encouraged that worship is not just a *by the book* endeavor, but also something that calls for our full engagement.

¹ It is notable that not only did David and his envoy ignore the written instructions in the Law regarding the proper transport of the Ark, they chose instead to use a *new cart*, a reference to an ox-cart, a distinctly Philistine innovation (see 1 Samuel 6:7-11).

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Seven

Read 2 Samuel 6:12-23.

The second half of this story strikes a welcome chord of lightness after the heaviness of the first half. The mood is decidedly more celebratory. And, just as Uzzah discovered that worship must be done appropriately, David's actions help us see that it also must be done wholeheartedly.

First, make a list of words that come to mind when you think of our times of corporate worship at SBCC.

Now, look back through the chapter and write down everything you read that describes the worship scene on that day.

How are the two lists describing worship similar? How do they differ?

Michal's sarcastic and hostile response to David's enthusiasm reveals much about her heart (6:20). Similarly, David's response to his critical wife reveals his heart (6:21-22). How did each of them view the day's activities?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

42



Study Seven

When it comes to corporate worship, do you find in yourself a spirit more like Michal's or like David's? Be prepared to share your response with your homegroup.

In John 4, Jesus talks to a Samaritan woman about the need to worship God both in spirit and in truth. In a way, this single chapter from the life of David illustrates that very concept. We see in these verses examples—as well as dire warnings—of what it means to approach God in spirit and in truth and the results when we don't.

What practices do you employ to prepare for corporate worship each week?

What specific warning or encouragement can you take from this account in regard to your own life of worship? Is there a warning or challenge for our church as a whole as to what it means to worship together in spirit and truth?

Read Psalm 19. Use David's words to inform your time of prayer. Ask God that he would give us a vision of his grandeur that would create in us a desire to worship him both appropriately and fully. Pray for one another in your homegroup. Pray that God will find you worshipping him in spirit and in truth.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

43

Study Seven

sermon notes

A Tale of Two Houses

2 Samuel 7



Americans cannot seem to get enough of home renovation television. Every week, millions tune in to watch people plan, plaster, and paint as they chase the “home of their dreams.” From the mostly cosmetic redesigns brought about on shows like “Divine Design” and “While You Were Out,” to the strip-it-to-the-studs projects undertaken on “Extreme Makeover: Home Edition,” we are suckers for this stuff!

Yet, as 2 Samuel 7 reminds us, the urge to build is nothing new. Even King David got the bug. He has now reached the point in his life where he’s ready to trade his lyre for a level, his warrior’s helmet for a hard hat, and his shepherd’s staff for a Skil saw.

Read through the narrative found in 2 Samuel 7:1-17. What initial questions do you have of the text? What stands out to you as you read?

David has reached a place of safety and security in life. Indeed, verse 1 tells us *the king lived in his house and the Lord had given him rest from all his surrounding enemies*. His position as king over a united nation is no longer in question by those within his borders nor in jeopardy from those outside of his borders. God has given him rest.

Rest seems just as elusive for us as it must have seemed for David, and perhaps even more so. Reflect on the last time you felt truly at rest. What are the necessary conditions for you to feel at rest?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

46

Study Eight

As he contemplates his rest, King David sees what he believes to be an inequity: he lives in a fine palace while the Ark of the Lord dwells in a tent. *David decides that the time has finally come for him to do what any self-respecting king worthy of the name should do: build a house for his God.* (Youngblood, p. 884) And, just to be on the safe side, David checks in with the prophet Nathan and gets the okay for his plan.

Yet, God has other thoughts and quickly sends Nathan back to David with a very different response.

Have you ever experienced a time when the Lord said, “No,” to your plans? What were the circumstances?

Often, when we attempt big things for God and we do not receive his divine approval, we are tempted to conclude that our plans displease God. In David’s case, however, Scripture clearly tells us otherwise.

Read the account of Solomon’s dedication of the temple in 2 Chronicles 6:7-9. What was God’s perspective on David’s desire to build a temple?

Now the story seems more confusing than ever! God was pleased by what was in David’s heart, but was not willing to let David live out what was in his heart. The issue here is not one of David’s plan but of David’s past. Read 1 Chronicles 22:6-10.

Although God approved of David’s plan to build a temple, God didn’t approve of David being the one to do it. God’s prerequisites trumped David’s good intentions. God chose David for a particular time and task: to settle the nation of Israel and bring about domestic and international peace. Yet, the method of establishing such peace—the shedding of blood—disqualified David from constructing the place of worship that was to signify peace between God and men.

Although David thought he had big plans to carry out on God’s behalf, God reveals, through Nathan’s oracle, that he has big plans to carry out on David’s behalf—bigger than even the grand temple that David envisioned. Mary J. Evans observes,

The chapter centres on a word-play that, unusually, works in English as well as it does in Hebrew. David is not to build a house (building) for God, but God will build a house (dynasty) for David. (Evans, p. 195)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Eight

Read 2 Samuel 7:4-16 again and make a list of all the promised that God makes to David.

Significantly, David will be the passive recipient of the blessings outlined here. *The message that Nathan delivers to David is dominated by a recital of what God has done, is doing, and will do. God is the first-person subject of twenty-three verbs in this message, and these verbs carry the action.* (Peterson, p.161) God has a plan to bless David and will trust that plan to none other than Himself.

Do you welcome the idea of God being the first person subject of the changes in your life or does that make you uncomfortable? How do you live in the tension of *work out your own salvation with fear and trembling* (Philippians 2:12) and *I am the LORD who sanctifies you?* (Leviticus 20:8)

2 Samuel 7:5-16 is known as the Davidic Covenant and, arguably, forms the pinnacle of the entire Old Testament as it lays the foundation for the messianic expectation that permeates the psalms and prophets and points our eyes to Jesus in the New Testament. Consider and respond to the messianic hope expressed in the following texts, each of which draws upon the imagery of the Davidic Covenant.

Isaiah 9:2-7

Jeremiah 23:1-6

Ezekiel 37:24-28

Clearly, the Davidic Covenant set the stage for the revelation of Messiah and thrust Israel into a time of intense waiting and seeking that would last until the advent of Jesus. Yes, the things promised came to glorious fulfillment in Christ! Consider and respond to the following passages.

Matthew 3:13-17

Luke 1:30-33

Acts 2:29-36

Hebrews 1:1-5

THE LIFE OF DAVID

48



Study Eight

So, how do we respond to these great promises so wonderfully fulfilled by our Lord Jesus Christ? We do it in the same way David responded upon first hearing the promises. Read through 2 Samuel 7:18-29 and take note of David's thankful and humble spirit.

Which of the aspects of our Messiah Jesus make you most thankful? Most humble? Be prepared to share your responses with your homegroup.

Spend some time reading through Psalm 89. Allow this psalm, rich with imagery drawn from the Davidic Covenant, to grow in you a sense of thankful wonder that, through the salvation accomplished by the death and resurrection of Jesus, the true Son of David, you have been welcomed into the blessings of this covenant and can now truly know what it means to have rest.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Eight

sermon notes

An Uncommon Kindness

2 Samuel 9

In the famous and oft-referenced speech from William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Shylock, a Jew, is responding to the poor treatment he has received at the hands of Christians and purports his right to respond. He says,

If you prick us, do we not bleed?
If you tickle us, do we not laugh? If you poison us,
do we not die? And if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?
If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that.
If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility?
Revenge. If a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his
sufferance be by Christian example? Why, revenge.
The villainy you teach me, I will execute,
and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction.
(Act III, Scene I)



King David may have disputed Shylock's insistence that revenge was the only proper response to an insult. As we will see in this study, David also knew the place of merciful kindness.

Read 2 Samuel 9. What stands out to you as you read? What questions do you have of this passage?

David's stated intention in this passage is to show kindness for Jonathan's sake. The Hebrew word translated as "kindness" is the word *kesed*. Eugene Peterson, in his commentary on this passage, notes,

The word translated "kindness" in our text is one of those large Hebrew words that radiates a spectrum of meanings like a rainbow of colors from a diamond in the sunlight: kindness, love, steadfast love, covenantal friendship, loyal love, and justice. It is a favorite word among the psalmists to convey God's characteristic relationship with us; it is a favorite word of the prophets to designate our most appropriate relationship with one another. (Peterson, p. 173)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

52

Study Nine

Look again at 9:3. David's impulse to show kindness to a descendant of Saul finds its model in the kindness routinely demonstrated by God. Reflect again on the list of synonyms Peterson provides for the term *kindness*. How has God demonstrated these characteristics in your life? Which of them is the most meaningful to you?

Although David drew inspiration from the kindness of God to display graciousness, generally, his affection for Jonathan prompted him to choose the house of Saul specifically. Going back in the story of David and Jonathan, read and consider 1 Samuel 20:12-17. At the height of Saul's persecution of David, Saul's son Jonathan entered into a covenant with David.

What terms would you use to characterize the relationship of David and Jonathan?

Jonathan recognizes that David is the eventual heir to the throne of Saul and enters into a covenant of loyalty with him. More than simply a shrewd political maneuver, Jonathan's covenant with David is the expression of a deep friendship that would later prompt David to exclaim, *very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women* (2 Samuel 1:26).

Reflect on your own friendships. How have friendships with other believers sustained you in difficult times? How have you been a friend to others in difficult times that expressed your *kesed* love for them?

Because of his deep love for Jonathan and the oath of perpetual love he swore to his friend, David looks for any ancestor of Saul's to whom he can extend *kesed*. This was an unexpected course of action by a king in the Ancient Near East. Swindoll notes,

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Nine

It was the custom in eastern dynasties that when a new king took over, all the family members of the previous dynasty were exterminated to take away the possibility of revolt. (Swindoll, p. 171)

This custom likely led to Mephibosheth's disability in the first place. Upon hearing the news of Saul's failed dynasty, the members of his family fled in fear. Read 2 Samuel 4:4. Now *crippled in his feet*, we learn that Mephibosheth was taken to live in Lo-debar, a remote town of little stature¹ that serves to hide Saul's heir from the anticipated vengeance of David's house.

Undoubtedly aware of all of this background, Mephibosheth must have been gripped with fear when the king's representatives arrived in Lo-debar and summoned him to appear before David. Accordingly, upon arriving in Jerusalem, Mephibosheth came before David and *fell on his face and paid homage*. Yet, David, also aware of the background, immediately dispels Mephibosheth's concerns and begins his address to Jonathan's son with the words, *Do not fear*. What apt words for one whose life had been so marked by that very thing!

How has God worked in your life to demonstrate to you that you no longer have need to fear? What place should *the fear of God* occupy in the lives of believers?

Mephibosheth has no need to fear because David's intent is not to harm him, but to bless him abundantly. David not only restores to Mephibosheth the food-bearing farm land of his grandfather, he provides—through Ziba and his sons and servants—an adequate workforce to ensure that he would be taken care of for years to come, in spite of his disability. And, with the invitation *you shall eat at my table always*, David assures Mephibosheth that his new place is not subject to the king's whims, but a lasting arrangement.

Although the particular subjects of this passage are, perhaps, not well known to us, this story ought to sound familiar. This passage provides a fresh glimpse at the grace we were offered on the cross.

¹ As a Transjordanian town, Lo-Debar held little importance within the boundaries of Israel. Additionally, the very name of the town meant "nothing." See Amos 6:12-13.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

54

Study Nine

Chuck Swindoll draws eight analogies between this story and our redemption:

1. Just as Mephibosheth, the grandson of the king, once enjoyed royal fellowship, so we (in Adam) once walked with the King.
2. As a result of a fall, Mephibosheth became a physical invalid, while, as a result of the fall, we became spiritual invalids.
3. King David sought out Mephibosheth in his hiding and God seeks us in our hiding.
4. Mephibosheth was the recipient of unmerited grace, and we are no different.
5. Just as David restored Mephibosheth from a place of barrenness to a place of honor, so God has redeemed us from our empty lives and restored our fellowship with him.
6. David adopted Mephibosheth into his family. We have been called the children of God and made co-heirs with Christ.
7. Just as Mephibosheth's disability was a constant reminder of the role of grace in his life, so our continuing struggle with sin reminds us always of our need for God's grace.
8. Mephibosheth received the same royal treatment at the king's table as the other children. In the same way, we have been saved into a community of saints, all of them there as a result of grace, all of them afforded the same privileges of childhood. (Swindoll, p. 176-178)

Read and reflect on these verses in light of the story we've just considered in 2 Samuel 9.

Romans 5:6-11

Galatians 4:4-7

Ephesians 2:4-10

Read through Psalm 136, which focuses on the *kesed* love of God. Allow this psalm to inform your time of prayer, thanking God that though we were his enemies, he brought us near, drove out our fear, adopted us as his children and has provided for our needs. As you read, write down any areas in which you're particularly thankful for the *kesed* of God and be prepared to share them with your homegroup.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Nine

sermon notes

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Ten 57

David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11-12, Psalm 51



In 1998, the scandal broke in the news that President Bill Clinton had an affair with a White House intern. This resulted in impeachment charges of which he was subsequently acquitted. The media swirl was huge. Can you, though, imagine the headlines if our president had been involved in an affair with a woman whose husband was a secret service agent, whose father was also in the secret service, and whose grandfather was a senior staff member?¹ What if she had become pregnant and her husband was killed to cover up the tracks? This is what we find in the story of David and Bathsheba! A scandal of monstrous proportions! This story, however, is not just tabloid fodder. In this account, we learn something about ourselves and about God.

Read 2 Samuel 11-12. As you go, make a rough outline of the story including major points where David goes wrong and where he gets back on the right path.

Take some time for everyone in your homegroup to share their most heinous sin. No! – Just kidding!... but did that send a shiver up your spine? Can you imagine if your worst sin was shared not just with your homegroup, but recorded for generations all over the world to read and discuss? Why do you think that God made sure this was recorded in his Word?

11:1-2 Notice temptation comes when David is not busy with the work he should be doing.

Had he been where he belonged- with his troops- there would never have been the Bathsheba episode. Our greatest battles don't usually come when we're working hard; they come when we have some leisure, when we've got time on our hands, when we're bored. That's when we make those fateful decisions that come back to haunt us. (Swindoll, p.183-184)

¹ We read in 2 Samuel 11:3 that Bathsheba's father is Eliam. Eliam is listed, along with Bathsheba's husband Uriah, as part of David's elite military band of "the Thirty" (2 Samuel 23:34,39). We also learn in this list that Eliam's father is Ahithophel, the close friend and trusted counselor of King David.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

58

Study Ten

How have you found this to be true in your life?

The goal of the Christian life is not, of course, to keep busy. Not laboring, though, for what is good can have a deleterious effect on our lives. Read 2 Thessalonians 3:6-14. What are the good things that you are laboring in that help keep temptations at bay?

While all agree that David plays the biggest role in this story of sin, there are some who think that Bathsheba cannot be entirely excused for bathing in a place where she could be seen. Raymond Brown, while recognizing David as primarily at fault, also suggests, *If she had thought seriously about her action she would not have put temptation in his path.* (cited in Swindoll, p.185) Whatever you think about that, it brings up a reasonable question:

Women, how can you, or how do you seek to help men avoid temptation? In what ways can men help women avoid temptation? Speak to one another in your group about ways you can protect those of the opposite gender.

Read James 1:14-15. How does the story of David illustrate the principle in these verses?

Dietrich Bonhoeffer gives insight and wise counsel in his book *Temptation*:

In our members there is a slumbering inclination toward desire, which is both sudden and fierce. With irresistible power, desire seizes mastery of the flesh. All at once a secret, smoldering fire is kindled. The flesh burns and is in flames. It makes no difference whether it is a sexual desire, or ambition, or vanity, or desire for revenge, or love of fame and power, or greed for money... At that moment God is quite unreal to us. He loses all reality and only desire for the creature is real...It is here that everything within me rises up against the Word of God... Therefore the Bible teaches us in times of temptation in the flesh, there is one command: Flee! (Swindoll, p.185-186)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Ten

How can you put this exhortation into practice in your own life?

Notice Uriah excels exactly where David has sinned. He has prioritized duty above pleasure, whereas David pursued unrestrained pleasure over duty (11:11).

There is a dark comedy in the way that the story is told. Even being made drunk did not make Uriah set aside his principles. David could take away Uriah's wife and even take away his life, but he did not have the power to take away his integrity. The contrast with David could not be more marked. (Evans, p. 210)

What are some areas of life that we as Christians have the opportunity to demonstrate integrity and godly principles? Do you have any "Uriah stories" to share—times when God has enabled you to stand strong when faced with opportunities to "bend" the rules?

Nathan cuts through all David's defenses and wakes him up to his situation before the Lord (12:7). Have you ever had an experience like this, where you were awakened to your standing before a holy God, in need of mercy? How did you respond?

Through this story we learn some important lessons about temptation and sin:

Sin is insatiable. David did not lack for culturally appropriate objects of his sexual desires. 2 Samuel 5:13 makes clear that David had multiple wives and concubines. You cannot, however, satisfy sin. It always wants more. How have you seen or experienced this?

Sin is primarily a serious offense against God. David's sin against Uriah and Bathsheba are obvious. Yet David says, *I have sinned **against** the Lord* (12:13). How is this true?

Sin always bears consequences. What were the consequences of David's sin?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

60

Study Ten

What are some consequences for the kind of sins we are prone to?

Sin's power is broken by confession and repentance. Read the following verses and respond.

Proverbs 28:13

James 5:16

1 John 1:9

Do you have any trusted friends who will “call you out”? Where do you turn to confess your sin? Do you just confess your sin to God or do you have a person/ people with whom you feel safe?

We speak of an addict in “recovery” who is abstaining from that to which he/she had an addiction. The Christian life is about recognizing that we are sin-addicts. The recovery we need, though, is not just abstinence from sin. We need to allow God the recovery of his rightful place in our lives. Eugene Peterson writes, *David's moving Psalm 51 is the eloquent rehearsal of his God-recovery.* (Peterson, p.189)

Read Psalm 51 aloud with your homegroup.

What are the elements of true repentance that we see in this psalm? How can we create a church culture in which repentance is not blushed at, but accepted and expected?

Before finishing this study it is important to notice that David's sin resulted in the death of his son (12:14). Generations later, *the Son of David*, Jesus, went willingly to his death for us, so that we might have life and forgiveness through him.

Close in prayer by thanking God for sending Jesus. Ask God to give us hearts that desire to live in a way that is pleasing to him, and ask for the strength to repent when we do sin.

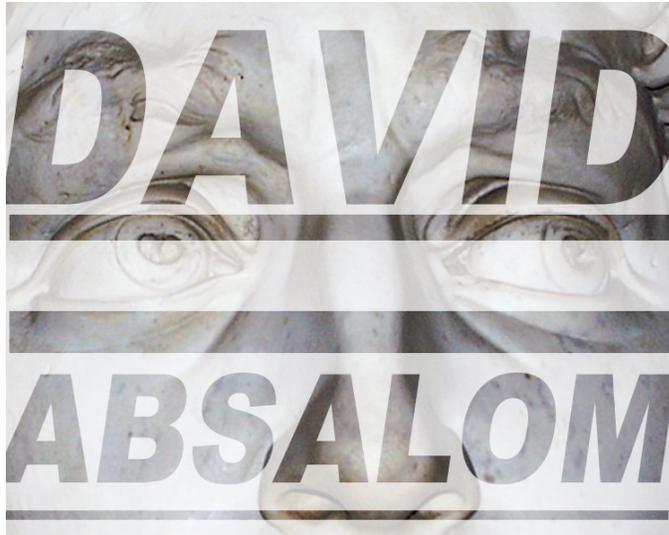
THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Ten

sermon notes

David and Absalom

2 Samuel 15-18, Psalm 3



After the Bathsheba episode that we looked at last time, the narrative turns quickly to show how the consequences announced by the prophet Nathan will be fulfilled.

This is what the Lord says, Out of your own house I am going to bring calamity. (2 Samuel 12:11-12)

Calamity is right! If you think you have a dysfunctional family, take a look at David's family and you'll feel better about your own! In 2 Samuel 13, David's son Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar. This leads Absalom

(Tamar's full brother) to seek revenge by killing his half-brother Amnon. And that's merely the beginning of the story!¹

David was good at a lot of things—warfare, poetry, leadership, to name a few. One area, though, that he does not excel in is parenting. He was not a good father. His passivity, preoccupation, and lack of discipline result in his household being a mess.² Hatred, deception, rape, incest, murder. Not a fun place to come home to—even if home is a palace!

Read the following verses and note what they teach about parenting.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Proverbs 22:6

Ephesians 6:4

1 Thessalonians 2:7-12

¹ If you have time, read 2 Samuel 13 and 14:23-33 which provide the backdrop for the story that we will concentrate on in this study.

² This is not to say that the poor behavior of kids can always be attributed to bad parenting. That is certainly not the case. As children, we cannot blame all our bad decisions on bad parenting. It is true, however, that parents can leave significant wounds on their children as seems clear in the case of David.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

64

Study Eleven

Was godly parenting modeled for you growing up? In what ways do you hope to emulate or not emulate your own parents in this regard? If you are a parent, how are you doing in that role? How should faith in Jesus Christ affect the way you parent?

Take a moment to pray for the families of SBCC. Pray that fathers and mothers would model the character of God to their kids and that the children would respond with respect and obedience and faith.

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-12. What is your impression of Absalom? What kind of man is he? How did he gain such immense popularity?

Read 15:13-16:14 and make note of the cast of characters. Which side is each on? Who has set out with David? Who stayed behind to work "undercover" for David?

Those who joined Absalom's rebellion/
enemies of David _____

Those who remained loyal to David

Eugene Peterson writes,

Back in the wilderness, where so much of David's character had been formed, we now see him recovering that which is, well, so characteristically David. Hardship brings out the best in David. Suffering can, if we let it, make us better instead of worse. (Peterson, p. 198)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Eleven

What does it mean that suffering can *make us better*? Have you seen this modeled by anyone? Has hardship made you a better or worse person? How so?

Are there any difficult things going on in your life right now? How might you allow these things to make you better?

The title to Psalm 3 links it to this episode in history. Read the psalm to see how David prayed in times like this. How might this prayer instruct your prayers?

Whether or not you are going through suffering right now, if you are a Christian you are part of a violent spiritual conflict. Patrick Henry Reardon comments on the violent language of this psalm (and many others),

To relinquish any of the psalms on the excuse that its sentiments are too violent for a Christian is a clear sign that a person has also given up the very battle that a Christian is summoned from his bed to fight. The psalms are prayers for those engaged in an ongoing spiritual conflict. No one else need bother even opening the book.¹

Do you think of yourself in a conflict like David? Do you pray this way for yourself, your friends, your family, or for the Church?

Read 2 Samuel 16:15-23 and notice how God's pronouncement through Nathan is being fulfilled.

One of the prominent themes in this story is that of friendship. In chapter 13, Amnon's "friend" helps him down the path of sin. In chapter 15, we see Absalom gaining a following of other opportunists like himself, but there is no mention of any friends. In chapters 15-16, we see how several of David's friends respond to this crisis. Some prove to be true friends and some turn against him. Read the following verses on friendship.

¹ Quoted in *God's Prayer Book*, Ben Patterson, Tyndale House Publishers, 2008, p. 32.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

66

Study Eleven

Job 2:11-13

Proverbs 13:20

Proverbs 17:17

Proverbs 18:24

1 Corinthians 15:33

What does it mean to be a good friend? How are you at being a good friend? Are you cultivating solid friendships?

Read 2 Samuel 17-18. Enjoy the drama! This section is filled with political power games, deception, and risky espionage. Where are God's fingerprints in the midst of all of this? What do you think we can learn about God's involvement in local and world affairs from this?

At the conclusion of this story is one of the most heart-wrenching scenes in all of Scripture as David learns that his son is dead (8:33). Think about the parallels to the gospel of Jesus Christ...

- The amazing love that God the Father has for rebels like us.
- David cries out, *If only I had died instead of you!* The Son of David, Jesus, actually does go willingly to his death as a substitute for those who continually challenge his rightful authority.

Write a prayer of thanksgiving for God's immeasurable love and grace for sinners like us, and as a homegroup read your prayers aloud to God.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

67

Study Eleven

sermon notes

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Twelve 69

Death

1 Kings 1-2

It is a good thing for men to face the fact that they will die. We exhibit our power, we parade our learning, and we display our wealth, but these seem to mean remarkably little after a short time. We are now having our little day as millions of our predecessors have had theirs, but within a hundred years we shall be gone from the scene and very few of us will be remembered by anyone. Man may learn, in his ingenuity, to postpone death a bit and to ease his pains, but he cannot overcome it. Death is the great democrat who, in the end, levels all our pretensions.

Elton Trueblood¹



*That we all die is incontestable. The statistics are in and they are conclusive: one out of one will die. How we die is a different matter. Will we die faithful till the end? Or will we say with Macbeth, *Life is a tale told by an idiot—full of sound and fury, signifying nothing?* Will we *finish well?* Or will we expire embittered and exhausted?*

After forty years of reigning over Israel, David dies. He is not exempt from the great statistic and his death, we might say, gets mixed reviews. In the book of 1 Chronicles, chapters 28-29, we see the triumphant, faithful David handing his charge over to the future King Solomon, and praying a remarkable prayer of faithfulness and gratitude.²

1 Elton Trueblood, *The Common Ventures of Life: Marriage, Birth, Work and Death*, 1949, p. 124.

2 Careful readers of Samuel / Kings who then turn to 1 and 2 Chronicles notice fairly quickly that the history of Israel is told from a slightly different, glamorized, perspective in the books of Chronicles. Chronicles (originally one book) concentrates on the reigns of David and Solomon as types (pictures) of the coming Messiah. David, for example, is anointed king of all Israel immediately after the death of Saul (while in Samuel we read of the wars David had to fight with the house of Saul to unify the nation. Chronicles does not mention David's sin with Bathsheba. Nor do the latter years of David's reign seem so fraught with difficulties and decline. Solomon is presented similarly in regal splendor. The author never mentions Solomon's foreign wives or his descent into idolatry (1 Kings 11:9-12). The question is why? What is the perspective of the Chronicler? Biblical scholars agree that Chronicles was written late in biblical history after the return from exile. Bruce Waltke explains:

After the dislocations of exile and return, who inherits the covenant promises? After all the misfortunes (the fall of Jerusalem, the destruction of God's temple, the loss of land) and their still being in subjection to the Persian emperor and their being without a king, is God still with them? (Waltke, p. 775).

THE LIFE OF DAVID

70

Study Twelve

The David chapters of 1 Chronicles are largely devoted to the king's preparations for the building of the temple in Jerusalem.¹ To put it mildly, in 1 Chronicles, David dies as we would like him to die. He goes out as he lived; he dies like a great king.

The the story is told, though, differently in the book we call 1 Kings. Here we see an old man of 70 who has lost his sexual potency, can't stay warm in bed and is surrounded by a bitter family feud. In 1 Kings, David dies alone. His wife Bathsheba isn't by his side, his son Adonijah is trying to usurp the throne and David continues to play the passive role that has plagued him since his fall into murder and adultery. In 1 Kings 2, David's last words are far from the noble prayer of 1 Samuel 29:10-16. In this book the king's last words are his call for the execution of one of his enemies, *[B]ring his gray head down with blood to Sheol.*

Before going on in this study read 1 Kings 1:1-2:12. This section of 1 Kings makes for great reading. It is filled with action and tragedy.

Keep the following outline in mind, and look for the following characters:

- Abishag (a beautiful virgin)
- Adnoijah (David's son through Haggith)
- Abiathar the priest (in Adnoijah's camp)
- Zadok the priest (in David's camp)
- Nathan (the prophet)
- Bathsheba (the mother of Solomon)

Outline of 1 Kings 1-2

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 1:1-4 | David and Abishag |
| 1:5-10 | Adonijah usurps the throne |
| 1:11-27 | Nathan and Bathsheba intercede |
| 1:28-40 | The Coronation of Solomon |
| 1:41-52 | Adonijah and Solomon |
| 2:1-9 | David's charge to Solomon and his last words before dying |
| 2:10-12 | The death of King David |

¹ Of the 21 chapters devoted to David, 17 chapters concentrate on his preparations for the temple.

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Twelve

Jot down your thoughts, reactions and questions as you read in the space below. What do you learn about death and dying from these chapters? What lessons do you learn about living from these chapters?

Look again at the above outline. The whole story is really about David's death. 1 Kings 1:4 is a significant verse. Abishag, a beautiful virgin, is put in David's bed, and the sexually prolific king *knew her not*. This is not because of any new-found restraint, but because David has grown impotent. As Bruce Waltke writes, *David's loss of sexual potency signals to his officials that he is no longer politically capable*. (Waltke, p. 706-707)

Yet while David may be well-past his virile prime, he seems to take his time in dying. Adonijah, his oldest son, and therefore the one in line to succeed him on the throne, grows impatient and has himself crowned as king.

Parallels have been drawn between Adonijah and his dead older brother Absalom. Both are good looking, both are self-absorbed and both are politically ambitious. Absalom tried to usurp David's throne and attempted to kill the King to do so (2 Samuel 17). Adonijah simply ignores his father and crowns himself king.

In his book on the life of David and in a chapter on the death of David, Eugene Peterson makes the point that often we don't know what to do with the elderly, or even with people our own age, or who are younger than we are. In the following quotation, Peterson is reflecting on Adonijah's impetuous claim to the throne. Discuss and respond to the following quotation:

Every life is a limitation on my life. Those closest to me limit me most. Children are a limitation; spouses are a limitation; parents are a limitation. These limitations aren't minor inconveniences, they're major and unavoidable conditions in the all-demanding exercise of being human. Given our propensity for wanting to live not as humans but as gods and goddesses, it's quite inevitable that from time to time we fantasize an end to the limitations: death of the other as freedom for the sovereign self. (Peterson, p. 221)

THE LIFE OF DAVID

72

Study Twelve

Have you ever responded to the death or fatal illness of a loved one like this?

What factors would cause a person to have this response?

In a sense, Nathan and Bathsheba are the heroes of these chapters. In his old age, David seems unconcerned about the chaos that will ensue after his death if he does not anoint his successor (1:21). Because of Nathan and Bathsheba's efforts, David has Solomon anointed, and his kingdom, we learn, will continue uninterrupted. Again, Peterson clarifies:

Insofar as this is a political story of Solomon's succession to David's throne, it's quite satisfactory. Insofar as it's a theological story of God keeping covenant through the turbulent uncertainties of human sin and by means of sometimes sordid human motives, it's flourishingly brilliant. But as a David story—a narration of what we can expect as human beings made in the image of God, saved by the cross of Christ, blessed by the Holy Spirit—it's disappointing. We should have liked a better ending: Bathsheba in lament, Bathsheba in awe before the sacred mystery of death, reading David one of his own psalms.

Then Peterson goes on to make a very profound point. This story of David's death is our story. Each of us will die and many of us will be treated like David. *We will be treated as a problem to be fixed, or as an opportunity to be seized, or as a responsibility to be carried out and put right.* (Peterson, p. 224)

David dies alone.

With all of the above in mind, jot down some of your thoughts on your own death. When you die, how would you like your life to be measured?

What are some things you would like people to say about you when you are gone?

THE LIFE OF DAVID

Study Twelve

What are some things about your life that you are now questioning or would like to change as you consider death?

In Acts 13:36, Paul is preaching and summarizes the life of David.

For when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his fathers and his body decayed.

What do you see as God's purpose in your life? How are you allowing him to fulfill his purpose? Think and share very practically and specifically.

Reflect on what you've learned through the study of David's life these last months, and ponder the answers you've given to the questions above. Commit yourself to follow the Lord's leading in these areas, and pause to imagine where that will take you in the future. Now, write a brief (but not too brief) obituary of yourself. Share this with your homegroup.

What would you like the epitaph on your tombstone to say?

We have spent 12 weeks surveying the life of David. We have observed his triumphs and tragedies, his faithfulness and his sin. In the end, David was *a man after God's own heart*, a man chosen by God to fulfill God's purposes.

Share a few thoughts with your homegroup summarizing what you have learned from the one through whom God would eventually send the *Son of David*, the *David* who is truly our King.

