

# **life groups' sermon guide**

## **king of hearts :: david: broken-hearted**



*Life Groups exist at Kingsway to provide authentic relationships for spiritual growth, caring for one another, and reaching out to others.*

*"Light shines brightest through cracked pots."*

**Joyce Meyer**

*"The Bible is a book of jacked-up folk!"*

**Paul Sheppard**

### **Warts and all**

I really love the quote from Paul Sheppard above. The Bible is indeed a book of "jacked-up folk". Top to bottom, beginning to end, the Bible makes no effort to sugarcoat the big (sometimes grand) shortcomings of the people that inhabit its stories. I have even heard that used as a basis of proof that it is divinely inspired. I mean, after all, if it were written by men, it is doubtful the characters would be revealed as being so incredibly flawed. But it is throughout all of Scripture, God uses ordinary people, warts and all, to do extraordinary things.

Q :: Give an example of someone God used in a great way, though they were greatly flawed? And what might we learn from the fact that God used them for the purpose He did?

Q :: Why does God use such people in these ways? Why not use folks that have it more together?

Of course, God does not veer from this approach when it comes to David. God does some amazing things in David's life, though he has many, many flaws – and some might argue that David's flaws are actually grander in scale than many of the other characters in Scripture. One might read David's story and wonder what God saw in him. He fell as often as he stood and stumbled as often as he conquered. In David we have one of the greatest stories of faith in all of the Bible: his slaying of Goliath with just a slingshot and a mountainside faith in his God; and we have one of the greatest examples of how far sin can take you away from God's purpose: David lusting after Bathsheba, committing adultery with her then orchestrating the death of her husband when it's discovered that she is pregnant. In his good moments, no one was better. In his bad moments, it's hard to get much worse.

Q :: Make a list of all of David's flaws throughout his life.

Quite a list, huh? YET, God calls David "a man after my own heart". He gives this distinction to no one else in all of the Bible. Paul was an apostle, John was the beloved, Abraham was a friend of God – but

none was tagged as a man after God's own heart. That God calls him as such should be an inspiration and offer incredible hope to all of us. The heart God loved was a checkered one.

Since God calls David a man after his own heart, I believe we can perhaps learn something of God's heart by trying to get through to what it was in David that earned him this title – and what it was not.

First, let's consider what it was NOT, for I believe that we can sometimes get so caught up in trying to perform for God, that we can miss the magnitude of the grace that we've been given. Look back at the list of David's flaws that was assembled from above. It's very clear that this "man after God's own heart" thing is definitely NOT tied to perfect (or even exemplary) performance. Far from it, right?

To think that a man who was an adulterer, a deceiver, a murderer, and a negligent father (to name but a few) can still be a man after God's own heart – it's scandalous!

Q :: What does the fact that such a sinner can be a man after God's heart say about the role of sin in our own lives?

Q :: God called David what He did before David was even anointed king. Being sovereign, we can be assured that it wasn't like God didn't know David's future failures. God KNEW in advance, exactly what David would do, both right and wrong, and yet God still chose Him as king. How do we let our own failures color how we think God perceives us?

So if these sins were not roadblocks to God's high esteeming of David, then what was it that David possessed that God valued so highly? I believe it we can perhaps catch a glimpse by looking at three key moments in David's life and how he responded in each.

### ***the heart of victory***

David's greatest victory. He's brash, confident and charges in with guns blazing (so to speak). Max Lucado's wonderful book *Facing Your Giants* (where a good chunk of this study comes from) brings out something really interesting - and easily overlooked, that I think may be a key to God being so pleased with him.

#### Read 1 Samuel 17:23-50

List the observations David makes about Goliath? I'll save you the time, there's just two (v. 26 and 36). Amazing, only two Goliath-related comments, both cocky kinda insults to boot. No questions about Goliath's skill, his weapons, his history in battle. Nothing. David gives me barely any thought at all.

Now look back at David's observations about God. There are at least NINE! God-thoughts outnumber Goliath-thoughts nine to two. Facing overwhelming odds David's focus is not on the problem, but on God.

Q :: How does David's ratio of God-thoughts to Goliath-thoughts compare to yours? Are you four times more likely to describe the strength of God or the height of the obstacle in front of you?

Q :: Why do you think his fellow countrymen had such a different perspective than David?

Q :: Read v. 45-47 again. What do these reveal about why God might consider this young man a man after His own heart?

### ***the heart of defeat***

David's greatest defeat. The whole Bathsheba incident stinks, from top-to-bottom. There is just SO much David does wrong here. It's not like there's one little slip-up and he gets back on track. Things go off the rails quickly and are spiraling out of control before you know it. One mistake begets another, and that begets another, and so on. The destructive aspects of sin are on full display.

### Read 2 Samuel 11

God is conspicuous by His absence in this part of David's story. David seduces – no mention of God. David plots – no mention of God. David murders – no mention of God. All this mess unraveling and God is not spoken to, nor does He speak. He finally shows up in v. 27 though – but not really in a good way.

Q :: Do you think God's absence is the cause or the result of David's sins? Explain.

Q :: Why do you think God is silent during all of David's sinful activity?

But it is not David's sin that reveals God's soft spot for him – it's what He does afterward. Although, it should be noted, not ***immediately*** after. No, David makes things even worse by trying to sweep things under the rug and not face up to it. It's only when

confronted by Nathan in 2 Samuel 12 that David deals with his sin. After sucking David into a story about a ruthless, thieving self-centered man who takes from someone all that they have (and hearing David pronounce judgement on this fictitious person) Nathan points that bony finger in David's face and proclaims "You are the man!" What follows is Psalm 51.

### Read Psalm 51

The very same principle being evidenced here as well. David's focus is more on what God can do for him, His abilities, His power and His character than it is even on his own sin. I mean, just in the first six verses he says of God that: 1) His love is unfailing; 2) His compassion is great; 3) He is right in His verdict 5) He is justified when he judges; 6) He desires faithfulness; and 7) He teaches wisdom.

Q :: What all do we learn from David about confessing our sin?

Q :: What does David tell God he will do once forgiven?

Q :: The things David's says he will do aren't conditions he's setting up to bribe God - they are expressions of gratitude for God's mercy. How is this different than how we approach confession of sins and requests for forgiveness?

### ***the heart of grief***

David's life was filled with great highs, and dark, black-as-night lows. He was dancing through the streets in his underwear one minute and deeply mourning a loss the next. One such low comes after Nathan's confrontation. God pronounces judgment on David's sin through Nathan and part of that is that the son borne to him by Bathsheba will die. David mourns and is seemingly inconsolable.

#### Read 2 Samuel 12: 13-19

Faced with the impending loss of a child, David presses hard into God and "pleads" for the child to be spared. Even though He knows God has passed judgment and is justified and right in His verdict, he nonetheless presses forward in his requests, no doubt with the same full-on, all-out passion that is his trademark. What happens next is what I find truly, utterly amazing:

#### Read 2 Samuel 12: 20

Did I really read that right? Upon hearing that his son has died, he gets up, cleans up and worships?? Once again, God-thoughts dominate David's thinking. The other stuff David does in v. 20 make sense after such a prolonged period of fasting and praying. But would worship have been your first activity after just hearing such awful news? I'm sorry to say that it would most likely not have been mine.

Q :: Have you ever had a time when you were able to praise God when, given the circumstances, that would not have thought yourself able to? Explain.

#### **Conclusion:**

I believe David was a man after God's own heart, because He allowed his own heart to be consumed by thoughts of God and how to bring Him glory. Notice that in Psalm 51 David tells God that if He forgives him he will worship Him? Well, he does just that after the death of his son. But God gets glory in David's life, whether in times of aching grief, times of great victory or on the heels of – and within the very confession of – sin of epic proportions.

David's story gives me hope because, while my own sins are different, I am no less a jacked-up mess than David is. May we all seek God's glory in every facet and circumstance of our lives, that we too may be a man or woman after God's own heart.