

The Life of David

Long Live the King

Study 3 | 1 Samuel 18:6-16

News and Needs

Upcoming Events:

- Ministry Leaders' Meeting: *April 22, 7:30 @ office, read Chapter 6.*
- Potluck and Congregational Meeting: *April 25th at John Jay after the service. Please plan ahead with your groups who is bringing food to share with our sister congregations who will be joining us. We're hosting!*

"Envy the King"

1. What are the many ways in which David is having success? Why is God favoring him? How does David respond to this success and favor?

Think about all we've seen so far in just the two previous chapters. First, David has been chosen behind doors as God's replacement for a rejected Saul. Then Saul comes to depend on the musical services of David just to soothe him in his tormented frame of mind. Then Saul is reticent to fight the giant Philistine and little David goes out to strike the giant dead--in front of the whole Israelite army. Furthermore, Saul's own son has cast his covenant loyalty on the side of David, his father's 'rival.' And David is having success after success in his military campaigns. God is showing all this favor to David to emphasize his own sovereignty. This favor on a lowly, obscure boy highlights the uniqueness and right of God to make his own choice, to determine those he decides to use and to bless. The text has also said earlier that God did this to emphasize that he alone looks at a man's heart, rather than judge by looks as all humans inevitably do. David has responded to this favor by neither boasting in it or shrinking back from it. Remember, there are at least two opposite ways that pride can manifest itself. A person can take credit for God's own blessing on them that they do not 'deserve' and have not 'earned'; they can boast. Or they can project a false humility which is really just wounded pride. David could have said or acted: "Aw, shucks. Me? I'll give other people a chance first." But even that would be to stay focused on self with a show of humility. Instead, David thinks only of the Lord and is learning to be faithful in obscurity and in fame: to serve the Lord no matter what.

2. What are the many ways in which Saul is beginning to unravel? Why is God removing his favor from him? How does Saul respond to God and to David?

We've seen Saul sit on the sideline when he should have sacrificed himself to protect God's bride. We've seen him tormented by an evil spirit. And now he begins to envy the Lord's blessing of David and all David's success. It fills him with rage and fury. Saul is God's demonstration, again, that both blessing *and* curse are part of God's sovereign choice. He can remove his favor at any time. In this case he does it to highlight Saul's own unfitness in hardness of heart and pride, as well as Israel's foolishness in looking at the outward appearance of a man and wanting a King just like the kings of other nations. Saul responds to this not with repentance, but with a downward spiral of rebellion which further removes God's blessing from him. He can no longer even rejoice in God's good gifts to another, being concerned only with how it affects him and his honor.

3. How does God show his favor and disfavor to different individuals today? What does success have to do with God's favor? How do you respond when God overwhelmingly shows you favor? How do you respond when he disciplines you? When others seem to prosper more than you? How can we practically help each other to seek the success of God's kingdom rather than our own success, that we might not envy?

There are probably a hundred different satisfactory responses to these questions. We're all different in our experiences, no doubt, but we all share these temptations. Get the group to share their experiences, their fears, their reactions to God's blessing and discipline. And there are numerous passages that speak to this. But it will be important at the very minimum to make clear that the Scriptures place an emphasis time and again on God's freedom--his sovereign right--to choose whom he will choose, to shower blessings on whomever he will, and to showcase his own *grace* in this process.

Romans 9:10 And not only so, but also when Rebekah had conceived children by one man, our forefather Isaac, 11 though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad-- in order that God's purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of him who calls-- 12 she was told, "The older will serve the younger." 13 As it is written, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." 14 What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God's part? By no means! 15 For he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion." 16 So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. 17 For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth." 18 So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills. 19 You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use? 22 What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, 23 in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory.

1 Corinthians 1:4 I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in every way you were enriched in him in all speech and all knowledge-- 6 even as the testimony about Christ was confirmed among you-- 7 so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift, as you wait for the revealing of our Lord Jesus Christ, 8 who will sustain you to the end, guiltless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 God is faithful, by whom you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord...26 For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. 27 But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."