

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, April 10, 2013 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study

DAVID... A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART "The End of an Era"

1 Kings 2:1-3, Psalm 103, Selected

For forty significant years, David reigned as king over Israel. Although checkered with failure and periodic lapses into carnality, David's rule was marked mainly by godliness and strength. The young shepherd lad matured into a gallant and bold warrior, a model of determination, and a never-to-be-forgotten statesman who walked with God. In this final look at David's life, we find him old and perhaps physically stooped. He faced the inevitable hour through which we must all pass. Death was both near and real... but so were the memories and the emotions. Surrounded by his son, the king-elect Solomon, and an assembly of loyal friends, David dreamed, rejoiced, gave advice, prayed, and finally died... thus ending an era that would never again be duplicated in the annual of history. As we come to the end of David's life and the end of his era we must learn some of the valuable truths and lessons from his life.

I. WHY DO PEOPLE LOVE DAVID'S STORY?

David has long been a favored and adored Bible character. From children to adults, he has for centuries been one of the most cherished and loved Biblical heroes found in Scripture. Having read his story and studied his life, it's not hard to see the attraction, but also given his great failures we may walk away from his life scratching our head a bit and wondering why people love David's story so much. What is it about David that attracts so much attention and adoration? Why do people love David's story?

Rate Your Favorite Bible Character: Take a few moments and try your hand at the following exercise.

1. **Who is your favorite Bible character?** Rate the following Biblical character 1 to 5, with 1 being your favorite, 2 your next favorite and so on. Note: there are many other good Biblical characters that could have been listed. These are just 5 good Old Testament Bible characters.

Noah Abraham Joseph Moses David

Why did you rank them the way you did? Why did you pick your favorite Bible character?

2. Why do you think that David is a favorite Bible character for many people?

3 Initial Reasons Some May Have Erroneously Loved David's Story:

1. **Narrowly focusing on one aspect of his life and not the whole** - If they knew the whole story they might not feel the same. It may be a particular episode from his life that causes the fascination with his life. For example, many children may fall in love with David and begin to idolize him because of favorite children's stories that surround his life such as the story of David and Goliath. We may fixate on a particular story from his life and not look at the whole picture and therefore heroize and idolize David without really seeing that he was extremely flawed and fallible as a man.
2. **Embellishment of his story rather than focusing on the Biblical account** – We have so often seen David pictured as a cute and cuddly cartoon character, boldly confronting a big, mean nasty Giant or perhaps holding a shepherd staff in his hand and taking care of some cute little sheep on a green hill side. His life has been so mythologized and fantasized that we overlook the reality that he was an ordinary man, like you and I, with ordinary feelings and needs to deal with, with faults and failing sometimes. Scripture helps us to see this, but in doing so the picture is not always pretty and sometimes hard to take given David's hero status in our minds.
3. **Blocking out the bad and only remembering the good** – We do this sometimes even as mature adults. When someone passes away we only want to remember the good and we discount the bad as if it never happened. The problem with this is that we may miss a key element or component of their life that really helped to shape who they are and all that God has done in their lives. We must accurately look a person's life... good and bad... to really discover who they are and properly appreciate how they got where they are. In David's case this is especially true. Although David had some great moral failings that we would like to block out and be tempted to overlook, because they are hard to rectify with our ideals of faith and highly esteemed Christian conduct, to do so is to miss key components of who he was, how God worked in his life, and how God grew him through his failings... it is to miss the lessons for our own lives and what God do in us and through us even in our great failings and weaknesses sometimes.

6 Good Reasons to Love David's Story: Why do people love David's story? And even more importantly, why should we love David's story?

1. **David's story is exciting** - David and Goliath, caves and deserts, beautiful women and palace intrigue, last-minute escapes and pursuits by two kings. It's exhilarating! David's was a great adventure and with God life is always a great adventure.
2. **David's story is inspiring** - David is both a committed believer and a prolific singer-songwriter. He has learned to trust Yahweh God in the depths of depression, the extremes of danger, and the heights of jubilation. His story inspires our own faith and practice of our faith.

3. **David's story is human** - We watch this flawed man fall very low, find repentance, grace and forgiveness, and is ultimately be restored and redeemed. David's story is our story. On some level we can and must relate to it whether we want to admit it or not.
4. **David's story is manly** - Do real men do God? Oh, yea! David was a man's man. This great warrior and leader of men integrates faith into his own life and his whole career. Many men today think that church, and God stuff, and loving Jesus is not macho or masculine. Listen, David's story helps us to seen a man's man loving God, singing and playing musical instruments, writing poetry, and at the same time hunting, fighting, warring when necessary, defending his country and family. We see David struggling with many issues men struggles with today... sexual purity, being a good husband and father, providing for your family and loved one, character issues, etc.
5. **David's story is morally challenging** - He lives in a world far from our own – with palaces and harems as well as giants and fierce hand-to-hand combat. But underlying the differences are the moral guidelines that keep us steady. Amazingly even today we struggle with the same moral challenges that David struggled with in his day. There truly is nothing new under the sun.
6. **David's story is ongoing** - He is the ancestor and type of the Messiah, the Son of David and Son of God --Jesus of Nazareth. To understand Jesus, you need to start with David.

II. INITIAL LESSONS FROM DAVID'S LIFE

David began as a shepherd in Judah, and was blessed and anointed by the prophet Samuel as God's chosen successor for King Saul. David was sent by his father, Jesse, on an errand to the valley of Elah, where a giant Philistine champion named Goliath taunted the army of Israel continually, shouting a challenge that no Israelite was willing to meet. Surrounded by men of war, David confronted Goliath with nothing but his faith in God and a shepherd's sling, defeating the giant with one stone shot to the head. After being hunted by King Saul for several years, David was officially appointed ruler of Israel, and took his place in history as one of the nation's greatest kings. David passed his throne to his son Solomon, who is considered one of the wisest men in history. King David's story is told in 1 Samuel 16 through 1 Kings 2.

3 Initial Lessons From David's Life:

1. **David and Goliath... Trust in God is more powerful than any earthly force or power (1 John 4:4)** - When young David faced Goliath on the battlefield he knew that he was no match for the giant in a physical sense, but his trust in God proved to be more powerful than any earthly force. The Bible says in 1 John 4:4, "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." God is greater than the forces of the world, and King David provided a powerful example of this when he stood up to the Philistines' champion armed only with his faith and the whole armor of God (Eph 6:13-18). Modern Christians in most nations do not face the hardships and persecutions that their first and second century predecessors endured, yet many still struggle to find confidence in times of spiritual turmoil. Modern believers can look to King David's

life as an example of the strength and power that come through a living faith in Jesus Christ.

2. **King David and Prayer Power... Prayer works for God answers prayer (Psalm 33:22)** - A large portion of the book of Psalms has been attributed to David, who was known as a poet and skillful musician. Many of David's psalms are prayers, praises, or pleas to God, and contain deep truths about the power of prayer. David's prayer psalms vary widely in topic, from prayers for protection and deliverance (Psalm 17), to praises of God's greatness and glory (Psalm 24), to outright cries of anguish and outrage (Psalm 22). This thematic variation demonstrates that no topic is taboo when praying to the Lord, and that He hears all the prayers of His people. According to Psalm 44:21 and 139:1-4, God knows the hearts and minds of believers, even before they utter a word. Psalm 55:22, David's own words, tell us, *"²² Cast your burden on the LORD, And He shall sustain you; He shall never permit the righteous to be moved."* Believers can cast all of their cares on God (Psalm 55:22), who hears all prayers, whether they be long or short; grandiose or simple; public or private.
3. **King David's Life Message... God's Grace is Sufficient (2 Corinthians 12:9-10)** - An overarching theme of King David's life is the sufficiency of God's grace. The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10, *"And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. ¹⁰ Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong."* David, like other Biblical characters, proved that God's strength manifests itself when a weak individual takes action through faith. Christians today may often feel that their talents, strengths, and resources are insufficient to accomplish anything for God's kingdom, but the life of King David is a clear reminder that God's grace and power are sufficient in any situation. Like the parable of the mustard seed taught by Jesus in Mark 4:30-32, God can use anyone to accomplish great things in this world, regardless of their status or position in life.

III. **DAVID'S PERSONAL ADVICE ON LIFE (1 Kings 2:1-3)**

David was hit with many heartbreaking experiences. Following his sin with Bathsheba, his infant son died. Later another son rebelled against him. His people failed to support him. His trusted advisor joined the enemy. His general disobeyed him . . . but he had a responsibility. He was king and did not have the luxury to wallow in self-pity. Life went on and so did David. Through it all, David experienced the amazing faithfulness of God.

4 Reminders from David's Life of God's Faithfulness:

1. **When David sinned he suffered the consequences, but God still loved him -**
2. **When David was on the run from his enemies, God delivered him. -**
3. **When David grieved the deaths of his children, God sustained and comforted him -**
4. **Whether David lived as a humble shepherd, a fleeing fugitive or conquering king, God's goodness endured and enabled him to go on. -**

David was a man's man. He fought, loved and lived life to the fullest. Throughout this study we've been reminded of God's grace over and over again, and that God is merciful to those who fear Him—to those who, like David, are people after His own heart

^dNow the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: ²'I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. ³And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn.'” 1 Kings 2:1-3 (NKJV)

Mind the Light

Years ago John Walker was the keeper of the lighthouse at Robin's Reef on Staten Island. He and his wife, Catherine, lived there four years faithfully taking care of his duty. One morning, however, he was stricken with severe pains and Catherine sent to the shore for medical help. When the physician arrived, he ordered John removed to a hospital at once. As he was being carried to the boat, he called to his wife, “Mind the light.” The poor fellow never returned to the lighthouse, but Catherine stayed on to “mind the light.” In fact, she carried out the duties so well that she was appointed keeper. For more than 30 years she stayed in that lonely spot, caring for the warning beacon to keep mariners from damage on the rocks.

As David was preparing to be gathered to his fathers, his final admonition to Solomon was “mind the light.” That is, be faithful to the light of God's Word: to His statutes, commandments, judgments and testimonies. If you do that, David promised, you will prosper in all that you do and wherever you go. And he was right. Solomon became famous for his wisdom and wealth. That truth has not changed today. Even though David has been dead for 3,000 years, God's Word is just as relevant to our lives as it was to his. The promise holds as well. When we are faithful to walk in the light of Scripture, we will find a prosperity of spirit that follows us wherever we go. Be careful to “mind the light.” Read God's Word and apply it to your life, and it will keep you from stumbling in the dark. Those who keep God's Word faithfully will be faithfully kept.

We might call David's words to his son, Solomon, at the time of his passing “David's Personal Advice on Life.” Let's put it into practical words for our lives as we glean these truths from David.

David's Practical Advice on Life: (based on 1 Kings 2:1-3)

What to do... *“...be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. ³And keep the charge of the LORD your God...” (v.2)*

- 1. Be strong in the Lord** – When David was strong in the Lord he conquered Giants (Goliath), and when he wasn't so strong in the Lord the Giant's conquered him (lust, adultery, lying, cheating, stealing, murder, etc.)
- 2. Prove yourself a man (or woman of God)** – How do you do that? By being true to and living true to God's Word.

3. **Keep the charge of the Lord your God** – Did David always keep the charge of God on his life? No, he didn't! Another valuable lesson to pass on to us. Stay true to God's call on your life, first of all to be a Christians (His), then to do what Christians are called to do (live it), and then follow it (stay true to His call on your life)

How to do it... *"...walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn." (v.2)*

4. **Walk in God ways** – Don't walk in the worlds ways, walk in God's ways. A good lessons learned by David passed on to us.
5. **Keep statutes, commandments, judgments, and testimonies** – In other words do what His Word says.

IV. **HOW COULD DAVID BE CONSIDERED A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART?**

After an accurate portrayal and full study of David's life, one may wonder about God's comment about David... namely that David was a man after God's own heart? What could that possible mean and how could David possibly be considered that man given his grave failings? To understand why David was a man after God's own heart, we need to see what characteristics he had to qualify for such an exalted description.

In the book of Acts, the Apostle Paul is speaking before the men of Israel, and he tells them of God's feelings about King David. Speaking first of King Saul the Apostle Paul states in Acts 13:22, *"²² And when He had removed him (King Saul from the throne), He raised up for them David as king, to whom also He gave testimony and said, 'I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after My own heart, who will do all My will.'"*

Now of course, the obvious question is, how could God call David "a man after His heart" when David was such a terrible sinner, having committed adultery and murder? Much has been written regarding the meaning of the verse and its applicable value today. Much has also been written about David, especially in the books of 1 and 2 Chronicles and 1 and 2 Kings. However, we find much of his character in the book of Psalms as he opened up his life for all to examine. David's life was a portrait of success and failure, and it highlights the fact that he was far from perfect. But what made David a cut above the rest was that his heart was pointed toward God. So what does it take to be a man after God's own heart? Let's look at some key characteristics of David's life to find out.

4 Key Characteristics To Be One After God's Own Heart:

1. **An Absolute Faith in God** - David had an absolute faith in God from early in his life. Nowhere in Scripture is this point better illustrated than in 1 Samuel 17 where David as a young shepherd boy fearlessly slew the Philistine, Goliath. Shortly before the duel, we see direct evidence of David's faith in 1 Samuel 17:37, *"³⁷ Moreover David said, 'The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine.' And Saul said to David, 'Go, and the LORD be with you!'"* David was fully aware that God was in control of his life, and he had faith that God would deliver him from impending danger. How else would one venture into a potentially fatal situation with such calm

and confidence? David knew early on in life that God was to be trusted and obeyed. As we see in Scripture, David's faith pleased God, and he is rewarded for it by the Lord.

2. **An absolute love for God's Word** - David absolutely loved God's law or His Word. Of the 150 psalms in the Bible, David is credited for writing over half of them. Writing at various and often troubling times in his life, David repeatedly mentioned how much he loved God's perfect Word. We find a beautiful example of this in Psalm 119:47-48, *"⁴⁷ And I will delight myself in Your commandments, Which I love. ⁴⁸ My hands also I will lift up to Your commandments, Which I love, And I will meditate on Your statutes."* It is not hard to see his complete adoration for God's Word. But also notice how he mentions that he "meditates" on God's statutes. God granted David understanding and wisdom through daily meditation. We would do well to not only read God's Word but also think about it throughout the day for God loves when we think about Him. A littler earlier in Psalm 119:2-3 David writes, *"² Blessed are those who keep His testimonies, Who seek Him with the whole heart! ³ They also do no iniquity; They walk in His ways."*
3. **A genuinely thankful heart to God** - David was truly thankful. Listen to him in Psalm 26:6-7, *"⁶ I will wash my hands in innocence; So I will go about Your altar, O LORD, ⁷ That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all Your wondrous works."* That is David's heart! David's life was marked by seasons of great peace and prosperity as well as times of fear and despair. But through all of the seasons in his life, he never forgot to thank the Lord for everything that he had. It is truly one of his finest characteristics. As he wrote in Psalm 100:4, *"Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."* As followers of Jesus Christ, we would do well to follow David's lead of offering praise through thanksgiving to our Lord on a daily basis.
4. **A truly repentant heart before God** - David was truly repentant. 2 Samuel 11:2-5 records David's sin, *"² Then it happened one evening that David arose from his bed and walked on the roof of the king's house. And from the roof he saw a woman bathing, and the woman was very beautiful to behold. ³ So David sent and inquired about the woman. And someone said, 'Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?' ⁴ Then David sent messengers, and took her; and she came to him, and he lay with her, for she was cleansed from her impurity; and she returned to her house. ⁵ And the woman conceived; so she sent and told David, and said, 'I am with child.'" The mighty fall hard, and David's fall included adultery, lying and murder. He had sinned against God and he admits it in 2 Samuel 12:13, *"David said to Nathan, 'I have sinned against the LORD.' And Nathan said to David, 'The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die.'" "**

But admitting our sin and asking for forgiveness is only half of the equation. The other half is repentance, and David did what we should all do... repent of our sins. Psalm 51 is David's prayer of repentance to God... listen to David's heart in just the first 2 verses (Psalm 51:1-2), *"Have mercy upon me, O God, According to Your*

lovingkindness; According to the multitude of Your tender mercies, Blot out my transgressions. ² Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, And cleanse me from my sin.”

In conclusion, David demonstrated his faith seemingly on a daily basis which pleased the Lord. Throughout his life his faith would be tested on a grand scale and in the final analysis he passed most of the tests. David also loved God’s law and he sought to follow it as best he could. He spent many days meditating on it and trying to apply it to his own life. He knew that God’s law had the power to change lives if it was followed to the letter. Another important character trait that David exhibited was that he had the attitude of gratitude and was very thankful for his life. During his life he had all sorts of trouble, but David thanked God every day no matter the circumstances. And, finally, David was truly repentant. Let us not forget that he was a man just like us who sinned on a regular basis. But, despite his sin, he always loved God and sought to repent of those sins. He is a role model for all of us sinners who need to repent earnestly. David was indeed a man after God’s own heart.

V. **SUCCINCT LESSONS FROM DAVID FOR TOMORROW**

Psalm 103 gives encouraging counsel from David’s life... for all of those who like him may have failed... or think they have failed... or those who just want to do life well as David did even through his own struggles and shortcomings. David’s wise words can have an effect upon five aspects of our lives – responsibility, focus, security, perspective, and morale. Let’s consider the suggestions related to each of these.

3 Short Lessons from Psalm 103:

1. **Keep your focus on God (vv.1-5)** – Not easy counsel. David writes, “... *forget not all his benefits...*” (v.2). There were some times in David’s life when he obviously got his focus off of God. But he definitely learned the benefits of keeping Him in focus all the time. In verses 3-5 he lists benefits to be remembered: pardon from iniquity, healing of all diseases, redemption from the pit, crowning with lovingkindness and compassion, and satisfaction with good things. But note the reason, “... *so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s*” (v.5). “*He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions (failures) from us.*” (vv.10-12). No matter what happens in his life through our own fault or those things that are beyond our ability to control, keep your focus on Him if you hope to be one who is after His own heart as David was. God is faithful!
2. **Rely on the fact that He knows you are dust (vv.13-18)** – David writes, “*As a father has compassion on his Children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him; for he knows how we are formed (“He is mindful that we are but dust”).* In spite of what He sees, still... He has endless compassion. God know our faults and failing... He doesn’t delight in them, but he does forgive them when we come to him in genuine confession and repent of them. This statement by David is not made for God’s benefit, but yours... in order that you may know that, like David, when we mess up He doesn’t stop loving us.

- 3. Live in complete obedience to God and His Word (vv.19-22)** – Compromise weakens one’s inner strength of character, and morale slides. As deterioration occurs, we grasp for human alternatives to hold our courage and confidence together and to keep our strength artificially propped up. However, no lasting courage can form apart from living in the mainstream of godly action and behavior. David, addressing his thoughts toward the angels, associates *“mighty ones...”* (v.20) with obedience... *“who do his will”* (v.21). In the aftermath of apparent failure, we must stay with it – doing what God wishes us to do, *“obey his word”* (v.20). What may appear to be defeat in the eyes of the human observer, may in actuality turn out to be great success in the eyes of God.

Some Final Lessons from David:

- 1. Failure is not the end** – Psalm 37:23-24, *“If the Lord delights in a man’s way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumbles (fails), he will not fall, for the Lord upholds him with his hand.”*
- 2. Even good people fail sometimes** – Psalm 34:19, *“A righteous man may have many troubles, but the Lord delivers him from them all.”* TLB *“The good man does not escape all troubles, he has them too. But the Lord helps him in each and every one.”*
- 3. Failure is not final, you can succeed next time** – David encourage his son, Solomon, as he was about to take the throne in 1 Kings 2:3, *“...you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn.”* If you follow God’s ways. **Philippians 4:13**, *“I can do everything through him who gives me strength.”*
- 4. Don’t let failing and failure discourage you** – **1 Kings 2:1-3 (NKJV)** *“¹Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: ² I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. ³ And keep the charge of the LORD your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn.”* And I have always loved this in **Joshua 1:9**, *“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be terrified; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.”*