

# Explore the Bible: Resolved

July 25, 2018

- *The Explore the Bible lesson for August 12 focuses on 2 Samuel 21:1-6, 10-14*

Now that we are—for the most part—used to the working out of consequences in David’s story, we turn to a different type of trial. The revolts against David subsided, although he would endure difficulties to the end of his days. But now he would have to deal with the consequences of his predecessor.

Keep in mind the famine being endured was not due to David’s sin, but Saul’s. Yet, here David stood as king, having to deal with the effects, ultimately trying to resolve the problem. *How do we tend to deal with the consequences of our predecessors?*

Because of our own egos and human pride, our usual tactic when put in such a situation is to play the “blame game”, making it abundantly clear: “It is not our (my) fault.” This can be seen in scenarios ranging from the playground to the political setting. With this in mind, we look on admirably as David offered a more meaningful response to what was happening.

## **The Cause (2 Samuel 21:1-3)**

David’s response was simple: he sought God’s face. This brings to mind Rodney Griffin’s powerful lyrics: “We have come to seek your face, Lamb of God, Giver of grace. You’re worthy of our highest praise, so we have come to seek your face.” This approach was the first step toward the rightful solution.

Even when we are forced to reckon with circumstances beyond our control,

God's solution is the best and only solution, which means we must approach him and seek his plan. It is through this approach that David became aware of the root issue: God's justice would need to be satisfied for Saul's misdirected zeal against the Gibeonites.

Again, rather than write off the issue, David pursued resolve. *What should we make of David's fervor for trying to make things as they should be?* While being relieved of the drought undoubtedly was a significant perk for making things right, there also is room to see the significance of making things right for the innocent victims of the previous regime.

## **The Request (2 Samuel 21:4-6)**

Making atonement or amends for such wrongs left the gate of opportunity open for this people group, and it is surprising they were not interested in achieving more than they asked for. This may be because God's desire for justice is for what is "enough," not extravagance.

For the Gibeonites, who nearly were annihilated by Saul, the direct recompense would be to cripple Saul's lineage, choosing his hometown to make the statement. For the Gibeonites, this meant righting a wrong; for God and Israel, this meant reopening the channel for blessing.

Notice how David's acquiescence to their request is similar to the wise woman's action in our previous story. In both of these cases, justice was required, and wisdom said "yes" through the human voice. Ask your group: *What are you willing to do to see justice satisfied? What is justice worth to God and humanity?*

## **The Resolution (2 Samuel 21:10-14)**

Here, the narrator turns to the heartstrings of both the audience and

David. As Robert Chisholm noted, “Why does the narrator inform us of Rizpah’s actions? He probably wants to honor her and her memory... . It is likely that he also wants to remind his audience of the tragic consequences of Saul’s sinful actions” (Robert B. Chisholm, Jr., *1 & 2 Samuel*, 288).

The sackcloth, often associated with mourning, was in this case used to cover the dead and decaying. Sadly, with no eternal promise for Saul, the physical remains were all that was left to try to preserve. Maybe this was hopeless, yet David responded with compassion.

The compassionate side of David shines as we notice not only his care for Saul’s family’s remains, but also his sparing Mephibosheth (with whom David had a covenant). After all of this, God responded positively. *How does this resolution make us feel about God?* Since this scenario challenges our 21<sup>st</sup> century context, ask: *What is most applicable from this story to us today?*

## Conclusion

Even for Christians, there is no question that devastating circumstances will happen, and there is little doubt that trials will include bearing problems initiated by others. In spite of whatever is faced, David reminds us to seek God’s face first and foremost. If we are wise, we will follow suit and await his leading, which should lead to ultimate resolve.

While this may sound like a simple formula, it is not necessarily easy. Ask your group: *How have you usually responded to the face of trials and troubles?* David’s story has led us through many reasons to write off his wisdom, yet his response here shows an example for us to emulate.

A challenge for this story is that our culture might side with the Dalai Lama who once said, “The best way to resolve any problem in the human world is for all sides to sit down and talk.” Nevertheless, it is God’s measure of

justice that brings the ultimate resolve. So, we begin the conversation with him so that his plan will be revealed.

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