2 Samuel 1-5

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Preacher: Paul Levy

[0:00] You said to change to Samuel, you're welcome to preach 254. This is my last Sunday preaching until September.

! So I'm very thankful for the elders for giving me a brief from preaching. There's going to be two students, one from Westlands Assembly of the States, Andrew and then another guy from Virginia South Wales, Dave, who are going to be with us over the summertime. There's a number of different people preaching.
So I pray I've got some writing to do study and I need to do some things that I just don't have a lot of time to do. So pray for me in love.
Let's pray for God. Almighty God, an everlasting Lord, you who poured out your Holy Spirit and your disciples gathered in that earth, grant to us the help of your Holy Spirit, that through the preaching and the hearing of your word our lives might be changed, the body of Christ would be united in holiness, and that your name would be magnified.
We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. And we're all transitioning, aren't we, through life, from one phase to another.
[1:22] Wherever you are in your life, you're probably transitioning, whether you're single to married, health to sickness, sickness to health, hopefully, studying to work, being a camel having a baby, from having one baby dying too, from work to retirement, being a parent or grandparent.

The book of Samuel is the story, one and two Sabbath, of Israel in transition. And you've moved from the era of the judges, where everyone did what was right in his own eyes, to the era of the kings.
And we're transitioning this morning from King Saul to King David, from a man who was not after God's heart to a man who was after God's heart. And in fact, we're transitioning from a king who's in waiting in 1 Samuel 16.
He's anointed King David, but he's in the waiting room. And he has to wait until 2 Samuel 5, until he actually becomes king. Until he's established as God's king, and he brings in God's kingdom.
And what is clear, isn't it, over the book of 1 Samuel, is it happens over a long time. You can't be in a hurry with God. It happens over a whole load of bloodshed and civil war.
[2:42] It happens under God's sovereign grace. It happens with David, at least at this point, in keeping his integrity and reflecting his righteousness.

The king is dead, long live the king. And where you start me to smooth track, this is unbearable that iPad there. I counted my eyes on it. It's like someone's flying towards me.
So, I was going to move tonight, I can tell you. So, when you're in the UK, you go to bed with one people in power, don't you? Normally you wake up with another. So remember Major was in power, and he is out, Blair is in.
Blair is out, Brown is in. Brown was out, took quite a bit of time for Cameron to come back in. But Cameron was out, May is in. May is out, Boris is in.
And 2 Samuel is thought about human politics. It's about the coming of God's king and God's kingdom. And it's laying the groundwork for us to understand the king of kings, the Lord.
[3:52] It's clear that as David is bringing in God's kingdom, it's not the schemes of men and women, but it's actually God's gracious purposes of its work.

Always in God's time, with God's king appointed by God's prophet. But Saul is dead. And the move to David being king should have been as smooth as silk.
It's what makes David's behaviour so impressive. He knew that everyone knew that Samuel had anointed David as king, and it became public knowledge.

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But the longer it dragged out, the longer David was in waiting, the more opposition King David faced before he fired Egypt at the throne.
The greater the temptation would be for him to compromise, and not reflect the kingship of God.
And so David will take his rightful throne, but it will be on God's terms, in God's way.
[4:57] And at this point, he is a lovely anticipation. We're meant to see the Lord Jesus being pre-faired, the greatest son of David. And so I want to do this morning, I want to look at five chapters, which is a big chunk.

And the temptation is going to be to get lost. You're going to have to work hard to stick with me, but I'm going to try my best to be clear. And what I want to do is, I want us to focus on what ties the five chapters together, and that is how David responds to the death of his enemies and the death of his friend.
There's three of his enemies and one friend. And not only does each death bring David closer to the throne, but just when you might have expected to rejoice over the death of an enemy, he grieves.
And it reminds us again of the innocence of David. So who are the three enemies who died? You've got the death of King Saul, and how David responds to his death. And then you've got the death of Saul's general, a guy who's by the name of Abner, who inspired rebellion.
And then you've got the death of Saul's son, Ish-bosheth. So firstly, Saul, he was Israel's first king.
And the people of Israel cried out, we want a king like all the other nations.
[6:19] They got a king who was full of envy, who was godless. They got a king called Saul who resented the new king off the block.

And David, he just hadn't been taken out. So do you remember, David had killed Goliath under the will of God. And do you remember the kind of Benjitches, the tribe of Benjamin?
Those girls came to the road and they said, well, Saul has killed his thousands, but David is tens of thousands. And the moment Saul heard that, he was filled with envy and he resented David.
So what's Psalm 1828? When Saul saw and knew that the Lord was David and that Michael, his wife, Saul's daughter, loved him, Saul was even more afraid of David.
And so Saul was David's enemy continually. You know what it's like to have an enemy. We've all had them, the thorn and the scythe among girls.
[7:27] Somebody will keep you up into the small hours of the morning. Maybe it's a family man who seems to have anything for you. Maybe it's the person at work who's undermining you. The neighbour whose mission seems to be to make your life difficult.

And you beg God to take them away. On a lot of occasions, you've daydreamed of them being dead. It's been quite a pleasant thought.
And Saul made himself David's enemy. He was unrelenting. Every moment he had, he wanted to take David out. And even though Saul consistently tried to kill David, when David hears the death of King Saul, you might have expected him to throw it past him.
You might have expected him to get a bottle of champagne. To say, feel I'm glad that sucker is off my back. But I tell you what he does. Number one, he grieves.
He's not just upset over his friend Jonathan. But over Jonathan's father Saul, he weeps and he grieves. And he presents a national lament.
[8:36] He writes this beautiful poem, this lament. In the rest of 1 Samuel 1, he encourages the whole of Israel to grieve. And secondly, he blesses the very men from a place called Javish Gilead.

Because these men, they respectfully buried Saul and Jonathan. They honored him. And then thirdly, David finds out that the foreigner who was letting him know that Saul is dead happens to be the very man who assisted Saul in his suicide.
And the moment he hears the Amalekite, hears that. The Amalekite thinks he's bringing good news. Saul is dead, the Amalekite says.
And I'm playing a part of it, but it wasn't good news. Because the moment that David heard that this man had to kill Saul, the Lord's anointed was the day the man died.
Because the harm of the Lord's anointed is to defy the Lord himself. So look at chapter 1 verse 16.
[9:39] And David said to him, Your blood, Amalekite, will be on your own head. For your own mouth has testified against you, said I have killed the Lord's anointed.

For David, whatever Saul had done, seemed irrelevant to him. David had seen Saul in his role as the Lord's anointed, through the Lord's eyes. It's a lovely principle, isn't it?

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That you are to see your enemy through God's eyes and not your own head. You are to see your own enemy through God's eyes and not your own head.
And if you did that, if we did that, we might forgive a lot quicker. To lay a hand on this king, evil as he was, was to defy the king of kings.
You think, ah, well, maybe this is a little bit of spin. David is trying to get the tribe of Benjamin, the tribe of Saul on the side. The tribe of Judah. And so the tribe of Judah, they anoint David pretty quickly.
[10:44] And they put him in Hegum for seven years. But to get the rest of the tribes, especially the tribes of Saul, well, maybe this is just a PR exercise so that David can get faithful with them.

But it's not. Even though Saul had consistently tried to kill David, David had, didn't he, on a number of occasions the opportunity to kill him, to take him out, but he wouldn't.
So the famous scene in 1 Samuel 24, you remember it? Saul goes into the cave, and it happens to be the cave where David tied it. Saul needs to go to the lute, there's no port-a-lutes in the Middle East.
And so he goes into the cave to protect his modesty. And when he's crouched down, David is behind him. And David and his men, his men say to him, God has put him here for you to take it. All David had to do was plunge the knife into his back and it would all have been over. What does David do? He keeps up behind him, and he cuts a little bit on the hand of his garment.
[11:45] So that later he would prove to Saul that he was that close to him. See, he doesn't let him know that he's there. And this is what we find out in 1 Samuel 24 verses 5 and 6.

And afterwards David's heart struck him. He felt guilty because he cut off a corner of the sword's rope. And he said to his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my Lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand in the main sting.
Because he's touching the hand of his garment and cutting it a bit. And so let me remind you that when we talk about the name Anointed One, or Anointed King, we're talking about Messiah, we're talking about the Christ.
They're the same word. Messiah is the Hebrew word, Christ is the Greek. And so when we refer to King Jesus, we are referring to him as the Anointed King.
Jesus wasn't the first Christ, Saul was. Jesus wasn't the first Messiah, Saul was. But they are shadows of the one who will be the King of Kings.
[12:50] And so with that kind of sensitivity about the Messiah, you would feel guilty about even cutting the hair of his garment. And so press the tape like we did a couple of weeks ago, a thousand years forward.

And you're in Acts chapter 2, and Peter is preaching in front of 2,000 people. And he reminds them that they crucified the Messiah. Let all the house of Israel know, therefore, know for certain that God has made him, Jesus, both Lord and Christ.
This Jesus from you crucified, oops. And I think that's true for the first time. The crowd suddenly realised that Christ killed us. They're devastated. They've killed the Lord's Anointed.
And when they heard this, they cut to the heart and they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, Brothers, what shall we do? Is there any hope for the Christ killers? And so if David felt guilty for just cutting off the hair of the garment, how much more of those who killed the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords.
That had to be the unforgivable sin, right? Apparently not. Because Peter says, Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.
[14:10] And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. That's why it's called Amazing Grace. The Christ killers are forgiven. In the very name of the Christ who they killed.

The murderers of the Messiah are told not only that they can be forgiven by repenting, but they can know the presence of God's Spirit. Not to dwell in a temple, but they themselves are built within themselves.
You see, there is nothing that God won't forgive. There really is nothing that God can't forgive. If I can go so far to say this, it really is true that Jesus is looking for an excuse to forgive.
How do you share your faith? People are often asking me, what do you do for evangelism training? What do we do for evangelism training? With a big smile on our face we say, there really is nothing that God can't forgive.

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That's your method, isn't it? It's not an eight week course. It's not a ten week program. To tell your friends there really is nothing that Jesus can't forgive. It's liberating. You can do it to the person next to you right now if you want it. I'm not going to make you do it. It's good to hear it, isn't it? He is one of those civil servants. He died of sin.
[15:23] He died of sin. He died of sin. He died of sin. He died of sin. He died of sin. He died of sin. He died of sin. He died of sin. He died of sin.

He died of sin. He died of sin. He died of sin. how David responded with integrity. Now look with me at the death of Abner. Abner is your classic political backroom boy.
He's one of these kind of civil servants behind the scenes pulling the strings. Saul is dead. It should have been one simple step. The following week David should have been anointed. But Saul's general Abner, who fought alongside Saul, didn't want to lose his face of power. So he goes to the son of Saul, a guy by the name of Isbasheth, and gets him to be king in rebellion against David.
But what Abner doesn't know is this, the plans of men and women will always come to nothing unless they are the plans of God. Eventually, after two years, Abner is offended by something that Isbasheth does, Saul's son, and Abner defects over to David.
And he brings with him the rest of the tribes of Israel. And this is the conversation that Abner has with the elders of the other tribes of Israel. The 11th tribe. Chapter 3, verse 17.
[16:48] And Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, For some time past, you've been seeking David as king over you. Oh. Oh. Abner knew that he was the one that was stopping it.

Now do it, he says. For the Lord promised David. He did know, didn't he? He knew that David was God's anointed king.
By my servant, God had promised, I will rescue my servant Israel from the hand of the Philistines, and from the hand of all their enemies. And God is using, isn't he, the sin of this man, Abner, who was with Saul's son, but who defects to David.
And he's using his sin to bring the rest of Israel on board. To anoint David as king. But in the process, while David is not around, David has a general himself.
A man named Joab. And Joab kills Abner. Because Abner had killed Joab's brother in a previous conflict. Don't get lost. It's clearly an act of revenge.
[17:56] That's the big thing. David's general revenges himself on Saul's general. But to everyone who's looking on, it looks like here is a man, Abner, who's defected over to David, and David was the one, who under his watch was doing some personal revenge.

It looks like David's got payback time. And what is very important is that David David is going to go to the throne of Israel. And if David is interested in reflecting the kingship of God, he's got to get to that throne with integrity.
And David is innocent. And he wants Israel to know he is innocent. So when he hears about the death of Abner, who really caused the whole civil war, he publicly grieves. He farts.
He laments. He curses Joab for killing Abner. He organises for Joab to sit in front of the funeral procession. And he stands at the back, because he's trying to communicate very clearly that Abner, by virtue of being Saul's general, deserved honor.
And David was not involved in the death of this man. 2 Samuel 3.36 is the reaction of Israel who's looking on. Of the media, and all the people noted, and it pleased him, as everything the king did pleased all the people.
[19:25] So all the people of all Israel understood that day that it had not been the king's will to put Abner to death. So David had nothing to do with Saul's death.

Can you see that? And he punished those who were involved. And now he has Saul's general, and he has nothing to do with that death. He is innocent.
He is innocent. He is innocent. And the people watch, and they've got a right to watch. It's actually true in church life, isn't it? You've got a right to watch your leader's life.
To watch your leader's life and doctrine. That's a general principle. And so church leaders, we're not only to do the right thing, but we are to appear to do the right thing.
And when we don't, we confess it. We own up to it. And the people of Israel needed to know that if they were going to join forces and recognise David to be the king of Israel, he is the kind of king that would be righteous.
[20:23] Like the God he represents. He would be the kind of king who represents a God who you can trust in. Who will bless those who bless him, and will curse those who curse him.

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Because it looked like, didn't it, that David took out Abner, and that they should need to be solved. And David will punish guilty men. That is part of his righteousness. But David must not punish our personal revenge.
Because remember, if God is king, the only way that you can have a human king is if he reflects the kingship of God. Otherwise, he will undermine the very God he's supposed to represent.
You see, at this point in David's life, he is just like God. God who takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner. God who takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, and neither should we, and neither should David.
And David is an honourable king. And so the question is, when we ordain David as king, will he live out the calling that God's kings are supposed to be like?
[21:36] This is David in his best days. We're two sermons away from David on his worst days. With Bathsheba, and the adultery with Bathsheba and the cover-up.

But at this stage, David is about reproach. He's not sinless, no, but he is reflecting the character of God. It's David as best. And right from the beginning, it's chapter 9, David is above reproach.
It was Robert Murray McShane who said to me that the greatest need of his congregation in the country, indeed, was his personal holiness. His Godliness.
It's true. I plead with you to pray regularly, weekly, daily, even daily. To pray for the godliness of the elders of this church.
It is your greatest need to make sure that their best days are their latter days. Not the former ones.
[22:43] Like happens with Saul, David, and Solomon. But the wheels fall off after a while. The king is dead, long live the king.

Third death is the death of the son of Saul, Ish-bosheth. Can you say it with me? Ish-bosheth. I don't make you up. Say it again. Ish-bosheth. It's a great word. Great name.
Ish-bosheth is a passive character. His will is not really in it. He's not really active. Abner seems to be doing all the running. Almost without Ish-bosheth's involvement.
But it's interesting here. Here is Saul's son, defying King David. God's appointed. He allows him, it's after being stalled for two years.
But when Abner sides with David and Saul, it's all over Belshazzar. And it's interesting, David exercises no revenge. So that when two thugs break into Ish-bosheth's house and kill him, chop off his head, bring David the head, they think that they're doing David a favour.
[23:50] That's near ancient Eastern politics, right? It's what you do. So they lug this big head into David and they say, here you are. They expect a big high five.

And what they get is David's destruction is to be killed on the spot. And then do their bodies start out as a public declaration that God has cursed them. Why?
Because not just the Messiah, but the Messiah's offspring are off limits. Now let me tell you why. David here is not one to play politics. David here is the incumbent keeper. That's what's driving the story. Years earlier, do you remember the cave incident? When Saul could have killed, when David could have killed Saul, but he'd just come off the head with a garment.
And at the end, when Saul had left, David holds it up and shouts at him and says, I could have killed you. But I didn't. I only cut the hair of your garment, Saul.
[24:58] Here is the truth. And Saul says, oh, you were that close to me and you didn't do it. And so this is what he says, 1 Samuel 24, verse 20, I know that you surely will be king, David, that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not come off my offspring after me and you will not destroy my name at my father's house. And David swore this to Saul.
David made a promise and despite how Saul had treated him, decades later, David keeps his word. Psalm 15, the righteous one who keeps his oath, who keeps his promise even when it hurts.
And what is driving David's mercy towards this man is of a covenant he made with his father, not to harm his offspring, who keeps his oath even when it hurts and does not change his mind.
That is the mark of those who follow David's greater son, Jesus. And so we are to be a people who keep our promises even when it hurts.
[26:15] Whether we're talking about the promise of a covenant like marriage or any other kind of promise we make, we say what we mean and we mean what we say. We say we're going to do something and we do it whether it's uncomfortable or not.

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Whether it's embarrassing to admit to something we've got done properly. We do it. We play it straight. We live with a clear conscience because at this point we are following the pattern that King David set out for us that will be lived out perfectly by the Lord Jesus.
We are covenant keepers who keep our promises even when it hurts. Iskosheth would not die in the hands of David.
There would be no payback. And so well 2 Samuel 5 David is in store as king by all of Israel and Jerusalem is secure for the first time. the Jezebites who owned it the last remaining nations to be wiped out under God's instructions are finally defeated.
The palaces the stores are built and David in his beautiful covenant mercy shows blessings to the people. But what I love is the way that David reflects on it.
[27:35] Look with me in 2 Samuel 5 verse 12 He knows that this only happened because of the king of kings of Israel not because of him.

And David knew that the Lord had established him king over Israel it wasn't his own doing and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel. It was God who had put him on the throne not even his God means.
It was God who had put him on the throne and why did God put him on the throne can you see it at the end of that verse for the sake of his people? If I had been writing 2 Samuel I would have said for the sake of God's glory.
It does say that plenty of times but it does say that here and I think what it's reminding us of again is what is good for God's people is good for God's glory. What glorifies God is when his leaders love his people.
And when David conducts himself above reproach it is exactly what God sent his son for for the sake of his people. For the sake of his church the bride. Because a thousand years after this comes David's greatest son Jesus the anointed one who will take that throne on a cross nailed under a sign which says this is the king of the Jews.
[29:01] And he will do that for the sake of his people. And while we were still sinners Christ died for us and this son of David was tempted in every way as he journeyed to his enthrone on the cross. And he never veered to the left or to the right and he matched God's law with perfect obedience.

And Jesus rather than expressing perfect vengeance towards those who pierced his side and stripped him and nailed him crying out Father forgive them for they don't know what they're doing. And David is giving us just an inkling of what the real son of David would be like.
That he would be righteous in every way and so we're not just called to preach the gospel we are called to live lives worthy of the gospel. But have you noticed God seems to take forever as he fulfills his promise?
God is not in a hurry but he gets into that. So for example Abraham has given us promise of a son but he's got to wait 25 years for it. And when Israel cries out from Egypt's enslavement they have to wait hundreds of years before God answers their prayer and David has to wait decades from being anointed to finally becoming a king.
And we've been waiting 2,000 years for Jesus Christ to come back. And with that waiting comes the temptation to compromise. It's hard to wait godly.
[30:27] Especially when you're entitled to something. The temptation to get corners. When you've been hard done by don't you feel that? The temptation to force God.

I've been praying for years for a spouse and God has not given me one. why can't I marry a believer?
Why can't I marry someone I shouldn't marry? Why do I have to pay all that tax that you know you should? The temptation to exercise revenge and face injustice.
They started it but I'm going to finish it. the temptation to lay clear what is rightfully mine but not trusting God by scheming and weeding and dealing. The king is there.
Long live the king. Let me close with David's response to one other death. It's the death of Jonathan who really is the only one of the house of Saul to get together.
[31:31] And Jonathan he loved David. He was the son of Saul but he loved David. He loved the Messiah. He aligned himself with the Messiah David over his father.

Even though it would mean losing the inheritance of kingship he followed the will of God. And there's a deep bond between these two men. And the lament that follows in chapter 1 is beautiful as it is.

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Let me read to you chapter 1 verse 26. He says I'm distressed for you my brother Jonathan. Very pleasant have you been to me. Your love to me was extraordinary surpassing the love of women. And naturally in the 21st century we've been brainwashed into thinking and sexualizing every aspect of every relationship. We think well this is a gay relationship. It's why you've got to keep separating yourself from our current day culture.
From what the text is saying. Ours is a really immature culture. it's turned this relationship into a gay relationship. But it's not. It's a beautiful description of a man's love for another.
[32:41] It's wholesome. These men love God more than they love each other. It is a love that is described as almost greater than a marriage.

It's a little bit disarming to us. Because we make God be married to love the highest love. As I finish let me try and apply this in a couple of ways.
I hope I'm not over applying it. But for those who journey in life along with the son of David if you are single or divorced or widowed. There is a greater love here on this earth than is greater than the love of marriage.
I think you read about this in men who serve together in wars. There is a profound loyalty.
And for those who are married it's an encouragement to have deep friendships within marriage but not to let marriage carry all the weight of your needs. And so we have to say don't we the kind of myth of our culture where we find somebody we say this person is my everything.
[33:58] That is completely unbiblical. A Christian doesn't say that. Claire is not my everything. She can't be my everything. She can't be my all.

There is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. And those friendships need to be nurtured. not just your relationship in marriage.
But can you hear the echoes in David's love for Jonathan and his grief over losing Jonathan's love through death? And so I wonder as you journey through life, as you transition from single to married or from married to single, from married to divorced, from married to widowed, whatever it is, from health to sickness, from employed to unemployed, whether the wind is behind you or whether the wind is in your face, you need to know that there is a greater love than even marriage.
It is the love of David. It is the love of the son of David, Jesus Christ. In whose covenant is the greatest love of all? So let me say as I close, which I said from on the third time this morning, if you're interested in wanting to live a life of integrity, as you journey into the age to come, it's standing for King Jesus.
If you're interested in wanting to live a life without compromise, then the way you resist temptation has time to take so long. God's promises seem to take so long to be fulfilled.
[35:34] The way you resist temptation, the key issue is to know the love of David's greatest son. Jesus loves me. This I know.

For the Bible tells me so. That's it, is it? Jesus loves you. So powerful last week was when Rico was preaching, where he said, whenever you hear the name of Jesus, remember, he died for me.
He died for me. He loves me. You hold on to that this week, and you're more likely to say no to the temptation of common hearts. Jesus loves you.
Let's pray.

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