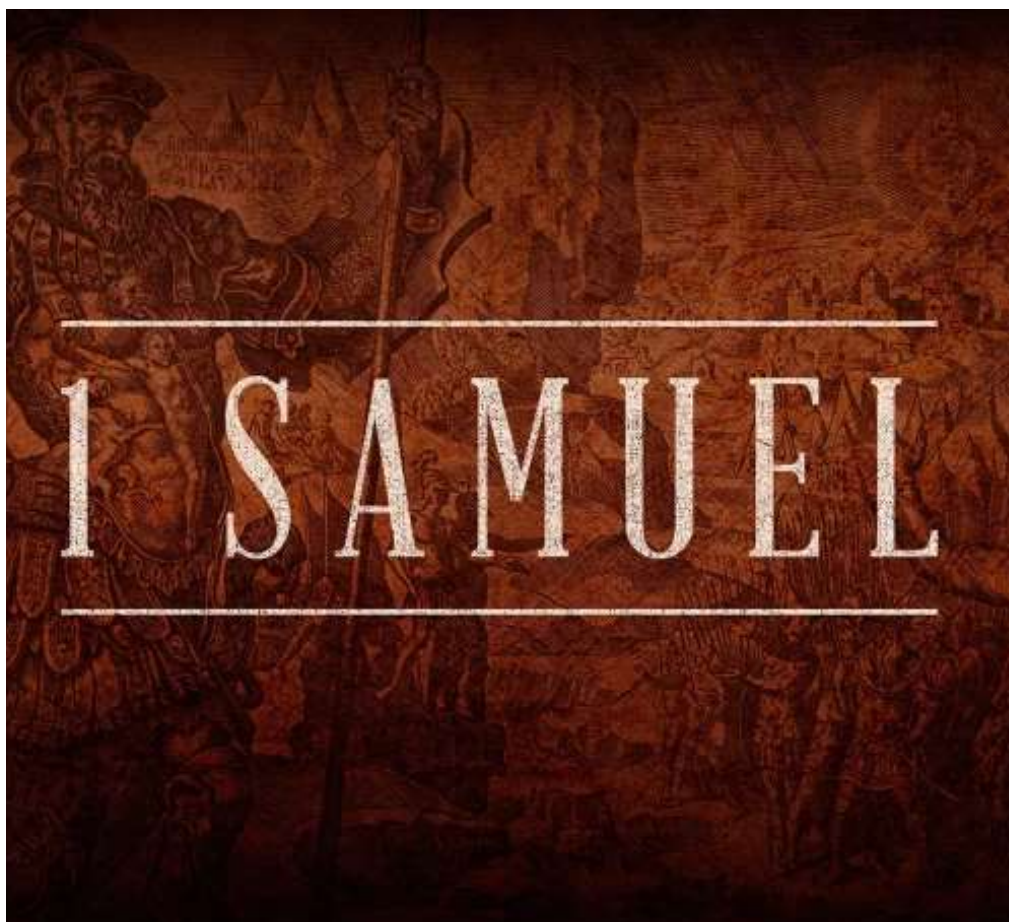


Let's Worship God

9th-14th November 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 29-30 - The Rise of a King

This is a long reading today, but it is worth it. I'll keep the devotion short to compensate. We are at the climax of 1 Samuel. I love endings; whether it is a TV series, book, or football season - I can't wait for the end; for me it is all about the climax. I love the drama, rising tension, and resolution of a story. The end of 1 Samuel has drama, rising tension, and the story is coming to a resolution.

The story has all been about the rise of a king (2:10). God promised to bless his people with a good ruler. Saul, the people's choice as that ruler, was a tragic failure, sinking into sin rather than rising to power. David, God's choice as king, has been raised up. He made a great start, full of faith in God and fighting for God. However, he ran into unexpected troubles, finding himself a fugitive. We left him languishing in the country of the Philistines at the end of chapter 27; an act of folly driven by God-less thinking. His rise seems to have stalled; how will God raise him to the kingship?

The answer is: by God's grace. In these closing chapters we have a study of contrasts - David and Saul. We see David rising and Saul falling. Both are sinners with blood on their hands, both giving way to faithlessness and fear. But we see Saul looking less and less like a king and David looking more and more the part. We see Saul lying on the ground after a séance, but David sharing the spoils of victory. One writer notes: "David is ready to be the next king and Saul is ready for removal." Behold the difference God's grace makes.

Questions

1. What contrasts do you see between David and Saul in these two chapters?
2. What similarities are there between the two men?
3. What is it that makes the difference between them?

Prayer Points

1. "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me."
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:7-8

Praise: Psalm 103:7-11 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 29 - God's Response to our Corruption

Last time we saw David he was languishing in the country of the Philistines. He had disappeared there, dwelt there, deceived there (shedding much blood in the process), and ended up in a dilemma there. The Hebrew Regiment of the Philistine Army was about to march out against the Hebrews! David is in the wrong; his own sin - the corruption of his nature - having got him into this mess. The one meant to lead Israel out to battle was now about to face Israel in battle! How can he get out of this? The answer is in chapter 29. It is another God-less chapter - the pagan Philistine King Achish is the only person who mentions the LORD. There is nothing positive about the portrait of David in this chapter. Yet, God's gracious fingerprints are all over it.

The Philistines muster on their way north to fight Israel, with David in tow. At the meeting of military bigwigs in verse 3 questions are asked about David's loyalty, and Achish defends his mercenary servant. However, the Philistine commanders insist that David cannot fight, lest he prove himself a double agent, or cannot resist the opportunity to ingratiate himself with the Israelites again by lopping off a few Philistine heads. The Israelite pop song still rings in their ears (verse 5). Achish is apologetic (verse 6); he does not question David's loyalty (verse 9), but orders are orders. All of a sudden, without doing anything, David's dilemma is resolved (verse 11)!

Here is God's response to David's sin. His hand has been at work, engineering a deliverance for his servant. It is grace. It's emphasised by the bizarreness of the whole situation: David never mentions God; yet pagan Achish swears by the God of Israel (verse 6); three times David's innocence is emphasised, wrongly (see 27:81-12)! God responds to David's sin with a gracious intervention. This is all that distinguishes David from Saul. God treats Saul as he deserves, David is treated as he does not deserve, simply because God has set his love on him. This is all that distinguishes us from anyone else: God treats us as we do not deserve, and simply because he has set his love on us - grace.

Questions

1. Does it trouble you that David seems anything but heroic in chapters 27 and 29?
2. Why should it encourage us?

Prayer Points

1. "God, be merciful to me, a sinner."
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:7-8

Praise: Psalm 130A - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday - 1 Samuel 30:1-10 - Our Response to Our Crises

As always, God's intervention in chapter 29 was timely. David returns to his Philistine home, Ziklag, just after an attack by Amalekite raiders. These longstanding thorns in Israel's flesh should have been rooted out permanently by Saul, but he had failed (chapter 29). It is a terrible crisis for David - suffering financial loss and, worse, family loss (verse 3). It hits him hard and deep; he weeps until he has no more strength left, not even enough strength to weep. There is even talk about stoning David. He is out of the frying pan and into the fire.

However, David, by God's grace, goes from strength to strength. First, he strengthens himself in the LORD his God (verse 6). This is an echo of Jonathan's visit in 23:16-17, where his friend strengthened him in God by reminding him of God's promise. Second, he seeks God, asking for the ephod (one of the ways God revealed his will). What a contrast to Saul who sought God through a medium! David is looking more and more like a king.

What is your response in a crisis like David's? Have you suffered economic loss like him - your job threatened by lockdown, or savings wiped out by emergencies? Have you suffered family loss like him, a bereavement or a lockdown-enforced separation? Is your safety and security at risk like his - your life in danger? Perhaps not from raiding Amalekite hordes, but maybe through hordes of cancer cells or viruses invading your body. In a crisis do you panic, plan, withdraw, despair, or ignore?

David is a model to us. First, we are to strengthen ourselves in God, resorting to him by his Word and by prayer. Second, we are to seek his will, submitting ourselves, our family, and our plans to him. Too often my response is to plan my way out of a crisis, not pray. Yet, in times when there is no longer even enough strength to weep, there is always enough strength in God. So seek him and submit to him.

Questions

1. What does it look like to strengthen yourself in God?
2. What do you do first in a crisis - plan or pray?

Prayer Points

1. "When my heart is overwhelmed, lead me to the rock that is higher than I."
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:7-8

Praise: Psalm 61A - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 30:1-10 - The King's Response to Our Captivity (Part 1)

David's response to this crisis becomes more regal by the minute - here is the king in action. As he strengthens himself in God and seeks his will (verses 7-8) David is acting as a leader (king), not just for himself. It is these two actions - strengthening himself in God and seeking his will - that enables him to rise up and deliver his people from the Amalekites.

Yet, even as we see David's response, we look past him, or through him, to our Lord Jesus. From him too, as he prays in a garden, we hear loud and distressed cries from one who would be King of God's people. He is under the threat of death from his own people (like David in verse 6). He too strengthens himself in God - seeking God's face and being strengthened by the angel God sent (Luke 22:43). Like his ancestor David, he too seeks God's guidance: "If you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22:42). In other words, "If there is another way, show me, make it possible; yet guide me into your will." Here is the King in a crisis, seeking God's face in prayer, and seeking to rescue God's people according to God's will.

Here then is the first part of the King's response to our captivity. Seeing his loved ones in trouble, in danger of death, he seeks to rescue them according to God's will. Here is Jesus Christ's instinctive response to the crises we, his loved ones, face. He saw our captivity to sin, and he set himself to rescue us according to God's Will, even though that Will required great suffering for him. This was his response to the crisis of our captivity to sin. So will he not much more then instinctively respond in saving love to all our crises?

Questions

1. What causes the Lord Jesus to respond like this to our captivity and crises?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for a Saviour moved by love to rescue us from captivity to sin and all other crises we face.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:7-8

Praise: Psalm 25:12-17 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 30:11-31 - The King's Response to Our Captivity (Part 2)

David's loved ones are captives; he and his men set off in pursuit. Presumably a plunder-filled raiding party of more than 400 men leave something of a trail, yet David has no idea who, how many, or where he is pursuing them to - this is a blind pursuit. Yet again though, God provides for David, this time providing a discarded Egyptian slave (verse 11) who can inform them and lead them down to the Amalekites (verse 16).

See the king in action here. First, he routs the enemy (verse 17) to such an extent that the Amalekites are not seen troubling Israel again until Hezekiah's time, 300 years later (1 Chronicles 4:43). Second, he rescues the helpless (verses 18-19). The men, women, and children who have been taken as slaves are set free. Third, he blesses the exhausted (verses 21-25). Some men who were too exhausted to pursue had been left behind to guard the luggage. The rabble among David's posse (they weren't all honourable heroes) do not want to share the additional spoils. David, however, is warm and measured in his response. He declares that the victory is from God, not from the 400 pursuers; and with a little gentle mocking (verse 24) he authoritatively rules on the matter. His concern is that those who were exhausted should be blessed and joyful too. Fourthly, he gives out gifts to God's people (verses 26-30). Here is God's king blessing God's people, fulfilling God's promise to bring peace and prosperity through his king. See God's king in action; see his response to captivity and distress.

The main lessons are in looking through David to Jesus, which we will do tomorrow. In the meantime chew this over: David's response to the complaints of the rabble is determined by God's grace to him and them. The spoils are "what the LORD has given us" (verse 23). Does your sense of God's undeserved kindness to you determine how you respond to disgruntled complainers?

Questions

1. Does your sense of God's undeserved kindness to you determine how you respond to disgruntled complainers?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for a keen awareness of God's grace to yourself, so that it determines your response to other unworthy people.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:7-8

Praise: Psalm 72:1-3, 8-10 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 30:11-31 - The King's Response to Our Captivity (Part 3)

David, the king whom God raised up to bless his people, points us to Jesus, the ultimate King raised up to bless us. Think of how David foreshadows him by his actions.

First, by his rout of the enemy David foreshadows Jesus' rout of all his and our enemies. The dark powers at work in this world, blinding, deceiving, destroying, and enslaving people have been routed at the Cross. Even death has been routed and made his servant.

Second, Jesus rescues captives like David did. His people were slaves to sin, bound to serve sin, and bound to receive sin's wages - death. But we are set free, no longer having to sin, free to obey God.

Third, he blesses the exhausted. Many of us are mentally, spiritually, emotionally, and physically fatigued. The "good fight" has been exhausting at every level. Perhaps the pressures of lockdown have been too much for you. See in David's concern for the exhausted an echo of his greater Son, Jesus. Hear Jesus say, "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). It is not unspiritual to be weary, especially from doing good. And it is not unnoticed by Christ, the blesser of the exhausted.

Fourth, he gives out gifts. Ephesians 4:7-8 tells us that the victorious King Jesus gives out gifts. He gives gifts to all mankind - sunshine, rain, harvests, and beauty to enjoy. He gives gifts to each one of his people to enable them to serve him (1 Corinthians 12). He gives the greatest gift of all - himself to all who repent and believe. Our greatest blessing is knowing him; he is the Gospel.

Picture the scene in the Amalekite camp that morning. You are a captive slave from Ziklag, chained and looking ahead to a lifetime of brutal slavery. The victors are revelling and probably abusing some of their captives. Then your king appears on the top of the hill and comes sweeping down to set you free. That is you, spiritually. You were captive to sin, and King Jesus comes, routs the enemy and gives freedom, true freedom to know and serve him. Take it; celebrate it; live in freedom.

Questions

1. How can death be considered Jesus' servant?
2. What gift has King Jesus given you to enable you to serve him?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God to show you the spiritual gifts he has given you to serve him with, and pray for grace to serve him with them.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." Ephesians 4:7-8

Praise: Psalm 69 - 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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