

Monday - Week Nineteen

Lesson fifty-four: David recognized as the real king

Read: 1 Samuel 18-20

Summary: Saul and Jonathon both realized that David was to be the next king of Israel but reacted in vastly different ways.

Background and Comments

- Poor Saul saw his family turn against him when Michal became David's wife and Jonathon his best friend.
- The people were probably not trying to put King Saul down when they sang their song about one slaying thousands and the other ten thousand. Saul took it the wrong way because his heart was full of evil to begin with.
- 1 Samuel 20 ranks as the most beautiful display of friendship in the Old Testament. It is incorrect to say that Jonathon loved David more than his father. He loved God more than both of them; his love for God dictated his actions toward his father and his friend.

Lessons for Today

- 1 Samuel 18:1 tells us that David and Jonathon were one in spirit with each other and loved each other as much as they loved themselves. This friendship has become legendary for good reason. Jonathon had every reason to hate David because of the "competition" for the throne of Israel. David had every reason to be suspicious of the son of King Saul. These chapters make it perfectly clear that their friendship was based on their love for God; this made their friendship incredibly strong. Do you have close Christian friends? Do you talk about the Lord with each other? Too often the amount of spiritual interaction between Christian friends is sitting in the same church on Sunday morning. Have you ever considered reading the Bible together or praying together? This will cement your friendship as it cemented David and Jonathon's friendship.
- 1 Samuel 18:12 tells us that Saul was afraid of David. Imagine that, Saul afraid of David! Many wicked people are still afraid of believers today ... but don't show it at all. They know in their heart that God stands with the believers and against them.

Read: Psalm 91; Galatians 3.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, bless me with strong Christians friendships. Remind me that strong friendships require effort and time. Lead me to speak freely about spiritual matters with those closest to me. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday - Week Nineteen

Lesson Fifty-five: David's Royal Conduct under persecution

Read: 1 Samuel 21-27

Summary: Even though Saul attempted to kill David over and over, David acted in love toward his king.

Background and Comments

- Saul's hatred made him unreasonable and especially cruel. Not only did he kill the priests at the city of Nob he killed everyone who lived in the city! David, on the other hand, displayed the tender conscience God had given to him. He felt guilty about this slaughter because it was he whom Saul hated.
- The king's officials were more godly than he was. They refused to kill the priest at Nob. Unfortunately they were not godly enough to try to stop Doeg when he attacked them. Whenever we sit by and allow people to be hurt we bear some responsibility for what has happened. God expects us to get involved.

Lessons for Today

- David was at the end of his rope when he fled to the Philistine lands. He was forced to fake insanity to escape with his life. God used these experiences to build David's faith in Him. David had nothing left to rely on; God was it. How has God done the same thing in your life?
- David spared Saul's life twice! Wouldn't it have been justifiable to kill Saul because of the state of war that existed between God's chosen successor and the evil king who was trying to kill him? Obviously David felt that it was not right. David had such high respect for the office of the king that he couldn't harm the person who held this office. Do you respect those who have been given positions of responsibility in the church, government and your home?
- Abigail is a quiet hero in David's life. She acted quickly and decisively to save her husband from his own pride and stupidity. David recognized these qualities when he made her his wife after Nabal's death. How can you use Abigail's example today?

Read: Psalm 92; Galatians 4.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, give me a heart like David's. Sharpen my conscience so that I can tell right from wrong. And then help me to act on what is right! In Jesus' name I pray; Amen.

Wednesday - Week Nineteen

Catechism Review

Read Questions 133-144

1. The conclusion to the commandments shows that God is serious about His commandments. What evidence is there that our society is not very serious about God's commandments?

2. Would you agree or disagree (and tell why): "Since we are believers God does not keep His threat to punish our sin."

3. God says that He will punish the children for the sins of their fathers. How can that be? It doesn't seem fair.

4. God promises to bless our obedience to the commandments. Does that mean that we earn God's blessings?

5. How does God bless us when we keep the sixth commandment? The fourth commandment?

Read: Psalm 93; Galatians 5.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, Your commandments are important to me. Give me the courage, dedication, and faith to obey Your law. I ask this in Jesus' name; Amen.

Thursday - Week Nineteen

Lesson Fifty-six: David on the Throne

Read: 1 Samuel 28 and 31; 2 Samuel 1 - 5:5

Summary: King Saul's death opened the door for David to assume the throne. David would become one of the greatest kings of all time.

Background and Comments

- Saul resorted to finding a witch to help him get information. Our reading tells us that Saul had thrown out all the witches from Israel. This is typical Saul - on the outside it appeared that he was doing what God wanted him to but on the inside he constantly disobeyed God.
- Bible scholars have argued and argued whether Samuel or an evil spirit appeared to the witch that day. We cannot tell because the Bible cloaks this whole episode in secrecy. We do know that in the end God used this witch to tell Saul what would happen to him.
- The Amalekite who told David about Saul's death was lying about how Saul died. He didn't kill Saul; Saul killed himself. This Amalekite didn't understand David's respect for the office of the king. This mistake cost him his life.

Lessons for Today

- Some people think that looking at horoscopes, calling psychics or playing with a Ouija board are harmless. God tells us to stay away from all those things because they can weaken our trust in God. The devil loves to get involved in the life of people through their involvement in these types of activities. Will someone lose their faith if they look at their horoscope? Probably not. Will a person die if they try cocaine? Probably not. But both are dangerous; we do well to stay away from things that are dangerous.
- Saul's armor bearer had more sense than many today who assist people in killing themselves. Murder is murder; our times are in God's hands.
- War is a horrible thing. What follows war is often worse than the war itself! Abner's cold-blooded murder is a sad commentary on Joab and the rest of the army. Pray that God will guard your congregation and your family against intrigue, gossip and behind-the-scenes maneuvering.

Read: Psalm 94; Galatians 6.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, You had planned that David would be the king of Israel years before it happened. I know that You will carry through on the plans that You have for my life too. I thank You for that. Amen.

Friday - Week Nineteen

Life Questions

Topic/Question: What should I do if someone tells me that they are thinking about killing themselves? Do people automatically go to hell if they kill themselves?

Bible References and Considerations

- Suicide is a sin but it's not the unforgivable sin (sin against the Holy Spirit - willfully turning away from God). The problem with the sin of suicide is that when a person turns their back on life they rejecting God's will for their lives. When someone kills themselves they are ending the time they have for repentance.

Practically Speaking

- Sometimes lifelong Christians end their lives in suicide. It appears that in the end they threw away the faith that God had given them. Yet it is also possible that they were not "in their right mind" when they committed this terrible act. For example, if a person has been struggling with severe depression he or she might not be able to make rational decisions after a while. There could still be faith in their heart even while there is incredible confusion in their minds.
- Whenever you hear someone talk about killing themselves you need to take them seriously. Ask why they have these feelings (let them talk about their problems). When you are finished talking with them ask the person what they are going to do next; make suggestions of helpful things to do. Make sure that the person talks to someone else about the situation (pastor, teacher, counselor, etc.). Do not hesitate to call the police if the person continues to talk about suicide (especially if he or she appears to have a suicide plan). The police have excellent resources for these situations.
- Whenever someone has thoughts of suicide it's good to remember the blessings God has given. It's also important to remember that God holds the future in the palm of His hand. He is the One who will see us through the tough times that might frighten us.

Read: Psalm 95; Ephesians 1.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, suicide continues to be a horrible reality in our world. Sin can so darken someone's mind that taking their life can seem like the only way to relieve the pain. Use me to encourage the people in my life. When I encounter someone who is contemplating suicide use me to provide hope and help. I ask this in Jesus' name; Amen.