

Since we've been away from our study of David (for some months), I want to begin this morning with a brief review of some important facts: (1) David was anointed to be king back in 1Samuel 16, and yet would not become king until 2Samuel 2 (in part) and 5 (in full). This was likely a 15-year wait, within which God used affliction and hardship to prepare David to rule. During this time David was a fugitive, living in deserts and caves.

(2) David has a growing army who attached themselves to him and for which he was responsible. This growing army provided David with necessary experience on how to lead and govern a people. Furthermore, they would serve as the nucleus of the kingdom, over which he would rule.

(3) David serves both as a type of Christ and an example of Christian experience. Just as David was exalted to the throne through 15 years of suffering and hardship, so Christ was exalted to His throne after 3 years of suffering and hardship. But then David not only serves as a type of Christ, but also as a prototype of every Christian to come (for every Christian must enter the kingdom of God through great tribulation). Put simply, there's always a cross before the crown.

Most of you know that the OT books were originally written in Hebrew, and that First and Second Samuel were originally one book. They were divided into two parts when the OT was translated into Greek in second century BC. It's for this reason, Second Samuel continues right where First Samuel ends.

This brings us to our theme this morning: David's Lamentation, and I want to consider three things about it—its context, reasons, and lessons.

- I. Its Context
- II. Its Reasons
- III. Its Lessons

I. Its Context

1. Second Samuel 1, can be divided into two halves—a messenger informs David's of Saul and Jonathan's death (vv1-16), and David laments Saul and Jonathan's death (vv17-27).
2. In our last sermon on the life of David (1Sam.30), we learned that David and his army defeated the Amalekites and returned their families and possessions.
3. Thus, 2Samuel 1 begins, v1—"Now it came to pass after the death of Saul, when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites, and David had stayed two days in Ziklag."
4. In other words, as David and his men returned from defeating the Amalekites, Saul died in battle with the Philistines.
5. Richard Phillips—"When 2 Samuel begins, the reader knows what David does not yet know: Saul was defeated and killed, and the Israelites were scattered in defeat."
6. And so, David learns of these events through a messenger—notice three things about him—his identity, message, and death.
7. (1) His identity, v2—"on the third day, behold, it happened that a man came from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head."
8. His clothing was torn and he had dust on his head, as a symbol of remorse—this was a common Eastern practice.
9. It's likely that he tore his clothing and poured dust on his head as he entered Ziklag as a sign of sorrow and remorse.
10. We learn from v13 that he was "an alien (not Hebrew), an Amalekite"—if you remember, David has just fought the Amalekites.
11. Thus, the question becomes—what was this Amalekite doing on a Philistine and Israelite battlefield? Well, as we shall see in a moment, it's likely he was searching the scene for things of value (a scavenger).

12. It was rather common for people to comb through the battlefield for anything of value—weapons and precious metals.
13. He likely came across king Saul, and realized his opportunity to take the crown and bracelet to David in hopes to be rewarded.
14. (2) His message—David asked him where he's come from (v3), and he says—"I have escaped from the camp of Israel."
15. V4—"How did the matter go? Please tell me. And he answered, 'The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also.'"
16. V5—"How do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead?" v6—"As I happened by chance to be on Mount Gilboa, there was Saul, learning on his spear; and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him."
17. V7—"Now when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me. And I answered, Here I am." V8—"And he said to me, 'Who are you? So I answered him, I am an Amalekite.'"
18. V9—"He said to me again, Please stand over me and kill me, for anguish has come upon me, but my life still remains in me."
19. V10—"So I stood over him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm, and have brought them here to my lord."
20. Now, here we come a difficulty—simply put, 1Samuel 31 describes Saul as killing himself (by falling on his sword), and this messenger says that he killed Saul—which is it?
21. Well, there's two options—first, they are both true, in that Saul attempted to kill himself but was still alive, and this young man finished him off.
22. Secondly, it's also possible that this young man was lying, and thus in fact, Saul, and Saul alone, killed himself.
23. This is probably the most common view—there's evidence that this man lied in order to impress David for selfish gain.
24. A.W. Pink—"This is one of the passages seized by atheists to show that 'the Bible is full of contradictions,' for the account here given of Saul's death (2Sam.1) doesn't harmonize with what is recorded in the previous chapter (1Sam.31). But the seeming difficulty is easily solved: 1Samuel 31 contains God's description of Saul's death, 2Samuel 1 gives man's fabrication. Holy Scripture records the lies of God's enemies as well as the true statements of His servants."
25. In other words—he embellished the story so that David would reward him for freeing him from Saul's tyranny.
26. Everyone knew Saul hated and persecuted David, and so it would be naturally assumed that David would reward the man who killed Saul.
27. In fact, Walter Chantry finds proof of the young Amalekite's deceit, in the phrase, v6—"As I happened by chance to be on Mount Gilboa."
28. The battle between the Philistines and Israelites were long and intense, nobody simply "happened by chance" to be present.
29. Walter Chantry—"The battle had been building for days. None in the region could have been unaware of the tens of thousands of troops massing on each side. He had been no doubt determined to be one of the first to strip the dead for personal gain."
30. (3) His death (vv11-16)—having heard about Saul and Jonathan's death, mourned, wept, and fasted for the day.
31. V13—"Then David said to the young man who told him, Where are you from? And he answered, I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite."
32. V14—"So David said to him, How was it you were not afraid to put forth your hand to destroy the LORD'S anointed."
33. V15—"Then David called one of the young men and said, Go near, and execute him! And he struck him so that he died."
34. V16—"So David said to him, Your blood is on your own head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, I have killed the LORD'S anointed."

35. Thus, regardless if he actually killed Saul or he lied and claimed to kill Saul, either way, David believed he killed Saul.
36. Thus, it was right for David to kill this young man, because he actually or at least claimed to have killed Saul.
37. And because he actually or assumedly killed Saul, he too should be killed, and so David had him rightly executed.
38. Let me say in passing, that if it's true this man was lying, then proof of the fact that laying and deceit don't pay.
39. Here's a young man who's walked nearly 80 miles, created this detailed account, all for the hopes of personal advancement.
40. And yet, what does he receive in return? Nothing but death! Surely, this illustrates the truth, the wages of sin is death.

II. Its Reasons

1. V17—"Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son, and he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow; indeed it is written in the Book of Jasher."
2. It was not uncommon for Eastern people to write poems or songs to commemorate or remember sad and happy events.
3. In fact, throughout the Scripture there are numerous events that prompted people to write songs of praise, deliverance, and lamentation.
4. The phrase "the Song of the Bow" refers to the fact that verses 19-27 was a song originally sung to an instrument.
5. Now, the song itself is called a "lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son"—thus, we find that David lamented the death of Saul and Jonathan.
6. This brings me to this rather important question—Why did David mourn over the death of king Saul and Jonathan (let me suggest three reasons)?
7. (1) Love for Saul and Jonathan, v23—"Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided."
8. In other words, both Saul and Jonathan were loved by the people of Israel, because they were pleasant or gracious in character.
9. The question here becomes—how could David say this of Saul when in fact, Saul was a very disagreeable and evil man.
10. Well, the answer is rather obvious—Saul wasn't always a disagreeable and evil man but grew that way over time.
11. Furthermore, Saul did much good in advancing the kingdom of Israel, and defending it from their many enemies.
12. We surely learn an important lesson—speak well of the dead—there's no reason to cast further shame upon them.
13. V26—"I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; you have been very pleasant to me; your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women."
14. Here David speaks of his love for Jonathan in the most beautiful and appropriate way—he was pleasant to him and his love was wonderful.
15. In other words, David found great encouragement from Jonathan's love for him—it brought him great delight.
16. The last phrase is literally "more than that of women"—which simply underscores Jonathan's unique love for David.
17. If you remember, for Jonathan to pledge love and allegiance to David was not only selfless but very dangerous.
18. Thus, what David means is simply this—the loyalty that Jonathan showed David went beyond that of marriage.
19. No wife is expected to renounce the crown, defy their father, and become the objects of the king's wrath (and yet this is what Jonathan did).

20. Simply put brethren, we find in Jonathan a beautiful example of loving loyalty and commitment at personal cost.
21. MH—"David had reason to say that Jonathan's love to him was wonderful; surely never was the like, for a man to love one who he knew was to take the crown over his head, and to be so faithful to his rival; this far surpassed the highest degree of marital affection and loyalty."
22. (2) Love for God's kingdom—by this I mean, David mourned the death of Saul because of the reproach it brought upon God's people.
23. V19—"The beauty (glory) of Israel is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen! Tell it not in Gath, proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon—lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."
24. Here we find a primary reason behind David's lamentation—the fall of Saul would bring shame and harm upon God's people.
25. It would embolden their enemies to strike against them—it would cause them to rejoice at their sorrow and grief.
26. Richard Philips—"There could be no doubt that news of Saul's defeat would be celebrated in the Philistine cities, yet David expresses the wish that this result could somehow be averted."
27. This is why David mourned, because the death of Saul and Jonathan meant the army of Israel had been defeated.
28. V4—"The people have fled from the battle, many of the people are fallen and dead, and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead also."
29. Furthermore, David knew the death of Saul and his sons, would also embolden their enemies to destroy Israel.
30. Perhaps another of putting this would be—David knew the fate of Israel was necessarily tied to their king (ruler).
31. Can I hear make an application? I've never understood why people in this country desire to see our president fail?
32. Regardless what you think of our president, surely, we have to know, his failure means our failure, the two are related.
33. David loved the kingdom of God more than he feared or hated Saul—the prosperity of the kingdom was his priority.
34. (3) Love for God Himself—this I trust is most obvious—the reason David loved Jonathan and the people of God was because he loved God.
35. David knew that news of Saul's death would not only bring shame upon God's people, but also dishonor God Himself.
36. Remember, David was man after God's own heart—that is, he had a heart for God—a heart that went after God.
37. Dear brethren, this is why we long for the church's success—yes that sinners would be saved and saints sanctified, but ultimately, that God would be glorified.
38. And thus, for these reasons (and perhaps more), David responded to the news of Saul and Jonathan's death, with a song of lamentation.

III. Its Lessons

1. Here I want to take a few minutes and simply suggest three practical lessons from chapter 1 and David's lamentation.
2. (1) Those who live by the sword die by the sword—here of course I'm thinking about king Saul—he lived by the sword and died by the sword.
3. Now, let me clarify what I don't mean—that Saul spilt blood in battle in defending God's people was not sinful.
4. Scripture never forbids killing for all reasons but it does forbid murder, and Saul murdered many people and attempted to murder David.
5. To put it simply—Saul lived by the sword and Saul died by the sword—he died a shameful and dishonorable death.

6. And thus, let me here say a few words about suicide or self-murder—Scripture never looks favorably on self-murder.
7. In fact, in every instance of self-murder, it was a wicked person who committed it, among disgraceful circumstances.
8. Saul and Judas are classic examples—now we must be careful to distinguish suicide from sacrifice (as Samson pulled the pagan temple upon himself and his enemies).
9. But it must also be clarified, that while suicide is sinful it's not the unpardonable sin, Christians certainly can be tempted with it.
10. (2) Christians experience bereavement, grief, and sorrow—only three days after David returned from battle, he received bad news.
11. King Saul and his beloved Jonathan had died—this resulted in David mourning, weeping, and fasting through the day.
12. Simply put, Christians have friends and family members die, and when they die, it brings great sorrow and grief.
13. But David's sorrow was to last behind that initial day, he actually wrote a song to remind him of his grief and sorrow.
14. While it's totally possible for Christians to wrongly (or even sinfully) grieve, it's very proper for them to grieve.
15. And, this is true regardless if our loved ones are Christian or not—now, don't get me wrong, we grieve differently if they are Christian.
16. But Saul wasn't a Christian and Jonathan was, and David grieved for both—death is always a reason to grieve.
17. But what's interesting here is, David wanted the next generations to remember the death of Saul and Jonathan.
18. In other words, David was intending to merely "get over it"—you never really get over death until you die or Christ returns.
19. Yea, you get past it! You endure it! You move beyond it! But you never really get over it! And you certainly never forget it.
20. In fact, there's a sense in which the intensity of our grief, will be in direct proportion to the depth of our love (for those who've died).
21. Matthew Henry—"The more we love the more we grieve"—or, the stronger the love the stronger (or more intense) the grief.
22. This is often why people who've been married for 30, 40, or 50 years, grieve in ways that's impossible to explain.
23. Today is Mother's Day. Many of you are reminded that you've lost your mother and that brings grief and sorrow.
24. And regardless if she was Christian or not, it still hurts! Yes, it's very different if she was a Christian, but it still hurts!
25. My mother is still living but I'm reminded of my grandmothers and even my father—none of whom were Christian.
26. In fact, I have a large portrait of my father on the wall on the landing to our stairs that lead to our second floor.
27. Because our bedroom is on the second floor and my study is on the third floor, I walk past this picture 30 times a day.
28. And it's been there since 2010. And yet, to this day, nine years later, I rarely look at it because it still hurts too much.
29. Sometimes I stop and look at it—and sometimes I smile as I remember all of the positive things my father did.
30. Brethren, it's not wrong to honor those who've died outside of Christ, and to even cherish fond memories of them.
31. Saul did not die in Christ, and yet David speaks rather pleasant things about him—he's remembering the good things.

32. Let say one more thing before I come to our final lesson—Saul acted very wicked toward David—he lied about him and tried to kill him.
33. And yet, for all that, David doesn't feel obligated to rehash those experiences for the benefit of himself or others.
34. My dear brethren, if the truth were told, I could fill several pages of things my father did or failed to do that was wrong (and even hurtful).
35. But why is it necessary to speak ill of the dead, especially, when there was so much good to remember him for!
36. (3) Christians should foremostly be concerned with God's church—many Christians fail to put first the good of the church.
37. Most often we think in terms of ourselves—but we ought to be concerned with how our actions impact God's church.
38. David's great enemy had died—the throne is vacant (in fact he will now become king)—but how does he respond?
39. Does he respond by rejoicing? Does he respond by gloating? No! But instead, he responds with grief and lamentation.
40. Why? Because he was more concerned with the prosperity of God's people, then he was of his own personal progress.
41. And so, in light of this last lesson, let me finish our time together with three plain and straightforward exhortations.
42. Exhortation 1—Be quick to mourn for fallen leaders—every time a Christian leader dies, we should sing a lamentation.
43. V27—"How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished"—another mighty warrior (soldier) has fallen.
44. Today up in Essex, Ontario, Pastor Richard Valade is preaching his last sermon, after starting the church 40 years ago.
45. And though he is dead, his public ministry has ended. In some sense we can say—"the weapons of war perished."
46. And thus, we should lament the death of faithful leaders, even if they are not in perfect theological harmony with us.
47. For example, R.C. Sproul died at the end of 2017, and we were all right to mourn for the weapons of war perished.
48. John MacArthur recently celebrated 50 years of ministry, and although he's still going strong, he soon will follow Sproul into the grave (and then we shall mourn).
49. Exhortation 2—Be careful to speak against leaders—David refused to speak against Saul, even when he died.
50. And keep in mind brethren, Saul terribly mistreated David! And yet, David respected him in life and in death.
51. He never spoke evil of him when he was alive or dead. Why? Because, he was more concerned with the kingdom than himself.
52. Exhortation 3—Be diligent to pray for leaders—be diligent to pray that they would not bring shame upon the church.