

Sermon Title: Trusting God with the Next Step

Series: Seeking God's Kingdom, Part 31

Scripture: 2 Samuel 2:1-7

Main Takeaway: We can patiently trust the LORD with the next step, even when we can't see the whole picture, because He is faithful.

At some point in our lives,
All of us go through transitions in life...
And they're not always easy.

It can be difficult to leave what's familiar in the past...
and step into something new.

Do you remember moving from middle school to high school?
In 8th grade you're the oldest in the school...
Then in 9th grade you're by far the youngest.
That can be a pretty drastic transition.

Starting a new job can also be difficult.
After years of knowing exactly what to do...
Suddenly you're learning everything from scratch.

Or how about the transition into retirement?
I know some of you said you're more busy now that you're retired...

Even so...
I imagine after decades of working,
you're used to a certain rhythm and purpose...
And now, you might have moments where you're asking yourself...

[SLIDE 1] Now what...? What's next...? Where do I go from here?

Those are the questions we were left with at the end of 1 Samuel.

David was in the midst of a major transition.

Saul and his sons were dead...
Israel's army was defeated...
His home town was burned to the ground...

And now he's mourning all that loss.

Then 2 Samuel 2 tells us...

[SLIDE 2] 2 Samuel 2:1 - In the course of time, David inquired of the LORD...

This is a subtle, yet really important thing to notice...

We don't know exactly how long David mourned.
But we do know he didn't rush into whatever was next.

That's what last week's sermon was all about...
Slowing down...
Taking the time to grieve...
And allowing the LORD to work in us as we wait on Him.

That's where David was.

But at some point...
"In the course of time"...
He was ready to take the next step.

And so he went to the LORD and asked...

[SLIDE 3] 2 Samuel 2:1 - "Shall I go up to one of the towns of Judah?" he asked. The LORD said, "Go up." David asked, "Where shall I go?" "To Hebron," the LORD answered.

Here's something that strikes me...

Samuel anointed David to be Israel's future king way back in 1 Samuel 16.
So... David *knew* he'd eventually be Israel's king.

But he never asks God “how” or “when”...
He’s not trying to have it all figured out.

That’s interesting...
Because, I don’t know about you...
But when I’m in a major life transition...
I like to know the whole plan...
I like to try and prepare for what’s coming...

There’s nothing wrong with that.
Being prepared is smart.

**But did you notice David wasn't asking God for the whole plan?
He simply asked...**

“Where shall I go?”

And notice that he went to the LORD first.
He didn’t go to his military advisors for suggestions...
He didn’t form committees or put it to a public vote...

Instead, he went to the LORD.
And the LORD answered...
Go “to Hebron”...

I almost expected David to say...
Okay, got it.
I'll go to Hebron.
But then what?
What do you want me to do once I get there?

...But that’s not what happened.
Verse two just says: “David went.”

**So God didn’t lay out all the details...
And David seems content with that.**

And so, in this moment, David's showing us that...

[SLIDE 4] Faithfulness begins by trusting God with the next step, even when we can't see the whole picture.

Faithfulness *doesn't* begin with having all the answers.

In fact...

We often don't know how our story will play out.

But when God directs us...

He gives us only what we need in the moment...

Our "daily bread" (so to speak).

But I have to say...

Trusting God with the next step...

doesn't mean He *immediately* shows us what that next step is.

[SLIDE 5] Sometimes trusting God means waiting for His direction and His timing.

Remember Psalm 31 where David said:

"My times are in Your hands" (v15)

Or Psalm 37 where David encouraged his people to:

"Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him" (v7)

David learned this from experience.

And so, during this transition...

All David knew was that the LORD wanted him to move his people to Hebron.

If the LORD was going to offer any more details...

It would come in His timing.

[SLIDE 6] 2 Samuel 2:2-3 - So David went up there with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. David also

took the men who were with him, each with his family, and they settled in Hebron and its towns.

You know....
I was in Hebron.

We went to a place called the Cave of the Patriarchs...

[SLIDE 6A] Cave of the Patriarchs 1

It's this huge building that was built around the traditional burial site of Abraham, Sarah and their family.

Looks nice, right?

But here's the reality...

[SLIDE 6B] Cave of the Patriarchs 2

When we were on our way back to the hotel,
Our bus driver said: Hey we're passing Hebron,
Want to stop and check it out?

And so we did.

But as soon as our Israeli tour guide got off the bus,
A Palestinian man came running over to us,
yelling at our tour guide.
I gathered that the man didn't want our tour guide there.

But then Israeli soldiers got involved,
And the situation calmed down.

Still... I was thinking...
I'm okay if we just get back on the bus...
But we went inside anyway.

And once inside, there were even more guards with guns.

[SLIDE 6C] Sarah's tomb

The thing is,
Historically, Hebron has seen a lot of tension.
It's an important place to Jews, Muslims and Christians.

As I said...
It's the place where Abraham and Sarah were buried...
It's where Moses sent the 12 spies into the land of Canaan...
And it was also super important in David's day.

So why did the LORD want David to go to Hebron?

Take a look at this...

[SLIDE 7] Map of Israel — When David Moved to Hebron

This is roughly what Israel looked like when David moved to Hebron.

The Philistines controlled much of the **blue** area along the western coastline.

Then up north you have the Jezreel Valley.
That's where Saul and Israel's army were defeated.

After that battle, the Philistines spread through central Israel.
I shaded it **purple** because that area was mixed with Israelites,
Philistines, and other groups...
But the Philistines were now the dominant military power in the area.

Then if you look to **green** areas, East of the Jordan river...
That's where Saul's surviving troops fled.
They made Mahanaim their capital city.
We'll see more on them next week.

But for now...
Look at **Ziklag** and **Hebron**.

David left Ziklag...

Which was in Philistine territory...

And moved to Hebron...

Which was deep inside the territory of Judah (the **yellow** area)

So at this point in the story...

- The Philistines controlled much of the west.
- Saul's remaining kingdom had regrouped east of the Jordan.
- The middle of the land was unstable.
- And David, along with his people, moved to Hebron and its surrounding towns in Judah.

That yellow area — the land of Judah — that's really important.

This was a very familiar place for David and his people.

They spent years running from Saul in this region.

And during that time,

David got to know the people of Judah...

Some of them even joined him in the wilderness.

And over the years, they came to know David's character.

They witnessed how he refused to take Saul's life...

And they saw how David protected the towns of Judah...

And how he provided for their needs after defeating the Amalekites...

They got to know David as a man who looked to the LORD.

So it's really no surprise that verse four says...

[SLIDE 8] 2 Samuel 2:4a - Then the men of Judah came to Hebron, and there they anointed David king over the tribe of Judah.

Notice that David isn't the king over all of Israel yet.

That doesn't happen for another 7.5 years.

The land of Israel is still very fractured after their loss against the Philistines.

So for now...

David was made king over the tribe of Judah.

But why David?

Again, this wasn't on a whim...

They *knew* David...

They saw firsthand the kind of leader he was...

They recognized God's hand on his life.

And notice that David didn't force his way into power.

He was led to this moment through God's providence.

In other words...

It was a moment God had been preparing for years.

And I love what comes next...

David's first act as their king...

Shows his heart...

[SLIDE 9] 2 Samuel 2:4b-5 - When David was told that it was the men from Jabesh Gilead who had buried Saul, he sent messengers to them to say to them, "The LORD bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him."

We talked about this last week.

If you remember...

[SLIDE 10] Map

The men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who risked their lives to recover the bodies of Saul and his sons from Beth Shan.

Now take a look at where Jabesh is...

Jabesh is over in the **green** area.

It's nowhere close to Judah—the **yellow** area.

That's significant...

Because the people of Jabesh were much closer to the Philistine threat than David was.

Hebron was much further south in a much safer area...

And yet, news of their courage made it all the way to David.

And so, David sends them a message.

It's about a 70 mile trip from Hebron to Jabesh.

But when they finally get there...

They read David's message.

He wanted them to know that despite the turmoil Israel was facing...

They have his blessing.

David said...

"The LORD bless you for showing this kindness to Saul your master by burying him..."

[SLIDE 11] 2 Samuel 2:6 - May the LORD now show you kindness [*hesed*] and faithfulness [*emet*], and I too will show you the same favor because you have done this."

I highlighted the LORD's kindness and faithfulness, because I wanted us to see that it's more than God just being nice.

Kindness (Hebrew = *hesed*) is about the LORD's loyal love Between Him and His people.

And **faithfulness** (Hebrew = *emet*) is about the LORD's trustworthiness. His people can trust Him to always be faithful to His Word.

Kindness and faithfulness is covenant language. That means that...

[SLIDE 12] When the LORD shows His *hesed* and *emet*, He's being faithful to His promises because of His loyal love.

And so David says to the people of Jabesh...

*May the LORD show you His loyal love and trustworthiness...
And I will also show you that same kind of favor.*

Then he says...

[SLIDE 12A] 2 Samuel 2:7 - Now then, be strong and brave, for Saul your master is dead, and the people of Judah have anointed me king over them."

David's basically saying...

*"Be strong and brave,
like you were for Saul and his sons when you recovered their remains.*

*May He show you His kindness and faithfulness
in the same way He's shown me.
He's been faithful to His promise and has made me king over Judah.*

So don't lose heart...

*I know things are chaotic now...
The LORD has a plan...
He's faithful...*

*So be strong and brave...
Because the LORD has not abandoned us...
Put your trust in His loyal love and faithfulness."*

**Talk about an encouraging message
from someone that's not even their king yet!**

I wonder what kind of impact that had on them?
Maybe they felt like...

*Wow...
David hasn't forgotten about us...
And for that matter...
The LORD hasn't forgotten about us!*

Their nation was in chaos...
Their future was unclear...
Yet David brought them a message of hope...

Despite what things look like now...
The LORD is still faithful.

And notice the intention and tone of David's message...

He doesn't demand their allegiance.
He doesn't threaten them.
He doesn't try to recruit them.

He simply blesses them.

Think about that...

[SLIDE 13] David's first recorded act as king, is encouraging frightened Israelites to trust the LORD.

It's also a message that brings *us* hope.

No matter what we're going through right now...
Even when things are chaotic and uncertain...
The LORD is still faithful.

That's why David encourages all of God's people...
Including us...
To...

[SLIDE 14] Psalm 37:7 - Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him...

Now...
If any of you are thinking:
"I can't be still."

I'm with ya.

Amanda and Morgan are constantly trying to get me to stop tapping...
But I can't help it.

Thankfully for me...
That's not what David was talking about.

Being "still" before the LORD doesn't mean sitting motionless.

Being “still” is about refusing to let fear take control.

And you know...

I want to give that some nuance...

There's a difference between being scared...

And allowing fear to control our actions.

I might be scared of what's next...

But will I let my fear decide what I do next?

Or will I wait patiently for the LORD to guide me?

For David...

Saul and Jonathan had just died...

Israel's future felt uncertain...

And he no longer had a home in Ziklag...

He might have been scared of what's next...

I don't know?

The text doesn't tell us.

But it does remind me of when he decided to live with the Philistines.

That was a decision made out of fear.

But this time...

[SLIDE 15] Instead of letting fear make the decision, David let the LORD make the decision.

Fear no longer determined David's next steps.

Instead...

Seeking the LORD...

And waiting patiently on Him...

Is what led to David's next step.

Patience is key.

You've probably heard the old joke...

*"Be careful when you pray for patience...
because you might get something to be patient about."*

We laugh...

Because there's a little bit of truth behind it.

God often grows patience through seasons of waiting.

But here's the thing...

When does God's Word ever tell us ***not to pray*** for something?

...especially patience.

Because...

[SLIDE 16] Patience is what trusting God looks like when we don't know what's next.

That's exactly what David did.

He didn't have the whole picture.

He simply trusted the LORD with the next step.

And so...

May David's example encourage us today.

When life takes an unexpected turn...

And we're left wondering...

"Now what?"

No matter what we're going through...

No matter how difficult life gets...

Or how uncertain our future is...

Remember...

The LORD is faithful.

He hasn't abandoned us.

He's with us... always.

So be strengthened in Him.

Don't give in to fear.

Just...

Be still...

And wait patiently for the LORD.

Let's Pray

We pray as Jesus taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,

Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into testing, but deliver us from the evil one.

For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.