

## Redemptive Failure | Fall and Rise of the House of David

### Cost Me Nothing

Second Samuel 24.14ff

10.30.22

*Then David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Let us now fall into the hand of the LORD for His mercies are great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."*

*<sup>15</sup> So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time, and seventy thousand men of the people from Dan to Beersheba died. <sup>16</sup> When the angel stretched out his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the calamity and said to the angel who destroyed the people, "It is enough! Now relax your hand!" And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.*

*<sup>17</sup> Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said, "Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house."*

*<sup>18</sup> So Gad came to David that day and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." <sup>19</sup> David went up according to the word of Gad, just as the LORD had commanded. <sup>20</sup> Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants crossing over toward him; and Araunah went out and bowed his face to the ground before the king.*

*<sup>21</sup> Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, in order to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be held back from the people."*

*<sup>22</sup> Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up what is good in his sight. Look, the oxen for the burnt offering, the threshing sledges and the yokes of the oxen for the wood. <sup>23</sup> "Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."*

*<sup>24</sup> However, the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price, for I will not offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God which cost me nothing."*

*So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver. <sup>25</sup> David built there an altar to the LORD and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. Thus the LORD was moved by prayer for the land, and the plague was held back from Israel.*

**The title of our current series is "Redemptive Failure: Fall and Rise of the House of David."**

We began where we left off last Fall (Fall of '21) with the infamous sin of King David. That failing occurred when David forgot who he was. He was God's Prime Minister, leading, serving and protecting God's people with the distinct view that, "these are NOT my people but God's".

The kings of the neighboring, pagan, Gentile-nations were (Matt 20.25) bent on power. They make themselves look larger than life – like gods. They’d get power and hold power by looking impressive and by TAKING from their subjects (1<sup>st</sup> Sam 8.10-19). But David would rule knowing that God is the only true King; “these people are His not mine and yet I’m totally secure, chosen by God and have NOTHING to prove” (I don’t have to impress anyone – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sam 6.14ff) AND David could be BOTH secure AND modest because he was a laborer, the eighth, extra, unnecessary son! So, he couldn’t lord himself over or look down on anyone (streetsweeper)!

THEN, David...forgot his low origins and forgot his high calling (Ps 78.70) He conformed to the pattern of the world (Rom 12.2-3) and began to rule like the kings who were NOT in a covenant relationship, chosen by God and dependent on God for security and legacy. David started sending people here and there... and eventually he sent for a young woman he saw taking a bath. He sent for her husband (from the front lines) and he sent him to his death.

David was then dethroned – his house falls and is hopelessly divided... until God raises up the fallen tent of David (Amos 9.11) and God restores his fallen king. We find him today, humbled but risen – confident in God’s grace.

Today we note the character change in David (a Pattern for us to follow) and the symbols pointing to a bigger Story (a Picture for us to trace) and lastly the motivation we find when we do trace the picture back to the King represented (a Persuasion to us to live a new life).

**Let’s look at part two of last week’s scene – let’s find in this sequel:**

- 1) A Pattern**
- 2) A Pointer**
- 3) A Persuasion**

David is a pattern of spiritual growth and the gradual liberation from sin and self that all believers in Jesus Christ undergo. We call it sanctification or spiritual growth.

He’s now, near the very end of his life and he’s been through the ringer (as we might say). God has taken David twice into the wilderness where the old David died and the new David was born through the waters of adversity (2 Sam 15.23) and he emerges changed. He’s not sinless, as we saw last week when he conscripted a standing army in order to impress the people... BUT he repents. He says those words, sooooo hard for people to say (especially people in authority), “I AM WRONG... I have sinned greatly in what I’ve done...” (24.10). He sees, even before a prophet has to tell him, that again, he’s sending and using people as the insecure and prideful Gentile kings do. But now he’s repentant and again dealing with God.

Listen again to how repentant David is back to dealing with God and back to caring for God’s people: *“Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking down the people, and said,*

*"Behold, it is I who have sinned, and it is I who have done wrong; but these sheep, what have they done? Please let Your hand be against me and against my father's house."*

David's now free from the desire to use people and take from them like all the other kings do... He's back to being a shepherd; he sees his fellow citizens as God's sheep. He's even willing to suffer and lay down his life for the sheep of God's pasture. He's changed – he rises!

And when it comes to DOING what God commanded, to build an altar and offer an atonement for his insecure pride, David won't allow others to do this FOR him.

The owner of the threshing floor, a Gentile, maybe the former king of Jerusalem, Araunah, says, "Everything you need, O king, I will DO for you..." But David says, "No! I have found the Pearl of Great Price and no cost is too much – I belong to God...who owns the cattle on 1,000 hills (Ps 50) ... He loves me. He's chosen me. To offer Him my life, my love, my all is nothing... I WANT to do this!"

In other words, David gets it.

And this is how sanctification goes in the lives of modern believers too. We're moved by God's Spirit to open our tight fists. We lose the need to use people, to send people and to impress people. When we see again and again the judgment we deserve, the angel of death who would be justified in punishing us...BUT who's been told by God, "It is enough!" We begin to die to our selfishness and pride and comfort-lust and we see – "God owns me... God is my Father... that's infinitely valuable! I'm the richest man on earth and any sacrifice I'm asked to make is small potatoes!"

David is a spiritual growth pattern for us to follow.

But the real emphasis in this episode is NOT David and how good he's become. It's NOT so much a pattern to follow as it is a PICTURE of something bigger than David and bigger than OUR ability to imitate.

In this episode we find pictures and emblems and signs and pointers to the real Hero of the story.

There are major, sweeping themes in this passage like David and the Son of David who will reign forever. The idea of grace that saves us from judgment and liberates us from what ruins life. Jerusalem and the Temple are major motifs in the Bible. The notion of a substitute who stands in for another, who does something as a representative for others.

Today is Reformation Sunday. We celebrate the return to these sweeping themes in the Bible, that One has lived and died, risen and ascended "on behalf of" others, "in the place of" others, "instead of" others.

Here, in this episode, we have pointers and pictures of these truths that got the attention of the Augustinian monk/priest, named Martin Luther in the early 1500s. It wasn't that Luther found some obscure loophole or some stray mention of God's grace but that he began to see it on every page in the Bible.

Today's episodes point to the necessity of atonement. David was sorry for his sin of "numbering the people" of TAKING the men of ancient Israel so he, David, could feel good about his reign and impress the people with a massive, permanent force that could crush all their enemies so they could rely on their great king and great military and NOT have to depend on God and His promises...and David repented and was troubled by his act of rebellion against God. But sorrow doesn't atone for sin...turning away from sin and stopping it – DOESN'T PUT THE EGG BACK INTO THE SHELL.

Sin offends the character of God. Sin, even "small" sins that "don't hurt anyone." All sin makes a cosmic imbalance against the standard of justice. All sin is a corrupt misuse of God's good gifts. Imagine I gave someone a five-pound bar of gold and he used it to inflict harm – and people said, "That's the weapon, T.J. gave him." It's like a subtle indictment of the giver.

So, with sin: God is the Giver and sin misuses His good gifts and all sin tells a lie about God. Sin cannot be just forgotten or swept under a carpet. It has to be paid for; the cosmic justice-imbalance has to be corrected.

It's why this theme is so prominent in the Bible – that "*there can be no forgiveness without the shedding of blood*" (Hebrews 9.22) Abraham is told to offer Isaac as a human sacrifice and it was a test – does Abraham see that God knows him, loves him and that everything Abraham has or will ever have is a gift from God – even his son, Isaac. And when God stops the father from offering the son... that's NOT the end of the story.

Abraham looks and finds a ram tangled in the thicket – a substitute. There has to be a substitute.

David says, "Let me stand in for these innocent sheep" but that's not simply a good example to follow – it's a picture of a theme we trace back to Jesus Christ.

This place that David bought is called "Moriah" in the parallel passages in *First and Second Chronicles* (CH 21 and 3.1) and that's the same name given to the place where Abraham offered Isaac. It's the same real estate, same threshing floor where Solomon will build the Temple.

And it's very close to the site where the One Sacrifice to end all sacrifices would be offered – a Human Sacrifice in which a Father would substitute His only Son to atone for all the sins of everyone in all of human history who enters into a trust-relationship with Abraham's God and puts all her/his confidence NOT in their own efforts and attempts to be good – but in Jesus Christ, the atoning sacrifice, the One who would balance the Books.

David lived 1,000 years before his descendent Jesus who would atone for David's sin. David didn't know what we do about Jesus Christ, but he did know, and his life does POINT to, this weighty theme of representation – that One can stand in place of another.

The Temple (built right on this threshing floor) would scream that truth every day as worshippers brought animals to represent people – the blood of animals in the place of guilty human beings...

Until finally, Jesus Christ, lives and dies and rises, the One pictured by all these types and shadows, symbols and pointers... When Jesus Christ offers Himself, He says what God the Father says in v. 16 of today's passage: "It is enough!" "It is finished!"; (John 19.30) nothing remains to be done... but to receive God's atoning work of Jesus Christ by trust.

Here, in this last chapter of First Samuel, God is saying, "It cost Me everything to have you – and I gladly paid the price because I love you...the deep magic that every sin deserves death and requires death... that can be fulfilled by an even deeper magic that a perfectly Righteous One could die in place of the unrighteous. I will pay the price."

In the parallel passage (First Chronicles CH 21) it says that after the sacrifice is offered fire comes from the sky and consumed the offerings and the angel puts his fearsome sword back in its sheath. And so with Jesus Christ, the fire of justice falls from heaven; then access is granted back to the Garden – Eden's flaming sword is sheathed and the Tree of Death, the Cross, becomes the Tree of Life.

And to see this, to actually trust that THIS is the Big Idea of the Bible (as the Reformers claimed and proved) TO TRUST THIS and make it your only hope and your confidence before God, this is a strong motivational force that actually changes people who believe it.

The more this dawns on you and the more you think about it and celebrate it and sing about it and rest in it... when we're actually receiving Christ and His benefits by faith, God's Spirit, allures us and draws us and persuades us to love God and love other people.

It's not so much that we look at David and say, *"Boy, I really need to love people more...and not try to send them here and there like they're my tools – I gotta be more like that David!"* We do...but holiness is sort of like happiness – it's an indirect pursuit that's often counterintuitive. When you're chasing happiness, it eludes you... same with holiness. It's actually when you're just fixated on Jesus Christ – trusting His "It is finished." – that's how your desires change.

You become, almost imperceptibly, lowly and yet persuaded – weak (in yourself) and strong (in Him). You became less self-confident (thus humble) and more Christ-confident (thus assured). You begin to sort of forget yourself – and it's VERY liberating.

When you're actually believing God's Good News (and as we saw in David – sometimes believers are unbelieving!) but when the Good News is right there before you and you're confident that God has

forgiven you and paid the price you could never pay – that Jesus Christ has paid it all and it cost me nothing – THEN, I can serve others with no strings attached (I don't have to be thanked or recognized or applauded... or even noticed). AND I find that I want to BE with this God who paid my price.

My money... is on loan from Him (and I can give it away for His glory and the good of others) – He'll supply all I need (the atonement proves it) and I can even suffer for others (as David was willing to do) because... What's the worst that can happen?

I say with St. Paul (Phil 1.21), *"For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain."*

"Oh, Aslan!" whispered Susan in the Lion's ear "can't we – I mean, you won't, will you? Can't we do something about the deep magic? Isn't there something you can work against it?"

"Work against the Emperors Magic?" said Aslan, turning to her with something like a frown on his face. And nobody ever made that suggestion to him again."

– C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (CH. 13 "Deep Magic from the Dawn of Time"; 1950)

"But what does it all mean?" asked Susan when they were somewhat calmer.

"It means, that though the Witch knew the Deep Magic, there is a magic deeper still which she did not know," said Aslan. "Her knowledge goes back only to the dawn of time. But if she could have looked a little further back, into the stillness and the darkness before time dawned, she would have read there a different incantation. She would have known that when a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the Table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards..."

– C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (CH. 15 "Deeper Magic from *Before* the Dawn of Time"; 1950)

Once when Swiss theologian Karl Barth was asked what he thought was the most important word in the (Greek) New Testament, he answered, *"Huper."* *Huper* is a preposition meaning "on behalf of" or "in place of." So when Barth called *huper* the most important word, he meant that the most important of all truths is that in salvation Jesus takes our place to bear the punishment for our sins so that "in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5.21).

– James Montgomery Boice, *Whatever Happened to the Gospel of Grace?*, p. 102

The soul is so constituted that it craves fulfillment from things outside itself and will embrace earthly joys for satisfaction when it cannot reach spiritual ones. The believer is in spiritual danger if he allows himself to go any length of time without tasting the love of Christ and savoring the felt comforts of a Savior's presence. When Christ ceases to fill the heart with satisfaction, our souls go in silent search of other lovers

– John Flavel (1628–1691), *Works of John Flavel* (vol. 2, p.438)