

Friday, July 20, 2018

Heard

2 Samuel 22-23

In my distress I called to the LORD; I called out to my God. From his temple he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears.
2 Samuel 22:7

God rules from His temple. David understood what it meant to rule—he was the king. As he reflects on the victories of his life, Israel's singer of songs writes a praise song to the LORD, acknowledging that it is God who gave the victories. It is preserved here and also in the Psalms (18). It is indeed a marvelous praise to the magnificent God of the Bible. David was certain that God heard the prayers that he offered. While in distress, he called out to the LORD in His temple. David did not view this as God being far away and unapproachable; rather, he knows that God heard his voice. He knew that God was listening to the cry of his heart from deep despair. What follows in the praise song is a poetic picture of how David saw God responding to his prayer. He parted the heavens and came down amidst smoke to a trembling earth, riding on dark clouds, soaring on the wings of the wind, roaring like thunder as He went to battle against David's enemies. How would my prayers change if I realized the intensity of the battle that I am in? What if I could truly understand that my prayers are heard by God, while He is in His temple, and that Almighty God will move with great power? I must learn to offer big prayers to a big God who is ready to answer in a big way.

Dear God, I am overwhelmed to think that You hear my prayers and that You respond to each and every one. Sometimes it seems as though You are not listening. Help me remember that You are and that my prayers bring me ever closer to You. Amen.

July 16 - 21, 2018

Saturday, July 21, 2018

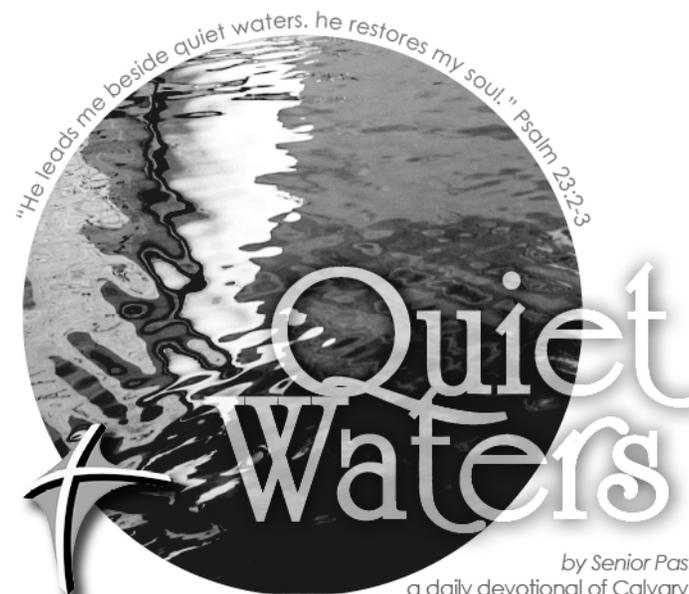
Cost me

2 Samuel 24-1 Kings 1

But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them.
2 Samuel 24:24

David feels the conviction of the LORD once again. But this time, the king is convicted before a prophet comes to speak to him. David is the example of a man who understands his place and role before God. He serves as a viceroy. He realizes that he is king only as he exercises his authority on behalf of sovereign God. God is the true King of Israel. No other king in Israel will comprehend this to the degree that David does. He sees his sin—and sees the consequences, as the plague comes into Zion—and repents. He has given himself and his people to the mercy of God (24:14) instead of his own decision, showing the true trust he has in God. God calls him to build an altar in a certain place so that the plague will stop. David obeys, finding the threshing floor owned by another who is willing to give it to the king. But David knows that a sacrifice is not a sacrifice if it costs nothing, and he has been called to make a sacrifice. So he pays for the threshing floor, which will become the place where Solomon will build the temple (2 Chron. 3:1). How many of my sacrifices cost me something? How many times is my repentance flippant and forgiveness from God is expected selfishly? I must learn from David that I serve a King who is greater than I. It is a joy to obey this King.

Dear God, allow me to see the depth of my sin and to grieve when the consequences bring pain to others. Teach me to repent with a sacrifice that has a cost to me. Amen.



by Senior Pastor Chuck Cervenka
a daily devotional of Calvary Community Church

Monday, July 16, 2018

Ready

2 Samuel 14-15

Then the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the LORD'S eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him."
2 Samuel 15:25-26

Once again, David relinquishes himself to the will of the LORD. When he is faced with the news that Absalom has gained a following, he flees. It may be that he knows this is the word of Nathan coming true (12:11) and so resigns himself to the will of God. He does not wish to see the people of the city of Jerusalem put to the sword. In the midst of fleeing, he stops and urges the priests to take the ark back to Jerusalem. In the statement that he makes to Zadok, he makes it clear that he is ready to accept the will of God in his life—whatever that may be. Fleeing is not new to David. He has done this before, but the previous times, he was certain that God was pleased with him and that He was going with and before him. This time, it appears that David is somehow less certain. But perhaps it is just that now David knows God differently and does not presume upon Him. He knows the consequences of his sin and he is ready to praise the LORD even as he lives in those rightful consequences. I must be ready to do the same. God is right in His judgment and grace. I have surely earned consequences from my actions. I am ready for Him to do whatever seems good to Him.

Dear God, I am ready to accept whatever seems good to You. I am Your servant. I know what my sins have earned and I trust in what Your grace will provide. Amen.

Tuesday, July 17, 2018

Curse

2 Samuel 16-17

But the king said, "What do you and I have in common, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD said to him, 'Curse David,' who can ask, 'Why do you do this?'"
2 Samuel 16:10

Saul has not been forgotten. As Absalom seeks to overthrow the throne and take what has not been given to him (the crown), a man from the same clan as Saul brings curses and false accusations upon David. David waited patiently and remained loyal to God's anointed king—something Absalom was not interested in doing. While those with David could not understand why David would not bring an end to the cursing, David took the opportunity to teach exactly what loyalty involved. Ultimately, David was not loyal to Saul but to God beyond Saul. He was loyal to Saul because Saul was God's anointed. The accusations of Shimei are untrue and his curse was unfounded. Yet David allowed for the fact that Shimei may be acting as an agent of God. David endured this relentless onslaught of suffering in hopes that God would see his distress and bring good to him. What happens to me is of far less importance than how I handle what happens to me. I live in a fallen world where my actions will be misunderstood and I will be cursed at times and in some ways. Am I able to trust in the truth that God sees my distress and will work it out for His good?

Dear God, how are You working in my life? Sometimes it feels so unfair and uncomfortable—especially when I am misunderstood. Help me trust in You beyond my situation and circumstance so that You will receive glory. Amen.

Wednesday, July 18, 2018

If only

2 Samuel 18-19

The king was shaken. He went up to the room over the gateway and wept. As he went, he said: "O my son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! If only I had died instead of you—O Absalom, my son, my son!"
2 Samuel 18:33

Absalom is the third son of David to die. David's own words are coming true. When confronted by Nathan, David decreed that the lamb must be paid for four times over (12:6). David mourns deeply for his son. He knows that in part, this is the consequence of his own sin and pride. Remember that Nathan said David would not die for his sin, yet his sons are. While there was relief in knowing that he had been forgiven by God, David also experienced the pain that came from knowing his sin had far-reaching implications on others. I believe that within this cry of pain, "If only," remains the lingering thought of "If only God had taken me instead of you because of my sin." The pain is deep. There was really no way there could be a celebration for this victory. The people of the nation chosen by God warring with each other cannot bring celebration for either side. David will make his way back to Jerusalem with the heaviness of grief. I must remember that my sin is not private, even though I am tempted to think that it is. I must do all I can to live my life in such a way that "If only" does not have to be on my lips. I must dwell in and with my God so that He permeates my words and my thoughts so that I may honor him at all times.

Dear Lord, keep me from the darkness of regret. Remind me that the best way to avoid the pain regret brings is to walk closely with You every moment of my life. Amen.

Thursday, July 19, 2018

Sought

2 Samuel 20-21

During the reign of David, there was a famine for three successive years; so David sought the face of the LORD. The LORD said, "It is on account of Saul and his blood-stained house; it is because he put the Gibeonites to death."
2 Samuel 21:1

After the famine had been going on for three years, David sought the face of the LORD. I wonder if he waited that long for any special reason. When he did seek the LORD, he was told that it was because of Saul's doings against the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites had a treaty with Israel (Joshua 9:16) that they had gained through trickery and deceit. Yet God viewed it as binding and Saul had not honored it. He put Gibeonites to death, so God brought the drought so that they could be avenged. Seven men from the line of Saul must be given over for execution. They are. The wrath of God is appeased and he answers the prayers on behalf of the land. How do I go about seeking the face of the LORD? I have the Word of God preserved for me so that God may speak to me through the powerful words on its pages, as the Holy Spirit illuminates the words and the meaning. Am I quick to seek the LORD or do I look to other sources and places before I go to His Word? When God reveals His will, am I quick to obey, no matter the cost?

Lord, help me seek Your face and Your will in all that I do. Keep me in Your Word. May Your Word dwell in me and may it guide me in each step. Help me be quick to obey. Amen.