

Seoul Grace Community

David: Lessons for a Wounded Life—"The Lost Ark"

1 Samuel 5:5-12, 2 Samuel 6:1-11

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1. Introduction

- a. David gives us the longest view of an individual life in all of ancient literature.
 - i. We see what makes and breaks a life.
 - ii. This story shows us the need for the immediate presence of God. The experience of God—not just the knowledge.
 - iii. And David's life produces the Psalms—collection of songs reflecting his pain and hurt as well as joys and triumphs
- b. The ark was where God's very presence rested and therefore it was a vital relic for the Israelites
 - i. It was the central piece of furniture in the temple
 - ii. Over the ark appeared the glory of God. The weight. The heavy brilliance of God.
 - iii. Israel had fallen into decay: The high priest had sons who were corrupt. They seduced the women who came to give sacrifices.
 - iv. The ark was then captured and now David wants to bring it back because he needs God's presence in his life and the lives of those he is ruling
- c. The ark is the central "character" in this story—what does it mean for our lives today? What does it tell us about the relationship we have with God?

2. The promise of the ark

- a. The ark had been lost and spent more than 20 years away from the tabernacle and it represented the loss of God's very presence in their lives
- b. David wants to bring the presence of God to the capital
- c. This is why David writes Psalm 27
 - i. "One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. 5 For he will hide me in his shelter in the day of trouble; he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;"
 - ii. He writes this psalm because he knows he needs spiritual reality in order to lead the people.
 - iii. This is the difference of knowing God and experiencing him.
 - iv. David needed a joy that would last. Even in his darkest times, he needed God's glory to be heavy on him.

3. The problem of the ark

- a. Originally the ark was taken out by Eli's sons into battle as they thought the ark would guarantee them victory. But it didn't: they thought they could use God for their benefit and were mistaken.
- b. Every time, after the Philistines captured the ark, they put it in their temples and the idols would fall down. In the cities they would suffer.
- c. Then David brings chosen men to reclaim the ark
- d. Uzzah touches it and dies—David is angry and scared.
 - i. Leviticus gives strict instructions on how to handle the ark (Had to be carried by the poles. Covered. Carried by Levites only. Etc.)
 - ii. And all these rules were broken by David and his company.
 - iii. It appears this is why Uzzah died. And people tend to not like this story because it appears that we're being told to follow all the rules and then we'll be blessed—don't follow and you'll die.
- e. What do the rules teach us?
 - i. The ark is unlike any other artifact in major religions: other items crave to be touched and bless people. Every other religious article blesses by contact.
 - ii. But the ark is different.
 1. Only once per year could it be approached and only with blood to be sprinkled.
 2. Other religions desire morality to get power from the deity.
 3. But the ark shows us the huge chasm between us and God. There is to be a sacrifice. There must be atonement. Death must atone.
 4. You can't go to God with your good works.
 - iii. Uzzah didn't respect the spiritual distance or chasm between him and God.
 1. His instinct was that the soil would defile the ark more than his own hand.

2. Soil functions just as God intended. Theologically, it's doing its job. But are you and I living the way we're meant to live? No!
3. He died because he didn't understand the need for sacrificial grace to come near to God.

4. The good news of the ark

- a. David finally sees the chasm between him and God.
 - i. He says how can I then have the ark come to me? (2 Samuel 6:9)
 - ii. He sees the need for grace. He sees his own lacking.
 - iii. The ark tells us about the gospel. No one is righteous (cf. Romans 3)
- b. But David also sees the provision of grace.
 - i. The mercy seat exists where God comes down to give his presence to the people (called mercy seat because the people haven't earned God's presence)
 - ii. David leaves the ark with Obed the Gittite—an outsider culturally, religiously perhaps.
 1. They would have surely thought he would die by holding the ark.
 2. But through gracious provision he lives.
 - iii. This is the second part of the gospel. We are utterly broken and yet infinitely loved.
 - iv. Forgiveness always takes suffering.
 1. A cost had to be paid.
 2. We know this when someone really wrongs us. They can pay or we can forgive and this costs us.
 - v. How much more then would God have to pay in order to forgive the hurts we've caused him?
 1. SOMEONE had to go into the holy of holies once a year and offer blood on behalf of the people
 2. Writer of Hebrews—describing the old tent and sanctuary design in chapter 9
 - a. The old way to get right with God was to have the high priest step in your place
 - b. And offer a sacrifice, the writer says
 - c. But now we have something else to bridge the chasm—the only thing that could bridge it!!
 3. Hebrews 9: 11 But Christ came as a chief priest of the good things that are now here. Christ went through a better, more perfect tent that was not made by human hands and that is not part of this created world. 12 He used his own blood, not the blood of goats and bulls, for the sacrifice. He went into the most holy place and offered this sacrifice once and for all to free us forever.
 4. 13 The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of cows sprinkled on unclean[c] people made their bodies holy and clean. 14 The blood of Christ, who had no defect, does even more. Through the eternal Spirit he offered himself to God and cleansed our consciences from the useless things we had done. Now we can serve the living God.
 - vi. This time, it's Jesus who atones for us—he paid the cost which we could never pay

5. Conclusion

- a. What's the result of this story? David gets unbridled happiness at the end of 2 Samuel 6 because he starts to understand the "gospel of the ark"—that there is an infinite divide between us and God yet it was through infinite love that Jesus came to bridge that gap in mercy and grace
- b. David has joy at the end of the passage
 - i. He sees the blessing to Obed-edom, he goes to get the ark, this time he carries it with poles
 - ii. This time he gets the true sense of the gospel—the chasm between him and God and yet the provision of immense grace to the outsider—a sinner like David himself
 - iii. He dances with the females in a linen ephod—because he sees the great chasm the ark represents but he also recognizes the gracious provision given to bless, of all people, Obed-edom
 1. 2 Samuel 6:21 "I didn't dance in front of the slave girls but in front of the Lord. He chose me rather than your father or anyone in your father's house, and he appointed me leader of Israel, the Lord's people. I will celebrate in the Lord's presence,"

