

David – A Man after God's Own Heart

The Life of David

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Well, tonight we are starting a new series, a series, in fact, which will probably take us up to the midway of the summer. It's a series about David. David, and the title to go for this evening's sermon is this, "A Man after God's Own Heart." And we had that in the first reading and we have it in our second reading, that that was what was spoken of David. Well, we could, I'm sure, in truth have a hundred sermons looking at David, looking at every detail, every aspect of his life, every situation he found himself in, but I'm not going to presume on your patience to preach that many sermons. I'm not sure I could, but a few at least we must because there's so much, God has given us so much of his life for us to be able to see in detail and much of the narrative of his life and probably read that per se, we read more about Saul, didn't we, just there in 1 Samuel 13, but much of the narrative of 1 Samuel, for instance, is very very detailed, indeed quite dramatic, very exciting, in places reads really like a sort of breathtaking one event following another, page turning to find out what happens next. And that kind of gripping narrative, well, we'll be looking at it when we come to it but not in such minute detail that we'll be pausing at every twist and turn in David's life but trying to get some of the bigger picture about him.

And of course, when we read of him and we're evidently going to be looking for lessons to apply over to ourselves whether there are things where we find that David's world and David's position in society are very different to ours. He was a king and that endowed him, didn't it, with special privileges, special responsibilities that are not quite ours. He had battles to fight, literal battles. He had to take up the sword to go against the Moabites or the Edomites or perhaps some of these ancient peoples. We're not quite called upon to do that. He was a polygamist. Well, we don't follow him there, and there are other things too, very significant, very famous things or infamous things where, again, we don't follow him there and where we'd find his life and our life, well, hopefully in those things really quite at variance. But we see, too, that he had a significance, a significance beyond any that we would have in the purposes of God, and that is that from his line as Paul preaching in Acts 13 in Pisidia in Antioch, told the people there that there's David and they believed him. These Jewish people, "Ah, we know David," they would say. Well, from David came the Lord Jesus Christ. Ah, they would stumble a bit at that and Paul refers, doesn't he, to the people in Jerusalem who still are not listening when the resurrection of Christ or the death of Christ are preached. But Paul actually quotes from

some of the Psalms of David to show that David, and we'll come to this in a minute, very keen perception as to what lay ahead and what his family was about.

So he had a significance that, well, none of us in that way have but yet he is an example to us. Despite all the ways in which maybe something of his life is quite different and distant to us, there are other ways in which we can see that God has given us him as an illustration so that we can learn something for our Christian life today. He is, if you like, the Old Testament equivalent of Paul in the New Testament in so many ways. A follower of the Lord and whose life is worked out in some detail.

So Acts 13, there is Paul preaching, or if we would have continued through the book of Acts, we could see another of Paul's exploits and difficulties. And his epistles and we read those, we not only are understanding Christian doctrine but much of it is very autobiographical. Paul is telling us about himself. Can't read 2 Corinthians in any other way. There he is talking about his own experiences very very exactly, in minute detail at times, and showing us, as he has showed the Corinthian church, what we should be like as Christians, what we should be expecting.

So God has given to us here in David and perhaps in the New Testament there in Paul, men who we can follow carefully and whose lives, their twists and turns, the things that befall them and their reaction to them, we can follow carefully, it's worked out in detail for us. And here it does catch our attention, doesn't it? It really is an introductory way of understanding David, the man that he was, the things that he did, why he did what he did, and how he did what he did, that he was a man after God's own heart, that God in seeing David saw something that pleased him, something that reflected back to him what he would look for in a disciple, somebody that claimed to be a follower. And to understand that is then to understand the man that he was, the man we find in the Psalms, the man we find in the history as it's unfolded in 1 Samuel. Of course, in that there is then a challenge to us to be like David in that. Summing it all up, having, as it were, the essential thing laid out before us that here was a man after God's own heart, a man that God, if you like, delighted in, that saw in him something that pleased him and that he, if you will, responded to, that God would in recognizing such a person, well, he comes very near to a person like that, and his comforts and his favor and his blessing rest upon a person like that.

So there is something here very very important not only for understanding David but for understanding what God is looking for. What kind of person is God wanting you and me to be? Firstly, of course, we see that actually Samuel, the prophet when Paul was preaching to the people there in Pisidia in Antioch, prophet that God raised up and raised up Saul, son of Kish, tribe of Benjamin, and then removed him. And we find here is the beginning of the problem, that Saul did not obey God, didn't listen, didn't actually love God. He said that he made that sacrifice, everybody was scattering, the Philistines were upon him, and so he felt he ought to make supplication to the Lord which sounded very pious but it wasn't and he'd made a bad mistake there. Samuel had told him that was God's commandment, "You're not the one to make the sacrifice. Wait for me," Samuel to come. And the rebuke is there, isn't it, in the fact, first of all, that as soon as he offered the

burnt sacrifice, Samuel came and then was straight on to Saul because of his disobedience. And told Saul that God might have built up his family to be a dynasty and now would not, and God removed him from office. It didn't happen there and then but it was going to happen in the future. It wouldn't have been lost on Saul, indeed his behavior later on shows that this very much was ringing in his ears.

But Samuel tells him in verse 14 of 1 Samuel 13, "But now your kingdom shall not continue," as we saw. "The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart, and the LORD has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the LORD commanded you." There would be another, a neighbor of yours whom God would put in your place, who would be a man after God's own heart as we've just been seeing. Saul wasn't. He was disobedient. He didn't reflect the life that God is looking for in each of us, a life of response, a life of obedience, a life of following hard after him. That's what God delights in. That's what God loves in a person, to see somebody after his own heart, and we'll see in a moment what qualifies for that. But Saul did not qualify for that. His disobedience, his lack of respect for God's word when he was now disqualified.

About that time Samuel didn't know the identity of the person. You'll see that when Paul preached in Antioch, the he actually put the name in there, inserted David's name in there, the son of Jesse, that this was all going to be disclosed. So what here was secret still kept back from Saul, well, nevertheless God had told or rather Samuel, but God had told Samuel that there is somebody else. I've prepared somebody else. I've already commanded him. When we come to see, Lord willing, next week how Samuel goes forth to actually anoint David, that this man, young man is already aware, God is already working in his heart and the anointing that he receives has already been prepared for this moment. God has commanded him to be commander over God's people.

So this, then, is the first in our series and we're going to try to understand something of what it means to be after God's own heart. So our first heading: perfection is not what God is looking for. God is waiting for somebody to show moral perfection, spiritual perfection, to love him absolutely 100% all of the time, and the Lord would be waiting and waiting forever. There would be nobody, nobody would qualify for that. David hadn't discovered something that you might call works religion, that if you do good works, if you have the right motives, the right attitudes and right words, and right behavior, that master that and you'll please God. Well, he hadn't managed that. He was a sinner just like each and every one of us. You can't reach to the standards of God's perfection. It is not within us to do it. We are weighed down with sin. Sin makes us swerve off course. The good intentions we have fail and what good works we do do are marred and they're marked and they're messed around with because of our sinful attitudes. We can't offer to God that perfection.

So David was not a man after God's own heart because of that, that he arrived at some perfection but what was true of him is this, he was a thoroughly converted man. He was a thoroughly converted man. He was a man who had been turned around. So whereas before, like all of us, he had been, in a way, inward facing. He had been taken up with

himself, who he was in his own desires, his own self-interests. He had been brought under conviction of sin and he realized his own transgressions and he had been turned around therefore so that now he was reliant upon God, the pardon, and for mercy. Fully reliant on that. We will emphasize fully reliant, that this man had left behind self-righteousness, obtaining God's favor by trying to work towards it. He had dismissed that and realized that he needed the mercy of God. How do we know? Because he actually tells us about this in Psalm 32. That brings us near to this, Psalm 32:1-2, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit." Blessed. Blessed is he. His transgressions are forgiven.

Well, who might that be? Who is able to say this? Well, it's David. It's a Psalm of David. A contemplation. Blessed is the one whose sin is covered. He discovered this. He had learned this, "Blessed is the man to whom the LORD does not impute iniquity." That God does not account David's sins to David's account but here David understood that God would account David's sins to somebody else. Somebody else would take the responsibility for those shortcomings, for that failure to obey the law of God. That would not be imputed, would not be credited and seen as part of David's account, and you're going to have to pay it and settle it. Somebody else had settled that account and his iniquities, then, had been imputed to this another and David had understood it.

And Paul writing in that mighty epistle to the Romans there in chapter 4 describes actually how David had discovered this. He's speaking now in new covenant times, the Lord Jesus had come and he actually uses what David had discovered to prove that this is not by works. We don't have God's favor, justification, God doesn't account us now no longer culpable, guilty for our sin, but he forgives freely and here's somebody in the Old Testament who discovered it. Paul says in Romans 4 just reading from verse 5 and the following verses, "But to him," writes Paul, "who does not work but believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is accounted for righteousness, just as David also describes the blessedness of the man to whom God imputes righteousness apart from works," then he quotes Psalm 32, "Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, And whose sins are covered; Blessed is the man to whom the LORD shall not impute sin."

So it's not works righteousness, this is a righteousness, the favor of God, apart from works. This is one we receive by faith, would actually push the works away and said, "Those can't help me. Those can't bring me God's favor. But I look at the Lord Jesus dying on the cross and that does." And David had that and he grasped that. That was there with him and Paul writes here in Romans 4 and quotes back to that experience of David to show that actually justification by faith alone, trusting in Christ for our forgiveness is something that David had fully understood hundreds of years before.

Psalm 103 and there in verses 1 to 5, what does David write, it's a Psalm of David, you see. "Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you

with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle's." And we see when we go on to verse 11, "For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us."

But he had learned, hadn't he, something there, that the mercy of God in Christ Jesus removes our sins so far from us that this is as far as the east is from the west, that no longer are these an operative thing, that they're discarded and God has disposed of them and David could see all of that. He was a thoroughly converted man. And moreover, as he went about worshiping God in the time when at that point there still wasn't the temple, well, it wasn't even the tabernacle there, the ark of God was being kept in a particular location and was due in due course to come and some more temporary scheme of things in Jerusalem to accommodate it before the temple was built, and the temple was going to be built by Solomon, not by David. But his going about the altar of God as he describes it in Psalm 26, is with an eye beyond the more limited horizons that in the old covenant you could see. You can see it in Hebrews, didn't we, some months back, that he couldn't offer as much as can be offered through the blood of Christ but David, it seems, was already looking beyond. Just to read a few verses there, Psalm 26:6, "I will wash my hands in innocence; So I will go about Your altar, O LORD, That I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, And tell of all Your wondrous works. LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house, And the place where Your glory dwells."

David could see that there was something very big promised in the sacrifices, something very big that extended beyond the sacrifices themselves, though those brought him great joy and to know peace with God and seeing the blood of another shed, that that iniquity in that temporary fashion had been, as it were, imputed to the beast that was slain, but David knew there was something more, something better that was to come and already he was looking ahead to the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just as Isaiah saw that day and rejoiced in it, well, so did David. He could see clearly beyond himself that there was a greater descendant coming from his family, that he would, indeed, bring to pass a far deeper and the far greater things that the old covenant was just prefiguring, was just a kind of temporary introduction, that the better thing was still to come.

And David foresaw that. Remarkable. That's Psalm 22 which so clearly looks at the sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ was given to him. And he would have known that this is not what my experience is to be. This is another. This is something greater that God is going to do. Psalm 22, just to read a few verses here, just read verse 16 and 17 and 18. "For dogs have surrounded Me; The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots." That's the crucifixion and that was given to David to have those words to say. He's a prophet, you see, and he understood these things. So he was seeing the day of Christ and rejoicing in it.

Turning back a few pages and this is quoted by Paul when he preaches in Pisidia in Antioch. He quotes David to prove the resurrection. Psalm 16:9-11. David writes,

"Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices; My flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Sheol, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You will show me the path of life; In Your presence is fullness of joy; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." The resurrection. And as Paul said, David's body saw corruption. Peter preaches the same thing on the day of Pentecost, his body saw corruption, but the Lord Jesus didn't see corruption. This was the one that David foresaw and could see one whom the grave would not hold and who would be issued forth from it and who would then show all who followed him the path of life, presence would bring fullness of joy, and at his right hand would be pleasures forevermore.

We also notice that Paul quotes David in Psalm 110:1-2. This is quoted often in the New Testament and it's a quotation that shows us that David could actually see that he had a Lord distinct from God the Father but level with God the Father who is David's Lord. He's going to be David's son or grandson, as it were, great great great grandson down the family line but David is already taking a position of submission to him. "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.' The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion. Rule in the midst of Your enemies!"

So David is certainly, you might even say, pretty much Trinitarian in his belief here that the Lord God saying to my Lord. Who is that? Well, the Lord Jesus when he comes is its actually meaning. And Paul when he preaches and Peter when he preaches says it's actually him, that is, the Lord Jesus that David was speaking about because who else could be sat at the right hand of God having his enemies made his footstool and ruling out of Zion unless it was the Son of God himself. And David could see those things.

So he could see beyond bulls and goats being sacrificed. He could see beyond the temporary nature of all the fittings, the fixtures of the tabernacle which was in the temple which would soon be. And in all these things he discerned a greater plan, a greater final solution to the problem of our sin that would blot it out and that would mean it wasn't imputed in a temporary fashion, a bull or a goat, that your own sin was regarded now as being carried by that victim, that beast that was slain, but there was an ultimate one, the Son of God who would bear away those sins. And he was cheered at that, and that delighted him. That's what he said, "Blessed is the man whose transgressions are forgiven. Blessed is the man whose sin is covered." He felt it. He felt the wonder of that at God's mercy, taking my sin, casting it as far as the east is from the west, forgiving all my iniquities, redeeming my life from destruction. And that never ever left him.

I'll say it again. He was a thoroughly converted man. Now if we are to follow on after David, if we are going to come, as it were, to God's attention as being people, men, women, after God's own heart, then we need to insure we've been thoroughly converted. There's the beginning of it. We need to be thoroughly converted. We need to ourselves taste it and seeing that the Lord is good and felt the wonder of it, the liberty of it, the freedom of knowing deliverance from sin and the blessedness of that state because really that reveals the source. All his courage and all his faith reveals the source of the power that's at work in him, and his longings, his hungerings, his thirstings, that he discovered just how good God is, how gracious, forgiving, merciful that he is.

He's turned his life around already as he is out in the fields as a young man looking after the sheep for his father Jesse, defending them against the lion and against the bear. This truth is now in his possession. Is it ours? Do we know it? Have we felt that? And had our eyes opened to it and enlightened to it because it's revolutionary. It is a turning around. It is to have been implanted in us a new nature which then produces a whole different set of outcomes and responses. David was a thoroughly converted man.

Our second final heading: David loved God. It's as simple as that. David loved God. We'll come back in a moment to see he actually loved God because God first loved him, and that of which we've just been talking about was his, he held it, and the logic of it meant that he now would love God. Not in a halfhearted way, not in a kind of little bit in, but a little bit out kind of way, not in a hesitant, not really persuaded of this kind of way but with a full commitment, with a wholeheartedness which just comes through, doesn't it, in all of his writings in the Psalms. Were we to say, well, here in Deuteronomy 6 in the Old Testament, verses 4 and 5, this great commandment that our Lord himself tells us this is the first and greatest commandment and said, "love your neighbor as yourself," is like unto it but hearing what here is in Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart." And they're in David's heart. They were there working in his heart. It didn't produce perfection, no, it couldn't do that, but it produced a longing, a desire toward those things that God loved. God loves his commandments and so David would love his commandments too. And it was in his heart. Not superficially, not kind of there but in an uncomfortable alliance with sin or an inclination or way, but there was something so full-on, something so wholehearted in David's obedience and in his love for God that takes us there to Deuteronomy 6, that his heart, his soul, his strength, there is an entirety of the man that he is that is now wedded to the love of God.

We read in Psalms in various places where he speaks of that love. Psalm 11:1, "In the LORD I put my trust; How can you say to my soul, 'Flee as a bird to your mountain'?" Put my trust in him. I love him. We read of him, Psalm 18:1, "I will love You, O LORD, my strength. The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold." Well, the words multiply there and that is David's take on God. That is not something academic but it's felt and it's known by personal experience, that he is convinced that that is what God is like toward him. So he says, "I will love You, O LORD, my strength. You give me that strength. You give me the strength to love You with all my strength." That is God's gift to him and he exhorts others in Psalm 31:23, for instance, to love the Lord.

And there is something very appealing in this, isn't there? There's something very strong in this. We are captivated when we read Psalms and when we read how David reacted toward the Lord, the strength, the vehemence of that desire and that is something that makes him a man after God's own heart. Thoroughly converted and in the light of that, responding to that by such a depth of love in return to God that it leaves amazed and astonished and realizing that this is something really wonderful, very appealing, very

appealing and we would like to be like David in that, that devotion, that passion, that strength of resolve. He loved God first and foremost. He loved God, had no other idols that were there with him. He was fully committed, consecrated, sold out to God.

Psalm 16 we quoted earlier for the resurrection but in verse 8, "I have set the LORD always before me; Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved." Always God is in my thoughts. I have set him before me. When I do anything, I have God before me. When I am going to think about something, I have God in my thought first and I arrange everything else around him. The beautiful discovery is as David makes it there, is that actually then if you have God before you, you find out he's at your right hand to help you and secure you so that you're not moved. That vehemence, that strength of desire so that the thought of God, yes, the thought of God excited him. It stirred him in the very depths of his being. It brought forth from him such longing and such praise, such admiration, and you really do feel that he means it, don't you?

Psalm 27:4, here is something of the heart of the man. "One thing," that's what he says there, "One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD All the days of my life, To behold the beauty of the LORD, And to inquire in His temple." The beauty of the Lord. There's something in David that responded so positively with such conviction, with such affection to the very thought of God. That's what he wanted, just to spend his time in reflection upon the glory, the beauty of God. God moved his soul, stirred his heart, filled his attention, trebled his horizons.

What a man that that is and how we read it and how we respond to that, how we feel in that. There's something there that we would like to be. We would like to be like David in that. We would like very much to have that kind of constancy and warmth of love and affection toward God. All else followed from it, and so the wholeheartedness that we hear of him in his worship, Psalm 9:1, "I will praise You, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will tell of all Your marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High." A whole heart. He has been gripped, hasn't he, by those marvelous works. He's going to be glad and rejoice God and sing praises to his name. Remarkable, that vehemence, I'll use that word again, that vehemence of desire that something that's sort of like a volcano, sort of erupting and molten hot in terms of his love for God.

And we see it come through and we'll see it in future sermons, that it touches on everything else, that David in his treatment of people is not halfhearted but there's something so fully committed. And his friendships with people like Jonathan and his care for Mephibosheth, that there are some things we'll see when we come to it, that is so strong that that love of God then carries over in his love for people. So he was straightforward, so warm, so committed, so engaged with them that we, again, are drawn to that.

The simplicity of it is this as is so much in the Christian faith, that this follows because of his love that he has for God coming ultimately from the knowledge that God loves him. That God loves him and he's convinced of that. It's as simple as that. That is it and what

he knows about God's willingness to forgive and to pardon sin, to overlook now and pass over David's sins, "Well, that must mean that His love for me is very very strong, very very powerful, will always endure." And in that knowledge it's as if he then says, "Then I'm satisfied. That tells me all I need to know and I can therefore respond to Him in a way that is not contrived or halfhearted but is full and is a reaction to that initial fact," and the simple fact that it is that he is loved of God.

We had Psalm 63 to being our worship, "O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You," and what does he say in verse 3 of Psalm 63? He says this, "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You." Better than life. "Better than anything that life can give me, any of its joys or its pleasures and its satisfactions. No, Your lovingkindness, Your pardoning mercy is You are gracious toward me, that is better than life and the result is my lips shall praise You. I'll respond to Your lovingkindness in turn by my wholehearted devotion to You, lip and with life."

And so there is our lesson for the evening is to know that love of God better. It is to believe it, to be convinced of it. To not doubt it or hesitate on it, or hedge about it, but to believe it. And we have more than David. He foresaw from afar the coming of his greater Son our Lord Jesus Christ. He could see that there was something happening here, the fullness of it. Well, that's for us to have and enjoy. We look at the cross, we survey the cross. He didn't have all of that quite there in all of its detail. He longed to know more but it was denied him and he couldn't have that. He was only going to be made perfect with us, not apart from us. And we have come to inherit the full understanding of the cross and the resurrection, our Lord in his glory at the right hand of God and him coming back one day bodily to this earth. Wonderful.

That's ours, and it all of it tells us the simple truth of God's great love toward his people, his love for sinners, his love for ordinary people, struggling people, people who are making mistakes, people who couldn't get it right at all, people who are muddling through at times. His love is there and we have to say, I get that. I'm beginning to see it better and better and it's changing me, that now my response to God is less complicated, it's more straightforward and bears something of that simplicity, the ease with which David reflects back to God his love and his praise and gives him his full attention, has him ever set before him.

Well, that's worth knowing. That's worth being that. What David had discovered is worth everything that we could discover it too and be able to declare, "Because Your lovingkindness is better than life as I see it, as it is, and that it's persuaded me and I can put other things in their place because I've got this and I understand the relationship that You have established with me that I now have with You. Calling You my heavenly Father places me in a place where I can freely offer You worship. I'm freed from my baggage in sin to be able to openly confess You and to follow on hard after You."

So we look, don't we, to gain what David's gained there and all that comes with it, the energy, the warmth, the courage, the faith, all of these particulars that stem from the

grasping of this lovingkindness from which he himself then responds to God in love.
Well, may God help us to be people that are after his own heart.

DAVID – A MAN AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART

1 Samuel 13:14.

(Sermon Summary)

Reading: 1 Samuel 13: 1-15.

This is a new series. We will not be looking at every single event in David’s life but taking a selection. The narrative in this part of Scripture, as it covers the life of David, can be breath-taking in its drama. We will not be looking at every detail but will be passing over much. There are, of course, ways in which David can seem a little distant to us, in the things that the Lord called upon him to be and to do. We are not kings having to go out and fight battles with enemies. We do not have the great responsibilities that he had, nor the special and particular promises that the Lord gave him regarding his family.

But there are many ways in which David has much to teach us. There are things in his exceptional life that can still be applied to our more ordinary lives and callings. In some ways, like the apostle Paul, there are details about his life and experience that are worked out in considerable detail for us in Scripture. In David’s case, we have the Psalms that give us an insight into the spiritual life of the man.

One phrase stands out in terms of what the Lord said of His servant, namely that David was a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14). This was said by the prophet Samuel in the context of a rebuke to Saul, who had now shown himself to be faithless and disobedient. This description of David is key to the man he is, the things he does and how he does them. We will see how this works out in the different situations and challenges that David finds himself facing.

1. Perfection is not what the Lord is looking for.

To be a man or woman after God’s own heart does not mean that we are perfect, spiritually, and morally. This is not what the Lord is looking for. Such a thing is impossible to find in a sinner. David had not discovered the way of sinless perfection. He was, however, a thoroughly converted man. He was justified and forgiven in the sight of God, and lived in the full knowledge of this fact. He lived as though he believed this about himself, and, in that way, he is a man after God’s own heart.

We know about his understanding of justification by faith in Psalm 32:1-2 which is then quoted by Paul in Romans 4:5-8. He had come to learn that he needed God’s mercy and he had found that mercy. Likewise, we can see his understanding of the forgiveness of God from Psalm 103: 1-5. He was a prophet and was able to discern that the Lord’s

house, and the worship associated with it, was full of hope and joy (Psalm 26:6-8). He saw Christ's day and rejoiced in it, knowing that there were promises made to his family that his tribe would bring forth, in the fullness of time, the Lord Jesus Christ. He foresaw our Lord's sufferings (Psalm 22:16-18) and also foresaw the Lord being raised from the dead (Psalm 16:9-11 and Acts 2:25, 29-31). Psalm 110:1-2 is another place where David prophesies of the Lord Jesus Christ. So David saw beyond the sacrificial system of His day and saw what this was all pointing towards. He was cheered at the thought of the pardon that was offered to him through the shed blood of another on his behalf, realizing that this was going to reach its greatest fulfillment in the Messiah. Out of these insights and realizations arose his wisdom, courage, power and deepest longings.

2. David loved God.

This, in so many ways, sums David up. He loved God deeply and, out of this, flowed his worship, adoration, and commitment to the Lord, which earned him the title as the man who was after God's own heart. Of him, it might be said, he took seriously Deuteronomy 6:4-5. We could quite as easily have said that his faith or his obedience marked him out as this sort of man, but his love for God serves us well for now as we think about what made him the man that he was. That love for God had captivated him and was very strongly felt (see Psalm 11:1, Psalm 18:1 or where he exhorts others, Psalm 31:23). This love for God made him a very appealing character to others. For he also loved people deeply, whether family, friends or the people he was ruler over. He had a strength, passion and devotion that followed from this. All of this arose from his deep love for God, setting Him always before himself (Psalm 16:8).

What did this love mean in practice? One thing that followed was that the thought of God excited in him great affection, great desire, great longing and great praise. When he said that he loved God, he really meant it. God moved his soul deeply (Psalm 27:4). His heart was greatly stirred at the thought of the Lord. His whole life and life's horizon was filled with the Lord. So the praise he expressed was full and free (Psalm 9:1-2; and Psalm 145:1-3). There was a great vehemence of desire. This love would then be visible in his actions, his behaviour, his treatment of people, his manner of life, his love of God's word and his confidence in the Lord. The love he felt for God flowed from the knowledge of God's love for him (Psalm 63: 3).

If we are not persuaded of the Lord's love to us, then we will be doubting and hesitant. There will be haunting fears and a want of spiritual energy, warmth, comfort, courage and faith. Like David, we should be willing to part with all that obscures the glory of God's love to us, that we in turn might love Him with a whole heart.