

THE LIFE OF David



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INTRODUCTION

Written by Nicholas Kelley

Pastoral Intern

I remember the first time I read through the book of Romans (I know we're supposed to be studying David's life, but bear with me). At the time, I was struggling with self-control, and I became frustrated with my sinful nature. I was convinced that no legitimate Christian could ever go through the struggles of temptation that I went through and for the length of time that I did. When I read Romans 7:15, it felt like I had finally met someone who understood me. Paul writes: "For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate." I didn't understand my actions, and I often found myself doing things that I knew were displeasing to God. What I realized at that moment is that, when we get to know the characters of the Bible, they are relatable people who deal with trials and temptations in much the same way we do.

As we study David's life, I think you will find that he has gone through situations that you have gone through and that he has processed emotions that you have processed. This is the glory of Scripture, that in it, we find people just like us. Consider Psalm 23. It is generally believed that David wrote this Psalm when Saul was plotting to murder him. Though we have probably never experienced being the victim of an attempted murder, we know exactly what it's like to feel the emotion of fear. He writes, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me." We too can declare this truth over our fears because we know that our God is ever-present, infinitely powerful, and ready to help in our time of need.

Think about David's well-known encounter with Goliath as a young boy. Though you have never had to fight against giants, I am sure that you have been met with obstacles that seemed too great to overcome. Like David, you can say to these challenges and temptations: "For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand" (1 Samuel 17:47).

As you read this study guide, you will see that David, although imperfect, proves time and time again to recommit himself to the Lord and to follow His ways. One way we can imitate David's example is by meditating on God's Word. David writes in Psalm 1:1-2, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law, he meditates day and night." If we are to grow in our faith and have the spiritual strength of David, we need to commit to studying God's Word. We pray that this resource will be used to assist you in your study of Scripture, encourage you, bless you, and give you direction as you navigate this journey that we call life.

WEEK 1: UNEXPECTED GENEALOGY

Written by Dave Vance

Lead Pastor

Read Ruth 1-4

David...known as a man after God's own heart, Israel's greatest King, and one of the most well-known Bible characters. For a man of such importance and stature, one would think his story would begin in the splendor of a palace or the heights of a throne. But his story begins in an obscure city, with an unknown family, and an unexpected genealogy. Before he ever became the shepherd boy who brought a warrior to his demise with a sling and a stone; before he led Israel, bringing their enemies to their ending; before triumph and tragedy, personal sins struggled through and great triumphs gained; well before David was ever known, his story was already written. Two generations before, David's great-grandmother, Ruth, began her own journey of faithfulness that would define David's future. She would live a story of an ordinary woman who experienced devastating loss and hardship, but also witnessed God's unending faithfulness and abounding love.

Ruth's bloodline is the last one that you would expect to produce the King of Israel. Her story takes place during one of the darkest, most wicked, rebellious, obstinate, and most unfortunate periods in Israel's history. Prior to Israel having a King, everyone did "what was right in their own eyes" (Judges 21:25). Without a ruler, civility did not exist, and the people were left to rule themselves. This quickly left the culture seeking their own good. Ruth was a Moabite woman who ended up marrying a Jewish man from one of the remaining faithful families. Tragically, her husband died, leaving her with the choice to either return to her people or remain with her mother-in-law and trust the plan of God in her life. Ruth decided to stay with her mother-in-law and journeyed with her to the town of Bethlehem. This story of faith, love, and devotion eventually finds Ruth being redeemed from her loss, marrying a wealthy landowner, and bearing a son named Obed. Obed would be the grandfather of David and form the bloodline of Jesus.

The backdrop of David's story reminds us that God's hand of providence is always at work. He is not just working in the seen and obvious of human history, not just through kings, queens, rulers, and nations. David's story reminds us that God is also at work in the everyday details of normal, average people. It's a story for people who wonder where God is when there are more questions than answers. It's for people who wonder where God is when one tragedy after another attacks their faith. It's a story for people who wonder whether a life of integrity in the midst of tough times is worth it. It's a story for those who will doubt whether God is in control,

whether God is good, and whether faith to do what is right is worth the promised outcome. And it's a story for people who can't imagine that anything great could ever come of their seemingly insignificant faith.

Like Ruth, God is writing a story in our lives with outcomes that we cannot imagine. He is orchestrating every part of our stories for our good and for His purpose. In every season... seeking, seen, shattered, hard, delayed, or triumphant and restored, God is sovereign. His plan will be accomplished. God is King, and He reigns in all the affairs of men, big and small, nations and families, and even in you. He can be trusted to write His story through our lives.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Do you know anything about your genealogy? What surprises you most about David's heritage? How does his heritage remind you of God's faithfulness?

Have you ever been in a situation where your experience didn't match your expectations? Explain the situation. How did it resolve?

As you walk through the book of Ruth, identify the "God-moments" (moments where God was at work behind the scenes). How prone are you to recognize God's provision and protection in your life? How convinced are you that God wants to be involved in your life to accomplish His purposes and plans? What evidence (or lack thereof) can you point to in supporting your conclusions?

Share your favorite "surprise ending" from a movie or book. What reactions and/or emotions did you experience? Why are people often drawn to unexpected resolutions to a story? When reading the book of Ruth, you would ever guess that Ruth would be the great-grandmother of King David. Yet it goes deeper still, she becomes part of Jesus' family tree. How does this move your emotions and bring you hope?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Matthew 1:1-16

Day 2: Psalm 139

Day 3: Philipians 2

Day 4: Galatians 4:4-5

Day 5: Ruth 4:14; Romans 15:13

WEEK 2: A CHOSEN KING; A REJECTED KING

*Written by Keegan McQuate,
Waterford Campus Pastor*

Read: 1 Samuel 8:1-22, 12-15

In 1 Samuel 8, the nation of Israel demanded that Samuel appoint a King to rule and judge the nation. The Lord instructed the newly appointed leader to obey the request of his people, because they rejected God (1 Sam 8:7). Samuel then warned the Israelites of the wicked and selfish things that a future King would do during his reign, and that the Israelites would cry out to the Lord in response to these actions, but the Lord would not help in their time of need (1 Sam 8:18). In 1 Samuel 9, Saul, son of Kish, was chosen to be King of Israel, and was later anointed. In 1 Samuel 12, Samuel gave a farewell address to the nation of Israel that encouraged them to fear the Lord and serve Him faithfully. He also gave a warning that if they continued down a path of wickedness with their King, they would be swept away. After his fight with the Philistines, Saul made an unlawful sacrifice to the Lord. He did not wait for Samuel to arrive at Gilgal, and immediately after Samuel arrived, Samuel confronted Saul for this decision. Samuel then told Saul that since he did not do what the Lord had commanded him to, Saul's Kingdom would end, and a new King would be appointed. This King would be "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam 13:14).

In 1 Samuel 14, Saul made a rash vow to the men of Israel, forbidding that any of them eat until the Philistines were defeated. Johnathon, son of Saul, not knowing this vow, ate a small amount of honey after defeating a group of Philistines, and the men of Israel informed him that he broke Saul's vow. To which Johnathon responded, "My father has troubled the land" (1 Sam 14:29). He then argued that it would be better for the men of Israel to taste the spoil of their victory, instead of starving themselves and making future victory harder. The Israelites argued on behalf of Jonathan and ransomed him so that he would live. In 1 Samuel 15, the Lord informed Samuel of His regret in appointing Saul as King, and instructed Samuel to deliver this message to Saul. Because Saul rejected the Word of God, the Lord prevented him from being King.

Saul, unlike David, checked all the boxes of a stereotypical earthly King. Saul failed to lead God's people and serve Yahweh. The life of Saul directly contrasts with the life of David, as man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. In the coming chapters, we are shown a King who is after God's own heart, King David.

As followers of Christ, we are commanded to obey the Word of God, and follow his commands. It can be tempting to compromise by giving in to worldly temptations. We must stand firm in our faith in Christ. We can learn from the Saul's mistakes by seeking to please the Lord rather than man.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

When have you pleased others at the cost of sacrificing God's commands?

What can you do to keep your focus on God when facing pressure to compromise your faith?

To make sure that we are following God's Word, we must be in it consistently. Do you spend enough time in prayer and in God's Word?

Just like the Israelites, sometimes we ask for things that are not the best for us. Have you seen God answer your prayers in ways that were different than what you wanted, but ended up being better?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: 1 Samuel 16:7

Day 2: 2 Timothy 3:16

Day 3: James 4:3

Day 4: Ephesians 4:14-16

Day 5: Isaiah 55:8-9

WEEK 3: OVERLOOKED - GOD LOVES TO USE THE UNLIKELY

Written by Chris Standridge

Ontario Campus and Communities Pastor

Read: 1 Samuel 16

There's almost nothing worse than being overlooked. Getting passed over can wound a person almost as much as any physical pain. No one wants to be the last kid picked for teams on the playground. It never feels good when a boyfriend or girlfriend breaks up with you claiming they're "just not in a place to be in a relationship right now" only to find out they're dating another person a few weeks later.

Those can be painful gut punches. But do you know what creates even deeper wounds than all of that? When your own father overlooks you. In the book of 1 Samuel, after Saul disqualified himself from ruling God's people, God sent the prophet Samuel in search of Israel's next King. When Samuel arrived at Jesse's house in Bethlehem to identify who their next leader would be, Jesse was certain his oldest son met all the qualifications. When he learned that his oldest wouldn't be King, he thought surely it would be his second-born son. After going through a lineup of seven sons, God rejected all of them for the mantle of leadership. Samuel said, "The Lord has not chosen these." Samuel was confused. God sent him to this very home to this very man to find a very specific son who would be the future King. But no future King stood before Samuel. Finally, Samuel asked, "Are all your sons here?" Then, it occurred to Jesse that he had an 8th son whom he thought was least likely to become King. David was so far off his dad's radar, in fact, Jesse didn't even consider calling him in from the fields to interview for the job! David's own father didn't think he was made of the right stuff to be used by God. Talk about growing up with daddy issues! David must have lived with a daily reminder that he was the runt of the litter and could never measure up to what his dad thought he should be.

Jesse made the mistake of looking at the outward appearance like most of us do. He saw his own son as the youngest, smallest, and in some ways, least respected son. (Shepherding was not a highly esteemed career path in those days by any means). And shepherding was where David excelled. So, by all outward and physical appearances, David was not nearly as qualified as his physically impressive older brothers. "But the Lord said to 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).

The good news is that with God we never have to measure up. He doesn't pick us because we're the most qualified. He doesn't consider birth order. He doesn't call us because we have the best physical attributes. If we were grade school kids on the playground waiting to be picked, God would choose us, not because we had the best physical resume, but because He looks upon the heart; the stuff on the inside of which we're really made of.

You may feel ordinary like David. So ordinary, in fact, that you wonder if anyone notices you or would choose you. Here's the good news: God can work with ordinary. He loves to pick the underdog no one wants on their team and turn them into extraordinary. Ordinary David may have been overlooked by his father, but his Heavenly Father saw through the exterior to the heart. He was a man after God's own heart.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Have you ever been passed over or overlooked for something? How has that experience molded you into who you are today, whether good or bad?

The world looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart. How does it make you feel to know that God sees beneath the surface?

David was a young shepherd who learned to become a man of God in moments of solitude on hillsides and pastures. How can God use your moments of solitude and obscurity to shape you into a better man/woman of God?

What is your reaction to the fact that Jesus seemed ordinary and lived in relative obscurity for most of His life before He went public with His ministry? He came into the world, and He had "no beauty that we should desire Him." How do you better identify with Christ knowing this?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: 1 Samuel 16:7

Day 2: Proverbs 21:2

Day 3: Psalm 19:14

Day 4: Isaiah 53:2-5

Day 5: 1 Timothy 4:12

WEEK 4: WAITING AND READY: DAVID & GOLIATH

Written by Jesse Rider

Mansfield Campus and Family Pastor

Read: 1 Samuel 17

Perhaps one of the most well-known underdog stories in the Old Testament is David and Goliath, or is it? We knew from the beginning of David's life that while man looks at the outward appearance, God looks at the heart. This story reflects how a mighty God can do mighty things through ordinary people. Goliath was not just big; he was a champion fighter, impressed by all. He had a reputation for winning and striking fear into the hearts of men. But Goliath's reputation did not matter for David, because he knew that God was with him, and that God is bigger and stronger than any giant. He exemplified strong faith and a willingness to follow God in the face of adversity. The battle of David and Goliath is a testament to facing trials and difficulties with the confidence that Christ is on your side.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

If you were an outsider watching David, what do you think your initial thoughts would be as he stepped up to the challenge?

If you were an outsider watching David, what would your thoughts be after seeing David defeat Goliath and after seeing how he gave credit to God?

How do you think David gained confidence in who God is so that he could step up to the challenge of fighting Goliath?

How can you gain confidence in who God is?

Is there a challenge in your life that you need to step up to with the support and confidence of God?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: 1st Samuel 16:1-13

Day 2: Romans 5:3-5

Day 3: 1 Chronicles 16:8-36

Day 4: 1 Corinthians 16:13

Day 5: 1 Peter 4:13

WEEK 5: THE POWER OF FRIENDSHIP AND JEALOUSY

Written by Chris Standridge

Ontario Campus and Communities Pastor

Read: 1 Samuel 18-20

There are very few things that enrich life more than a faithful friend. A close friend can propel you to achieve greater things than you ever thought possible on your own. Think about your best friend in life. Maybe he was a Buzz to your Woody, or she was a Thelma to your Louise. A best friend is there with you through thick and thin, ride or die, even in life's lowest valleys.

On the flipside, a furious foe can drain the life out of you. A Joker to your Batman, a Maleficent to your Snow White (okay, I've gone too far with the movie references). Jealousy, animosity, backstabbing, bickering, fighting, and arguing can steal your joy, even on life's highest mountaintops. So, what happens when friend and foe collide?

In 1 Samuel 18, we're introduced to probably the best friendship narrative in all of Scripture, but also one of the most bitter rivalries. David was best friends with Jonathan. The only problem was Jonathan was the son of King Saul. And even though David did not see himself as Saul's enemy, Saul saw David as his. David was the heir-apparent King to Saul. He was the rising military leader. David was the warrior poet women wrote songs about and danced for. Even Saul's daughter, Michal, fell in love with David. And unchecked jealousy drove Saul mad. Jealousy is a tremendous burden to carry. Someone once said, "To live without comparison is to remove a tremendous burden." David became a tremendous burden to Saul because Saul couldn't stop comparing himself to the one God chose to replace him. Jealousy is a natural emotion you experience when you feel threatened as well. Now, imagine you're the ruler of a nation and someone was chosen to replace you that wasn't in your bloodline. The jealousy would rage and lead you to do crazy things like it did Saul. He tried to kill David at least 11 times! He gave his own daughter's hand to David in marriage as a political pawn. Talk about obsession! Jealousy is an appetite you cannot satisfy; the more you feed it the hungrier it gets.

What did the Lord use to spare David from a jealous, murderous King? A faithful friend. Jonathan was David's biggest fan and protector against his own father. He only survived because of a covenant bond with a trusted friend who would protect him, even if it meant Jonathan would not be King. C.S. Lewis once wrote, "Friendship...has no survival value; rather it is one of those things which give value to survival."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Where do you experience your deepest feelings of jealousy?

How do you feel when others get recognized and promoted when you do not?

Have you ever had a relationship that went deeper than casual friendship? One that was like a covenant bond between the two of you?

How has that friendship protected and promoted you to greater things in your life? How have they sacrificed for your survival? Have you been that type of friend?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Ecclesiastes 4:9-10

Day 2: Proverbs 18:24

Day 3: Psalm 133:1

Day 4: Psalm 27:17

Day 5: Ecclesiastes 4:4

WEEK 6: THE VALUE OF PURITY

Written by Caleb Vance

Student Ministry Pastor

Read: 1 Samuel 21-22:5

In 1 Samuel 21-22:5, we read of David being in dire straits. The narrative shows David who acts shrewdly to survive imminent danger. In the first section of the chapter, David lies about being on a mission from King Saul and requests the consecrated bread found in the temple. The consecrated bread was typically only eaten by Sons of Aaron, which would have seemed as if David was deliberately breaking a well-known cultural rule. Yet, to survive, David had to lie, cheat, and even trick this priest. Later in the chapter, David pretended to be insane so the King of Gath would spare him.

Interestingly, in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus seemed to approve of David's actions. He appears to argue that the Jewish view of history was that David was right. In a desperate moment, David acted desperately, and God provided what he needed. David even accumulated a large group of desperate and needy followers after he had escaped from Gath. This group would be the first people David ruled over. It wasn't until after having experienced desperation did David's rule and reign begin.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

When have you ever felt desperate? How did you respond to desperation?

How have you seen God work in the midst of desperation?

Do you know that God cares about the situations you experience and desires to work in and through them?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Psalm 31:14-16

Day 2: Romans 15:13

Day 3: Psalm 50:15

Day 4: James 1:2-4

Day 5: Proverbs 3:5-6

WEEK 7: RESTRAINT - MERCY OF THE UNDESERVED

Written by Michael Searles

Worship Pastor

Read: 1 Samuel 24 & 26

People love justice. Everyone cheers at the end of a good film when the bad guy finally gets what he deserves. There is a plethora of Law and Order style television shows that run for many, many seasons because we like to see justice served to petty criminals. True Crime has become its own genre of TV, documentaries, and podcasts. Our culture is obsessed with the villain receiving the penalty for their transgressions. Even in the Church, we are excited for Jesus to come back to get rid of all the evil in the world!

And so, it is strange for us to see our hero David choose to NOT bring justice to a man who certainly deserves it. Saul had been chasing David all over Israel to capture and/or kill him. He was a father figure in David's life; his King and general, father-in-law, and the father of his best friend. And to make matters worse, David was completely innocent of wrongdoing! It was purely Saul's insecurity and jealousy that propelled his chase.

And yet, twice David had the chance to vindicate himself. On two separate instances, one could argue that God delivered Saul into David's hands to dish out justice. But what does David do? He shows mercy! Saul had made himself David's enemy, seeking to end his life even though David had done nothing but love and serve him. How is that justice? These acts of mercy are confounding!

One of the reasons it bothers us for Saul to receive mercy is that we put ourselves in David's shoes. We resonate with the hero of the story. But that's just the thing; we aren't David in this story, we are Saul. People love justice, until we are the ones who deserve its punishments.

We have made ourselves enemies of God, who killed the Author of Life though He had done nothing but love and serve us. We are not David, the righteous mercy-givers; we are Saul, the one who deserves wrath. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners, washing away our trespasses and reuniting us with the Father. If Christ has shown mercy to us though we nailed Him to that old, rugged cross, how much more should we show mercy to those who have wronged us?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

As Christians, how do we balance the ideas of mercy and justice? How does God see them?

Why is it so easy for us to accept mercy for our transgressions, but so difficult for us to pass that along to those who have transgressed us?

When we read scripture, it's very easy for us to identify with the "good guy" in the story. How does putting yourself in the role of the villain change your view of things?

Do you ever find it difficult to accept God's mercy? Is it easier for you to show mercy than to receive it?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Luke 6:27-36

Day 2: James 2:13

Day 3: Matthew 5:7

Day 4: Ephesians 2:1-9

Day 5: Colossians 1:21-23

WEEK 8: HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOURSELF

Written by Nicholas Kelley

Pastoral Intern

Read: 1 Samuel 27-28, 30

As Michael said in last week's devotion, we all have an innate desire for justice and for the Lord to rid the world of evil. And if we are not careful, we may begin to think that we deserve the Lord's favor, even though we have offended His divine law. However, if we are honest, even after having corrected our heart posture, there are times when it feels like God is distant and that He has done little to stop the schemes of the wicked. When we see the Nation of Israel whose people were brutally attacked; a moment reminiscent of the holocaust that happened not even 100 years ago, we begin to question the efficacy of God's plans and good purposes. Unsurprisingly, people feel upset and confused with how our world is running. The corruption of man has left many people asking, "Lord, where are you in all of this?"

Perhaps David asked this same question when he and his men returned to their ransacked homes and found that their wives and children had been taken captive by the enemy. To make matters worse, many blamed David for what had happened and even sought to stone him. We wouldn't have been surprised if David had resorted to weeping, isolation, and self-pity. After all, that's what we typically do when times get tough. And yet we read to the contrary. David, rather than blaming God and burying himself in his sorrow, chose to "strengthen himself in the Lord his God." This begs the question: How can we strengthen ourselves in the Lord our God when times get tough and when the world wages war against us?

First, we should pray. One of the greatest blessings of being God's children is that when we hand Him our weakness, He supplies us with His strength (Isaiah 40:29-31). All we need to do is confess our inability to overcome life's hurdles and request that the Lord provide for our needs. Second, we should work on cultivating a spirit of worship and thanksgiving. This means that we must first believe in our hearts that all things (even difficult things) work together for His glory and our good (Romans 8:28). When we consider God's majesty and holiness and meditate on the message of the Cross, our response becomes one of thanksgiving. The burdens of this life begin to feel light compared to the pain that Christ bore on the Cross for you and me. A third way we can encourage ourselves in the Lord is by studying His word. Satan will argue that if the Lord cared for us, we wouldn't experience trials and that since we do, He does not care for us. We must confront these lies with the Truths of Scripture. No other tool can extinguish the fiery arrows of the serpent like God's Holy Word. When we pray, worship, and study Scripture, even during life's joyful seasons, we set ourselves up for success when trials do occur (and they will occur).

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Have you ever dishonored God in how you handled/reacted to difficult circumstances?

Do you find yourself faithfully praying, worshiping, and studying God's Word more when life is easy or when life is hard?

Do you ever doubt God's love when times get tough?

Do you truly believe in your heart that God works all things for His glory and our good?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: 1 Peter 4:12-13

Day 2: James 1:2-4

Day 3: 1 Peter 1:6-9

Day 4: John 16:33

Day 5: Romans 12:12

WEEK 9: THE EPITAPH OF A WASTED LIFE

Written by Nicholas Kelley

Pastoral Intern

Read: 1 Samuel 31 and 2 Samuel 1

Now and then, I visit cemeteries and read the epitaphs on the gravestones. Titles like “loving father,” “faithful husband,” and “caring friend” are commonplace. It always strikes me how one’s entire lifetime can be summarized in just a few words, and yet, it seems that people give little thought to what they want their tombstones to say. I have begun to realize that our epitaphs are being written long before we die. They are written in the present, by how we treat people, by how we serve God, and by how we steward our time. We need to ask ourselves today: “What legacy will I leave to future generations?”

Saul failed to serve God and so his epitaphs are testimonies of a wasted life, a life that showed little concern for the glory of the Lord and little desire for the welfare of God’s people. Unlike righteous David, Saul’s requests for the Lord’s help remained unanswered because he was unfaithful. Saul was rebellious, and the Lord’s silence became his punishment (1 Samuel 28:6).

In the last few moments of his life, Saul’s sons Jonathan and Malchi-shua were killed in battle, and it appeared that he would be next. Rather than continuing to fight for Israel, he chose to end his own life on the battlefield. His death shows us that even the mighty will fall who do not serve God as Lord. Throughout his life, in his decisions, Saul wrote his epitaph: “Worthless Servant.”

There is a saying that goes: “Nothing easy is worth doing.” We, as Christians, would be wise to think about that statement. Following Christ requires immense time and energy, and it demands that we deny the passions of our flesh. It’s hard work to be a faithful follower and as we move forward in obedience we should expect obstacles. Christ never said that this life would be easy. He did say, “In the world you will have tribulation...” (John 16:33) Yet, if we should persevere to the end, through God’s sustaining work, we shall receive a reward far surpassing any earthly pleasure. We will hear Christ himself say to us “Well done my good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your master.” Will your epitaph be “Worthless Servant” or “Faithful Servant”? You must decide.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

If you had to decide today, what would you want your gravestone to say?

When you think about your contributions and service to Christ's Kingdom, has your life been marked by faithfulness and good stewardship of time? If not, what holds you back from giving God your maximum time and effort?

What can you begin doing today to ensure that you leave a legacy of faithful service to God?

What opportunities/gifts has God given you to serve His people?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Matthew 25:14-30

Day 2: 1 Peter 4:10

Day 3: Colossians 3:18-4:1

Day 4: Luke 16:1-13

Day 5: 2 Corinthians 9:6-7

WEEK 10: KING AND COVENANTS

Written by Caleb Vance

Student Ministry Pastor

Read: 2 Samuel 5

2 Samuel 5 is a monumental event in David's life, as he finally became King over the entire nation of Israel. The Israelites began to recognize David as their leader far before his coronation. The anointing of David as King was more than a momentary calling to be fulfilled in a specific event, it was a life-calling that God had orchestrated for David to carry out.

In this chapter we read of David conquering and possessing the city of David. Jerusalem had been known as an unconquerable city and yet David and his people won the battle against them.

Without question, David was victorious because God was with him and was working through him. In this section, God established David's rule as King. Even foreign nations began to desire good relations with him.

Another finale event took place in this chapter, as David seemed to put an end to the Philistines, who have been a rival nation throughout the narrative thus far. As opposed to Saul, David was obedient to God and God brought him victory. David's calling as King was a gift, and David consistently recognized the true King in their midst.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

When have you been in a season of waiting for what God promised you?

How did it feel when the season of waiting ended with answers?

How do we view our callings in life?

Read: 2 Samuel 6

In the previous chapter, the main idea was David's rule and victory as King. In chapter 6, David is seen acknowledging the true and ultimate King in their midst. This chapter shows a clear contrast between a relaxed view of God's holy Kingship and a posture of humble, exuberant worship in response to His holy rule.

Following his victories and establishment as King of Israel, David decided to bring the ark of the covenant to the city of David, Jerusalem. On its way to the city, the ark was handled in a manner unworthy of He Who's presence it represented. As it was carried on a cart, rather being carried by priests as God ordained in the law and ordinances of Moses, with a lack of sacrificial worship, it stumbled on the road and Uzzah reached out to catch it. Because he touched what represented God's holy presence in an unholy manner, God struck Uzzah down and he died.

David's reaction was one of anger and confusion, which led him to rightly ask: "How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?" (v. 9) This question is at the heart of the chapter because this horrific tragedy spoke volumes to David about the weight that the ark of God truly carried. It was not that David had to bring God's ark into the city of Jerusalem that mattered, it was that David got to bring the representation of His presence into His own city. This was not merely an obligation; it was an opportunity to publicly recognize the true Kingship of Israel.

After learning of God's blessing upon the household where he had left the ark, David decided to try to bring the ark to the city again. This time, the process and heart behind it appears to be completely different. The heart of David, a man after God's own heart, can be seen on full display, not through his perfect worship of God, but through his awareness that he needed to change his posture before God. By making sacrifices and by dancing before the Lord, David and his people put on the proper welcome party for the entrance of the King of kings and Lord of lords. While David's own wife, Michal, Saul's daughter, took issue with his display of praise for God's presence, David understood that this moment was a public display of his loyalty and dependence upon the rightful King. This "triumphal entry" of God's manifest presence in Jerusalem would only be rivaled by Jesus's entry into the city in the Gospel accounts, and one day His triumphal return as the Rightful King.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

In what ways do we neglect to properly worship God based upon Who He is and what His true position is over our lives?

Have you ever had to adjust how you worship?

Worship is more than just singing... how will you worship God this week in the way that you live? How will you acknowledge Who the Rightful King truly is this week?

Read: 2 Samuel 7

After bringing the ark of the Lord into the city of Jerusalem and after having been established as the King over God's people, David had an idea. David asked a worshipful question: "Why do

I live in such a beautiful home, but the TRUE KING lives in a mere tent?" The Lord, through the prophet Nathan, responded to David with heartfelt encouragement and promise. This message features what has become known as the Davidic Covenant, a promise made by God to David to eternally establish his throne as King of Israel.

God carefully reminded David from where He brought him, from leading sheep to leading God's sheep, the Israelites. He then spoke about David's lineage, that his own child would build His house, the temple. God promised that He would never take away His love from David and his children, and that David's throne would remain established before Him.

The man after God's own heart responded in humility, awe, and worship. "Who am I... and what is my house that you have brought me so far?" In this prayer, David remembered who Israel is as a people, God's chosen inheritance. Therefore, God established David, not because of David's greatness, but because of the great love of Yahweh. David trusted God's promises for the future, though many of them he would never see in his own lifetime. "For you, O Lord God, have spoken, and with your blessing shall the house of your servant be blessed forever."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

When has it been hard for you to trust God's promises? How do you fight to trust in those moments?

What does it mean to you that, through the reign of Jesus, He continues to keep His promises to David?

How does knowing His faithfulness to this promise made to a broken leader point you to His great faithfulness in your own life today?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Psalm 27:14

Day 2: Psalm 33:20-22

Day 3: Hebrews 12:28-29

Day 4: Matthew 22:37

Day 5: 2 Thessalonians 3:3-5

WEEK 11: KINDNESS TO THOSE LIKE US

Written by Mike Mahek

Shelby Campus and Missions Pastor

Read: 2 Samuel 9

Have you ever received an unexpected response? Was there a time you expected someone to react harshly, but they showed kindness instead? In this chapter we read how David extended his grace to Saul and Jonathan's family. Saul was David's predecessor and his enemy. Jonathan was Saul's son, although he was loyal to David instead of his own father. We read that David intentionally sought out someone from Saul's house to honor. This is the same Saul who sought to kill him many times, and yet David, when sitting on the throne of Israel in power, showed kindness to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth. He showed kindness by honoring Mephibosheth and having others honor him. David restored the land of Saul to Mephibosheth and established servants to tend the land since Mephibosheth could not care for it himself. David probably exceeded the honor that was shown to Mephibosheth when his grandfather was King.

Lastly, David treated Mephibosheth as he would his own sons by inviting him to dine at the King's table. David treated him like family despite his heritage and inability to restore things on his own. Does this sound familiar? It parallels the Gospel. Unlike Mephibosheth, we are rebels, enemies of God because of our sin. We are worse than "dead dogs." And yet, God, being rich in mercy, showers us with lavish grace and calls us into His family. Oh, what sweet reminders in this passage of the wondrous love of God! So how should we respond? We should respond with thanksgiving and praise. We should respond by living lives that honor Him above all. We should do the work He has prepared for us to do. We should live lives that are Spirit-led.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Do you recognize your condition before God like Mephibosheth did before David? How did Mephibosheth describe his situation?

List ways God has been gracious and kind to you?

Mephibosheth, because of his physical condition, was unable to manage the land. How are you like him?

David showed amazing kindness. How is this like how God shows us kindness? How can we humbly reflect the kindness we've been shown?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Romans 3:9-26

Day 2: Luke 15:11-24

Day 3: Psalm 103

Day 4: Isaiah 61

Day 5: Ephesians 2:1-9

WEEK 12: TEMPTATION AND SIN: DAVID & BATHSHEBA

Written by Michael Searles

Worship Pastor

Read: 2 Samuel 11

How many times have you woken up and randomly felt like breaking the law? Ever hear your alarm clock and then think to yourself, "I want to commit murder today?" Chances are (and hopefully) those answers are, "Never," and, "Absolutely not." That's not how these things work. It's rare that someone's first run in with the law is the result of a felony offense. Most criminals start small, and over time work their way up to more serious crimes.

Did you know that's how sin works in our lives? It almost always starts small. James puts it this way, "But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death" (James 1:14-15). Temptation leads to little sins, little sins turn into big sins, and big sins kill.

David didn't wake up one morning wanting to commit adultery and murder! He simply felt like being a little lazy that day. Our passage begins, "In the spring... the time that kings go out to battle... David remained at Jerusalem." David shirked his duties as King, a small, seemingly insignificant transgression. A little laziness never hurt anyone, right?

Had he been at war, David would never have been atop the palace to see Bathsheba, which probably would have prevented him from allowing lust to enter his heart. And if lust never entered his heart, he would never have transgressed God's standard of marital fidelity. And if he had never crossed that line, the murder of Uriah most certainly would not have happened. David's little sin grew into a bigger sin, which eventually ended in death (Uriah's as well as Bathsheba's son born to David).

If you are a Believer, Christ has set you free from the power of sin and death. But so often we choose to allow our old nature to dictate our actions. We entertain temptation and sin, rather than fleeing from it. And it's when we let those things hang around that we start down a path that can lead to death. Pursue holiness; flee temptation. Rejoice in the freedom we have through Christ by striving for righteousness! You won't regret it.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Is there an area in your life that you've allowed temptation to have a foothold?

How have you seen sin grow in your life?

What are practical steps you can take to avoid falling into the trap of temptation?

What is the proper course of action once we become aware of the sin in our lives?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Psalm 51

Day 2: 1 Peter 5:6-11

Day 3: 2 Timothy 2:22

Day 4: James 1:12-18

Day 5: Mark 7:20-23

WEEK 13: ACCOUNTABILITY AND REPENTANCE: DAVID & NATHAN

Written by Mike Mahek

Shelby Campus and Missions Pastor

Read: 2 Samuel 12 and Psalm 51

We read in 2 Samuel 12 about David's hypocrisy and the revelation of his sin. Nathan, like how Jesus taught, used a "parable" to lead David to repentance. Unknowingly, David revealed how he would respond to his own sin. His anger was greatly kindled. He called for the death of the man in the parable, to which Nathan revealed to David, "You are the man!" This revelation has at least two applications for us.

The first is accountability. Do you have someone like Nathan in your life? Do you have someone who knows your struggles? Do you have someone who will be brutally honest? Do you have someone who will call out your sin? Remember David was the King and Nathan was fearlessly addressing the King about his sin. Nathan was uncompromising. Do you have a person like this in your life? Secondly, are you a person like Nathan for someone else? Are you a true friend to someone who needs honesty?

The second application for this passage is repentance. David's confession, although somewhat after the fact, shows that he had remorse for his sin. Notice that Nathan assured David that the Lord had "put away" his sin. God had already forgiven David, but he still had to deal with the earthly consequences of his sin. Repentance is difficult. It is hard to fight the battle against sin in our lives. Look at the words of David in Psalm 51. Here he poured out his heart to the Lord. And while in despair over his sin and the consequences of that sin, David found hope and healing. For us, we know the rest of the story. We know why Christ lived, died, and rose. Forgiveness and victory come through the power of Jesus Christ. Even in the darkest moments of David's life, we see that God was faithful. We know that He still is. He is always faithful!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Who do you know that will be uncompromisingly honest and challenging regarding your fight against sin?

Have you set up an accountability system with this person? How often will/do you check in with them?

Are you helping others to be accountable in their lives? Do you check in with them and have conversations even when it's difficult?

Have you repented of your sin? Have you confessed it to God? Have you cried out to Him for forgiveness and for freedom from the bondage of sin? Have you radically committed to a new path; a new way of living found in faith in Jesus Christ?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: 2 Timothy 2:14-19 (Paul mentoring Timothy)

Day 2: Galatians 6:1-10

Day 3: Matthew 4:12-17

Day 4: Proverbs 28:13-14

Day 5: 1 John 1

WEEK 14: CONSEQUENCE: DAVID'S FAMILY CRISIS

Written by Jake Christie

Young Adult Pastor

Read: 2 Samuel 13-15

Shame and control are heavy themes throughout the story of David's life. Early on, David's father, Jesse, didn't even acknowledge his son's existence! In this story, David's own sons were grasping for power which ultimately led to horrible decision-making, to feelings of shame, and eventually self-destruction.

We see Amnon who went from feeling conflicted and depressed about his feelings for his sister Tamar, to feeling shame. He was eventually killed because of his actions. He knew his feelings were wrong, but not wanting to be denied, he took control of the situation himself, rather than submitting these feelings to the Lord. He surrounded himself with people who justified and helped him fulfill his carnal desires through his cousin Jonadab, he manipulated his father and his sister to make his sister vulnerable, and then he sent her away because of his shame. Shame led to control, which led to sinning, which led to even more shame.

We see this same pattern in Absalom. He heard what happened between Amnon and Tamar and how he sought control over the situation. He brought Tamar into his home and plotted to kill Amnon (control), he ran to another kingdom to not have to deal with the consequences of his actions (shame), then plotted to overthrow his father's rule (control).

We even see David go through this same pattern in this story. He does nothing to take care of the situation between Amnon and Tamar and hides himself (shame). When he brings Absalom home, he keeps him away from himself (shame & control). This is the pattern that David falls back on when he does not rely on the Lord to take care of him, and we see it repeatedly in his family.

Shame is one of the most dynamic feelings in human experience. It can cause us to become paralyzed, push us into reckless action, or bring us to a place of denial. It looms in the back of our minds, often sending us into the fight, flight, or freeze response when trying to survive an attack from a predator. Every time these shameful feelings are not given to God, we relive them as though they happen over and over again, causing the issues that ignited the shame to compound, becoming heavier and more devastating.

Shame and control are tempting feelings to let take over our lives, but the Lord is good and wants us to submit every aspect of our lives to Him. When we try to take control and manipulate situations, we don't allow the Lord to give us the freedom that comes with surrender. We make our problems worse by not letting Him work in our lives and by not asking Him to help us when we feel lost in shame and feel tempted by control.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Where have you seen examples in scripture where someone has dealt with their temptation in a way that honors God?

Who are the people in your life you go to for counsel? What does it say about your motivations?

When faced with a situation where you feel shameful, how do you tend to respond?

When you feel or are betrayed, how do you tend to handle the situation? Can you think of a time you honored God with your response to betrayal?

As believers, we look to Jesus as our ultimate example. How do we see Him submit His life to God?

We all have learned behaviors that we develop by watching those who raised us. What are some learned behaviors you need to replace with Godly behaviors?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Psalm 3

Day 2: Matthew 4:1-11

Day 3: Luke 22:40-46

Day 4: Psalm 25

Day 5: 1 John 1:9

WEEK 15: LOST IN THE FRAY

Written by Jake Christie

Young Adult Pastor

Read: 2 Samuel 18-19

When we are experiencing grief, it can be easy to lose sight of what the Lord has for us. We start by seeing David who mourned the loss of his son Absalom, his betrayer. David's general, Joab, rebuked him and asked him to focus on the people who supported him, rather than those who had forsaken him. After Absalom's rebellion and after forgiving Shimei, David began making decisions to help reunify Israel.

When we are focused on the darkness of life, we can forget what the Lord has done for us, and what He calls us to do in the present. It is when we focus on God that we find true peace and progress. This does not mean we don't grieve or mourn, but it does show us that our grief ought to take us somewhere. Grief is a vehicle to further our reliance on God and it helps us remember that we need Him since He is the only constant who will never let us down.

Although Joab was replaced by Amasa (Absalom's general) because he killed Absalom after David asked him not to, he still acted as a reminder to David to have the right focus. We all need people in our lives to help us see what the Lord would have us do, including forgiving those who betray us.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

How do you tend to handle grief? How can/does it point you back to God?

Can you name someone in your life that points you back to living the way God has called you to?

As a believer in Christ, you have been forgiven. How do you exercise forgiveness for others?

What would it look like to have your life totally focused on what God has called you to? What would you be doing right now? Who/what would be in and out of your life? What could you accomplish?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: Matthew 5:4

Day 2: Lamentations 3:25-33

Day 3: Romans 8:18

Day 4: Ephesians 4:32

Day 5: Psalm 116:1-2

WEEK 16: WORDS FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

Written by Keegan McQuate

Waterford Campus Pastor

Read: 1 Kings 2

In this final account of David's life, King David spoke with his son Solomon and gave him wisdom for the next generation of leaders in Israel. David informed Solomon that his time on this earth was ending and then encouraged him to be strong and faithful to the Lord's commands. David encouraged Solomon to be obedient to the Lord's statutes so that he would prosper in whatever he did or wherever he turned. David then recalled the Lord's promises to make Israel his nation and his people, and to establish the house of David. He also recalled the Lord's promise that if David's lineage followed God with all their heart and soul, then his line would continue to sit on the throne. David spent the end of his life encouraging his son and the next generation of Israelites to remain faithful to the Lord and his commands. After 40 years of reigning as King, David passed away. David, "a man after God's heart," was succeeded by the wisest man to ever walk the Earth, Solomon. The Davidic covenant continued down the line of David to later be fulfilled by Jesus.

The end of David's life and the beginning of Solomon's reign can be applied to our lives by seeing how David imparted his message to his son. As followers of Christ, we should be seeking to share this wisdom of the Word with the next generation. We should be teaching them to be faithful and to follow the Lord's commands in all that they do. This model we see from David, should be one that is replicated in each Christian household as we seek to train up our children in the way they should go. Every follower of Christ should seek to model a life that is obedient to the Lord's commands.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

What do you think is currently molding the next generation? What is the model set for them to replicate? Do you think that we as Christians have a responsibility to train the next generation?

How do you think we can best prepare the next generation to succeed as followers of Christ?

In what ways do you model David's final words to Solomon? In what areas do you struggle or have room to grow?

Who do you know that you can model this way of living for and encourage them to do the

same? What practical steps can you take to be a model for those around you to see 1 Kings 2:3-4 on display?

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES:

Day 1: 2 Samuel 7:24-25

Day 2: Psalm 132:12

Day 3: Proverbs 22:6

Day 4: Mark 12:30-31

Day 5: Psalm 127:4-5



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