

Sermon Notes for September 5, 2010

Sermon Series On David
A Life Of Great Success And Great Failure
“David Teaches Us How To Grieve”
II Samuel 1:12-27

Introduction

A. SHOULD CHRISTIANS GRIEVE AT THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE?

1. Some believers in Jesus Christ do not believe that believers should grieve when they lose a fellow believer in death.
 - a. that believer is now in heaven
 - b. that believer is in no more pain
 - c. that believer is in “a better place”
 - d. what do believers have to cry about?
2. How can you **NOT** GRIEVE AT THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE?
 - a. how can you not grieve when you lose a:
 1. father?
 2. mother?
 3. sister?
 4. brother?
 5. child?
 6. friend?
 - b. if you have lived in the presence of someone and then they die,
 1. **HOW CAN YOU NOT GRIEVE?**
 2. **YOU CAN’T HELP FROM GRIEVING!**
 - a. it is a “natural reflex”
 - b. you cannot stop it
 - c. my mother’s funeral – I broke down; my kids had never seen me cry like that
3. Scripture teaches that we **should** grieve when we lose a loved one
 - a. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus;
 1. **John 11:35 – “Jesus wept”**
 2. to weep silently; to shed a tear
 - b. Scripture actually teaches that there is a “proper time” to grieve
Ecclesiastes 3:1-4 – “There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under heaven: a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot, a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance.”
4. Reality teaches us that a lack of grieving can actually cause us harm
 - a. J. H. – “I was just trying to stay ahead of the pain.”
 - b. A. G. – “I had a break-down 10 years later.”

B. DAVID TEACHES US HOW TO GRIEVE OVER THE LOSS OF A LOVED ONE

1. Yes, David failed in many ways, but he is a great model for us about how to grieve.
2. This warrior, this leader of 600 mighty men; this anointed king knew how to grieve.
 - a. why do we think that men should never grieve?
 - b. has there ever been a greater warrior than David; a more masculine man than David?
 - c. David apparently had no trouble at all with expressing his tears.

I. THE DEATH OF ISRAEL'S LEADERS

A. Hearing About THE DEATH OF SAUL

1. King Saul was in a fierce battle with the Philistines
 - a. Israel's method of battle was hand to hand combat
 - b. while the Philistines had trained archers
 - c. as Saul and his army attempted to flee these archers, Saul was mortally wounded on Mount Gilboa

I Samuel 31:3 – “The fighting grew fierce around Saul, **and when the archers overtook him**, they wounded him critically.”

1. although Saul was wounded, he had not yet died
 2. Saul's fear was that the Philistines would find him still alive and torture him to make a point about defeating the king of Israel.
 3. so, Saul asked his armor bearer to kill him; and he did not
 4. so, Saul put his sword on the ground and fell on it, committing suicide.
2. David heard about the death of Saul

II Samuel 1:3-4 – ““Where have you come from?” David asked him. He answered, “I have escaped from the Israelite camp.” “What happened?” David asked. “Tell me.” He said, “The men fled from the battle. Many of them fell and died. **And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.**”

 - a. a messenger went to David and said that he had been at Saul's side when he died
 - b. how **would you think** that David would react to Saul's death?
 - c. you **would think** that David would have been relieved that the man who was trying to kill him was dead!

B. Hearing About THE DEATH OF JONATHAN

1. not only had King Saul been killed on Mount Gilboa, Saul's sons, Jonathan, Abinadab and Malki-shua were killed as well.
2. It would certainly be understandable:
 - a. that David would not grieve the loss of a man who tried to kill him
 - b.** but, obviously, David would greatly grieve the death of his dearest friend, Jonathan
3. So, how did David grieve the death of these two men?
 - a. Saul, David's greatest enemy
 - b. and Jonathan, David's greatest friend

II. GRIEVING THE DEATH OF AN ENEMY

A. The REASON FOR THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SAUL

1. at the death of Goliath:
 - a. when David killed Goliath in the valley of Elah, the people of, Israel began to chant: **“Saul has killed his thousands, but David his ten thousands”**
 - b. upon hearing this, King Saul became angry and began to see David as a threat to his throne:
 - c. from that point on, Saul tried to kill David:
 1. while David was playing the harp for Saul, Saul threw a spear at him
 2. Saul pursued David for some 8-10 years, trying to kill David
 - a. David and his 600 men and their families had to live “on the run”
 - b. years and years of being homeless, living in caves and under the stars
 - c. every day being afraid for their lives.
2. Why **wouldn’t** David celebrate the death of his enemy, Saul?

B. The REACTION TO THE DEATH OF SAUL

1. LOOK AT WHAT HAPPENED WHEN DAVID HEARD OF SAUL’S DEATH!

- a. **PLEASE REMEMBER WHAT SAUL HAD DONE TO DAVID.**
 1. the man who had hunted David down for almost 10 years.
 2. the man who had made David’s life miserable
 3. **WHILE DAVID HAD DONE NOTHING TO DESERVE IT!**
- b. NOTICE WHAT DAVID AND HIS MEN DID WHEN THEY HEARD OF SAUL’S DEATH!

II Samuel 1:11-12 – “Then David and all the men with him **took hold of their clothes and tore them**. They **mourned** and **wept** and **fasted** till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.”

1. they **tore their clothes**
 - a. a sign of extreme sadness
 - b. a physical expression of surprise
 - c. this person wanted others to know his deep pain and suffering
 - d. some believe that when a person tore his clothes, they exposed a broken heart
2. they **mourned and wept**
 - a. then, David’s soldiers wailed and cried all day and into the night for the death of Saul
 - b. the Hebrew uses two words here:
 1. they mourned
 - a. there was great sadness
 - b. they “lamented”
 2. they wept
 - a. they wailed
 - b. they sobbed

3. they **fasted**
 - a. not only did they weep, the men committed to fasting, showing how sad they were
 - b. this was a time to stop doing everything, so that they could focus all of their attention on their grief
 - c. grieving was what they were going to do all day long
2. **PLEASE RECOGNIZE THAT DAVID AND HIS MEN MOURNED THE DEATH OF A MAN WHO DESIRED TO HARM THEM!**
 - a. why would David and his men mourn their enemy at all?
 - b. Perhaps, the greater question is this: “How” could they mourn over the death of an enemy?
 1. grieving over the death of an enemy does not make sense.
 2. how many of us would do that?

III. GRIEVING THE DEATH OF A FRIEND

A. The REASON FOR HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH JONATHAN

1. David and Jonathan’s relationship was **born in admiration**
 - a. when Jonathan saw David kill the 9 foot giant, Goliath, Jonathan **“became one in spirit with David”** (I Samuel 18:1)
 - b. both David and Jonathan were brave warriors for Jehovah God
 - c. they became closer than brothers
2. David and Jonathan **made a commitment to one another as friends**
 - a. it wasn’t enough to simply believe in their friendship
 - b. they “made it official”

I Samuel 20:16-17 – **“So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, “May the LORD call David's enemies to account.” And Jonathan had David reaffirm his oath out of love for him, because he loved him as he loved himself.”**
 - c. Jonathan and David made “a pact” that they would be the best of all friends.
3. David and Jonathan **expressed their relationship in a personal, passionate way**
 - a. after realizing that Saul was indeed trying to kill David, Jonathan and David “physically” expressed their love for one another

I Samuel 20:41 – **“After the boy had gone, David got up from the south side of the stone and bowed down before Jonathan three times, with his face to the ground. Then they kissed each other and wept together-- but David wept the most.”**
 - b. this was not merely a handshake or even a hug, it was an emotional connection to one another as best friends

B. The REACTION AT THE DEATH OF JONATHAN

1. it would be very, very easy to understand why David would grieve over his best friend
2. Jonathan was the closest friend that David had in all of the earth
3. it was certainly easy to see why David would grieve over such a loss

IV. THE EULOGY FOR ISRAEL'S LEADERS

A. David's EXPECTATION OF GRIEF

1. David was so moved to grief that he "wrote a lament"
II Samuel 1:17 – "David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan,"
 - a. as the leader of his 600 mighty men, David wrote a eulogy for these two men who were killed.
 1. David called it the "Lament Of The Bow," for that was how Saul and Jonathan were killed
 2. David required all of his men to learn it and to say it
 - b. how appropriate it was that David recognized these two men in such a public way
2. what would David's eulogy say about these two men?

B. David's EXPRESSION OF GRIEF FOR BOTH MEN

1. The **power of these men**
 - a. David constantly repeated this phrase in his lament, "**how the might have fallen**"
II Samuel 1:19 – "'Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. **How the mighty have fallen!**'"
 1. these two men were "larger than life"
 2. they were both great leaders
 - b. these were not your average men; they were not from the "rank and file;" these men were exceptional; they were "mighty men"
2. The **participation of these men**
II Samuel 1:23a – "'Saul and Jonathan-- in life they were loved and gracious, and in **death they were not parted.**'"
 - a. **DESPITE** their differences as a father and a son, Saul and Jonathan not only fought side by side, they died side by side. During Saul's reign, he had fought **twelve wars**:
 - **one** with the **Ammonites**
 - **seven** with the **Philistines**
 - **one** with the **Edomites**
 - **one** with the **Moabites**
 - **one** with the **Syrians**
 - **one** with the **Amalekites**
 - b. somehow, Jonathan did not allow the differences between himself and his father, Saul, to keep them from being a team on the battlefield.
3. The **passion of these men**
II Samuel 1:23b – "They were **swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions.**"
 - a. these men were both warriors!
 1. they were quick on their feet; they each handled a sword,
 2. they were as brave as lions, not stepping back from any challenge

3. **Phillip Keller** – “David called to memory the handsome grandeur of the two men in the early days of their young glory. **No men in Israel could compare with the arresting presence of these magnificent stalwarts. They stood strong like two splendid lions.**”

b. these brave warriors died where warriors “should die,” on the battlefield; together

C. David’s EXPRESSION OF GRIEF FOR JONATHAN

1. However, David has some very special, some very sensitive words to say about his best friend, Jonathan.

II Samuel 1:25-26 – “How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. **I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women.**”

a. David used language here that some have misinterpreted

1. that David and Jonathan were homosexuals
2. that is a total misunderstanding of the text

b. what David was saying was this:

1. no one loves you like your mother who is:

- a. selfless
- b. caring
- c. supportive
- d. always there

2. equally, a wife:

- a. is meant to help her husband; that is why she is called his “helpmate.”
- b. to always be by her husband’s side

3. however, Jonathan was even “more selfless” than the woman in David’s life

- a. for, despite being the heir to the throne of his father, Saul
- b. after witnessing David killing Goliath, Jonathan recognized David as the anointed king of Israel and made it his goal to help David achieve the throne.

1. Jonathan “gave” his kingly clothes and armor to David

I Samuel 18:3-4 – “And Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as himself.

Jonathan took off the robe he was wearing and gave it to David, along with his tunic, and even his sword, his bow and his belt.”

c. **Joyce Baldwin** – “Jonathan had allowed his own interests to be disregarded; in order that David’s could prosper. True, that kind of love David had found in the women in his life – his mother and his wives, **but even their love was not compared with the love which had motivated Jonathan.**”

- d. DARE WE SAY IT, DAVID MAY HAVE BEEN SAYING THAT JONATHAN LOVED DAVID MORE THAN EVEN DAVID'S MOTHER LOVED HIM!
2. So, you can see why David grieved so deeply over the death of his dear, dear friend, Jonathan
 - a. Jonathan was not only David's greatest friend
 - b. Jonathan was David's greatest supporter
 - c. how many of us can say that we have a friend that thinks more of me than he thinks of himself.

V. SUGGESTIONS IN EXPRESSING YOUR GRIEF

A. There IS A PROPER WAY TO GRIEVE THE LOSS OF YOUR ENEMY

1. DESPITE the fact that King Saul tried to kill David for 8-10 years, David grieved when Saul died
 - a. THE ONLY WAY that David could grieve the death of his enemy WAS THAT DAVID FORGAVE SAUL.
 1. OTHERWISE, David could not have grieved
 2. **Phillip Keller** – “It comes home to us with tremendous impact that even though David had been hounded and harassed by Saul for so many, many years, **David appeared to bear no personal grudge against him.** David had a breadth of generosity, a depth of compassion in his character that few of us ever possess. In this dimension of his life, at least, he was a truly great individual. **He knew how to forgive.”**
 - b. if you have lost someone in your life that you did not grieve over
 1. you may have actually said, “good riddance”
 2. “I am glad they are gone”
 3. “they are finally getting what they deserve.”
 - c. if you feel this way, then, there is a real possibility that you have never forgiven that person
 1. David was pursued by Saul for almost 10 years FOR NOTHING HE HAD DONE!
 2. and yet, he grieved over Saul's death
 3. J. H. - he did not grieve at her death; years later at her grave, he wept.
2. I beg of you; deal with those who have wronged you
 - a. forgive them
 - b. and then, grieve over what did not happen in both of your lives

B. There Is A PROPER WAY TO GRIEVE THE LOSS OF YOUR FRIEND

1. do not deny that a loss has occurred
 - a. without a doubt, David did not hide his grief
 1. he tore his clothes, he wept, he fasted
 2. he wrote a eulogy
 - b. do not become “super spiritual” thinking that
 1. they are in a better place
 2. that they are no longer suffering
 3. that God is in charge and “took them home”

- c. no matter how someone died, **IT IS A LOSS**
 - 1. **Kenneth Chaffin** – “**Those who bless us in their lifetime should be mourned when they die.**”
 - 2. how can you not grieve over the loss of one you loved when they leave this earth?
 - a. I don’t care how “close to Christ they were and now are,” they are gone
 - b. **Phillip Keller** – “No doubt David had often dreamed that when he came to the throne, Jonathan would serve as his chancellor, the first minister in the realm. It was a private pact between them. But was not to be. **Jonathan was gone!**”
 - d. if you deny yourself the grieving process
 - 1. you will “still grieve; you just won’t know it
 - 2. Beth – grieved over the death of a friend in high school.
2. **expect to experience a time of grief**
- a. **David grieved over the deaths of Saul and Jonathan**
II Samuel 1:24-26a – ““O daughters of Israel, **weep for Saul**, who clothed you in scarlet and finery, who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold. "How the mighty have fallen in battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. **I grieve for you**, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me.”
 - 1. it was “expected” that people would grieve over the loss of a loved one
 - 2. laments are found throughout scripture
 - a. some **70% of all of the Psalms** (most were written by David) were **laments**
 - b. there is a book the Old Testament called “Lamentations.”
 - 1. The prophet Jeremiah expressed his grief over the Babylonians taking Israel from their homes to Babylon
 - 2. Verses:
 - a. **Lamentations 1:1** – “**How deserted lies the city, once so full of people!** How like a widow is she, who once was great among the nations! She who was queen among the provinces has now become a slave.
 - b. **Lamentations 2:19** – “**Arise, cry out in the night**, as the watches of the night begin; **pour out your heart like water** in the presence of the Lord. Lift up your hands to him for the lives of your children, who faint from hunger at the head of every street.”
 - c. **Lamentations 3:48-49** – “**Streams of tears flow from my eyes because my people are destroyed. My eyes will flow unceasingly, without relief,**”

- d. **Lamentations 5:15** – “Joy is gone from our hearts; **our dancing has turned to mourning.**”
 - b. it is right, proper, and necessary, to go through a time of grief
 - 1. my dad’s funeral – the Marine Corp. sent a group of soldiers
 - 2. this “natural outburst” of tears should “tell you something”
- 3. **reflect over the blessings of a life** that has been lost
 - a. **David wrote a Eulogy and required that all of his soldiers learn it**
 - b. I encourage people to have funerals when there is a death.
 - 1. some only want to have a graveside service
 - 2. but we need a place and a time to remember the loved one
 - 3. my mother’s funeral – “she was my best friend”
 - c. **FUNERALS ARE A TIME FOR EVERYONE TO REMEMBER WHO THAT PERSON WAS!**
- 4. **do not experience your grief alone**
 - a. **David grieved with his fellow soldiers when he heard of the death of Saul and Jonathan**
 - b. as believers, we need the body of Christ to help us get through our time of grief.
 - 1. after all, the church is called the “Body of Christ”
 - a. a body “heals itself” as the healthy part of the body heals the broken part of the body.
 - 2. **Dr. Larry Crabb – Connecting** (writing about how the Body of Christ ministered to his wife, Rachael, after her father died.

“Like each of us, Rachael’s dad was an imperfect person, a tangle of contradictions, some remarkable strengths and a few infuriating weaknesses. **His impact on my wife’s soul included rich blessing and deep hurt.** He both nourished and damaged her. Rachael came to the evening apprehensive, aware of both her wounds and warmth. She wanted to neither criticize her father nor put him on a pedestal.

The group wanted to see Rachael embrace her pain without stirring up resentment, and everyone desired to nourish her confidence in God’s goodness in a way that would allow her to connect with what was noble and gracious within her.

My wife was asked, “**What are some of the hard memories?**” **How did your dad change over the years?**” “**What are you most grateful for?**” and “**What one image do you want to leave in our minds as we think of your father?**” Rachael painted a portrait of her dad for more than an hour. The group learned that her father’s father had insisted that each of his children carry black people’s shopping lists into grocery stores where they weren’t allowed, or face a whipping; and this in the deep south. We learned that Rachael’s dad would take long walks after work, pockets spilling over with gospel tracts, asking God to send him to the folks that were ready to hear the good news of Christ. **We**

learned that he was a baseball fanatic and would pay Rachael to stay home while he took his sons to major league games. He preferred well-informed masculine company at athletic contests. Rachael was more interested in the social event than the game.

We learned some things that were not easy for Rachael to share. But in everything that was said, her dad was honored for the good that was in him, and there was much. God was exalted for the good he achieved through her dad's weaknesses.

One middle-aged woman told me as we lingered (no one wanted to leave) that she had experienced a healing in her soul as **she** listened to Rachael share. Her father, who had died some years before, had been a stiff, unapproachable man, the kind that would not invite a daughter to snuggle in his lap. **She had not been able to get beyond her bitterness over what he had failed to provide her.**

But that evening, something deeper than her anger was aroused. She could see the good that God had wrought through her dad. She felt an urge to honor him, to appreciate him, and to worship God as she remembered everything about him. **As she described it, "I felt something in me shift."**

A power flowed out of my wife and connected with the goodness in this lady's redeemed heart. **The life of Christ in one aroused the life of Christ in another.** Self-control resulted, and good urges were released. **Another moment of connection."**

5. **there will be a time to move on from your grief**
 - a. if you deal honestly and openly with your grief, . . . you will eventually heal
 - b. despite the loss; despite the pain, you **will be** able to move on
 - c. my cut finger
 - d. but, please remember: until then
Ecclesiastes 3:3-4 – "there is a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build, **a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,**"
 - e. **Kenneth Chafin** – "**There is nothing more natural than to grieve the death of a friend.** Often I'm with persons who have suffered the loss of a loved one and yet feel guilty about their grief. They have been taught—in error—that **people who have faith in God should not grieve.** As a result, they have **added** to their natural pain a sense of guilt for hurting. **The ability to grieve is God's gift which allows us to process our loss in such a way that we can go on living without a sense of guilt.**