

Theme: David's response to Saul's death is an example of how we should trust God and respond to others.

I. Intro - Grieving Warriors

- A. In LOTR Aragorn and others grieve and sing after Boromir's death
- B. Struck me as strange - but David was the warrior-poet!
- C. Many of our favorite authors had experienced war - Tolkien, Lewis included
- D. What is David lamenting? What does it teach us?

II. A King's Tragic Death (vv1-16)

- A. The background (review of 1 Samuel)
After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days. 2 Samuel 1:1
 - 1. The story of Saul and David in brief
 - 2. Saul had died in battle, David had defeated Amalekites
 - 3. David and his men do not know what happened in battle between Israel and Philistines
- B. The battle report arrives
On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and with dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor. 2 Samuel 1:2
 - 1. About 80 miles from Gilboa to Ziklag - 3 days travel
 - 2. Man has appearance of mourning - bad report

"Where have you come from?" David asked him. He answered, "I have escaped from the Israelite camp."⁴ "What happened?" David asked. "Tell me." He said, "The men fled from the battle. Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead." 2 Samuel 1:3-4

- 1. Like story of Eli and his house (waiting for word from battle; messenger arrives with torn clothes & dust; disastrous news; sign of a family under judgment (see 1 Samuel 4).
- 2. The appearance is bad; the story is worse!
- 3. The worst news of all - Saul and Jonathan are dead
- 4. The reader already knew all this - but David did not

C. David questions the messenger

Then David said to the young man who brought him the report, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"⁶ "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," the young man said, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and riders almost upon him. 2 Samuel 1:5-6

- 1. David wants to know how he knows this
- 2. The young man "happened" to be there (strong in Hebrew) as Saul was dying

When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, 'What can I do?'⁸ "He asked me, 'Who are you?' "An Amalekite,' I answered. 2 Samuel 1:7-8

- 1. An Amalekite - this is a bad sign
- 2. Saul was supposed to have killed the Amalekites - but did not

3. The Amalekites had destroyed Ziklag and carried off women, children, property
4. They are literally sitting in ruin done by Amalekites!

D. The Amalekite's story - I killed Saul

"Then he said to me, 'Stand over me and kill me! I am in the throes of death, but I'm still alive.'¹⁰ "So I stood over him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord." 2 Samuel 1:9–10

1. The Amalekite claims to have killed Saul
2. Note: This also explains to others how David got the crown and armband - not by killing Saul but from the hands of the raider who took them
3. The reader knows this contradicts 1 Samuel 31 - Saul had killed himself
4. Saul's sin with the Amalekite's has come back to haunt him as an Amalekite picks his dead body for profit. Sin has a way of finding us out!
5. The Amalekite thinks he will be rewarded by David for killing off Saul - who had been trying to kill David

E. The surprising reaction

Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them.¹² They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. 2 Sam 1:11–12

1. David does not rejoice - he weeps and mourns!
2. The reader may well be surprised - the Amalekite certainly was!

3. David does not rejoice at the death of his enemy Saul, but rather mourns this tragic end. Which would I do?

David said to the young man who brought him the report, "Where are you from?" "I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite," he answered.¹⁴ David asked him, "Why were you not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?" 2 Samuel 1:13–14

1. David asks where he was from - did he know what he was doing?
2. He was a resident alien - he knew Israel's laws, and claimed to have killed the Lord's anointed - a capital offense!
3. Why would you destroy God's anointed King? - David could have done this twice, and refused to!
4. Vv15-16 - David has the Amalekite put to death for destroying God's anointed King

F. David's reaction is exemplary - he does not rejoice in Saul's death, but rather defends and grieves over him. His primary concern is not his own good, but the good of the nation. This is the heart of a true leader.

G. What a contrast all of this is with Saul! He looked out for his own good, not that of the nation. He counted David's life as worth nothing - even though David was God's anointed. He certainly would have rejoiced at news of David's death - even if it hurt the nation of Israel.

III. A Lament Worthy of A King

A. David's lament for Saul and Jonathan

David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, ¹⁸ and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar): 2 Samuel 1:17–18

1. David then wrote a lament (elegy/funeral dirge; different than word for lament in Psalms)
2. The lament is for Saul and Jonathan - each mentioned 4 times by name
3. He writes it for the whole tribe of Judah to sing
4. Lament: how the mighty have fallen!
“Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. **How the mighty have fallen!**... ²⁵ “**How the mighty have fallen in battle!** Jonathan lies slain on your heights... ²⁷ “**How the mighty have fallen!** The weapons of war have perished!” 2 Samuel 1:19, 25, 27
 - a. Repeated three times for emphasis
 - b. Beginning of lament, end of lament, start of the stanza for Jonathan
 - c. This is the theme of the lament - weep, for the mighty have fallen!

B. Lament - for the mighty have fallen

1. Saul and Jonathan are the glory of Israel (v19)
 - a. They are the mighty ones (v19, 21,25, 27)
 - b. They were mighty in battle (v22)
 - c. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions (v23)

- d. They were loved and gracious (v23)
- e. They cannot be parted - even in death! (v23)
- f. Saul brought blessings to Israel (v24)
- g. David laments his personal loss of Jonathan - his closest, most faithful friend (v26)
- h. David views the loss of Saul and Jonathan as a terrible tragedy that has befallen the people of God

2. The enemies of God's people will rejoice

“Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice. ²¹ “O mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, nor fields that yield offerings [of grain]. For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul — no longer rubbed with oil. 2 Samuel 1:20–21

- a. The Philistines (Gath and Ashkelon) should not get to rejoice over this
- b. Gilboa (where they fell) should be accursed
- c. Saul's shield is no longer anointed with oil!
 1. Shield can refer to both physical shield and ruler
 2. Saul was the anointed king, but he and his shield will no longer be anointed
 3. This is a tragedy for God's people!

C. A lament worthy of a king

David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, ¹⁸ and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):... ²⁴ "O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold. 2 Sam 1:17–18, 24

1. David does not just lament personally, he led others in lamenting Israel's loss
2. He had this lament written down for future generations to sing!
3. His lament is worthy to sing of a king
4. His lament is worthy of a man who will be king too!
 - a. He shows leadership - he leads others to join in the lament
 - b. He does not just lament Jonathan his closest friend - he laments Saul the king for this will have an even greater effect on Israel
 - c. David shows godly character by not pointing out Saul's sins or taking revenge at the time of Saul's death, but rather honoring the good Saul had done.
 1. Example of the meme at the death of Stephen Hawking - this shows a lack of character
 2. Example of those who excoriated Billy Graham at his death - this too shows a lack of character
 3. The inability to honor the good of those who have gone before displays a profound lack of character in a person, group or family
 - d. The desire for vengeance and revenge leads to heartache and ruin - especially for the one cultivating it within their own soul

5. This display of character is a sign that David is truly ready to be seated on the throne of Israel.
 - a. Character matters in a leader, for it often trickles down to the rest of the people
 - b. Character matters for the pressures of leadership will reveal flaws and create great harm
 - c. Character flaws destroyed Saul and disqualified him as king, while character strengths paved the way for David to reign as Israel's greatest king.

IV. Applying the Word

A. How is my character?

1. This is a key test of David's character & leadership
2. His reaction to Saul's death displays great character
3. David had spent years under persecution - how would he respond when the persecutor died?
4. How do I respond to those who say and do harmful things to me?
5. Does mercy triumph over judgment in my words and actions - or does vengeance rule my thoughts and actions?
6. Am I able to honor the good others do - or do I reject anyone who has done evil?
7. Do I trust God enough to let Him handle others - or do I take vengeance into my own mouth and hands?
8. Look to God - He is a just ruler of the universe and can be trusted implicitly!

B. Closing prayer

A Lament Worthy of A King

2 Samuel 1 (2 Samuel 1:17-27)

June 10, 2018

Prayer

Acts 20:32

Teaching keywords: biblical characters; character; grieving; leadership

May Christ be your shield today: Christ before you; Christ behind you; Christ beneath you; Christ above you; Christ on your right; Christ on your left; May Christ be with you, Christ be in you alone and in multitude, near and afar; for all you face and for all your life, that you may live in the protection and power of his blessing. Go forth - blessed to be a blessing to all you encounter.

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²¹“O mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, nor fields that yield offerings [of grain]. For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul — no longer rubbed with oil. ²² From the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back, the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied. ²³ “Saul and Jonathan — in life they were loved and gracious, and in death they were not parted. They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. ²⁴ “O daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold. ²⁵ “How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. ²⁶ I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women. ²⁷ “How the mighty have fallen! The weapons of war have perished!” 2 Sam 1:17–27