
Day 93 – April 3

Israel as a Monarchy (1100 – 930 BCE)

David's Rise to Power

Readings: *1 Samuel 22:2-25:1; Psalm 52; Psalm 63; Psalm 54; Psalm 57*

Reflections:

- Saul's killing of the priests, their families and whole town shows how evil he has become. His hatred against David had turned now against innocent people. It is a reminder to us that hate multiplies hate, often victimizing innocent people. As Saul spirals into evil, remember it was the Israelites who rejected God as king and wanted an earthly king. Saul stood head and shoulders above everyone else and yet his heart was not right. This whole story of Saul serves as a severe warning to those who would reject God's leadership and would look to a human leader instead. David as a man after God's heart provides safety for the one priest who escapes demonstrating his grace and ownership of Israel.
- In David's psalm (Psalm 52) from this story he points out the obvious comparison that God is making between him and Saul. Of Saul he writes, "Here now is the man who did not make God his stronghold but trusted in his great wealth and grew strong by destroying others." Of himself he writes, even in this place of great vulnerability, "But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's unfailing love forever and ever."
- The story of Keliiah shows that David, even now as a wanted man, is being used by God to protect Israel. It shows that David is listening to God and God is honoring him by protecting him. Here again we see the importance of taking time to listen to God and to be in relationship with him through regular communication. Psalm 63 from this period reveals so clearly the depth of the love relationship David shared with the Lord. I love the phrase David writes, "I will sing in the shadow of your wings." Like a little bird chirping in the nest under the protection of his mother. He doesn't mind using very humble images of those times when he is completely trusting in God and worship him.
- Jonathan reaches out again and shows the depth of his love for David. He willingly surrenders his right to the throne and gives it willingly to David. He encourages him and recommits to serve him. What a great picture of true companionship.

- The pursuit of David continues and God continues to help him elude Saul.
- The story of David sparing Saul's life foreshadows Jesus' teaching on enemy love. In this time period, David could have killed Saul and it would be viewed as a great triumph. Yet again, uncharacteristic of the time, he spares Saul and shows him incredible grace. Even Saul now so full of hate and evil is softened by David's grace in that moment. It will not remain but it does show the power of enemy love to diffuse hate and restore relationship, even if temporarily. In that moment, Saul actually acknowledges that David will be king and that he is more righteous than himself. Saul asks for David to protect his descendants and of course David is happy to do this because of his righteous character and deep love for Jonathan.
- David again expresses his heart in Psalm 57. His love for God grows through this time of great persecution, difficulty and testing. David's heart is completely abandoned to trusting in God and because of God's faithfulness David writes, "For great is your love, reaching to the heavens, your faithfulness reaches to the skies." Times of great testing do not need to question God but can become our greatest times of growth and in deepening our love for God as we witness his care for us even in the midst of great pain and difficulty.
- The simple sentence on Samuel's death shows how much Israel loved him. Faithful leaders receive the blessing of love from those they serve. We see it expressed here at Samuel's passing.