

Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE) – “Period of Wars” continued

Readings: *2 Samuel 12:18-23, 26-31; 8:2-12; 1 Chronicles 18:12-13; 11:10-11, 20-47; 2 Samuel 23:11-17. Also See: 1 Chronicles 20:1b-3; 18:2-8; 2 Samuel 8:13-14; 1 Chronicles 11:15-19, 18:9-11; 2 Samuel 23:8, 18-39*

Reflections:

- Although David is forgiven, he is still under a form of judgment. The son born to him dies even though David pleads with God but God's judgment remains. This is a solemn warning that prior to Jesus coming sin and judgment could still have lasting consequences. God's grace did not mean every single consequence of that sin was wiped out. In Christ, all judgment is completely removed and so we do not need to fear God's ongoing judgment although at times the human consequences of sin will still remain in our lives. For example, a person may murder someone and repent. God will forgive that person but they still have to go to jail.
- The remaining stories in this reading are the accounts of David's victories. Here we see a mix of heroism and brutality. Again we see the great contrast between the kingdom that is based on approach of “love your friend but hate your enemy” and a kingdom that is based on “loving your enemies”. Slavery, ruthless murder, and even crippling animals are all a part of a kingdom that is not based on enemy love but enemy hate. Why did God allow this? Why was this considered God giving David victory? Even if you have an academic answer of God protecting the bloodline and showing us how things don't work, you definitely would not get that from first reading. It appears God is all for this. In Jesus' we see how great a reversal this is. Again, in the story of David, he will not raise a hand against Saul, his greatest enemy because he sees God's calling on his life (even though Saul has clearly rejected it and is demonized). To other enemies David and his men display a ruthless vengeance. Even this seems odd, that David and the story does not reveal a basic valuing of God's image or imprint on other enemies a part from Saul. Again, although we are left with these questions, it does make Jesus and his clear teachings on enemy love stand out all the more clearly as the fullest expression of true love.