



THE COMMUNITY

God's Heart | DAVID GRIEVES OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN'S DEATH

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

2 Samuel 1:1-27

Second Samuel begins where 1 Samuel left off. The book as a whole recounts David's reign as king of Israel and it shows David to be quite a different character than we see in 1 Samuel. He is shown to be quite fallible. However, David remains a man after God's heart because of his faith in God, intense prayer and heartfelt repentance. Later in the book, because of his sin, David sees his family fall apart as his son Absalom mounts a rebellion against him. Hope isn't lost though, as God makes a covenant with David in chapter 7, promising the eternal rule of David's line with the ultimate fulfillment coming in David's greater son, Jesus Christ.

In our first lesson, David grieves Saul and Jonathan as they have recently died. This chapter shows David's heart for the Lord's anointed king (Saul) despite being sought after by him numerous times. David's heart is in line with God's and even though Saul, his vicious enemy, is now gone and the threats are finished, David is still saddened that his life (and chance for repentance) is passed. Chapter 1 also displays David's blood-brother love for Jonathan. David's heart for both of these men is quite sincere and simply shows the greatness of David's character and his ability to turn to God despite the emotional roller coaster he is experiencing.

David Hears About Saul's Death (1:1-16)

Chapter 1 begins with a messenger running to tell him the terrible news that Saul and Jonathan have died in battle. David asks the young Amalekite man, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" The young man says that he was watching the battle and Saul turned to him and asked that he kill him. The Amalekite man admits to killing Saul, taking his crown and armband and is here to present them to David. This, of course, is not true because 1 Samuel 31:4 says that Saul killed himself by falling on his sword. Nevertheless, the news of their death is shocking to David. Verse 11 says he "took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him." David expresses deep grief because of Saul's death. Why would he do this? Saul is finally dead! He will not have to deal with a crazy, power-hungry king chasing him anymore. David doesn't see the situation in that light. The Lord's anointed is dead – and more than that, someone confessed killing him!

After a time of mourning, David asks the young man again where he is from and then says, "How is it you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the LORD's

What's the Big Idea?

After the Philistines kill Saul and his sons, David finds out about their death and laments. This passage shows David expressing God's heart in judging the Amalekite messenger who professed to kill King Saul and by lamenting Saul's and Jonathan's death.

What's the Problem?

We often let our emotions control us and we selfishly turn to them for comfort or self-pity instead of trusting God in the situations we face.

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anointed?” David asks this because he understands, as he did in the caves when hiding, that Saul's life is not for someone else to take. Saul was anointed by God as the king over His people. David commands that his man be executed. This expresses David's heart for God to judge those who harm the LORD's anointed. It shows that David's heart is for God's holiness and will. Perhaps more than anyone, David understood that we are to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (see Matt. 5:44) and leave vengeance for the Lord, not ourselves (see Rom. 12:19). Help your group see that David is seeking after God's heart, not his own desires. David wanted to be innocent in his dealings with Saul – that's why he never killed him. For us today, we don't have the power to put someone to death, but we can hope in the justice and wrath of God to rescue us from our enemies instead of taking matters into our own hands.

David's Lament (1:17-27)

In verses 17-27, we see David's true heart for Saul and Jonathan in his “lamentation” (a sad song). These are not your average sappy, sing-song lyrics you would hear on Top 40 radio. These are deep, emotional, painful, hard words for David to sing. Your group will do well to seek the Lord to have the same heart of mourning as David. Pray that they would strongly desire to “weep with those who weep” (Rom. 12:15).

In this song, David uses sobering and somber words. We all know that David and Jonathan were very close, so it is not surprising that David mourns Jonathan. However, you wouldn't think this was a song written about a man who was trying to kill David. He curses the place where Saul died: “You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor fields of offerings!” (v. 21). He calls Saul and Jonathan “beloved and lovely...swifter than eagles...stronger than lions” (v. 23). We can learn from David's example. We should look for the best in people, hoping to God that they will repent from sin and turn to him. We must love our enemies (Saul) and our friends (Jonathan) until the day they die, trusting God for the best in their lives. Toward the end of the lamentation, David pens quite a line regarding his affection for Jonathan. He writes, “I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of a woman” (v. 26). Not even a woman could please David the way Jonathan did. Jonathan was a man who would have taken an arrow for David. He defied his father to spare David. This shows the intimacy, beauty and importance of close relationships. Help your group ponder this wonderful aspect of the Christian life as they seek to develop and maintain intimate relationships with others.

Conclusion

Second Samuel 1 ends a stressful chapter of David's life. Saul, the spiteful enemy, is finally out of the picture. David is going to be anointed king, but that is not first on his mind. He laments his losses and seeks the Lord during yet another time of trial. Your group should see this chapter as a great example to us today, in that we should turn to Christ despite terrible situations where our emotions may run rampant and try to control us. David knew what sorrow was and more than that, Christ is called “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief” (Is. 53:3). Because of this, we can turn to Jesus no matter the situation because He will know perfectly well what we are going through.

What's Our Response?

We should entrust ourselves to Jesus, the true King, in whatever emotions we're experiencing.

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What Are the Questions?

2 Samuel 1:1-27

Launch

As you think about the range of human emotions, which ones do you feel most uncomfortable in experiencing or expressing and why?

Explore

Read 2 Samuel 1:1-2.

1. Describe the setting of this narrative.

Read 2 Samuel 1:3-10.

2. How does the man describe things when David asks him what happened?

3. Read 1 Samuel 31:3-5. How does this man's account square with the narrator's explanation of Saul's death?

4. Since the narrator includes both accounts, the most likely resolution to the conflicting accounts is that the man lied to David. Why do you think he would do that?

Read 2 Samuel 1:11-16.

5. How does David respond when he hears this bad news?

6. How does David respond to the Amalekite messenger?

7. What justification does David give for having the Amalekite messenger killed?

Read 2 Samuel 1:17-17-27.

8. Why do you think David taught the sons of Judah the lament?

9. What is David's point in verse 20?

10. In what specific ways does David extol Saul and Jonathan in this lament?

Apply

11. Summarize the primary expressions of David's heart in this chapter.

12. Since David is described as a man after God's own heart (cf. 1 Samuel 13:14), what does David's expression in this chapter reveal about the heart of God?

13. What connection do you see between David's heart as God's king and the ultimate expressions of the King of kings? 14. How do the expressions of David's heart in this chapter, and their fulfillment in the King of kings, give you encouragement and hope?

NOTES:

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What Are the Answers?

1. David returns to Zillah from defeating the Amalekites as described in 1 Samuel 30 and receives a man who came from Saul's camp.
2. He says that Saul and Jonathan are dead and claims that he killed Saul at his own request after he had become injured in the battle.
3. The narrator says Saul killed himself after becoming injured, but the man says he killed Saul.
4. It's likely that he came upon Saul's crown and bracelet and wanted to keep it, but he needed a convincing story that would allow for that.
5. He tears his clothes, weeps and fasts until evening.
6. He has him killed.
7. He takes his story at face value but indicts him for stretching out his hand against the LORD's anointed.
8. It memorialized the fallen in a more significant way than if he merely expressed the lament and left it at that.
9. He's expressing the disgrace of Saul and Jonathan's death in that it gave God's enemies an opportunity to gloat.
10. He extols their might and courage, the way that Saul provided luxuriously for his people and the love he shared with Jonathan.
11. Grief, judgment and adulation.
12. It suggests that grief, judgment and adulation are part of the heart of God.
13. David's grief, judgment and adulation look forward to a day when the King of kings will judge all His enemies with finality, wipe away tears from every eye and make all things new.
14. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

David said to him, "How is it that you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?"

2 Samuel 1:14



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