

David the King 6 - Mourning and Rejoicing

1. Mourning our loss.

Today we've come to the point where Saul and Jonathan have died in a great battle with the Philistines.

1Sam 31:1-6 Now the Philistines fought against Israel: and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines, and fell down slain in mount Gilboa.

2And the Philistines followed hard upon Saul and upon his sons; and the Philistines slew Jonathan, and Abinadab, and Malchishua, Saul's sons.

3And the battle went sore against Saul, and the archers hit him; and he was sore wounded of the archers.

4Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it.

5And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him.

6So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.

It was a sad day for Israel. For whatever faults Saul had, still he had led Israel to many victories. Facing certain death, he fell on his own sword rather than being finished off at the hands of the pagan Philistines.

David had been sidelined and occupied with the aftermath of Ziklag and the battle against the Amalakites to recover his family and the families of all of his followers. It was the fatal mistake of a man, an Amalakite, from the camp of Saul who came to report to David the death of Saul and Jonathan.

2Sam 1:5-11 And David said unto the young man that told him, How knowest thou that Saul and Jonathan his son be dead?

6And the young man that told him said, As I happened by chance upon mount Gilboa, behold, Saul leaned upon his spear; and, lo, the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him.

7And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called unto me. And I answered, Here *am* I.

8And he said unto me, Who *art* thou? And I answered him, I *am* an Amalekite.

9He said unto me again, Stand, I pray thee, upon me, and slay me:

for anguish is come upon me, because my life *is* yet whole in me.

10 So I stood upon him, and slew him, because I was sure that he could not live after that he was fallen: and I took the crown that *was* upon his head, and the bracelet that *was* on his arm, and have brought them hither unto my lord.

11 Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him:

The young man evidently thought that he would gain favor with David by claiming to have finished killing Saul. David was such a man of honor that he would not hold the young man guiltless for having slain the King's God's anointed.

2 Sam 1:13-14 And David said unto the young man that told him, Whence *art* thou? And he answered, I *am* the son of a stranger, an Amalekite.

14 And David said unto him, How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed?

We have already seen previously that this was evidence of David's love for Saul in that David always and only wanted best for him. But there is another message in this today in David's reaction to the loss of Saul and Jonathan. In David's eulogy, there was weeping and rejoicing. As we examine David's rejoicing and weeping, we can learn to rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep. We learn this from Rom 12:14-15

Rom 12:14-15 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not.

15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

2. Weep with them that weep.

2 Sam 1:11-12 Then David took hold on his clothes, and rent them; and likewise all the men that *were* with him:

12 And they mourned, and wept, and fasted until even, for Saul, and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the LORD, and for the house of Israel; because they were fallen by the sword.

Our neurological system is set that whenever we experience anything negative we have a depressive reaction. Even down to the point that if someone yells at us or calls us a name there is a shock to our system. When we were children we staved off some attacks by

trivializing our opponent saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but names will never hurt me." It is certainly true that we have the ability to rise against and resist the bullying that takes place when people slander us. However, the fact of the matter is that even something as small as calling someone a name has a detrimental effect.

We experience challenges that we overcome from moment to moment. With the practice of living life we can often overcome them and take them in stride. We fortify ourselves because we know that constant criticism, name calling, and insults can have their effect, wearing us down even to the point of a nervous breakdown. If the least of pressures can wear away at us, then imagine how big disappointments, slanders, and attacks affect us. In light of that, we need to be able to be sensitive to what others are going through so that we can weep with them that weep. This is one of the reasons why it is so important to have a network of fellowship. Just as our everyday experiences wear us down we need to have a regular building of relationships that will help to sustain us. I remember when we had the pallets of brick delivered to put the brick face on the building. I used to watch my father lay brick by brick, brick by brick, as we came to finish the job. We took note of how many brick it took to finish the job. Sometimes you'll see a jar of Jelly beans at a fair with the contest to see how many jelly beans are in the jar. Right now I would like to have a contest to see if anybody could guess how many brick it took to finish the job here on the church...I don't know how many bricks it took to get to that point, but it only took ____ brick to finish it. Before the last brick could be laid, all the other bricks had to be put in place first. That's the way it is with fellowship. It takes many hours of fellowship to build up to the time to support us in our greatest hour of need.

There will be sometimes when our needs will hit us like a ton of bricks. It could be the loss of a job, the loss of an election, the loss of a friendship, the loss of a house, a turn in our health, or some other great disaster. For David it was the death of a king and the king's son, his best friend. In times like these it is not appropriate to turn to the person and say "Cheer up – it's a sin to be sad." This is the time when we are called upon to weep with them that weep.

I regularly point out at the time of a funeral that there would actually be something wrong if we didn't experience some form of mourning. The shock of a death might not make itself felt immediately, but a flood of tears of grief at some point will provide blessed relief for our souls. I find it curious that there are those who somehow feel some sense of shame for their tears. We don't cry over people who don't mean anything to us. All across the world there are funerals

being held even today. But we do not feel compelled to cry over them, because we don't even know who they are. We do cry over those the more special they are to us. It might be a national figure. It might be a beloved pastor. It might be someone who we don't really know but deserves respect. I remember when pastor Horton and Pastor Higgins passed away, how so many turned out to their funerals. I knew pastor Horton, but I did not really know pastor Higgins very well. I went to the funeral because of the loss of one of our great spiritual generals. The closer someone is, the more acutely we will experience our grief because the ties that bind us have been severed. This includes not only all the memories of significant and happy moments, but also all the day to day things we were not even aware of in our consciousness.

There are a myriad of polite expressions we use that lubricate our interactions with people. Saying hello, how are you, see you later, take care. I was surprised that there was one phrase that people have said to me that I have found comforting. Throughout the years, when referring to the loss of close relatives people quickly respond with, "I am sorry for your loss." At first, I felt like I needed to explain that these losses had happened quite a while ago and I wanted to let them know that I was okay. I learned to just say, "Thank you." Kind of like when someone says "How are you?" and you simply answer "Fine." After a short while, I just came to appreciate the expression. Even though I had no need of comfort, nevertheless I found it very comforting. It doesn't have to take much, but it is always appropriate to offer a remark that acknowledge someone's pain or even mere frustration with life.

Especially on this occasion of the 19th anniversary of the attacks on the World Trade Center towers, it is very difficult to not come to tears as we watch people in their real-time grief as they were watching the towers being hit, the flaming explosion billowing out, the horror of people jumping from the building in some vain hope that they might escape, and then the knowledge afterwards of the firefighters and the police running into the danger up into the tower, sacrificing their lives in the almost certain knowledge that they would not be going home that day. Their experience became our experience and our hearts go out to them. We weep with them that weep. It was quite some time later when I was able to finally go into New York City and to walk around the perimeter of Ground Zero. There were still numerous tributes attached to the fences for those who were lost that day. I took time to cry and pray and to feel their pain.

Let's see how David took time to cry and pray and feel his pain.

2Sam 1:17-27 And David lamented with this lamentation

over Saul and over Jonathan his son:

18(Also he bade them teach the children of Judah *the use of* the bow: behold, *it is* written in the book of Jasher.)

19The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!

20Tell *it* not in Gath, publish *it* not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.

21Ye mountains of Gilboa, *let there be* no dew, neither *let there be* rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, *as though he had not been* anointed with oil.

22From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.

23Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

24Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with *other* delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel.

25How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, *thou wast* slain in thine high places.

26I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me: thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.

27How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!

3. Rejoice with them that do rejoice.

At the same time that we hear David's anguish, we also hear David's rejoicing:

- The beauty of Israel is slain upon thy high places: how are the mighty fallen!
- the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty.
- Saul and Jonathan *were* lovely and pleasant in their lives
- In their death they were not divided: they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.

Another thing that I often have to do at the time of a funeral is to point out that it's OK to dwell on the *happy* memories and to forget the difficult memories. As I have talked to funeral directors, one of the things that I'm interested in is the stories they have to share about different

things they have seen happen at funerals. Just as people have their own notions about religion (that they think are the way that things are supposed to be), they also have many notions about the way funerals are supposed to go. Funeral directors very often have strange stories about the things they've witnessed. Now we like to have a time of testimony at the wake for a funeral. When we have the testimonies, I keep in mind that, from what funeral directors have said, there are always potential problems that exists in the families of those who have passed. On more than one occasion, I have either heard directly or indirectly from people who have said "I didn't even know who these people were talking about." In other words, they did not have the same experience and relationship with their departed relative that others had. And so, I encourage people that in case if there were any faults that they remember about the deceased, that they can be assured that their concerns and their prayers have been answered: their loved one is totally fixed at that point. Now it is totally appropriate for them to focus on the happy memories and forget any hard times. This is certainly evident in David's eulogy for Saul and not just Jonathan.

In the same sense that I took time to pray and weep for those who perished in the World Trade Center attack, I also took time to rejoice. As I read their messages, I also saw the expressions of love and memories that people shared. To this day, those of us who went through that time, can feel the appreciation that those families had for their loved ones as they share their memories in tribute today. For me, as I see the videos of those young faces, and especially those who served us responders, I identify with the pride that their families have in them.

Today we live in a cancel culture that does not have an appreciation for all the good that has been done. They do not appreciate anything positive about characters in our history because of their flaws. When they start tearing down statues of U.S. Grant who worked tirelessly to promote true liberty after the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln, and people who fought for abolition, and statues of Jefferson and Washington, who were key figures in advancing the great principles of liberty that this country was founded on, then we realize that there is no rationality behind the cancel culture. It is no wonder that there is growing disregard for all of their concerns because they cannot be taken seriously. As people wake up to the insanity, we realize that all of humanity is flawed. We mourn the loss of those who died in the World Trade Center disaster, and we celebrate them in spite of the fact that according to the law of averages they no doubt were flawed people also. Similarly, just as David admire the heroic efforts of Saul and Jonathan, we are set free to appreciate all of the work

that has gone on before us to give us all that we have today.

4. Deep gratitude.

As you read through the Old Testament, you see that many of the saints had feet of clay. They might seem made of all gold and silver, but like the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, they are weak in the end with feet of clay. Nevertheless, when we read Hebrews Chapter 11, we see that flawed saints were used by God to carry forward the message of his grace. They did this well because they, themselves, were recipients of that grace.

Noah got drunk after he got off the ark
Abraham passed his wife off as his sister
then his son Isaac did the same thing
Jacob was a scoundrel
Joseph could have been considered boastful
Moses disobeyed God and struck the rock
Gideon made an ephod that became a snare to Israel
Barak was short on courage
Samson couldn't control his urges
and yet...

Heb 11:33-40 Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,
34Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

35Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

36And others had trial of *cruel* mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

37They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

38(Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and *in* mountains, and *in* dens and caves of the earth.

39And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

40God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

They all received God's grace that they without us should not be made perfect.

Eph 2:4-8 But God, who is rich

in mercy, for his great love
wherewith he loved us,
5Even when we were dead in
sins, hath quickened us together
with Christ, (by grace ye are
saved;)
6And hath raised *us* up together,
and made *us* sit together in
heavenly *places* in Christ Jesus:
7That in the ages to come he
might shew the exceeding riches
of his grace in *his* kindness
toward us through Christ Jesus.
8For by grace are ye saved
through faith; and that not of
yourselves: *it is* the gift of God:

Our heroes are not perfect, they are just heroic.

1Cor 10:11-12 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.
12Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

Be careful not to walk through this life with a critical attitude toward those all around you. God has placed people in our lives to stir us up whether it is by their example, their challenge to us, or by their need. Be thankful for everyone that God has put into your life. When you talk with them feel their pain, feel their frustration, feel their anxieties, and mourn with them. Take time to rejoice with them, to appreciate them, to encourage them. We do this all at the same time that we struggle to grow in our sainthood.

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

1. Mourning our loss. 1Sam 31:1-6, 2Sam 1:5-11 , 2Sam 1:13-14, Rom 12:14-15
2. Weep with them that weep. 2Sam 1:11-12, 2Sam 1:17-27
3. Rejoice with them that do rejoice.
4. Deep gratitude. Heb 11:33-40, Eph 2:4-8, 1Cor 10:11-12, Gal 6:1