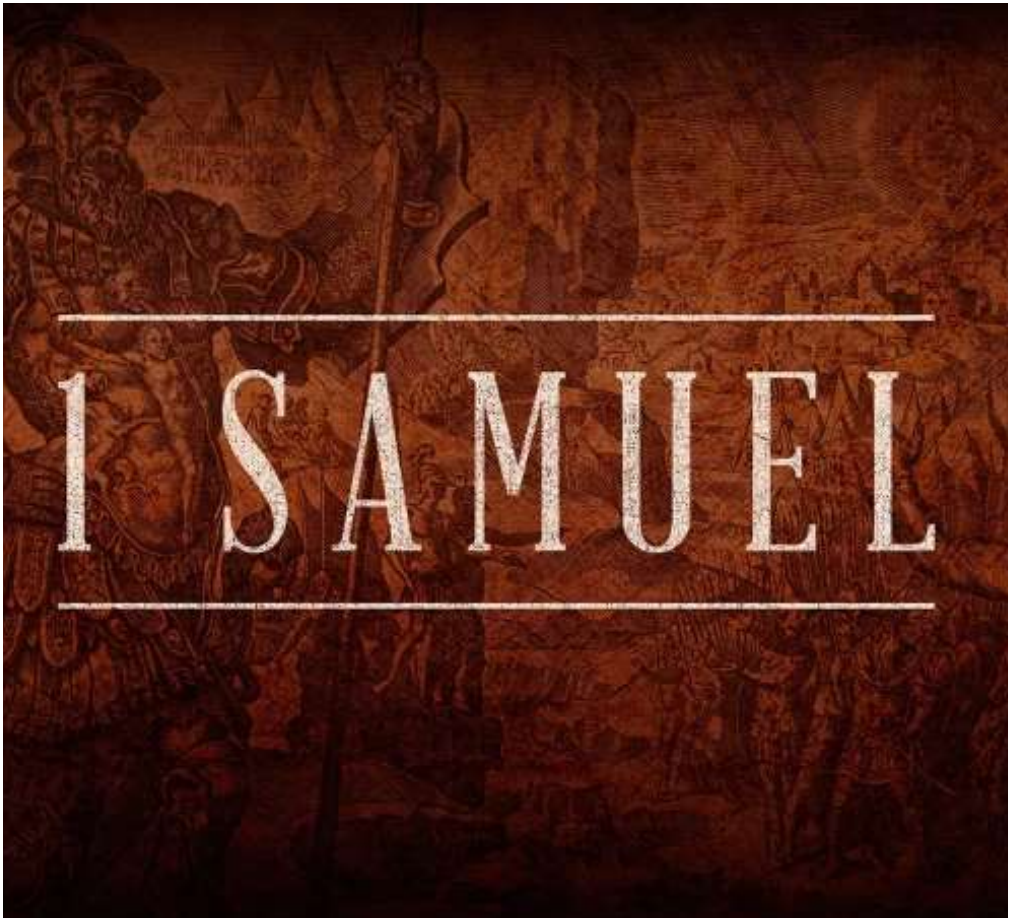


Let's Worship God

23rd-28th August 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 18 - After the Giant-Killing

There's a danger that our familiarity with the story of David blinds us to its shocking twists and turns. We know that David quickly becomes a hero after killing Goliath, but almost as quickly becomes Public Enemy Number 1 in Saul's eyes, spending up to 10 years on the run. Ten years hunted, harried, hounded, and hiding as an outlaw. Just pause - is that what you'd expect from a national hero? He toppled a giant and tanked the Philistine army. He is welcomed as a war hero. He is the court favourite, and good-looking too. On top of it all, he's the King's favourite music artist. He is an All-Star hero flying high in the aftermath of one of the most astounding victories ever. Where does it all go wrong?

It all begins to go downhill right after the victory, on the way home. It goes downhill *because* of the victory and its aftermath - it happens after the giant-killing.

Remember David is not just a person like us; he holds a special role as the anointed king of God's people. He is the LORD's messiah, or christ. So he stands as a signpost to and shadow of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. His life experience is like a scale model of the real deal, pointing to a true and better king.

When we look at this chapter from this angle it immediately becomes relevant to us. We too live in the aftermath of the great victory of God's King. Jesus has killed the giants of Sin, Satan and Death, rescuing God's people from ruin and slavery. We live after the giant-killing. David has won his victory, but his kingdom is not yet fully established. Jesus too has won his victory but his kingdom is not yet fully and finally established, and won't be until he comes again. In this chapter we see what life is like after the victory of God's king, that is, our time and place.

Questions

1. When did Jesus win his victory, and when will his kingdom be fully and finally established?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to equip you this week to live 'after the giant-killing'
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.

1 Samuel 18:14

Praise: Psalm 18:1, 25-28 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 18 - David: the Successful Messiah

We're told of three incidents after the giant-killing: Jonathan and David's developing friendship (verses 1-5); David's praise by the people and Saul's jealousy (verses 6-16); David marrying Saul's daughter (verses 17-30). Each incident closes by noting David's success - verse 5, verses 14-15, and verse 30. It's like everything David touches turns to gold. Goliath clearly was no fluke, David being successful in all his undertakings, surpassing everyone else. And he's loved for it. We're told 6 times: Saul's son loved him (verses 1 and 3); Saul's daughter Michal loved him (verse 20 and 28); Saul's servants loved him (verse 22); and Saul's subjects loved him (verse 16). He is winning the hearts of Saul's son, daughter, servants, and subjects.

He's winning battles and winning hearts because the LORD was with him (verse 14). Samuel anointed him with oil, and God anointed him with the Holy Spirit. It is the empowering and equipping of the Holy Spirit that brings success for God's king.

All this talk of success and prospering echoes Deuteronomy 29:9: "Therefore keep the words of this covenant and do them, that you may prosper in all that you do." Keepers of the Law will be prospered by God. The Law is not just the Ten Commandments, but the sacrificial ritual too. Those who kept the Covenant were those who offered faith-filled repentance and loving obedience. Here is an insight into David's heart - he loves God and his Law. Therefore God blesses him. After the giant-killing David is a success and a sensation. He receives plaudits, praises and popularity. God is with him and success follows him.

Do you too want to be successful in all you do? Here is the secret - keep God's Law. That doesn't simply mean keeping commandments. God's Law required the people to walk in faith that their sins were covered by sacrifice. We must walk by faith in Christ and in obedience to Christ.

Questions

1. Why was "keeping the covenant" not simply a matter of obeying commandments?

Prayer Points

1. Ask for God to be with you, as he was with David, granting you success.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.

1 Samuel 18:14

Praise: Psalm 1 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 18 - Christ: the Successful Messiah

When we see David as a scale model of Christ - a miniature with some incredible detail, but not the reality - we open up new windows for viewing Christ and his work.

Like David, and even more than David, Jesus is wonderfully successful. His heart was true to God's covenant, walking in faith and obedience. God was with him, his Holy Spirit being given him especially for ministry. He was wonderfully successful in his mission of coming to redeem his chosen people by his blood. He gathered them, saved them, and sent them out. Satan could not tempt him into spoiling his obedience, nor distract him from his purpose.

He still is wonderfully successful, like David, only more so. He wins battles and wins hearts. His people have been victorious in battle for 2000 years, winning the spiritual battle that rages all around them. They overcome sin and temptation. They overcome fears and doubts. They make it safely across the river of Death to their homeland. Not one is ever snatched from his hand. He wins hearts too, subduing even his enemies to his service. Those who hate him are brought to love him. Those who rebelled against him are brought to revel in him. Jesus has "success in all his undertakings".

What are you aiming to do for him? It might be daunting. It might feel like it is slipping away from you. Know that he is wonderfully successful in all he does. He brings to pass exactly what he wants, and he is doing that, and will do that in your efforts. As you look out on the stubborn mass of mankind, do not fear. There is no one better placed, or better equipped, to win them to himself. He doesn't rely on your window-dressing. This relieves us of enormous pressure. We, of course, want to present him as winsomely as possible, but you're not putting lipstick on a pig. When he opens people's eyes they can't not come to him! He's that successful.

Questions

1. How was Jesus successful in the past?
2. How is Jesus successful now?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for eyes of faith to see how winsome and winning he is.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.

1 Samuel 18:14

Praise: Psalm 45:1-5 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 18 - Saul: Hating the Messiah

I think Saul is immediately suspicious of David. At the end of chapter 17, three times he asks whose son David is. Saul knew that God has given the kingdom to "one better than him", and probably knew Samuel went to Bethlehem with his anointing flask. David's family, at least, knew what had happened, if not more people from Bethlehem. It's easy to imagine word travelling fast. Saul's questions are ominous. There's another hint in verse 2, when in the middle of an otherwise positive section we're told that "Saul took David". This is not a positive term. It makes me think of the old saying - Saul is keeping his friends close and his enemies closer. Saul is angry and afraid.

Saul is angry because David is exalted above him. As David travels home, the triumphant general at the head of his army, the spoils of war following, crowds line the road clapping, cheering and singing - verses 7-8. The pop hit is not a hit with Saul. Saul is angry that David is getting more glory. Saul is not number one and is disgruntled about not being top dog.

Saul is afraid too. By verse 8-9 Saul seems to have added up two and two about David's identity. In verse 12 we're told that Saul feared him because David had what he lacked - God's empowering presence. In verse 15 he realises he cannot stand before this political and military juggernaut, David. Saul won't really be king while David lives. Saul is angry and afraid because he hates God's Messiah.

Many react like Saul: they hate the Messiah, Jesus. They are angry because he takes the glory that sinful hearts want for themselves. We want to be number one and take credit for our achievements. Faith requires bowing the knee and acknowledging he is number one. Many are afraid because he threatens their rule over their own lives. We want to do things our way, and cling to our power and control. Learn from Saul - it leads only to destruction.

Questions

1. Are you hating the Messiah because he takes the glory you want for yourself?
2. Are you hating the Messiah because he threatens your rule over your own life?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to show where you are failing to acknowledge Jesus' glory or rule.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.

1 Samuel 18:14

Praise: Psalm 2:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 18 - Murdering the Messiah

Maybe you're tired reading the same passage every day. Persevere; the chapter doesn't really make sense in chunks, just as a whole. Saul's anger and fear bubble into murderous rage, directly in verses 10-11 and indirectly in verses 17-30.

Saul tries to murder David directly by throwing a spear at him while he plays (verses 10-11). In one sense it is "the spirit of harm". In another sense the spirit is just using what is in Saul's heart - he is thinking straight and the act is wilful: "I will pin David to the wall." Perhaps David excused it on grounds of Saul's bouts of madness. Saul then tries to murder David indirectly. David is owed his daughter's hand in marriage for defeating Goliath (17:25), but Saul changes the terms of the agreement. Now he must "continue to fight valiantly" (verse 17). Saul's hope is that he will be killed. But David is too humble to take the offer.

Saul has another opportunity - his daughter Michal loves David. After some subtle pressure from courtiers David is interested, but can't afford the dowry. A large dowry is needed to honour the daughter. It's a little like a restaurant where you pay what you think the meal is worth. Saul sets the strange bride-price of 100 Philistine foreskins. This might seem strange but was possibly common practice. Often heads and hands were cut off to keep tally. On the surface Saul is saying, "I'm willing to accept a poor but valiant suitor." But his plan is revealed in verse 25. So imagine Saul's joy when David survives and presents him with 100 Philistine foreskins!

All of Saul's schemes backfire. He gives David a wife who will protect him in chapter 19, and he makes David a serious contender to be his successor by bringing him into his family by marriage. Saul's fears multiply - verse 29. A plan to murder the messiah that fails and simply deepens the wicked one's predicament? Sound familiar?

Questions

1. Where do we even more clearly see murderous plots against the Messiah fail with spectacular backfiring?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for a Saviour who had his hand strengthened by murderous plots and intentions. Pray that God would likewise use Satan's plots against you to strengthen you.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.

1 Samuel 18:14

Praise: Psalm 57:5-7 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

I SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 18 - Saul or Jonathan?

How do you react to the success of God's Messiah, Jesus - like Saul or Jonathan? Saul hated the messiah. He was angry because he wanted glory for himself, and he was afraid because the messiah's rule threatened his own rule of his life. This is the way of destruction.

Jonathan, on the other hand, though he is next in line and heir to the throne, sees God's chosen king in David and submits to him. In verse 4 Jonathan gives David the weapons of the heir and the clothes of the crown prince - he is acknowledging David as the next king and giving up his pretended rights as king. Jonathan couldn't have held on to his rights to the crown. David will be like a Spirit-driven juggernaut all the way to the throne. But Jonathan is no mere political pragmatist who sees the way the wind is blowing. He loves God's king and gives up all to him.

So will you be like Jonathan or Saul? Will you cling to your own rule, gripped by fear because you think you have to sort it all out and you're failing to? Will you hold on to hurts because what someone did meant you're not number one, or because it highlighted your own failings? Are you angry that God has asked you to do or endure something hard for him, giving you a difficult path to walk, for his glory, not your own?

Jonathan had to die to his own dreams, submit to one greater than himself and place himself in his hands. Here is selfless submission. This is the call to us all in the aftermath of Jesus' giant-killing: selfless submission, sacrificial service, painful giving up of our own goals, desires and hurts. We must entrust all to God's successful Messiah. Ultimately, it is an investment for our own good. We see this later in the story where Jonathan's family are preserved when David, in his love, provides for Jonathan's disabled son after his death. Submitting to the Messiah may be hard and costly, but it is ultimately for our good.

Questions

1. Where are you - like Saul, clinging to your own rule, or holding on to hurts because someone trod on our toes, or angry because of the difficult path set before you?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for a heart like Jonathan - loving the Messiah King, even at a cost.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

And David had success in all his undertakings, for the Lord was with him.

1 Samuel 18:14

Praise: Psalm 116:6-9 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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