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2 SAMUEL 1:1-2:7

Today, we begin a three-month study of the **Book of 2 Samuel**. Let's just set a little background for this book before we get into the lesson.

The **Books of 1 and 2 Samuel** were named for the prophet Samuel. This is not because he was the writer although he **did** write the biggest portion of **1 Samuel**. But, in **chapter 25 of 1 Samuel** we see that Samuel died and according to **1 Chronicles 29** it is believed that the prophets Nathan and Gad completed these books.

In **1 Samuel** we know Saul became king of Israel. We know from **1 Samuel 8** that the people demanded a king. They were tired of having Samuel as their leader and they wanted to be like the nations all around them. Samuel went to God and said, "*Lord, they don't want me anymore.*" And God said, "*No, Samuel, they haven't rejected you, they have rejected Me.*"

And we know that even though God's perfect plan was to be the King of Israel...God gave the people what they wanted.

He gave them a human king...and even though King Saul looked good (in fact, the Bible says he was the handsomest man in the land and stood head and shoulders above all the other men) and he seemed to have the power of God upon him at least at the beginning, we know that eventually he left the Lord out of his life and God chose another man to be king of Israel.

So, **1 Samuel** is basically about King Saul and also about David **before** he became king, but **2 Samuel** is about David **after** he became king.

David was a very interesting man. He was not a perfect man. He made many mistakes. He made many bad choices. **But, he was God's man.** He is the only character of Scripture that was known as *a man after God's own heart*.

By the way, what does it mean to be a man after God's own heart? Does it mean perfection?

No! It means that person has a teachable spirit. It means that person really God and even if that person fails God he sees his sin and confesses and repents and comes back to God with all his heart and soul.

David left a legacy for the Jewish people. King David is still revered by the Jews...but David also left a legacy for us...a legacy of how a man can be loved and forgiven and led by God and he also left us a legacy of beautiful psalms.

I'm so glad that God allows us to know the faults and failures of His servants. The Bible never flatters its heroes. It tells the truth about each one of them and because of this we see the grace of God and we see how the dear Holy Spirit works to bring God's children to conviction and repentance.

I confess that when I think of David's life, I feel as though I'm looking into a mirror. I think about my own rebelliousness and failures and I'm so ashamed. But, then God reminds me that as great as my rebelliousness has been, His grace and faithfulness has been so much greater!

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My prayer is that as we study David's life and times that we will be overwhelmed...not by David and the things *he* did, but by God and the things *He* did!

I want us to remember that God took a little shepherd boy from his father's fields and brought him to the throne of Israel. I want us to study David's life recognizing that David wasn't as one writer said, "a polished marble personality." **He was blood and bone and breath and he had the same struggles in his soul and spirit that you and I have.**

I want us to remember as we study David's life that he was not a "super-saint." God doesn't choose His servants because of their greatness, but because of His greatness! God uses the foolish things of this world to shame the wise. God uses the weak things of this world to shame the strong. And God uses the base things and the despised and He has done all this so that no man should boast before Him!

We're going to see Jesse's youngest son...a shepherd boy from Bethlehem that even his father forgot he had when Samuel came looking for God's choice...we're going to see this giant-slayer and composer of poetry and a man after God's own heart become an adulterer and a murderer and a very weak and ineffective father.

David was a man of triumph and he was a man of tragedy.
David was very gifted, but David was human.
David was strong in battle, but David was weak at home.

And I pray we will understand God's grace so much better when we finish this study than when we begin it today!

One more thing...let's just set the stage for *chapter 1 of 2 Samuel*...

It was the same back then as it is today. Things haven't changed...Israel had many enemies. All the nations surrounding Israel were against Israel, including the Philistines and the Amalekites.

If you'll remember from our pastor's sermons on *1 Samuel* and our study of *1 Samuel* last year, Saul was pursuing David to kill him.

When David trusted in God...when David went before God and asked Him to show him what to do, the Lord always met his needs and gave him direction and guidance. But, sometimes David didn't do this. Sometimes David let fear get the best of him and he forgot to seek the Lord's guidance.

We know that David feared for his life so much that he took his wives and children and those men who were following him and fled to the land of the Philistines...to the city of Gath.

When David got there, he pretended to be a defector. The king of Gath, Achish, gave David a city...the city of Ziklag. David was secretly carrying on raids against the enemies of Israel, but he told Achish he was carrying on raids against his own people.

Well, one day while David was with Achish out on the battlefield, some of the Philistine warlords began to distrust David. They went to Achish and demanded that David be sent away from the battlefield. Reluctantly Achish did this and David returned to Ziklag and when he got there he

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found that the Amalekites had made a raid on Ziklag and had burned it and taken captive the women and children.

David was in trouble! The folks who were with him threatened to stone him, because their wives and their children had also been taken!

So, **David asked God** what he should do and God told David to pursue the Amalekites and he would surely overtake them and rescue all that they had captured.

David took 600 men and overtook the Amalekites and rescued the women and children and all the sheep and cattle and other livestock.

In the meantime, however, Saul was engaged in a battle against the Philistines, but they were losing. The Israelites fled from before the Philistines and many were killed...and Saul was badly wounded by the Philistine archers... **1 Samuel 31:4-6**.

Now, let's read
2 Samuel 1-10...

Do you see the difference in the accounts of Saul's death? How do you harmonize the two? Well, there are two ways you can look at it. It is possible that Saul was still alive even though he had fallen on his own sword in an effort to kill himself, and with some kind of last breath he asked this Amalekite to kill him...just like this Amalekite said. Or, it is possible that the account in **1 Samuel** is correct.

Which is correct? I believe the account in **1 Samuel 31** is historically correct and I believe what this man was telling was a lie he was telling to make himself look good in David's eyes.

Think about it! Everyone knew what was going on. Everyone knew Saul had been after David, and that David had been fleeing for his life.

And now Saul is dead! And here comes this young man thinking "You know, if I go tell David that Saul is dead and I'm responsible for it, then he might make **me** his Secretary or State!"

But, what did David do?

Verses 11-16...

This man's lie didn't make him any points with David, did it? No! Instead it sealed his doom!

See, this Amalekite didn't know that David, himself, could have killed Saul on several occasions. But, David knew that until God actually removed Saul from the throne Saul was still king. Saul was still the Lord's anointed over Israel.

The world tells us to love our friends and hate our enemies, but Jesus taught us,
"Love your enemies. Bless them that curse you. Do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

If David had killed Saul he would have been taking things out of God's hands. It was far better for David to wait for God's timing than to try to help God out! And he felt the same way about what this Amalekite had said he'd done.

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David might have run ahead of God on occasion, but when it came to Saul, David was determined to wait on God.

Let me ask you...have you ever had to wait on God? It's hard, isn't it? I mean, it's much easier to take things in our own hands and run ahead of God, isn't it? Waiting is just plain hard work!

I read this week the definition of integrity: "Integrity is keeping a commitment even when circumstances have changed."

David was loyal to Saul when Saul was good to him, and David was loyal to Saul when Saul sought to kill him.

David was a man of integrity!

The Lord had a timetable for Saul's death. David knew this. David knew he would become king of Israel someday. God had promised this. And David took very seriously someone saying they had killed Saul.

Verses 17-27...

David writes this song of lament...this song of grief and of mourning. The first thing he grieves over is the fall of the glory of Israel. **Verse 19** refers to the beauty of Israel. And the word beauty there doesn't refer to the physical beauty of the land. It doesn't refer to the greenness of the trees or the color of the flowers. It speaks of the glory of Israel.

In the **Old Testament** the word glory indicated beauty. And Israel was glorious to the Jew. It was a chosen land for God's chosen people. It had been given to Abraham and promised to his descendants, and this land was special to the Jew.

It represented the glory of God. But now the land had fallen and the Philistines had conquered and David says, "**the beauty of Israel is slain**" and he says, "**how have the mighty fallen.**"

And then in **verse 20** through the first part of **verse 25**, he talks about the death of **Saul** and the death of **Jonathan** and the deaths of **the other Israelite soldiers**.

One of the strangest things is the way that David grieved over the death of Saul. David grieved over the death of Saul in spite of all the things that Saul had done to David.

I believe that David truly **loved** Saul. And we know he dearly loved Jonathan. David loved Saul because God loved Saul, and I believe he loved him because he was Jonathan's father. David honored Saul because God had placed Saul in a place of high honor. Sometimes we need to remember that when the folks in high office are not honorable, we still need to honor them because of the position God has allowed them to occupy.

God's promise that David would be king is about to be fulfilled, but that joy was lost in the sorrow over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. And David wept over his loss.

He grieved the death of **Saul** as king and the death of **Jonathan** as a soldier...Jonathan, valiant in battle. Jonathan standing there by his dad, defending with his bow unto the death the nation of Israel. And David grieved over **all the other soldiers** who had died in battle... "**How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle.**"

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Then, in the last part of **verse 25** and **26**, David doesn't think about the glory of Israel. He doesn't think about the valor of those brave men who died in battle. **His heart is fixed on Jonathan.**

There's not a greater friendship in all of history than David and Jonathan. It was a friendship built upon **loyalty** and **trust** and **commitment**. They had spent time together, prayed together, laughed together, cried together, fought together.

It was a sad thing for the glory of Israel to fall. It was a sad thing for Saul and the soldiers to fall. But that which broke the heart of David most was the death of his dearest friend, Jonathan.

Well, let's see what David did next...

2:1...

David inquired of the Lord. David and his men had been living out of the Promised Land for over a year. They'd fled to Gath out of fear and because they had **not** inquired of the Lord.

Verse 1 says **"then it came about afterwards that David inquired of the LORD..."** After what? Well, now remember where David is and what has happened. God had already promised David, "You are going to be the next king." But, David couldn't be king while Saul was still alive. But, now Saul is dead.

Now, David could have begun to assemble a great army. He could have begun to figure out just how he was going to defeat the Philistines. David could have begun a public relations campaign...

But, instead of doing any of those things, he inquires of the Lord!

Even though God had already told him he was going to be king and even though Samuel had already anointed him, and even though Saul is now dead, David does not rush head on. Instead he inquires of the Lord!

And I love the way he inquires of the Lord. He asks if he should go up to one of the cities of Judah and God said, "Go up," and David said, "Well, **where** Lord?"

I think it's very interesting that David hadn't asked God if he should leave the Promised Land, but he was asking Him if he should go **back** in and where.

David could have just started out when God told him to go up, but David had learned the lesson of running ahead of God, and he inquired of God again...and he asked him **a specific question**.

And God was faithful to answer David. He told him to go up to Hebron.

You know, sometimes I get weary in asking God...but I don't believe He gets weary in my asking. What is prayer? Prayer is asking God!

I was in a Bible Study years ago and the author of the study made the comment that once we've asked God for something a couple of times that we shouldn't ask anymore. He said it was an insult to God if we keep bringing it up. But, I don't believe that's what the Bible teaches.

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James said, "You don't have because you don't ask." And Jesus told the story of the woman who kept asking the judge for legal protection and even though the judge was an unbeliever, he finally granted her what she wanted because she refused to give up.

God has invited us to prayer. He has invited us to ask Him for **guidance** and **provision** and **protection** and **blessing**. And I believe when He gets tired of our asking, He'll let us know and we'll just have peace that we aren't to ask for a certain thing anymore.

Well, let's see what David did next...

Verses 2-4a...

God's will for David was that he become king...in God's way and in God's time. God's will is always perfect. We don't always see it that way. Many times we've already figured out what would be the best thing to happen in a particular situation and we want it to happen and we want it to happen at the time we consider perfect!

But, here we see David finally being anointed king over the house of Judah...and interestingly he was anointed king by members of his own tribe. David was of the tribe of Judah, wasn't he? If you'll remember from **1 Samuel**, Samuel had already privately anointed David when he was a young shepherd boy, but this was a public anointing.

Verses 4b-7...

Here we see David's first act as a king. And this act was a blessing to someone else. David was in God's will. And when a man or a woman is in God's will he or she will be a blessing to other people.

1 Samuel 31:9 tells us that Saul had been beheaded by the Philistines and they stripped off his weapons and sent them around **"to carry the good news to the house of their idols and to the people"**.

And then they fastened his body and the bodies of his sons to a wall in the city of Bethshan.

But this same chapter tells us that the brave men of Jabesh-gilead heard about this and arose and walked all night and took the bodies of Saul and his sons from the wall and came to Jabesh and cremated them there and then they took their bones and buried them and fasted for seven days.

David knew these men had done a brave and honorable thing. And he pronounced God's blessing upon them.

David was also saying: "I'm the king of Judah, but let me by your king as well. Saul is dead. You don't have a king. I'll be you king!"

Well, that's our introduction to the **Book of 2 Samuel**.

Let me just close with a few applications and we'll be through. We just have time to mention these...

- 1) David had respect and honor for the man God had placed in authority.
It didn't matter to David that Saul was not a man of honor. It mattered to David that God had placed him in a position of honor.

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And we need to honor those whom God has placed in authority over us, whether they deserve this honor or not.

- 2) When David lived in fear and ran ahead of God's will, he jeopardized the lives of all those around him.

David had no business going to Gath and relying on Achish. God had already promised him he would be king. Saul wasn't going to kill David. God was going to protect David. I mean, how could David be king if Saul killed him?

If God has made us a promise...let's trust in that promise. Let's not sit around and stew and fret and take matters into our own hands. Let's trust His promise to us.

- 3) When David was willing to wait on God's will to be accomplished in God's way and in God's timing he was blessed and was a blessing to others.

We see this when he pronounced a blessing on the men of Jabesh-gilead and we're going to see it time and again in this book.

When we walk and work in God's will and in God's way God's blessings are going to fall upon us. And we are going to be a blessing to those around us. There's just a ripple effect in the life of a Christian who is in the will of God!