

August 21, 2016
Sunday Morning Service
Series: The Life of David
Community Baptist Church
643 S. Suber Road
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To Ponder . . .

Questions to ponder as we prepare to hear from 2 Samuel 2:1-11.

1. In how many different ways in this story did David illustrate the character or work of Christ?
2. Consider David's various expressions of integrity before the people recognized him as king.
 - a. How did those things contribute to the people's willingness to have him as their king?
 - b. How could God use those various tests to mature David to be the king?
 - c. Think of similar tests God brings into your life to prepare you for service.
3. Why did David praise the men of Jabesh-gilead?
4. Describe the character of Abner.

THE KING AFTER GOD'S HEART **2 Samuel 2:1-11**

I mentioned briefly in last week's study that a major theme of 1 Samuel is God's choosing of David to be Israel's king. Many of the events of the book worked in coordination toward that goal. That David was God's choice for king is very significant because throughout the rest of the Bible we discover an undeniable connection between David and Christ. To conclude that David was a type of

Christ is an understatement. By God's own design, David was a chosen forerunner of Christ.

To David, God gave the promise of the everlasting kingdom under the reign of the eternal king who would be born in David's line. *"When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever"* (2 Samuel 7:12-13). The Israelis in Jesus' day understood this connection. They had been looking for the king who would be born in the lineage of David to come and establish their kingdom that would last forever. The people's shouts of praise to Jesus when He entered Jerusalem on a colt reflected this understanding. *And the crowds that went before him and that followed him were shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"* (Matthew 21:9).

God chose David to model and to be a forerunner to the King of kings whose reign will never cease. That is why God called David, "A man after His own heart." It wasn't that David always acted like God. Rather, He was the expression of God's heart as the type of the eternal King God has given in Jesus Christ. God rejected Saul and sent word of that rejection through the prophet Samuel. *"But now your kingdom shall not continue. The LORD has sought out a man after his own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you"* (1 Samuel 13:14).

But didn't God choose Saul to be king also? Yes. But God provided Saul in response to the people's continual harping for a king so they could be like their neighbors. The people were not willing to follow God, so God gave them a king who was not willing to follow Him either. The people were satisfied enough with Saul. But God chose David as Saul's replacement who for eternity will be the chief illustration of the King over God's Kingdom, the Seed of the woman by whom God redeems the fallen creation to Himself—Jesus Christ.

Therefore, in the facts of the story about Judah accepting David as their king and Israel making Ish-bosheth their king, we see illustrated the eternal conflict between God's anointed redeemer, Jesus Christ, and the world's facsimile of a redeemer presented in

multitudes of “man-made” kings. Jesus is still the chosen King of kings, the perfect expression of God’s heart.

Acceptance of God’s King (vv.1-4a).

God’s king was concerned about God’s will. Again we read that David inquired of the LORD. *After this David inquired of the LORD (v.1a).* As we mentioned in the past, so here it is possible that David used the ephod with the Urim and Thummim under the direction of Abiathar as before (30:7-8). We don’t fully understand how that worked. At the same time, we must admit that God informed us that in those Old Testament days He spoke to the prophets in many ways (Hebrews 1:1). To that end, sometimes we read that David simply received the words of the Lord, but there is no indication given as to how (1 Samuel 22:5; 23:2).

How blessed we are in contrast to have God’s completed Word, prayer, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. God reveals so much of His will for us in the Bible. But we have to read it to be familiar with God’s will. In fact, if we busied ourselves with what God has clearly stated regarding His will in the Bible, we would not have much time to worry about what we do not know about God’s will. We can inquire of the Lord, we can discover God’s heart by praying according to what we learn in the Bible. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit teaches us the truths about God’s will and desire from the Bible.

Too often the people who claim to be followers of Christ relegate His Word to times of convenience. Then we wander from the path of God’s will. Before long we are in a crisis and we cry out to God in desperation, virtually blaming Him that we have ignored Him. Far better to inquire of the Lord daily.

David wanted to know what God said to him. He stands as quite a contrast to Saul. When Samuel anointed Saul he warned him, *“Now therefore listen to the words of the LORD” (1 Samuel 15:1).* We know from the story that Saul did not listen to the Lord and it cost him his kingdom. God said to him through Samuel, *“Because you did not obey the voice of the LORD and did not carry out his fierce wrath against Amalek, therefore the LORD has done this thing to you this day” (1 Samuel 28:18).* Conversely, David began his reign as king by

diligently seeking what the Lord would say to him. He wanted to know God’s will in order to obey God’s will.

We are so very privileged in that area. From the outset of our relationship with God, we depend on His amazing promise. The Bible reveals that God’s word, God’s promise, God’s will for us is for *“everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (Romans 10:13).* Just pray! His will for those who trust Him as Savior continues the same. Jesus instructed us, *“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you” (John 15:7).* Therefore, we should inquire of God so consistently that we, *pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17).* We pray knowing confidently that *the prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working (James 5:16).*

David inquired of the Lord and the Lord answered. He asked, *“Shall I go up into any of the cities of Judah?” And the LORD said to him, “Go up.” David said, “To which shall I go up?” And he said, “To Hebron” (v.1b).* A simple lesson in this conversation is that we should not ask God to reveal His will if we are not willing to actively pursue it. Notice how verses one through three are replete with activity. “Go up” is stated three times in verse one. In verse two, God said, “Go up” and David “went up.” Not only did David obey God by “going up” but he influenced his men who also “went up” (v.3).

From these active verbs we conclude that God’s plan for David was advancement. God’s desire is for us to sit still and be quiet as we seek His will and desires. Then His plan is for us to obey what He has revealed which often requires us to do something—even if it is simply trusting Him.

Jesus the perfect King illustrated this principle. He came to earth knowing the Father’s will. As a child, He told His parents that He had to be in His Father’s house. He often told His followers that He had to be about His Father’s work. Therefore, He said that He had to go up to Jerusalem to be tortured and killed. Nothing would deter Him from doing the Father’s will. While He was traveling through Samaria, *When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem (Luke 9:51).* And so He prayed for strength and grace to complete the Father’s will.

If we are truly followers of Christ, should we not also be determined to respond to what He reveals to us? We should live like

Paul who confessed, *Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead (Philippians 3:13).*

David inquired of God, learned God's will, and then God's chosen king followed God's will. David simply did what God told him to do. *So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel (v.2).* Hebron is where the "life of the nation" began in Abraham. Abraham lived in Hebron and built an altar to God there (Gen. 13:18). He buried Sarah in Hebron (Gen. 23:19). Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Leah, and Jacob are buried in Hebron (Gen. 25:9; Gen. 50:31).

It was fitting that the people would declare David king in Hebron, the hometown of the father of the nation. It was the burial place of the man through whom God chose to bless the entire world. God brought that promised blessing to pass in Jesus Christ, the son of David. Consider how Matthew's introduction to Jesus ties Abraham, David, and Jesus together. *The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham (Matthew 1:1).* Of course it was God's will for His chosen king to go to Hebron!

And when David obeyed God, he influenced others also. *And David brought up his men who were with him, everyone with his household, and they lived in the towns of Hebron (v.3).* Because there were 600 men who followed David, this group would have numbered well over 1,000 and maybe as many as 2,000. This was just the beginning of doing God's will. It was God's plan for David to shepherd His people. Because David obeyed, the shepherding began quickly. And the people recognized God's will in David. *And the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah (v.4).* David was from Bethlehem, a town in Judah. David had provided gifts to the leaders of Judah. Now his investment was paying dividends. His wise son Solomon would teach, *Cast your bread upon the waters, for you will find it after many days (Ecclesiastes 11:1).* That is what David had done and what he would continue to do.

David drew the perfect picture of the King of kings who because of His obedience to the Father's will, continues to draw people to Himself. He promised, *"And I, when I am lifted up from the*

earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32). And still He does.

Kindness of God's King (vv.4b-7).

Out of the blue it seems, we read about the men of Jabesh-gilead who had been the former king's friends. *When they told David, "It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul" (v.4b).* We are familiar with the story. It was told in 1 Samuel 31. The Philistines found Saul and his sons dead after the battle on Mt. Gilboa. They cut off their heads, and put their armor in the house of the false god. Then they attached the bodies to the walls of the nearby city of Beth-shan. Beth-shan had been a city in that area for millennia. Probably it began as an outpost city for Egypt. Joshua gave it to the tribe of Manasseh, but the city was too well fortified and the inhabitants were never driven out. Even in Saul's day it was inhabited by Philistines—which explains why they hung the decapitated bodies on the wall.

While most of the Israelites who lived in the northeastern tribes fled or hid, the men of Jabesh-gilead bravely retrieved the bodies, took them home, and burned them. Someone felt that David should know this story. Maybe the teller of the story wondered if David was going to do anything for the people of Jabesh-gilead. Hmmm! That would be a difficult situation for David, right? Those people had been great friends of Saul who perceived David to be his enemy. But David had already revealed his respect for Saul in the lament (2 Sam. 1). So maybe being kind to the people of Jabesh would not be so difficult after all.

This was an important issue, though it might have seemed insignificant at the time. God had made it clear that David would be the king over all of the kingdom of His people. God took Saul's kingdom from him to give it to David. That kingdom included all of Israel, including the northern tribes which were mostly under Philistine occupation now. Now comes this story about this handful of guys in one small town in the northern tribes.

Often what appears to be insignificant to the majority is actually God working out His plan for the most significant. Like David's kingdom beginning in one city (Hebron) in one tribe (Judah). It is like the Savior of the fallen creation being born as a baby in a stable. It is

like God's will regarding one of the smallest nations of the world being the center of the great conflagration when Christ will defeat Satan and sinners. So why did David need to know about this simple event of a handful of men from Jabesh retrieving Saul's body from Beth-shan?

This story presented a perfect opportunity for God's king to make the folks in Jabesh-gilead his friends. He offered God's blessing on them. David understood their kind deed. *David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead and said to them, "May you be blessed by the LORD, because you showed this loyalty to Saul your lord and buried him"* (v.5). No doubt David was aware of the history of Saul's relationship with the people of Jabesh. Early in his reign, King Saul had come to their rescue and delivered them from the cruel hand of wicked Nahash the Ammonite. Rather than despise the people for their loyalty to the one who had saved them, David praised them. Was Saul worthy of their loyalty? Not likely. Saul's worth was not David's point. The men's loyalty was the focus of his praise.

David responded the way he did because he desired for the people to know God's love. *Now may the LORD show steadfast love and faithfulness to you* (v.6a). Ultimately the issue was not the astonishing loyalty of the men of Jabesh, or the worth of Saul. The point was God's blessing. The new king sincerely desired for Yahweh, the covenant God of Israel, to show unchanging love and faithfulness to those people. That is about as difficult as the instruction of our King of kings, Jesus. *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust"* (Matthew 5:43-45). Jesus taught and David illustrated that enemy loving is not a theory but an activity.

He promised his own blessing. God's king promised to do good. *And I will do good to you because you have done this thing* (v.6b). It is one thing to say, "God bless you with steadfast love and faithfulness." It is a bit more difficult to say, "I will love you and be faithful to my word regarding you." It is good for us to remember that just because someone sees us as their enemy, we do not have to reciprocate. Obviously, David refused to consider the men of Jabesh

his enemies. And Jesus the King of kings did not consider me to be His enemy when He died for me.

Through this situation, in a very practical way, God's king prepared the way for a united kingdom. *Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be valiant, for Saul your lord is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them* (v.7). David's love for those who saw him as the enemy was genuine and sincere. He was not pretending to be nice in order to gain personally. He had good motivation to love those people and to be kind to them. God's kingdom was at stake. Up to this point in history God desired for only one kingdom of His people, not Israel to the north and Judah to the south. All twelve tribes were to be represented in the kingdom and ruled by the king. Therefore, it was very important for David to draw the resisters into the camp.

Isn't that the work for all of us who are citizens of Christ's kingdom? He has given us the great responsibility to go to the "perceived" enemy and tell them the good news about the King who is also the Savior. It is true that because they see us as the enemy, they may not respond well. But we need to love them like Christ who died for them loves them. Christ desires for His kingdom to be complete, and obviously there is still work to that end that needs to be accomplished.

This story is so much like the story Jesus told about the king who prepared a grand wedding banquet in honor of his son. He sent out the announcement to those who had been invited, but they all gave excuses for why they could not attend. Imagine how the king felt. Imagine how God feels when through us He invites guests into the blessing of His kingdom and the ones invited reject His invitation. That is probably a bit like David felt. After he expressed love and concern for some people in Israel, the people as a whole rejected him as their king.

Rejection of God's King (vv.8-11).

All Israel chose their king—and he wasn't David. Ish-bosheth was Saul's son. *Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years* (v.10a). We are never told why Ishbosheth stayed home from the battle. The

possibility of Saul and sons being killed might be the very reason. In fact, Saul might have made the decision to leave Ishbosheth at home after his visit with the witch at Endor.

Whatever the reasoning, Ishbosheth was alive and well and able to take the throne of Israel. There was only one problem: God didn't choose for Ishbosheth to be the next king. That was almost certainly Saul's choice. That was the people's choice. That was the logical choice. But human wisdom's logical choice is not necessarily God's choice.

Sincere leaders presented the king who God rejected. *But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim, and he made him king over Gilead and the Ashurites and Jezreel and Ephraim and Benjamin and all Israel (vv.8-9)*. It is hard to tell what happened in Israel for about five years. We know that David was king of Judah, reigning in Hebron for seven and a half years (v.11). We know that Ishbosheth ruled for only two years before Judah and Israel were reunited. Maybe Abner was serving as leader.

Abner demonstrates the influence a powerful man can have on a lot of people. He was Saul's cousin and head of his bodyguard. He was standing with Saul when he received news about David's conquest of Goliath and, therefore, saw firsthand God's blessing on David. He sat at the king's table along with David. They were fellow warriors. He was at Saul's side when Saul acknowledged that it was God's will for David to be king. Abner knew God's will regarding David. Therefore, we must conclude that Abner was a rebel against God's will.

As a rebel, Abner was able to influence the majority of the people in Israel to reject God's will and choose their own king. That made all who followed him a rebel against God also. The sad end of Abner was to die like a fool. At his death David responded: *And the king lamented for Abner, saying, "Should Abner die as a fool dies?" (2 Samuel 3:33)*. What a picture he drew. Indeed, none is more foolish than those who follow Satan who powerfully influences the majority of the human race to reject God's chosen King Jesus.

Judah chose God's king. They followed David. *But the house of Judah followed David (v.10b)*. The contrast pointed up in the word "but" is significant. There is God's will and there is rebellion against

God's will. Never will they be the same. The people's acceptance of David as king was a matter of God's timing—as His will always is. *And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months (v.11)*. David made overtures toward Israel from the moment he became king. He longed for God's will of a united kingdom to come to pass immediately. He had to wait. So we wait for the Lord to complete His kingdom and pray "Even so Lord come quickly." And so we wait for the Lord to complete the details of shaping us into His own image.

The work of God in the life of David so illustrates the Father's work in God the Son, our Savior, Christ the King. David challenges us to inquire and know God's will. David challenges us to act according to God's will. David challenges us to love like Christ loves in order to work toward the fulfillment of the kingdom. David challenges us to wait on the Lord as He works out His will.