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2 SAMUEL 21:1-23:39

We're almost at the end of our study of **2 Samuel**. And we have before us today three diverse chapters...three chapters that aren't really connected with each other as far as subject matter goes. But we're going to do the best we can to at least hit the high spots of each chapter.

2 Samuel 21:1-9...

This is a most unusual story...it's also a bloody story, isn't it?

I believe to fully understand this chapter, we need to be reminded who the Gibeonites were.

The Gibeonites were a tribe of people who tricked Joshua when Joshua led the Israelites into the Promised Land. They heard about how Joshua and his men were defeating all the people in the Promised Land and they were afraid of the Jews...really, they were afraid of their God!

So, they sent a delegation...and they pretended to be from a faraway place...

They had put worn out and patched sandals on their feet...and worn out clothes on and the bread they were carrying was dry and crumbly and their sacks and wineskins were worn out and torn and mended...

And the bottom line is that they made a proposal to the Jews...

They said, "We live a long way away from you, but we've heard of the power of the Lord your God. We've heard how He is enabling you to defeat all your enemies.

We live so far away from you that all our provisions which you see were fresh and new, when we left home, but now they have become dry and stale, and our sandals are all worn out because of the long journey."

(Wouldn't you think somebody would have been suspicious of all this?)
Then, they went on to say,

"However, we would like to make a covenant with you folks."

What were they trying to do? They were trying to convince the Jews that they were not a threat to them...that they didn't even live within the borders of their land...and it was in the best interest of both of them if a covenant was made.

They were saying, "We've heard how God has killed your enemies...and we don't want to be your enemies, we want to be your friends."

And **Joshua 9** tells us that a covenant **was** made with them...and God was not consulted in the making of the covenant.

Well, three days later, Joshua heard that they were **not** from a faraway country, but actually were from within the borders of the Promised Land...but it was too late...the

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Jews were bound to this covenant, because it was made in the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

The Jews could not do anything but honor this covenant, even though it was made from deception.

But, Joshua did make these people to be servants to his people...they became "hewers of wood and drawers of water for the house of God."

Now, with that reminder of just who the Gibeonites were...let's look again at **chapter 21**.

All through the years...over 400 years... because of this covenant the Gibeonites had been allowed to coexist with the Jews.

But then Saul came along and was made the first king of Israel and apparently in his zeal to rid Israel of her enemies, he had put some of the Gibeonites to death.

And here, in the latter years of David's reign, **chapter 21** tells us there was a three year famine and that David sought the presence of the Lord. David went before the Lord...and asked Him why they weren't having any rain and God told David,

"It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death."

So, David knew he must do something to end the famine and he went to the Gibeonites and asked them what would atone for the lives that Saul had taken. And the Gibeonites told David that they would be satisfied if they could take the lives of seven of Saul's sons.

And this is exactly what happened!

Well, how does this apply to us today? What had Saul done? Saul had broken a covenant. *What is the breaking of a covenant? It's a sin, isn't it?* So, in an attempt to apply this to our lives today, **let me just share with you four truths about sin...**

1) Past sins that have not been dealt with often have present consequences.

Apparently, David waited until the famine had been going on for three years to even ask God "Why?" I don't know why it took David so long to ask God "why", but it surely didn't take God long to tell David the reason for it, did it?

Why was this so serious? I mean, why did God demand such a penalty for their sin?

God demanded this because He holds His children to a very high standard. When God's children enter into a covenant, He expects that covenant to be honored.

And that's not done much today, is it? We see marriage covenants broken, we see business covenants broken every day. We see treaties between nations made and broken...

In fact, we could point to instances in history when treaties were made with the specific purpose of breaking them.

God expects sin to be dealt with. And many of the consequences that we face and that our children are facing are consequences brought on by sin that has never been dealt with.

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Sometimes even sin that *has* been dealt with bears consequences!

2) Sometimes we must make restitution for the sins of others.

When Saul murdered these Gibeonites, David wasn't anywhere around. David was probably off hiding from Saul...in a cave somewhere. David was not a part of Saul's army when this happened.

Don't you wonder why David didn't bring that up? I mean...why didn't David say, "But, **God**, I didn't do it! Why am I having to deal with the mess that Saul made?"

That's probably what I would have said!

But David knew that he must act on behalf of his nation...they needed rain and he didn't argue with God when He told him the reason for the famine was because of something Saul had done...

Several years ago a recommendation was brought before the Southern Baptist Convention that simply said,

"We as messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention inform of resolution offer on behalf of the Southern Baptist Convention to the African American family of the United States our apologies for the part that our spiritual forefathers played in giving sanction to slavery."

Did the spiritual forefathers of the Southern Baptist Convention play a part in giving sanction to slavery?

I don't know. I wasn't around then, and neither were you. But, I read this past week this may very well have been one of the reasons that the Southern Baptist Convention was formed in the first place.

Now, there were those at the convention that year that thought this resolution should have been passed and there were those who did not. It **was** passed.

The overwhelming majority of the messengers voted to simply say to a race of people that though they were not alive, they believed that apologies should be made for our spiritual forefathers who gave sanction to slavery.

And that is what we find here in this passage...sometimes restitution must be made by us for the sins of others. We as parents may have done this on occasion. Have you ever paid for something your children were responsible for breaking?

Let's look at something else...

3) The price of restitution is sometimes very high.

When we think about a resolution the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention made compared to what we see here, or paying for something our children have done, all that pales into insignificance, doesn't it?

In this case...in **chapter 21** of **2 Samuel**, the price was the lives of seven men...seven of Saul's sons...

Now, you and I would say, "What a terrible thing! How unjust

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and unfair! Surely David could have done something else! These boys may not have had anything to do with what Saul did.”

But, let me just point out a couple of things...

Verse 1... God said, **“It is for Saul and his bloody house, because he put the Gibeonites to death.”**

God Himself was saying, “It isn’t just Saul, it is also his sons.” **His bloody house**. This doesn’t mean his actual dwelling place had blood all over it. It means his family...his sons in this case...had blood on their hands.

Remember when God told David that the sword would never depart from his **house**? This didn’t mean a literal sword would be stuck in his house somewhere, did it? It meant there would be a deep division in his **family**.

So, these were not little boys...these were grown men and more than likely they had been a part of this massacre of the Gibeonites.

David was merely making restitution by meeting the demands of the Gibeonites.

And of course, the question arises...

“Was God in this?”

And the answer is ABSOLUTELY!

How do we know? Because after these men were killed, God sent rain. Restitution had been made!

We need to always remember that God’s ways are not our ways. God’s thoughts are not our thoughts...that as high as the heaven is above the earth...so high are God’s ways and thoughts than ours.

One more truth about sin and we’ll move on...

4) Sin always leaves a trail of sorrow...

Verses 10-14...

Here we see five sons that Michal had raised for her sister, Merab, were put to death and two sons of Rizpah, one of Saul’s concubines were put to death.

So, we see these “sons” included grandsons, don’t we? Remember Michal? Michal was the wife of David. Merab was Michal’s older sister and Merab had actually been **promised** to David by Saul, but had been given to a man named Adriel. Apparently, Merab, had died, because we see that Michal had raised the sons that Merab had borne to Adriel.

I think it’s interesting that the Bible says Mical had no child until the day of her death and even the children she had brought up were taken from her, as well.

And here is Rizpah...mother of two of Saul’s sons, not as his wife, but as his concubine, and here she is...brokenhearted and she stays with the bodies of these men...keeping the

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vultures and the wild animals away.

Some commentators believe she stayed there for 6 months...from April to October... “from the harvest until it rained on them from the sky...”

What I'm trying to say is this: Sin brings sorrow...and it often brings it to those who had nothing do with it. So often folks justify and rationalize their sin by saying, "I'm going to do what I'm going to do because my sin affects only me!"

Your sin rarely affects just you! Sin has a ripple effect...and it so often affects those who had nothing to do with it! We've all been there! I believe if we took a poll we would say that we have all been affected by someone else's sin.

This is not a happy passage of Scripture. But, I believe it's there to point out to us again the seriousness of sin...the serious way God looks at sin.

There's not any place in the Bible that sugar-coats the reality of sin and what it does in your life and in the lives of those who love you and in the lives of those who come after you.

That's why it's so important for sin to be dealt with!

The rest of **chapter 21** deals with some more of Israel's conflicts with the Philistines.

Next, I want us to very quickly look at **chapter 22** and I apologize for having to do this quickly. I believe Bro. Bob preached five sermons on this chapter when we were in **2 Samuel** on Wednesday nights.

In **chapter 22**, we see a man, weary from the **struggles of life...**
weary of **famine**, weary of **war**, weary of **conflict**,
weary of **burying those he loved...** just **weary...**
but finding rest and renewal in God's faithfulness.

David sat down and composed a song of triumph and I want us to key in on four different themes found in David's hymn of praise to God!

1) When times are tough, the Lord is our only security!

Verses 1-7; 17-20...

I want to tell you what I see in this section of this psalm...

It may be that you have enemies who are coming against you...maybe on your job or in your family...**and if you do I want to tell you...**even if they are dealing with you heavy-handedly, the Lord will tenderly support you in your struggle.

Why is God so faithful to His children? What keeps His strong arms always open, always willing to hold you when you need Him? Let me give you the reason...

Verse 20b...

"He rescued me, because He delighted in me."

Are times difficult in your life? If you're running from the enemy of loneliness, or a broken relationship or any other kind of heartache...God still delights in you. He cares for you. Caring

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for you, He feels your loneliness and your heartache. And delighting in you, He will be your strong support!

2) When days are dark, the Lord is our only light!

Even in darkest times, David found a lamp to light his way...**verse 29**

There's something very comforting and safe about having a light on a dark path. But even a flashlight only lights a few steps ahead. By the same token, as the Lord lights our path, He may not shine on the part of the road that's way ahead of us!

He may not answer all of life's questions...but He will give us the light we need to overcome the obstacles in our lives **today...verse 30...**

And He will give us the light we need to find Him in the darkness **today...verse 31...**

So, if there is fear in your life today...fear of failure or fear of the unknown...fear of losing someone you love...fear of financial reversals...

If your road looks dark, remember the Lord's light is yours...

3) When our walk is weak, the Lord is our only strength...

David wasn't a strong man in himself. We've seen that when ruled by his own passions, his character proved to be cracked and chipped and flawed.

The key to David's strength was when He acknowledged God as His Source. Verses 33-36...

God told Paul, "Paul, My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is perfected in your weakness."

So, if you're feeling weak today and your strength is all gone...just know that's good! God's power is perfected in your weakness!

4) When our future is foggy, the Lord is our only hope...

David was filled with hope for the future. Even though he didn't know what the future holds, he knew he holds the future.

And he knew God would not only deliver, protect and love **him**, but God would deliver, protect and love his descendants as well...**verse 51...**

Are you concerned about tomorrow? Are you unsure about what tomorrow holds? Is your future foggy?

You know, **parts** of our future will **always** be a mystery to you and me.

But, we can know that nothing can touch us that God does not allow and He will always be with us. He is our **security**. He is our **light**. He is our **strength** and He is our **hope!**

This was a song of triumph for David. David was saying that no matter what life has thrown at him, God had been faithful! David was saying that he had clung to God through **all** his struggles. This ought to inspire each of us to do the same thing!

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Well, the last chapter we have in our lesson today... **chapter 23** tells us of David's mighty men.

It gives us a little insight into the character of these men. We don't have time to really cover this chapter, but if we did have time we would see that all these men were different, but they all loved David and served him with all their heart and soul.

They were men of **character**. They were men of **commitment**.
They were men of **courage**.

I love the story of the three men who went to get David a drink of water when he was so thirsty.

Verses 13-17...

David was from Bethlehem. And here David was...in the cave of Adullam and the Philistines were in Bethlehem. Apparently they had occupied that little town and had set up a garrison there.

When these men heard David say, "Oh that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem..." they decided they would!

And David was so humbled by the daring thing they did that he couldn't drink it...He offered it as a sacrifice to the Lord.

But, you know...I believe the Lord honored these men for that effort. Jesus said that anyone who offers a cup of cold water in His name, He would bless.

These men served David the way **you and I** should serve the **Lord Jesus Christ**...always willing to go the second and third mile. **I believe it's hard for us to remember sometimes that God could accomplish His work without us.** We should feel very humbled that He chooses to use us!

The greatest need in our day is people who are committed to the lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives.

- people who are committed to **serve Him faithfully,**
- people who are willing to **trust Him completely,**
- people who are willing to **witness for Him, and visit for Him and**

minister in His name.

These men loved David enough to be inconvenienced for him. Do we love Jesus enough to do the same?

I wonder when God looks at you and me if He says,
"There's one of My children! She serves Me faithfully in all that she does. I can trust **her** because she trusts **Me!**"

My prayer is that we will serve the Lord Jesus with the same character and courage and commitment that these men served David.