

The Weekly Word
January 22-28, 2018

The story of David continues to unfold.

Happy reading...

Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, January 22: 1Chronicles 19- Jumping to conclusions...

How often we jump to conclusions. We interpret a situation wrongly, don't check the facts and create a mess. Hanun and his leaders made a colossal mess because they jumped to conclusion.

In the course of time, Nahash king of the Ammonites died, and his son succeeded him as king. David thought, "I will show kindness to Hanun, son of Nahash, because his father showed kindness to me." So David sent a delegation to express his sympathy to Hanun concerning his father. When David's envoys came to Hanun in the land of the Ammonites to express sympathy to him, the Ammonite commanders said to Hanun, "Do you think David is honoring your father by sending envoys to you to express sympathy? Haven't his envoys come to you only to explore and spy out the country and overthrow it?" So Hanun seized David's envoys, shaved them, cut off their garments at the buttocks, and sent them away (1-4).

Our wounding, insecurities and 'the like' push us toward bad decisions. I have seen it over and over.

Once prior to an elder meeting, one elder told me he had to leave by 8:00pm at the latest. In the 20 minutes leading up to 8, we were in a deep discussion regarding a particular situation and the elder who spoke to me was the major voice on one side of the discussion. It was pretty obvious to me, as moderator, that this elder's opinion was NOT carrying the day. At 8 sharp he grabbed his papers got up and left. The room was silent; everyone thought he was storming out because he was 'losing' the discussion. I could feel the tension in the room. Fortunately I was able to explain that he had told me he had to leave by 8 and his leaving had nothing to do with the preceding discussion. This situation would have been disastrous for the elders had I not been informed prior to the meeting.

Jumping to conclusions creates huge problems...

I am reminded about how David often spoke with the Lord before he sent men into battle or made a major decision. How wise this is... seeking the Lord's perspective can save us some the pitfalls of jumping to conclusion. God knows what's going on and He can direct us to wise decisions rather than rash ill-informed ones.

Many soldiers died because Hanun jumped to a conclusion and started a war. Had he known the Lord and was willing to seek the Lord's advice, this senseless battle could have been averted.

History is history, I cannot change what happened. However, I can learn from his mistake and follow the example of David and seek the Lord and then obey His leading...

So can you, if you know Jesus because if we are Christ-followers then the Lord will lead and guide us toward what is right and true... if we will listen and obey.

Oh, Lord, tune my ears to hear Your voice and adjust my heart to want to obey You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, January 23: 1Chronicles 20- We don't have to be defined by our past...

Every history is selective. No one can record everything. Sometimes what is left out is as interesting as what is included.

The Chronicler, maintaining a history for the beleaguered exile Israelites in Babylon omitted an interesting detail in this account of David. He wrote:

In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, Joab led out the armed forces. He laid waste the land of the Ammonites and went to Rabbah and besieged it, but David remained in Jerusalem. Joab attacked Rabbah and left it in ruins. David took the crown from the head of their king—its weight was found to be a talent of gold, and it was set with precious stones—and it was placed on David's head. He took a great quantity of plunder from the city... (1-2).

Now compare this to 2 Samuel 11:1-4: *In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem. One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." Then David sent messengers to get her. She came to him, and he slept with her. (Now she was purifying herself from her monthly uncleanness.) Then she went back home...*

The account of Bathsheba is an important detail in the history of Israel, especially since she would bear David his son Solomon, who would be the next king of Israel.

We can all surmise why the Chronicler might omit this and seeing that this is God's Word, God obviously wanted us to read this version as well as the Samuel version.

I pondered that... now I don't know the mind of the Lord, but it did lead me to some interesting thoughts.

- 1- From Samuel: none of us are perfect. Even the best and greatest among us sin. Even the greats have faults and areas of weakness. Wow, these great faith heroes are real people like me.
- 2- From Samuel: We are who we are and we need to be honest about ourselves... And we especially need to be honest about ourselves before the Lord since He knows all anyway.
- 3- From the Chronicler: We don't have to be defined by our failures. David rose from the ashes of failure to be a great king.
- 4- From the Chronicler: The gift of forgiveness is powerful, our sins are washed away. *As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us (Psalm 103:12).*

I pondered this good news and found my thankfulness for Jesus growing... the cross provides the gift of forgiveness. Alleluia.

Thank you for the Cross, Lord. Thank for the nail scarred hands... Oh, Jesus, you give me new beginnings every day when I am honest with You and confess... Praise You. Amen.

Wednesday, January 24: 1Chronicles 21- We all blow it...

I wish I knew what it was that blinds even a faithful follower's heart from the ways of God. David, a man after God's own heart, walks faithfully most days and yet there are times he chooses a wrong path that makes one's head scratch.

Counting the fighting men is one of those choices. His closest advisor is shouting in his ear "Don't do it." Yet, willfully, David overrules Joab's counsel and dives headlong into his folly.

David's sin with Bathsheba is more understandable; done in secret he had no wise counsel to steer him correctly in a time of weakness. However, in today's reading David plows on into sin despite the voice of those he has trusted. What gripped him so tightly that he did this?

I do not know and if David can fall like this I must beware. I am vulnerable to similar lapses. I, too, am capable of great sin.

Oh, Lord God, protect me from my worst self. Take my heart and heal it from its wanton selfishness and sin...

Fortunately, the story does not end with David's failure. David comes to his senses... *Then David said to God, "I have sinned greatly by doing this. Now, I beg you, take away the guilt of your servant. I have done a very foolish thing"* (8).

I am touched by the fact that David came to this realization on his own. His heart was not dead. The Spirit of God coursing through his life brought internal understanding of what he needed to do. David confessed to the Lord...

Even in the darkest moments of sin, confession is the way out. David, like the prodigal son, has come to his senses and the Father is waiting there for him.

The Lord never turns a deaf ear to our cries of confession. What a gift confession is... what an amazing, wonderful, life-giving gift confession is!

Sin has consequences. I might be forgiven but sin also has natural consequences. In a rare instance David is given a choice of his consequences... wisely he falls into the hands of the Lord, where mercy is possible.

Stepping back, this sad tale reminds me about the depravity of the human heart –my human heart –and the wonder and gift of confession. Most weeks in worship we hear this promise: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness* (1John 1:9).

What a gift, what an amazing gift is our access to the Father and the forgiveness that is ours when we confess.

Lord, thank You for this reminder today. I love You... In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen

Thursday, January 25: 1Chronicles 22- Great projects take tremendous planning...

David poured a huge amount of planning and resources into the Temple. Even though God had told him he was not the one to build the temple, his heart burst with love for the Lord, so he stockpiled tremendous resources so that his son Solomon could attend to the building and not be burdened with resource procurement.

What a gift David gave his son.

From a spiritual perspective, David could have abandoned his dream of a temple when he received his 'NO' from the Lord. But David was a man after God's heart and since building the temple would happen under his son, David used every skill and gift he had to provide to the temple as if he, himself, was getting to build it.

His dream of providing for the Lord was more important to him than who received the honor for actually building the temple.

Love for the Lord rather than recognition drove David and this is a spiritual lesson I can learn from this text. The question filling my soul right now is this, “What drives me in my work for the Lord?” Is it personal recognition or love for my Lord?

As I chew on this question it has deep and profound implications...

I hope and pray it is love for my God and not recognition that drives me... I need to look deep within to answer this. And so will we all.

David truly was a ‘man after God’s own heart’.

Lord, my prayer is that I, too, might be a man after Your own heart. Through Jesus, I pray. Amen.

Friday, January 26: - 1Chronicles 23- No one can do it all...

In God’s economy, no one can do it all. David, the king, needed advisors. Aaron, the priest, needed the Levites to perform the ancillary functions so that he could do the priestly duties.

As Israel transitioned from movable tabernacle to permanent temple the role of the Levites adjusted but remained necessary and important.

For David had said, “Since the LORD, the God of Israel, has granted rest to his people and has come to dwell in Jerusalem forever, the Levites no longer need to carry the tabernacle or any of the articles used in its service.”

According to the last instructions of David, the Levites were counted from those twenty years old or more. The duty of the Levites was to help Aaron’s descendants in the service of the temple of the LORD: to be in charge of the courtyards, the side rooms, the purification of all sacred things and the performance of other duties at the house of God. They were in charge of the bread set out on the table, the special flour for the grain offerings, the thin loaves made without yeast, the baking and the mixing, and all measurements of quantity and size. They were also to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD. They were to do the same in the evening and whenever burnt offerings were presented to the LORD on the Sabbaths, at the New Moon feasts and at the appointed festivals. They were to serve before the LORD regularly in the proper number and in the way prescribed for them (25-31).

It seems that the Lord is intentional in necessitating many people to see that His work is accomplished. This theme continues in the New Testament where apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor/teachers (see Ephesians 4:11) were necessary for the building up of the body to do its part. Then as the church matures we see elders and deacons being added to leadership roles (see 1Tim 3:1ff).

All of this was to equip and protect the body so that the body—all believers—could use their gifts as God dispensed and determined (see 1Cor 12). Everyone is needed for God’s design for the church to work properly

I have ranged far and wide from my initial thoughts on the Levites; even so I see consistency in the Lord’s workings.

God called a people to spread His fame and God is still using a people. No longer is God’s people defined by a blood line, now instead it is defined by one’s faith in Jesus. The goal remains the same, to bless the nations by giving everyone a chance to know and follow Jesus. To accomplish this task, every Jesus-follower needs to play her or his part. There are no bystanders in the church of God. Everyone is an active participant.

Am I playing my part? Are you playing your part?

Think about it...

Lord, I am so blessed that You saved me. My appreciation is best put into action, doing what You would have me do. Show me, Lord. Apprentice me, Lord. Lead and guide me, Lord, into being the son and disciple You want and desire me to be. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Saturday, January 27: - 1Chronicles 24- The many spiritual blessings of the New Covenant...

In some ways I feel like I am back in the beginning chapters of 1Chronicles... names, names and more names.

This chapter begins with the names of the priests. In a culture and religious system where priests are essential for maintaining personal and community connection with the Lord, listing the family names of priests is important. Doubly so if the community is reestablishing the sacrificial system after the exile.

Parallel to priests, cataloguing the Levite families is also important for similar reasons.

Contemplating the role of priests in the sacrificial system of Israel caused me to realize the great blessing we have under the New Covenant. In Christ we are a kingdom of priests.

As Peter reminds his readers in 1Peter 2:9:*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Such is our description: *a royal priesthood... God's special possession.* No longer do we need to have an intermediary. We have direct access to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. And no longer do we need to sacrifice the blood of animals to atone for our sins. Jesus Christ, the perfect priest, offered his life on the cross as the once for all sacrifice for sins.

Hebrews 10:10-14 *...we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But when this priest [Jesus] had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.*

So as I sat today, I pondered the many spiritual blessings of the New Covenant... what a wonderful way to prepare for worship tomorrow.

Jesus, thank You for establishing the New Covenant in Your blood and for inviting me to be part of Your new covenant. I am eternally grateful and I pray that I might live in a manner that declares You to my world. I pray this in Your name, Jesus. Amen.

Sunday, January 28, 2018, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

[Click here for a link to my sermons on the web.](#) Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.