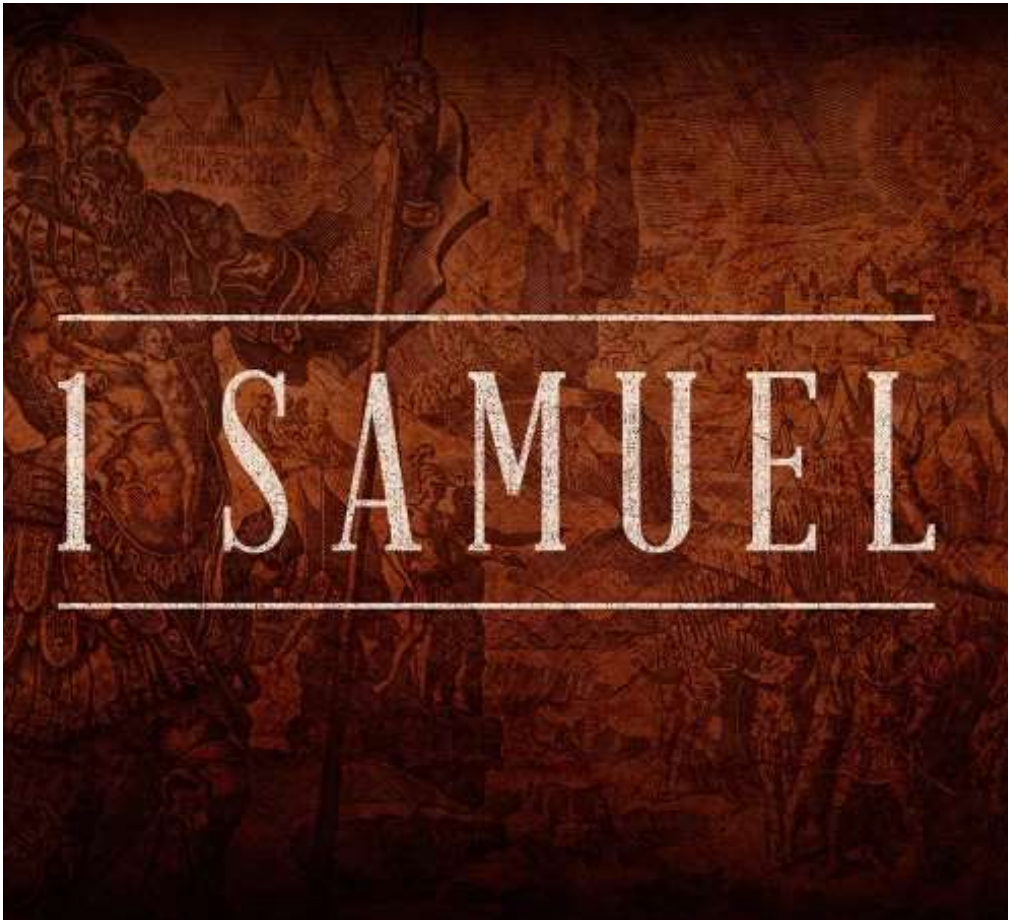


Let's Worship God

14th-19th September 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 21:1-22:5 - Airbrushed Heroes

Some Christians are intimidating. Not because they are unfriendly or mean, but because they are so good, or seem so good to us. Perhaps you look at other Christians and they seem to know so much, always knowing what to say, always able to pray confidently and never losing their temper. You look at your own struggles, doubts, and temptations and think, "I'm sure So and So would never think, say or do that." Probably all of us look at someone else and think, "They're a far better Christian than me." If that person only knew the esteem in which we held them they would quickly put us right and acknowledge the same thoughts, struggles, and sins. We have airbrushed their picture, like models have their spots, wrinkles, and cellulite removed, and compared them to us at our worst. There's a danger we do this also with Bible characters. We can look at them as models of faith and conduct, but miss their folly and faltering faith.

David is one of the great Bible-heroes. He is a model of giant-crushing faith and heart-stirring passion (in his Psalms). He is victorious in battle and righteous in rule. He is "a man after God's own heart" (13:14). So far, the picture of David has been unrelentingly positive. He has zeal for God's honour and courage to face the Philistine champion. He is loved by Saul's people, Saul's court, and Saul's family. He has won battle after battle, and pop-songs have been written about him. He plays well, sings well, looks well, fights well. He probably even smells good too - he seems to have it all! Here is a giant of the faith to model ourselves on. The problem with giants is that they make us feel very small.

This week's chapter is a comfort to non-giants like you and me. David is a man under pressure. His faith falters, his decisions are, at best, strange and, at worst, wrong. His conduct is far from blameless and will have huge consequences for others. Sound familiar?

Questions

1. Why do we so often only see an airbrushed picture of other people?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that this week God would show us his grace towards foolish and faltering saints like us.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9

Praise: Psalm 34:1-5 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 21:1-9 - Falsehood

David flees from the field with Jonathan to Nob, about 8 miles from Saul's court. The Tabernacle and Priests had relocated here after the destruction of Shiloh (chapter 4). David is alone, without his trusted lieutenants, apart from perhaps a few servants (See Matthew 12:3). David is on the run, constantly looking over his shoulder. He meets with Ahimelech, the great-grandson of Eli and the High Priest. Ahimelech's brother is part of the royal court (14:3), and David doesn't know if he can trust Ahimelech. Ahimelech, for his part, knows that something is up - he is trembling (verse 1). This scene is tense - both men are nervous. David seems to tell bare faced lies (verse 2 and verse 8).

What do we make of this? Some think David is deliberately vague, using double entendre - he is on God "the King's mission". Some think he is telling the truth, referring to God as king. Others think he is trying to protect Ahimelech from Saul's reprisals. Is he just telling a plain old pants-burning 'porkey pie' lie? Or are we not to think anything of it, since the passage makes no judgement? What do we make of this?

The Bible does not give an explicit moral judgement on every action performed in its story. Silence does not endorse ambiguity - we can't simply say, "We can make no judgement since Scripture makes no judgement." Neither does inclusion mean approval. Even if he is being deliberately vague, he is still intending to deceive. If he is trying to protect Ahimelech, he fails miserably (chapter 22). He may be speaking the truth, but it doesn't fit the overall direction of the story, as we will see. I think it's just a big fat lie. David the liar!

The whole tale he spins is flimsy. He is on a mission, but the mission is so hasty he has no weapon and needs to borrow one! One writer says, "Imagine your plumber asking to borrow your pipe-wrench, or your window cleaner asking to borrow your buckets!" Here is a man in a cauldron of fear, lying to protect himself, lying to get by, lying to get bread. The "man after God's own heart" is lying like a child.

Questions

1. Even if we do not excuse David's lie, what leads him into it?
2. Has intense pressure ever led you into sin like this?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that, by God's grace, liars can still be men or women after God's own heart.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9

Praise: Psalm 34:6-10 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 21:10-15 - Folly

By deceit and deception the fugitive David has got a sword - Goliath's sword. It is unique and instantly recognisable - "there is none like it" (verse 9). And, of all places, where does he flee? Gath, Goliath's home town. It seems like sheer folly. Did he expect to get asylum among Saul's enemies, since he was himself now an enemy? There certainly was no place for him now among God's people. He is exiled from the Promised Land. It shows his sheer desperation. One author notes, "When Achish of Gath is my best hope, then I'm in trouble."

Unsurprisingly, he is recognised as an Israelite hero. He seems to be arrested: the phrase "in their hands" and the wording of the title of Psalm 56 seem to suggest this. Filled with fear (verse 12), he acts like a mad man to escape. Picture him scratching the walls like a caged animal and drooling like a rabid wild beast. It was local superstition, or social etiquette, that you didn't harm the insane, so David is let loose. Not before drawing a tremendous response from Achish though (verse 14). Looking at the situation overall, we see David deceiving again, and disgracing himself before Gentiles and the enemies of God's people. This is not David's finest moment.

I think here we see a godly man under intense pressure and facing an unprecedented trial in his life. His faith is faltering. He is relying on deception, rather than his Deity. He is relying on his guile, rather than his God. He is resorting to human wisdom and human ways. This chapter shows us falsehood, folly, and faltering faith. The outcome will not be pretty: in verse 7 the camera lingers on Doeg the Edomite, Saul's chief herdsman, at Nob. In chapter 22 Doeg will tout on David and Ahimelech and around 200 people will be slaughtered at Nob by Saul.

Sometimes even heroes like David make serious mistakes that have serious consequences. Isn't that comforting? Even the faith of the best can falter when the heat is on. God does not expect perfection from us here and now. He expects repentance and faith. He expects progress, not perfection. We are not saved by our perfection, but by God's grace and Christ's perfection.

Questions

1. Where are you tempted to resort to human wisdom and human ways?

Prayer Points

1. Deliver us from temptation to resort to human wisdom and human ways.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9

Praise: Psalm 34:11-14 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 21:1-9 - Quiet, Gracious Provision

There is encouragement for us in Nob and Gath. We see David as a sinner just like us. This giant of the faith has faltering faith like we do. Yet, see how God treats him, despite his folly, falsehood, and faltering faith.

Despite his folly, falsehood, and faltering faith at Nob, God quietly provides for David. David is empty-handed and will soon be empty-bellied. Under pressure and on the run, he needs his daily bread. Where will it come from? As one author says, "Ahimelech's holy bread became David's daily bread."

Was it right for David to take the holy bread, which was lawful only for the priests? Jesus was asked this question. Three different Gospels each take a different angle, so there are many things we could say. But perhaps for the most straightforward answer look at Micah 6:6-8, which Jesus quotes in Matthew 12:7, "I desire mercy and not sacrifice." Jesus is saying that for the ceremonial law, like that regarding the holy bread, the spirit of the law is greater than the letter of the law.

Did David deserve this bread? Clearly, no! But none of us deserve any of God's provision. It is all of grace, and always of grace. How many times have you been under pressure with family troubles, financial difficulties, or pressure at work, and yet sat down to eat at least once? That is God quietly at work, providing, strengthening, and sustaining. God's blessings come to us despite our folly, our falsehood, and our faltering faith. They come quietly, unobtrusively, and unassumingly. We receive grace upon grace, day upon day.

And, of course, the Cross is the ultimate gracious provision. It secures all his other gracious provision for us. It assures us of all other provision. Romans 8:32, "He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

Questions

1. Where have you seen God's quiet and unobtrusive provision?
2. Why does the Cross assure us of all other provision?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for daily bread, and much more besides.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9

Praise: Psalm 56:1-5 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 21:10-15 - Folly, Falsehood, & Faltering Faith Redeemed

Not only does God quietly and graciously provide for us, despite our falsehoods, folly, and faltering faith, he also redeems our failures. We sang Psalm 56 yesterday. The title of that Psalm tells us that it was written by David at this time. As David reflects on his Gath experience afterwards, where he was "much afraid" (21:12), he is able to write: "When I am afraid, I put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?" (Psalm 56:3-4).

Here are the fruits of bitter experience - God taught David vital lessons through this time. As one writer remarks, "David's folly is the stuff psalms are made of." David looked back and said, "Next time I won't fear. Next time I will trust. Next time I will listen to his Word." He has learned vital lessons through his folly, falsehood, and faltering faith.

Friends, this is our certain hope: God redeems our moments of folly, falsehood, and faltering faith. The times we fail, like David, are inexcusable and wrong. But God works all things for good. God brings blessing out of our sin. There may be many moments in life that we regret, but God will redeem them. Bring them to him in repentance and faith.

Does this sound too good to be true? Look all through the Bible - it is everywhere, from Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery to Paul's persecution of the church. But really, you need look no further than the cross. There is the ultimate act of folly, falsehood, and unbelief, but God redeems these things to bring about the greatest good. Peter's denial, Judas' betrayal, the disciples running away, the miscarriage of Jewish justice, the indifference of the Roman government, the torture and execution of the only truly innocent man - all acts of sin. All redeemed by God to work for good, the greatest good.

Questions

1. Where have you seen God redeem situations brought about by your own folly or unbelief?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for God's working of all things, even our sin, for our good. Ask for forgiveness for any current acts of folly and ask God to redeem them.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9

Praise: Psalm 56:6-9 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

I SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 22:1-5 - Blessing and Growth

Having escaped from Gath David takes refuge in the cave of Adullam. Here men begin to gather to him. These are men who will protect, guard, and support him. They are men in difficult circumstances (verse 2) who will be blessed by him. Later on we read of lists of David's Mighty Men, Israel's heroes and champions. I wonder was this the beginning of them; were these the good old days in which deep bonds were forged and of which fireside tales were told. Certainly here God is putting in place the beginnings of a kingdom, or 'an administration', as we would say today.

His family come to him here. His father, who wouldn't even invite him to a feast, and his brothers who mocked him before Goliath. Now they seek shelter from him, and he can provide it. In leaving his parents in Moab, he reveals a growing commitment to God's plan and ways. They were not safe in God's land, so he sent them to the land of his great-grandmother Ruth. They will stay there until God makes his will clear to him. David is now waiting in faith, rather than running in fear.

In obeying the prophet Gad's instructions (verse 5) David sets himself apart from Saul. Saul was rejected because he disobeyed the prophet, or, rather, disobeyed God speaking through his prophet. Here is David, "one better than [Saul]" (15:28).

Yes, there has been folly, falsehood, and faltering faith, but there is a faith that is growing, and, as a result, an obedience that is growing. God is not looking for perfection in his people this side of glory, but he is looking for progress. The Christian life is like a plant. It starts small like a seed, it grows slowly, but it grows big, until one day it is a big strong tree bearing fruit. How do you tell the difference between a dead and a living plant? By green shoots, growth, and fruit. So it is with the Christian. There may be folly, falsehood, and faltering faith; but is there also growing faith and growing obedience?

Questions

1. Can you look back over the last year and see any areas of growth in your Christian life?

Prayer Points

1. Ask for God to show you the areas of growing faith and obedience in your life.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Corinthians 12:9

Praise: Psalm 61 - 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!**

Let's Worship God is produced
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