

TRUE TO THE END / Sunday School- July 8, 2012

Unifying Topic: DAVID EMBODIES GOD'S JUSTICE

Lesson Text

I. David, The Exalted Leader (2 Samuel 23:1)

II. The King And His Kingdom (2 Samuel 23:2-4)

III. David's Everlasting Covenant (2 Samuel 23:5-7)

IV. David's Epithet (1 Chronicle 18:14)

The Main Thought: So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people. (1 Chronicles 18:14, KJV).

Unifying Principle: People want to have a meaningful existence. How do we discover our purpose in life? Acknowledging God's authority in our lives enables us to become the people God created us to be.

Lesson Aim: To learn that the king could be a source of success and salvation to the people but only in the context of administering justice and fearing God.

Life Aim: To reaffirm that regardless of how unjust or unrighteous a leader can be, God's will will not be affected.

23:1 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,

23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue.

23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.

23:4 And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain.

23:5 Although my house be not so with God; yet he hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow.

23:6 But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands:

23:7 But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place.

18:14 So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people.

HISTORY:

First Samuel 2 records the song Hannah sang when she brought her son Samuel to serve the Lord at the tabernacle, and 2 Samuel 22 records the song of David after the Lord helped him defeat his enemies (v.1; Ps.18). No matter how dark the days or how painful the memories, we can always praise the Lord. Now, we come to David's last words. In this poem, David did not describe the great things that he had done. But he described what God had done for him.

LESSON:

2 Samuel 23:1 David, The Exalted Leader

23:1 Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said, — At least seventy-three of the psalms in the book of Psalms are assigned to David, but his last one is found only here in 2Sam.23. The phrase "*the last words of David*" means "*his last inspired written words from the Lord.*" The psalm may have been written during the closing days of his life, shortly before he died. Since the theme of the psalm is godly leadership, he may have written it especially for Solomon, but it has much to say to all of God's people today.

This ¹identifies the speaker as David. It then identifies David through an increasingly grand sequence of appellations. In the first line, he is merely "David." In the second line, he is distinguished by his family ties as "*son of Jesse.*" In the third line, the poetry begins to take flight: David is "the man whom God exalted— the anointed one of the God of Jacob— the favorite of the Strong One of Israel" (verse 1c-e). Before the oracle even begins, the poem has given its verdict on David. He is the favorite – the "*darling,*" or "*beloved*" – of the Strong One of Israel.

2 Samuel 23:2-4 The King And His Kingdom

23:2 The Spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word was in my tongue. ²David didn't promote himself to achieve greatness. It was the Lord who chose him and elevated him on the throne (Deut.17:15). The Lord spent 30yrs. training David, first with the sheep in the pastures, then with Saul in the army camp, and finally with his own fighting men in the Judean

¹ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=11/22/2009&tab=2

² The Wiersbe Bible Commentary(pg.599)

wilderness. The Spirit not only empowered David for battle, He also inspired him to write beautiful psalms that still minister to our hearts. David made it clear that he was writing the Word of God, not just religious poetry. The mouth belonged to David but the Words were those of the Lord. When you read the Psalms, you are reading the Word of God and learning about the Son of God.

23:3 The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God. God didn't train David just to put him on display, but because He had important work for him to do; and so it is with every true leader. ³Again David referred to the "*Lord as a rock*"; "*the Rock of Israel*." In other words, God provides security in our lives. He is stable and dependable like a rock! So, God wants leaders and kings to rule in the right way. They should care about the people. And they should always be fair. That would show that they respect God. This demands a submissive attitude toward the Lord; having a fear of God. Without righteousness and the fear of God, a leader becomes a dictator and abuses God's people, driving them like cattle instead of leading them like sheep.

23:4 And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. In David's experience —⁴"*the light of the morning*," that is, the beginning of David's kingdom, was unlike the clear brilliant dawn of an Eastern day but was overcast by many black and threatening clouds; neither he nor his family had been like the tender grass springing up from the ground and flourishing by the united influences of the sun and rain; but rather like the grass that withereth and is prematurely cut down. However, David can now describe his reign as a good ruler; a godly leader. He said that a good ruler is like bright sunlight. Have you ever seen the light of the sunrise in the morning with no clouds? Have you ever seen the tenderness of the new growth of grass with fresh dew upon it? Light and rain are representatives of blessings. ⁵With God's help, leaders must create such a creative atmosphere that their co laborers will be able to grow and produce fruit. Ministry involves both sunshine and rain, bright days and cloudy days, but a godly leader's ministry will produce gentle rain that brings life and not storms that destroy.

2 Samuel 23:5-7 David's Everlasting Covenant

23:5 Although my house be not so with God; me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although he make it not to grow. In spite of the sins of David, God had forgiven him, and made an everlasting covenant with him. God knows, that neither David nor his children have lived and ruled as they should have done, justly, and in the fear of the Lord. But God was graciously pleased to make a sure covenant, to continue the kingdom to David and to his seed until the coming of the Messiah. ⁶"*Ordered*" - Ordained in all points by God's eternal counsel; "*Sure*" - or, preserved, by God's power and faithfulness in the midst of all oppositions. "*For this*" - or, in this is, that is, it consists in, and depends upon this covenant. "*Salvation*" - Both mine own eternal salvation, and the preservation of the kingdom to me and mine. "*It is all my salvation*": nothing but this will save us, and this is sufficient. Therefore it should be all our desire. The covenant didn't rest on the merits of David and his sons therefore would He not cause it to prosper? Will He not make it increase?

23:6 But the sons of Belial shall be all of them as thorns thrust away, because they cannot be taken with hands: ⁷"Belial" means "*worthlessness*", "*ungodly*." David is saying that just as you would gather up thorny bushes and burn them to keep them from ruining the crop, the worthless ungodly people will be dealt with harshly, like rejected thorns and briars; uprooted and burned because they cannot be handled; cannot get a sturdy grip on them. They cannot be judged kindly. The marked contrast between the righteous and the wicked is clearly presented here! Those who are in right relationship with God will be saved and those who are evil will be punished. The only way to make our lives count for God is by believing His promises and receiving His Salvation.

23:7 But the man that shall touch them must be fenced with iron and the staff of a spear; and they shall be utterly burned with fire in the same place. "*Whoever touches thorns uses a tool of iron or the shaft of a spear; . . .*" "*Fenced*" is an intransitive verb to fight using a slender sword, formerly in combat, now as a competitive sport. When opposing sin and wicked people, God's servants must be both diligent and careful. In ancient clearing of thorns, a tool and/or thick, protective gloves were used to protect the worker from injury. Those whose job it is to clear thorns from the land has to exercise care in handling them lest they be injured (*See Smith*.) Thorns are dug up, gathered and burned as undesirable, useless things. Unspiritual leaders produce thorns that irritate people and make progress very difficult.

³ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/2samuel-lbw.htm>

⁴ <http://www.bibletools.org/index.cfm/fuseaction/Bible.show/sVerseID/8659/eVerseID/8659/RTD/JFB>

⁵ The Wiersbe Bible Commentary (pg.600)

⁶ http://www.studydrive.org/com/wen/view.cgi?book=2sa&chapter=23&verse=5#2Sa23_5

⁷ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/2samuel/24.html>

1 Chronicle 18:14 David's Epithet

So David reigned over all Israel, and executed judgment and justice among all his people. This means that no enemy occupied any part of the land. God gave David victory by preserving David wherever he went and in his reign he executed judgment and justice among all his people making him a just ruler. His epithet (a word or phrase expressing some quality or attribute) would be "*just ruler!*"

SUMMARY:

⁸The list of David's mighty men is preceded by a short poem (vv.1-7) titled "*the last words of David*". In the first stanza (v.1) he identified himself as "*the son of Jesse,*" a peasant farmer in Bethlehem. David was never ashamed of that, as God lifted him "*up on high*" and placed him with the great men of the world, the man "*anointed by the God of Jacob.*" He is the same God who saved me and the same God who hopefully saved you.

His consciousness of being God's instrument is clear from the second stanza (vv.2-4), in which he acknowledged that God had spoken to him and through him (v.2). The Spirit came upon David, and that is the way men wrote the Old Testament. The "*rule over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God*" (v.3). It is obvious that the decisions made in our government today, regardless of the party, are not made "*in the fear of God.*" He is a king who rules as an agent of God, and it says he is like the brilliance of the sun on a cloudless morning and like a clear day after rain (v.4).

In the third stanza (vv.5-7) David centered on the Davidic Covenant, by which God chose and blessed him. God had made an everlasting commitment with him and his dynasty (my house), a covenant that guaranteed his ultimate well-being (cf. 7:8-16). In contrast, evil men, like so many thorns, will be cast aside to be consumed by the judgment of God (cf. Matt.13:30, 41). What David seems to be saying is simply this: David's house had not been perfect, but he fully trusted in God to provide whatever was needed to give rise to a righteous king. "*Yes, my house is not worthy of this. We did not receive this by merit. It did not come because of who I am; But God...!*" "*Evil men can come in like thorns, But God...!*" This is David's hope!

In the end, David's reigned over all Israel was as a "*just ruler.*"

APPLICATION:

God will be God; "*true to the end*" no matter how we act. We may go through a long training before we get it but, His judgment will be "*sure.*" Receive His salvation so you can be with Him "*in the end!*"

⁸ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/davids-last-words/>
<http://pitwm.net/pitwn-sundayschool.html>