

It was a guy from a plumbing supply house that reminded me of God's holiness. We were building our prior churches first building with all volunteer labor. I acted as GC. The building was up, the roof was on, and it was buttoned up – widows and siding. We were installing the mechanicals: electrical, HVAC, plumbing, etc. After we unloaded his pipe for the heating system, he was curious about the church, so I gave him the nickel tour.

Many people **know God** as Savior, but I **don't think many people** know God as Holy.

- I hope you have experienced the joy of having your sins forgiven.
- However, **while God is merciful and forgiving**, *He wants us* to **respect Him** as God.
- **Let's celebrate God's grace, but let's also walk humbly before our God.**

When we got to the doorway of the sanctuary, he stopped and whipped off his hat before entering. He then entered with reverence. My attitude was a contrast. I was wearing old shorts with holes in them, a full toolbelt, and wearing a ballcap. I did not even think of the sanctuary as a holy place; to me it was just a construction site, a dream of the congregation. I entered that sanctuary hundreds of times each day and not once did I enter with reverence. I was embarrassed and thought of a passage in Leviticus that talks about treating the holy things with contempt, because the Lord has made it holy (Le 22:9).

We are going through **the story of David's life** and pulling out life lessons for us today.

- There are **two sides to today's** message: **God both** 'exalts the humble and humbles the proud.'<sup>1</sup>
- **Since January** we have seen the process of **Saul** being humbled and **David** being exalted.
- David **has had victory after victory** and seems to be God's golden boy who can do no wrong.

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<sup>1</sup> Rick Wadholm, *A Theology of the Spirit in the Former Prophets: A Pentecostal Perspective* (Cleveland, TN CPT Press, 2018), p. 156.

Today, **David gets reminded** that *God alone is God* and is to be honored – even in the little things.

- For **the first time David is afraid of God**. ‘David was now afraid of the Lord, and he asked, “How can I ever bring the Ark of the Lord back into my care (2Sa 6:9 NLT)?”’
- However, **David had a heart after God**. He **processed** what God’s holiness meant and submitted to God’s plan. It was a **reason to celebrate**: ‘And David danced before the Lord with all his might ...<sup>15</sup> So David and all the people of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouts of joy and the blowing of rams’ horns (2Sa 6:14-15 NLT).’

Today, David celebrates God’s grace and holiness.

**David**  
*Celebrate, 2Sa 5-7*



Let me catch everyone up.

Last Saturday night, David became king over Judah and Israel.

- When we got home, Connie said ‘there was a lot of death in the message.’ Well yes, the tribalism and death of the ancient near east make us uneasy. Perhaps we might **feel different** if we lived in Israel or Ukraine today.
- Regardless, **God has placed David on the throne** *without* having to undermine his loyalty to Saul, or Saul’s son, king Ish-Bosheth.

Let’s back up for a second. Samuel was told, ‘Anoint him (Saul) to be the leader of my people, Israel. He will rescue them from the Philistines, for I have looked down on my people in mercy and have heard their cry (1Sa 9:16 NIV).’ *What is Saul’s most important and initial duty?* **Rescue** Israel from the Philistines.

- **Samuel** even hints to Saul, ‘there is a Philistine outpost (1Sa 10:5)’ in Gibeah.
- Instead, Saul **rescues Israel** from the Ammonites. He **has someone else fight Goliath**, and his son **Jonathan** is the only family member who attacked the Philistines.
- Saul seems **to be frozen with fear** when it comes to the Philistines.

Now that David is king, he will deal with the Philistines.

1. Early Victories.

First, David decides to **make Jerusalem his capital**. 'David then led his men to Jerusalem to fight against the Jebusites, the original inhabitants of the land who were living there ... <sup>9</sup>So David made the fortress his home ... He extended the city, starting at the supporting terraces and working inward (2Sa 5:6, 9 NLT).'

Jerusalem was '**symbolically and geographically**' better suited for the capital *than Hebron*.<sup>2</sup>

- Jerusalem had been a **walled city for a long time**. Even **Joshua was not able to conquer Jerusalem** (Jdg 1:21).
- David and his army **crawled in through the water tunnels**.<sup>3</sup>

David *knew* that **God had established him as king** (v. 12).

- The **king of Tyre**, modern day Lebanon, congratulates David on becoming king and develops a friendly relationship.

After he establishes Jerusalem as his city, **the Philistines panic**. They 'mobilized all their forces to capture him ...<sup>18</sup>The Philistines arrived and spread out across the valley of Rephaim. <sup>19</sup>So David asked the Lord, "Should I go out to fight the Philistines? Will you hand them over to me?" The Lord replied to David, "Yes, go ahead. I will certainly hand them over to you (2Sa 5:17-19 NLT)."'

- Notice, **David paused to seek God's guidance**. It's his job, he **saw Saul do things without God**, so he pauses to ask God.
- **Though things may seem obvious in our daily decisions, God loves to hear from us.**

'So David went to Baal-perazim and defeated the Philistines there. "The Lord did it!" David exclaimed ... <sup>21</sup>The Philistines had abandoned their idols there ... <sup>22</sup>But after a while the Philistines returned and again spread out across the valley of Rephaim. <sup>23</sup>And again David asked the Lord what to do. "Do not attack them straight on," the Lord replied. "Instead, circle around behind and attack them near the poplar trees. <sup>24</sup>When you hear a sound like marching feet in the tops of the poplar trees, be on the alert! That will be the signal that the Lord is moving ahead of you to strike down the Philistine army." <sup>25</sup>So David did what the Lord commanded, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer (2Sa 5:20-25 NLT).'

- Give **God the glory** for your victories. David said, '**the battle is the Lord's (1Sa 17:45 NIV)**,' just before killing the giant.

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<sup>2</sup> David Toshio Tsumura, *NICOT The Second Book of Samuel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2019), p. 95. Verse 7 contains the first mention of 'Zion' in the Bible, likely meaning is 'a fortress located on a ridge,' p. 97.

<sup>3</sup> Tsumura, 2 Samuel, pp. 97-100.

- Also, if you truly want to know God's will, He will even give you the specifics to fulfill it.
- God is concerned about the details – especially as it relates to His glory.

A lesson David is about to learn ...

### 3. Ark.

'Then David again gathered all the elite troops in Israel, 30,000 in all. <sup>2</sup>He led them to Baalah of Judah to bring back the Ark of God, which bears the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies, who is enthroned between the cherubim (2Sa 6:1-2 NLT).'

The Ark represented the presence of God.

- It contained a jar of manna from the exodus from Egypt, Aaron's staff that budded, and the tablets of the 10 commandments.
- In Eli's day the Ark went with Israel into battle against the Philistines (1Sa 4), *but* the Philistines captured the Ark.
- The Philistines were afraid of it and sent it back (1Sa 6) to Israel.
- But because **some Israelites died** it was put away for safe keeping.<sup>4</sup>

'They placed the Ark of God on a new cart and brought it from Abinadab's house, which was on a hill ... <sup>5</sup>David and all the people of Israel were celebrating before the Lord, singing songs and playing all kinds of musical instruments—lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, and cymbals (2Sa 6:3, 5 NLT).'

David is excited to bring God's presence to Jerusalem; it is a celebration.

'But when they arrived at the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah reached out his hand and steadied the Ark of God. <sup>7</sup>Then the Lord's anger was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him dead because of this. So Uzzah died right there beside the Ark of God (2Sa 6:6-7 NLT).'

- Let's celebrate God's grace, but let's also walk humbly before our God.
- Uzzah was only trying to help, but God killed him *despite* his good intentions.  
*Why was God so severe?*
- This Ark represents God's very presence. It was not to be treated casually.
- God had **commanded that the Ark** *only be carried* on the shoulders of the Levites by poles (Ex 25:14).
- David is afraid. He has not seen this side of God.

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<sup>4</sup> It was stored in Kiriath Jearim for 20 years, 1Sa 7:2. It may have come out occasionally (1Sa 14:18, 21:1, 22:19) but it does not appear to go into battle anymore.

The Bible says **that** 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Ps 111:10).' It is so easy for us as easy-going Americans to imagine God as a friend who always forgives and overlooks wrong. Yes, God does, but that does not mean He is like us. God is **wholly different** from us,

- He is the creator, author, and sustainer of everything.
- **He is too pure** to look on sin.
- The **mountains melt** before His presence (Na 1:5).
- **He is** 'immortal and lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see (1Ti 6:16 NIV).'

**Israelites were terrified** and said, 'we will die if we hear the voice of God any longer (Dt 5:25 NIV).'

They petitioned Moses to be an intermediary.

- Today, **we only approach God through Jesus our intermediary, our advocate.** We approach 'with **reverence and awe**, for our "God is a consuming fire (He 12:8 NIV)."'
- We approach God through the **one-time sacrifice of Jesus** on the cross
- **We are to** 'Act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God (Mi 6:8 NIV).'

David is so afraid; **he leaves the Ark** at Obed-Edom's home.

David still **wants to bring the Ark** to Jerusalem, but he did his homework. He wrote, The "'Levites did not carry the Ark the first time, the anger of the Lord our God burst out against us. We failed to ask God how to move it properly.'" <sup>14</sup>So the priests and the Levites purified themselves in order to bring the Ark of the Lord, the God of Israel, to Jerusalem (1Chr 15:13 NLT).'

- David **honors God** by respecting God's method for transporting the Ark, and he **sacrifices a bull every six steps** on the way to Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>

'After the men who were carrying the Ark of the Lord had gone six steps, David sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. <sup>14</sup>And David danced before the Lord with all his might, wearing a priestly garment. <sup>15</sup>So David and all the people of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord with shouts of joy and the blowing of rams' horns (2Sa 6:13-15 NLT).'

This time **David dances more freely** than before *because he was honoring God and doing it the right way*, not just the fastest way.

- He **danced** with all his might because he was free by **obeying the rules**.
- Many today think that **freedom is do as I please**, but no, real freedom comes from *living within the boundaries*.
- I've used this **illustration many times**, but it is so true. **Imagine a 5-year-old who pounds away at a piano, hitting any key just as he pleased.** That is today's

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<sup>5</sup> Tsumura, *Second Samuel*, pp. 117-18.

conception of freedom. It is a freedom of sorts but is not beautiful in any way. Now imagine a 60-year-old who has studied music and practiced the piano daily. He sits down and plays freely as his heart directs him, but this time it sounds beautiful and makes sense to our ears.

Perhaps you have been **pounding away at the keys of your life, but you have been producing noise.** **Your life** seems purposeless and messy. Jesus said, 'So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed (Jn 8:36 NIV).'

- Jesus said he **came to give life**, life to the fulness (Jn 10:10). You will never reach your **full potential** until you submit to God's rule over your life, **it is like our dedicated pianist who learns his craft to be really free.**
- I encourage you to **lay down your freedom today** and submit to Jesus' rule. **He will forgive your sins and really** 'set you free from the law of sin and death (Ro 8:2 NIV).'
- Jesus said to '**repent and believe** the good news (Mk 1:15 NIV)!' It is worth **dancing** about.

Pray.

- **Let's celebrate grace, but let's also walk humbly before our God.**

There is one more segment of today's story.

#### 4. Tent.

David's **biographer jumps way ahead** in narrative to show us something.

'When King David was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all the surrounding enemies (2Sa 7:1 NLT).' That **tells us when**, after *all* the Philistines were defeated. So, this segment is **intentionally** out of chronological order.

'The king summoned Nathan the prophet. "Look," David said, "I am living in a beautiful cedar palace, but the Ark of God is out there in a tent!" <sup>3</sup>Nathan replied to the king, "Go ahead and do whatever you have in mind, for the Lord is with you (2Sa 7:2-3 NLT)."'

The **Ark of God's presence is still in the tent** that Moses made 400 to 500 years earlier. It bothers **David**. He is living in luxury, but the symbol of God's presence is in a moveable tent.

**David knows that God** 'does not live in temples built by human hands (Acts 17:24 NIV).' **But he wants to honor God and please Him.** The **contrast between the tent and his place** is too much for David. He must honor God.

That night **God spoke to Nathan** and reminded Nathan that 'I have never lived in a house' **NOR** have I asked for a 'beautiful cedar house (2Sa 7:7).'

**Through Nathan**, David is **told that his son will build** a temple for the Ark and that David's throne will be secure.

- David did not get mad, instead **he gives thanks to God**. He humbly prays, 'Who am I, O Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far (2Sa 7:18-19 NLT)?'
- **And He praises God**, 'How great you are, O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you. We have never even heard of another God like you (2Sa 7:22 NLT)!'

*Do you see David's heart?* He is humble and honors God.

### **Conclusion.**

**David's celebration** of God's grace and holiness reminds me of the celebration of the lost son who came home.

The father gave ...

- 'The best **robe** (Lk 15:22 NIV).'
- 'A **ring** on his finger.'
- '**Sandals** on his feet.'
- They killed the **best calf** and had a celebration meal.
- There was **music** and **dancing**.
- The reason is 'this son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found (v. 31 NIV).'

We should be feeding the pigs, but instead are sons and daughters of God because of His great grace. **That is worthy of celebration!**

But **let's not forget** to walk humbly before our holy God.

**Pray.**