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2 SAMUEL 6:1-7:29

Today, we're going to see David's attempt to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. We're going to see how his first attempt failed and why. We're going to also see the reaction of Mical to this. And we're also going to see what happens when God says "No."

I hope we will see in today's lessons some **precepts** and **principles** we can apply to our own lives.

I read this week the difference between a **precept** and a **principle**. A **precept** gives us **specific and detailed instruction**. A **principle** gives us **general directions**.

For example...

If you're traveling down the highway and you see a sign that reads **SPEED LIMIT 45 MPH**...that's a **precept**. That sign is *specifically instructing* you to travel no faster than 45 mph.

But if you see a sign that says **PASS WITH CARE**...that's a **principle**. That sign is not telling you **to** pass, it's simply giving you the *general direction* that if you pass, you're to do so very carefully.

Most of us drive believing the speed limit is a **principle**, a *general direction to be followed* rather than a **precept**, a *specific instruction to be followed*, don't we? ☺

So, with all that in mind...let's look at

2 Samuel 6:1-5...

We need to understand that the ark of the covenant represented the very presence of God to the Jews.

We saw last week that the kingdom was united. The people were united. Jerusalem had been chosen by David to be the capital of this united kingdom. Jerusalem had never been the capital before.

The tabernacle was at Gibeon at this time. There was no temple.

The one thing...the main holy thing...that David could bring to Jerusalem and establish Jerusalem not only as the **political** capital of Israel...not just a **city of might** and a **city of power**...but also as the **religious** capital...the **holy** city of Israel...was the ark of the covenant.

Well, where **was** the ark of the covenant?

The ark of the covenant was over at Abinadab's house ten miles away.

Remember when the Philistines captured the ark of the covenant and placed it alongside their god, Dagon, and Dagon kept falling over?

God eventually struck the Philistines with hemorrhoids because they would dare to capture and put His holy ark alongside their filthy, heathen god.

And remember how they finally put the ark on a new cart and hitched the cart to two milk cows and they watched as those cows took the ark away?

We don't have the time to tell the entire story...but let me just say this...

Eventually, the ark was brought to Kiriath-jearim to the house of Abinadab, and it remained there for **twenty years!**

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And it was still there when David decided to go get it...David knew above all else he needed the presence of God. He knew he could never lead God's people without God's presence. And David knew that God, when speaking of the ark of the covenant back in the **Book of Exodus**, said, **"...there I will meet with thee and I will commune with thee."**

So, let's see what happened.

Verses 6-11...

The son of Obed-edom, Uzzah, reached out to keep the ark from falling from the new cart and God struck him dead!

Now, let's see three things that I believe we can see in this passage of Scripture.

1) God does all things well!

Some people have accused God of being too severe on Uzzah.

But, when we see passages of Scripture like this that we have a hard time with, we need to remember that **God does all things well**. We need to also remember that God is not fair as we reckon fairness, but He is perfectly **just** in all that He does. We trust in His character. **He is perfectly righteous!**

2) God expects things to be done His way!

Was David going a good thing in bring the ark to Jerusalem? YES! But he failed to find out how. David used a new cart to transport the ark.

Well, didn't the Philistines do the very same thing? YES! But, the **Philistines** had not been given specific instructions on how to transport the ark. The **Philistines** were not **God's** people! They regarded the ark of the covenant as a "lucky charm", not as the holy presence of Almighty God!

The ark of the covenant was very holy and it was to be transported God's way...by the Levites...borne on their shoulders by staves.

3) It's good to desire the presence of God in our lives!

I know that the presence of the Lord is not now localized as it was back in David's time. The Holy Spirit lives within each one of us. Nevertheless, in our personal experience, the presence of the Lord may be stronger at some times than at other times.

The thing that matters most in the life of a believer is to have a strong awareness of the presence of the Lord upon our lives day in and day out.

We **want** God's presence in our lives, don't we? There's not one of us who would say, "No, I don't want God's presence in my life."

How many of us have prayed something like this?

"O Lord, grant that this day I might have a strong sense of

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Your presence in my life. Without You, Lord, I am nothing. Without You, Lord, I can do nothing. Without You, Lord, I'll make so many mistakes and go wrong in so many decisions. O Lord, this day I desire above all else the conscious sense of Your presence in my life."

See, our desire is the same as David's. It's not such an old-fashioned story after all, is it?

But, sometimes we want to do like David did. We want to hitch God's presence to one of our new carts. We just want to add God to our list of "things to do"... "meetings to attend"... "books to read." We just load Him on top of all the other things of our busy life and then take off!

And we put forth our **hands** toward Him, but not our **hearts**. *God is altogether holy and He demands not only the putting forth of our hands to work, but also the putting forth of our hearts to worship.*

One more thought before we leave this passage...

God's presence can be a blessing as it was to Obed-edom the three months it stayed there. But God's presence can also be judgment as it was to Obed-edom's son, Uzzah.

Whenever God comes into our lives by the power of His Holy Spirit He comes either to blast or to bless, either to convict or to comfort, either to destroy or to deliver, either to judge or to save.

I mean, many times, before the **peace** of the presence of the God can be a reality in our lives, the Holy Spirit has to convict us of something, and destroy some sin in our lives, doesn't He? And He must teach us to do God's work God's way.

And that's what we see David doing. Apparently, David got His Bible down and read up on how the ark should be transported, and he went to the Levites and commanded they consecrate themselves and go and bring up the ark God's way!

You know what I've discovered in the four weeks we've been in **2 Samuel**? Every time David asked God what to do he was blessed and every time he didn't he got in trouble. And you know what I've discovered in my years of being a Christian? Every time I ask what to do, He blesses me and every time I don't I get in trouble.

Well, let's look quickly at Michal's response to David in all this...

Verses 15-23...

We know that in **1 Samuel** the Holy Spirit tells us that, "Michal, Saul's daughter loved David." But here, we see that "Michal despised David in her heart." And we can't help but wonder what turned Michal's love into hatred.

Michal was given to David by King Saul.

Michal was David's first wife.

Michal was the wife of David's youth.

And some of the things Michal did lead us to believe that she really did care for David at one time. One time she helped David escape from her father.

But something happened. We know that she had been taken from David by Saul and given to another man. And as far as Scripture

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tells us, that was done without protest from her and without the formality of a divorce. She went and married another man.

What is that? Well, it's adultery, isn't it?

But, David brought her back and if that's where the story ended, we'd say, "Good!" But, when Saul gave Michal to David, he said she would become a snare to him. And we see here that she is exactly that.

When she saw David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.

And after they had set the ark in the tent David had pitched for it and after he had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings and after he had blessed the people in the name of the Lord, and after David had distributed bread to all the people and they had gone home...**David came home to bless his household.**

And Michal came and said...**verse 20...**

And David said to Michal... *"I wasn't leaping and dancing and expressing joy and worship for you, Michal, but I was doing it before the Lord."*

What happened to the young daughter of Saul who had loved the handsome, rugged, brave young David? Somewhere along the way the things David loved and the things Michal loved became different. And that difference became a great barrier between them.

And I believe we see here a picture of the Lord Jesus and someone who **professed** at one time to love Him...but their love wasn't lasting.

For instance,

All the years that David was running from Saul, Michal should have been with him. She should have been loyal to David. She should have been bearing his reproach. But, where was she? She was living with another man...she was committing adultery.

This is very much like a person who walks down the aisle and says he loves Jesus and then goes out into the world and commits spiritual adultery.

I wonder if David grieved all those years over Michal. And I wonder if the dear Lord Jesus grieves over those who professed to love Him, but are living with the world.

David wanted the presence of the Lord upon his life...but Michal couldn't have cared less!

Verse 23... "And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death." *(I think it's interesting to note that Michal is referred to as "Saul's daughter" far more than she is referred to as "David's wife."*

Does this mean that David left her alone after this...that he had no relations with her after this? I don't know, but Michal died childless...a terrible thing in those days.

And those who only profess a love for Jesus yet don't possess a love for Jesus will die spiritual childless as well!

Well, in the time we have left, let's look what happens when God says, "NO."

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In **7:1-4**...David called Nathan the prophet to him and essentially told him that it wasn't right for him to be living in a house of cedar while God is dwelling in a tent.

And Nathan tells David to go ahead with what he wants to do. However, in the quiet of the night when Nathan went to bed, the word of God came to him and God told Nathan something very different. He told Nathan to go back to David...

Verses 5-17...

Now, folks who study the covenants of the Bible understand that this is the Davidic Covenant. God made a covenant with Noah. God made a covenant with Abraham. And here we find God making a covenant with David. It is a "forever covenant."

Here, David is still a young man...less than 40 years old. His kingdom is finally firmly established. The ark of the covenant has been brought to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is not only a political capital, it has become the spiritual capital because the ark of God is now resting there.

Also, we see that Israel is not at war at this particular time.
David's enemies have been subdued, at least for the time being... **verse 1**

And even though David is resting, he's not lazy. David begins dreaming big dreams for the Lord. He has a fervent desire. And that desire is to build a house for God.

David says, "I'm just a man and I live in a palace... 'a house of cedar.' And yet, God, Almighty God, lives in a tent."

David's motive was pure. David's love for God and his gratefulness to Him for who He is and what He had done inspired David.

David had such a heart for God and he simply wanted to do something great for God, and Nathan said, "It sounds good to me."

And yet, God said, "No!"

This "no" isn't quite as clear in **2 Samuel** as it is in **1 Chronicles 17**. The Lord is a little more blunt in **1 Chronicles**...

"Go and tell David, My servant, 'Thus says the Lord,
'You shall not build a house for Me to dwell in.'"

That sounds like a "no" to me!

Let me ask you...was David's heart wrong? Was Nathan's heart wrong? No! Nathan's heart was right! David's heart was right! **Their motives were right! Their desires were right!**

So, the question is this...

If your motives are right and your desires are right but God says "NO", how do you respond?

Let's see how David responded...

Verses 18-29...

From this passage, there are at least 6 things we can learn to do when God says "no" to us!

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1) When God says “no”...**Don’t demand an explanation...**

Now, there **is** an explanation...but God many not tell you what it is. God’s denials are always for a reason. God doesn’t sit up in heaven and flip a coin. He is a God of love and compassion and wisdom. **And He has a reason.**

He may wait until **later** to tell you and He may **never** tell you!

In David’s case, he told David later. If we were to go to **1 Chronicles 22**, we would see that God told David he could not build Him a house because he had shed so much blood. The house of God...the temple of peace...could not be built by a man of war.

2) When God says “no”...**Don’t forget God knows what’s in our heart...**

In **2 Chronicles 6:7**, the Bible says that God told David that he “did well” because it was in his heart to build Him a temple. God knew David’s motives were pure. He knew David’s desire was not to glorify himself but for God to be glorified.

And if you’ve ever had a desire or a dream to do something for God’s glory and He said, “no,” remember He knew it was in your heart and He knew you did well because it was in your heart.

God doesn’t reward us on the basis of what we do, but on the basis of what’s in our hearts to do.

3) When God says “no”...**Don’t think God has stopped loving you...**

God made a point of telling David how He had cared for David, didn’t He? He reminded him from whence He had brought him.

He said, **“David you were a little old shepherd boy. I took you and touched your life. I anointed you with My blessings. I saved your soul. I protected your life. I’ve delivered you from the hand of your enemies.**

I’ve made you king over all Israel. David, you cannot question My love for you.”

And if God has said “no” to you, I want to tell you that doesn’t mean God has stopped loving you. Go back in your mind and remember the things God has done for you.

3) When God says “no”...**Don’t think His purpose for you is over...**

God had a purpose for David’s life, and He had a purpose for David’s descendants. God told David he would not be allowed to build Him a house, but God also told David that He would build David a house.

What is Jesus so often called? He’s called “the Son of David.” Jesus said in **Revelation 22:16**: **“I am the root and the offspring of David.”**

The Lord Jesus came from the seed of David. And, interestingly, He didn’t come from Solomon...the son of David who would be allowed to build the house for God. He came from the seed of Nathan...another son of David.

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- 4) When God says “no”...**Do everything you can to help those to whom God says “yes”!**

Do you know what David did after God said “no”?

1 Chronicles 29:2-3...

David didn't sit and pout and sulk. David got busy gathering the materials that Solomon would need.

In his excellent book **THE MAKING OF A MAN OF GOD**, Alan Redpath says, *“I'm sure that in heaven David will have the glory for the building of the temple, not Solomon.”*

If you cannot build, gather the materials for another.
If you cannot go, do all you can to send another.

If God says “no” to you, you look around and find someone to whom God has said “yes” and help make it possible for him or her to achieve the desire that was on your heart.

I believe when we get to heaven, we'll be amazed at the saints who will get the glory for providing either the encouragement or the witness and the example or the financial means or the prayer support that enabled others to do the work they could not do themselves!

Finally...

- 5) When God says “no”...**Go and sit before Him and give Him glory!**

Verse 18...It's been my experience that when God says “no”, it either drives us **from** Him or presses us **to** Him!

David went before God and he prayed and praised God! What a sensitive and godly man David was! He was indeed a man after God's own heart!!

In David's prayer, he restated God's promises to him and you know, that's always a good thing to do! And he acknowledged that God had the right to have the last word...

“For Thou, O Lord God, hast spoken; and with Thy blessing may the house of Thy servant be blessed forever.”

Sometimes God says “yes, and go to it”...

But, if God says “no”...

Don't demand an explanation...

Don't forget God knows your heart...

Don't think God has stopped loving you...

Don't think God is through with you...

Do everything you can to help those to whom He has said “yes.”

And

Go sit before Him and just give Him glory!

God wants to teach us and many times He teaches us more through His denials than by His permission.

Let me end with this story...

Ira Stanfill was an Assembly of God evangelist. He died several

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years ago. Ira Stanfill wrote some of the old gospel songs that we love to sing like "Mansion over the Hilltop."

One rainy night his wife was killed in a car wreck. It absolutely devastated him. His wife had been his partner in evangelism. He just could not understand why God would allow this to happen. Their plans and their desires were to spend all of their lives serving God...just singing and preaching the gospel all over America and around the world...and now all of that was over.

One night he went to his motel room and began to pray and ask God why that had happened. And he said, "You can call it a dream or a vision or whatever you want to call it," but he said,

"God showed up and spoke to my heart and said, 'Ira, you don't need to know all of that now. You just trust Me and serve Me and we'll talk it over in the bye and bye.'"

And he sat down and wrote a song and here are some of the words...

"Though shadows deepen and my heart bleeds,
I will not question the way He leads.

This side of heaven we know in part,
I will not question from a broken heart.

We'll talk it over in the bye and bye,
We'll talk it over my Lord and I.

I'll ask the reasons and He'll tell me why,
When we talk it over in the bye and bye."

See, when God says "no", He simply wants us to trust Him. He has the right to do it, He has the reason to do it...and one day He will tell us why!

May God help us to do just that!!!!!!