

Explore the Bible: Respected

May 16, 2018

- *The Explore the Bible lesson for June 3 focuses on 2 Samuel 1:22-27; 2:1-7.*

Picking up at this point in the struggle between King Saul and David may not offer smooth entry for our new study. But one thing is clear: Saul, the first king of Israel, was dead along with his sons, and David was en route to becoming the next king of God's people.

If you look at the first 16 verses of 2 Samuel chapter 1, you do not see a gloating David. He did not celebrate the death of his king and his best friend, Jonathan. Yet, their deaths moved David closer to his destiny of becoming king. *How do we become OK with a tragedy that moves another's destiny forward?*

David would be called upon to lead, yet he always respected the "Lord's anointed," which had been Saul. So we see a unique respect for both God and Saul as we move toward David's artistic lament. Even though Saul did not deserve honor, David gave him honor. *Think about how David's approach in our story today could change our view of giving honor to others.*

Commemoration (2 Samuel 1:22-27)

This lament, when we look at verses 17-18, was supposed to be sung and remembered by the people. You even could call this song a continual eulogy for Saul and Jonathan. Notice the language of both honor and respect, as well as love. One must remember David had been Saul's son-in-law and Jonathan's brother-in-law.

One thing comes to mind: We tend to over-memorialize those who have died, even if they did not live good lives. *Is this what David is doing?* While Saul did many terrible things, he also served many good purposes. When it came to Jonathan, David was remembering his closest friend whose “love” was “more wonderful than that of women.” This spoke to the depth of their commitment to true friendship.

While a lament is a sad song, this particular song is meant to remember the lives of the deceased. Today, we call these “celebrations of life.” *What is the biggest challenge to celebrating a life while mourning a death?* While it is a difficulty, it is nonetheless important, giving value to the life that God gives us.

Coronation (2 Samuel 2:1-4a)

“In the course of time” leads us to believe David took the necessary time for mourning before moving forward. In his faithfulness up to this point, David inquired of God before taking his first step. In response, rather than taking the throne, “they anointed David king over the house of Judah.”

It seems that the people do the anointing rather than a priest or prophet, and it also seems God led David to Hebron for this purpose. This speaks to a very organic process of kingship. *Have you ever experienced a God-led direction like this? If so, please share it with your group.*

It is clear all of this hinges on seeking God and following him. This applies to all people, whether in a royal office or not. *What does divine guidance mean to you? How has following God’s plan made things easy or difficult for you?*

Commendation (2 Samuel 2:4b-7)

If you look back to 1 Samuel 31:8-13, you can see how Saul's body was dishonored by the Philistines and then honored by those of Jabesh-Gilead. It is fascinating that David not only knew, but also offered gratitude to those who honored the deceased king. Here again we see David's God-given leadership and willingness to look outside of his own plan.

As a nurturing leader, he offered them a blessing of "kindness and faithfulness," as well as his own favor in response to their allegiance. Verses 6-7 show David as both understanding and encouraging them forward. *What can you learn from David's approach and tactics here?*

Since this week's story centers on David's leadership, it is helpful to point out the significance of commending others for their service. Here, we see a prime example. *How would our families change if we commended our children more? How would our churches change? How would our workplaces change?* We must not miss such simple and meaningful opportunities as these.

Conclusion

David first was a shepherd when he was introduced in 1 Samuel. Consider looking at what a "shepherd leader" looks like by reading his 23rd Psalm, where David called God our shepherd. He used phrases like "he makes me...guides me...anoints me." A shepherd's view can teach us a lot about David's leadership.

Jesus also picked up this shepherd view. In John 10:11, he called himself the "good shepherd." *What else could a shepherd teach us about God? What leadership lessons do we need to learn from the shepherd?* Ultimately, Jesus would be the shepherd who willingly laid down his life for

his sheep.

This is the kind of leader we want to follow. As the old refrain reminds us: “He leadeth me, he leadeth me, by his own hand he leadeth me; his faithful foll’wer I would be, for by his hand he leadeth me” (Joseph H. Gilmore, “He Leadeth Me”).

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