

April 30 — Sheba's Revolt

READ

2 Samuel 19:31-21:22

Psalm 7

1 Chronicles 20:4-8

2 Samuel 20:2, *"So all the men of Israel deserted David to follow Sheba son of Bikri. But the men of Judah stayed by their king all the way from the Jordan to Jerusalem."*

THINK

Do you ever feel like one thing after another continues to go wrong? David probably felt that way when, shortly after stopping a rebellion led by his own son, he faced yet another troublemaker stirring up malcontent. Sheba, from the tribe of Benjamin, incited the Israelites to revolt against King David, and all but the men of Judah deserted him.

That would be pretty disheartening for any leader. After all, one loyal Israelite tribe out of twelve isn't the best odds. But God put David in his position of authority, and no human rebellion could ever move the hand of the Almighty. The revolt was eventually put to rest, and King David continued to reign.

There are several lessons we can learn from this story. On one hand, we are like David. When all others seem to abandon us, we should stand firm, knowing that God is with us and trusting in Him to turn things out for His perfect will. On the other hand, David is a picture of God, and we must decide if we will be like the men of Judah or all the other Israelites that flocked to the false calls of the latest charismatic leader. But no matter how you apply it, "trust in God" is what always sees us through!

PRAY

God, I put my trust in You. Thank You for never abandoning me, even if others do. Lord, keep my heart always true to You. In Jesus 'name, Amen.

May 1 — Reflection of Praise

READ

2 Samuel 22:1-51

Psalm 18

2 Samuel 22: 2-3, “...*The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my savior; my God is my rock, in whom I find protection. He is my shield, the power that saves me, and my place of safety. He is my refuge, my savior, the one who saves me from violence.*”

THINK

As King David comes to the end of his life, he reflects on all that God has been for him. He is confident in where his strength always comes from and in the fact that his security lies in the hands of his Rock, Fortress, and Savior — God Almighty.

David’s life was full of mountaintop victories. It was also plagued with difficult valleys of personal failures, family dysfunction, and tragedy. Yet we read, that in every circumstance, he praised God and sought intimacy with the Lord.

It’s easy to praise God on the mountaintop, but the real test of faith is praising God in the valley lows. A true life-change relationship means that we know the God of the highest moments is also the same God of the darkest of days. Will you choose to praise Him in both? Let Him be your Rock, Fortress, and Savior in every circumstance.

PRAY

Heavenly Father, You are my Rock, my Fortress, and my Savior. I will praise Your name on the mountaintops and in the valleys of life. Thank You for the hope and refuge that only comes from You. In Jesus ’name, Amen.

May 2 — Pick Your Poison!

READ

2 Samuel 24:1-25

1 Chronicles 21:1-22:19

1 Chronicles 21:1, *"Satan rose up against Israel and caused David to take a census of the people of Israel."*

2 Samuel 24:10-11, *"But after the census, David's conscience began to bother him. And he said to the Lord, 'I have sinned greatly by taking this census. Please forgive my guilt, Lord, for doing this foolish thing.' The next morning the word of the Lord came to the prophet Gad ... This was the message: 'Go and say to David, ... 'I will give you three choices. Choose one of these three punishments, and I will inflict it upon you.'"*

THINK

The devil tempted David to do a seemingly benign task — to take a census of Israel. Why would God take such umbrage when he followed through with counting the Israelites? Let's explore!

The census was meant to count what belonged to man. Israel belonged to God — not David — and God didn't command His people to be numbered. It was a prideful act, and, afterward, David's conscience condemned him.

When we choose to sin, we have no say in the consequences. But God allowed David to "pick his poison" from the following three judgment options:

- Seven years of famine — but David was wealthy and, therefore, would not be affected.
- Three months of fleeing before Israel's enemies — which would mostly result in the death of soldiers.
- Three days of plague — that would affect all of Israel, the rich and poor alike.

By selecting the last option, David knew that he, too, could fall victim to the devastating plague. He even asked God just to punish him and his household, but God had other plans in mind. And due to David's sin, over 70,000 people died. David atoned with burnt and peace offerings. God accepted David's plea for mercy and relented as He consumed the offering with fire from heaven. By giving the three options, God tested David's wisdom and heart after His foolish error in judgment, and this time he passed the test.

This is a graphic but beautiful picture of sin and repentance. God is willing to forgive us when we admit our failures and turn back to Him. Like David, God wants us to be in fellowship with Him and keep short accounts of sin. No matter our offense before Him, if we truly desire to follow His heart, we will be blessed in the end. So, seek God, obey, and repent immediately. And remember, the devil tempts us to do wrong, but God tests us to make us strong!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, I want to obey Your commands. I turn from my failures and towards You as I seek to stay on track with Your will for my life. Amen.

May 3 — You've Got Talent!

READ

1 Chronicles 23:1-25:31

1 Chronicles 23:4-5, *"Then David said, 'From all the Levites, 24,000 will supervise the work at the Temple of the Lord. Another 6,000 will serve as officials and judges. Another 4,000 will work as gatekeepers, and 4,000 will praise the Lord with the musical instruments I have made.'"*

THINK

Have you ever thought to yourself, "How can I use the gifts God has given me?" Or maybe you've wondered, "What gifts do I even have?" It's easy to immediately jump into the comparison game when it comes to our abilities and talents. But whether it's singing on stage, helping behind the scenes, welcoming people, or volunteering with children, we've all been purposed to fulfill unique roles within the church.

In today's reading, there are a lot of interesting, difficult names to read. Although you probably can't even recall a single one of them, take a moment to consider the specific roles David instructed them to fulfill. What can we glean from this chapter? God had unique roles for each individual person.

Although it was written thousands of years ago, and our style of worship looks different today, the message still rings true: YOU have been blessed to be a blessing to others, with unique talents to serve within the local church. So, right now, take a moment to write down some of those gifts and abilities that can be leveraged for God's glory. Those talents are meant to be used!

Remember, God never intended for you to keep such talents to yourself or waste time comparing them with others. Be bold and make God smile as you put them to use, bringing honor to His name!

PRAY

God, Thank You for the specific gifts and abilities You have given me. Help me not to compare them with others, but to use them to bring You praise inside and outside Your House! Amen.

May 4 — Royal Lessons

READ

1 Chronicles 26:1-28:21

1 Chronicles 28:20, *“David also said to Solomon his son, ‘Be strong and courageous, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is finished.’”*

THINK

As David was nearing the end of his life, he knew that God’s chosen successor was his son, Solomon. Therefore, as God’s twice-anointed king to lead all of Israel and someone whose greatest desire was intimacy with the Lord, he wanted to set his son up for success — to instill the importance of leading with wisdom and discernment. Most importantly, He charged Solomon to follow the Lord with wholehearted devotion and a willing mind to obey the ultimate King as he led his people to pursue holy living. David followed with instruction for what He had greatly desired to do for God but didn’t per God’s commands — build the temple to house God’s Ark and be a permanent structure for people to gather and worship.

Having witnessed his father's tremendous power and responsibility that came with leading a powerful nation, Solomon took David's advice to heart. He knew firsthand that going against the Lord of Heaven’s armies resulted in catastrophe for Israel’s enemies as well as seen the consequences of his own father’s disobedience when God sent a plague as punishment for one of David’s greatest mistakes as king. Think how intimidating this soon-to-be role must have been for him as he geared up to take the throne! He was about to lead the Israelite nation — who God set apart as holy — and took his father’s words to heart.

No, you will never be anointed king of any country, but David’s instruction is a royal lesson for you as well! So, stop and consider what areas God has positioned in you for power or leadership. Whether it’s as a parent, a manager at work, or a godly influencer among your peers, you, too, have been called to obey God and follow Him with wholehearted devotion. That’s the first and most important step. The second is this: DO THE WORK! Don’t be apathetic or easily sidetracked by things of less importance. Whatever job God puts before you — commit to doing it His way. Not only will you grow in deeper intimacy with Christ, but you will also bring Him the glory He most rightly deserves!

PRAY

Lord, What tasks have You set before me that I could more greatly apply Your wisdom and discernment, both for today and in the future? I seek to be found faithful in Your sight. Amen

May 5 — Open Hands

READ

1 Chronicles 29:1-22

1 Kings 1:1-53

1 Chronicles 29:14, *“But who am I, and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? Everything comes from You, and we have given You only what comes from Your hand.”*

THINK

King David was passionate about building God’s House. So passionate, in fact, that he gave \$3.3 billion of his own money for the construction of the temple and raised \$6 billion from the people of Israel. He had a whopping \$9.3 billion in hand, yet he still approached God in prayer saying, “Who are we to give generously to You, Lord?” That’s a great question! Because although the money was earmarked to build God’s house, it already belonged to God.

It’s easy to forget that everything we have is a blessing from God. As our Blesser, He wants us to be a blessing in the lives of others. And part of this blessing, this opportunity of generosity, is to build and expand the local church.

We are born with nothing, and we die with nothing. But what we do while we’re here means everything to God. It shows Him where our heart is. With so many lives hanging in the balance eternally, what are you doing with God’s stuff? Are you clenching your fists or opening your hands? Remember, the Bible says that God loves a cheerful giver!

PRAY

Dear Lord, Thank You for my countless blessings. Help me to remember that without You I’d have nothing, and help me to open my hands and give cheerfully. Like David, I want to help build Your house to make a difference in the lives of others. Amen.

May 6 — In Awe

READ

1 Kings 2:1-10
2 Samuel 23:1-7
1 Chronicles 29:26-30
Psalms 4-6, 8-9, 11

Psalm 8:3-5, *“When I consider Your heavens, the work of your fingers...what is mankind that You are mindful of them, human beings that You care for them? You have made them a little lower than the angels and crowned them with glory and honor.”*

THINK

If you’ve ever looked up at the sky on a clear night, you know what it’s like to be in awe of that vast expanse of God’s creation. Over a billion trillion stars in the universe, and yet even the small fraction that we can see is beyond our comprehension.

When David was coming to the end of his life, he reflected on this — God’s divine design. After years of ruling the kingdom of Israel and now facing his own deteriorating health, it was clear that the “greatness” of humanity was only a flickering flame compared to God’s brilliant light.

And yet, God cares for humanity. He cherishes us, has crowned us with glory and honor, and has given us dominion and authority over the earth. It’s staggering. We may never fully understand it, but we know how we are to respond: with awe, wonder, and gratitude.

PRAY

Mighty God, We praise Your most holy name! To You be all the glory and honor and power. Thank You that You care about us and seek intimacy with us. We stand in awe of You. Amen.