

Sermon Title: “You Can’t Stop God”

Series: Seeking God’s Kingdom, Part 36

Scripture: 2 Samuel 5:1-10 (1 Samuel 2:9-10)

Main Takeaway: No one can stop what the LORD intends to accomplish.

It’s been 34 chapters since we’ve heard Hannah’s prayer.
But her words have been echoing in the background
during our entire walk through the pages of Samuel.

In her prayer, she said...

Her heart rejoices in the LORD...
She delights in His deliverance...
Because there’s no one like Him.

She said...
The LORD is a God who knows...
He strengthens those who stumble...
He gives life...
He brings down to the grave and raises up...
He humbles and He exalts...
He lifts the poor and needy and gives them a throne of honor...
He guards the faithful...
He silences the wicked...

Her prayer basically traces David’s story without even saying his name...

Think about it.
David was the overlooked shepherd boy...
He was the youngest son in his family...
And yet the LORD chose to anoint him as the future king.

But before that would happen...
David faced warriors who were stronger than him...
He spent years running for his life...
He lived as a fugitive...

And yet...

The LORD delivered him through it all.

And now, the man who was once a simple shepherd boy...

Is about to become the king that unites Judah and Israel.

All of this leads to a lesson that David's been learning...

[SLIDE 1] 1 Samuel 2:9b - "It is not by strength that one prevails."

Interestingly enough...

Last week we heard David finally admit something out loud that sounds an awful lot like Hannah's prayer.

After Joab murdered Abner...

David knew he had to do something...

But he openly admitted...

[SLIDE 2] 2 Samuel 3:39 - "...though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me."

And yet...

We also saw last week that David leaned on the LORD's strength.

He said...

[SLIDE 3] 2 Samuel 4:9 - "The LORD ... has delivered me out of every trouble."

Like Hannah, David knows the LORD is his deliverer.

And so now in chapter 5...

We finally get to see David crowned as the king over all Israel.

He didn't get to the throne by his own strength.

He didn't kill king Saul...

He didn't kill Saul's commander, Abner...

He didn't kill king Ish-Bosheth...

David's road to the throne was carved out by the providence of the LORD.

David has spent years refusing to race his way to the throne...

He refused to take by force what God promised him...

Instead, he waited on the LORD.

To be fair, there were moments where his patience wore thin...

But at the end of the day, he chose to keep following the LORD.

That's the posture of Hannah's prayer...

It is not by strength that one prevails.

And so now, instead of going up north to take the throne...

Everyone came to him...

[SLIDE 4] 2 Samuel 5:1 - All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood."

Again... Everyone came to David.

This is exactly what Abner was going to do for David...

Back in chapter 3, after Abner talked with David, he said:

"Let me go at once and assemble all Israel for my lord the king..."

But after Abner left in peace...

Joab killed him.

Abner never got the chance to help reunite Israel...

But now in chapter 5...

Everyone comes to David in Hebron.

Imagine that...

It wasn't that long ago that the northern tribes were fighting against David and his southern tribe of Judah...

They fought for years!

But now all the tribes of Israel are recognizing that they are David's people...
They're ready for him to become their king.

That's proof that God's promise didn't depend on Abner, Joab, or even David...
God doesn't need anyone manipulating events like Saul tried to do in the past.

This was the providence of the LORD.
He's the God who raises the poor from the dust...
And has them inherit a throne of honor.

He's been the One paving the way for David all along.

So when everyone gathered in Hebron...
They said...

[SLIDE 5] 2 Samuel 5:2 - In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.'"

You know...
Last week someone said to me...
"What's the deal with all these military commanders?"

Abner had grown incredibly powerful and influential...
So much so that he seemed to be the one that was really calling the shots...

Joab became so powerful that David admitted that even though he's king...
Politically speaking, Joab's just too strong for him...

But David also used to be a military commander under Saul...

And he was so successful that people were singing:
"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

I thought that was such a great observation...
I hadn't really thought about David alongside Abner and Joab before.

But David knew what it was like to become a powerful military leader.

He knew what it was like to gain power and influence...

And that's exactly what the people of Israel remember here in verse 2...
They said: “**You were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns.**”

But here's what was different about David:

David didn't use his military strength to take Saul's throne.

Even when Saul became his enemy, David refused to kill him.

David displays a different heart posture...

The LORD said in verse 2...

*“You will **shepherd** my people Israel...*

And you will become their ruler.”

The people remembered David's military strength...

But from the very beginning...

The LORD was looking at David's heart.¹

David wouldn't just be their king as they've known kings...

David would be their **shepherd**.

And there's something interesting here underneath our English translation.

When verse 2 says David was “the one who led Israel”...

The Hebrew phrase says more literally:

[SLIDE 6] “You were the one bringing Israel out and bringing Israel in.”

In other words...

As Israel's military commander...

David used to *lead* God's people *out* into battle...

And he was famous for *bringing* them *home* safely.

That language echoes another really important passage...

[SLIDE 7] Numbers 27:15-17 - Moses said to the LORD, “May the LORD, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out

¹ 1 Samuel 16:7

and bring them in, so the LORD's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

Moses prayed this prayer long before David.
He knew **Israel needed a shepherd-leader...**
Someone who would go before the people and lead them out...
Then safely bring them back in.

Joshua was the immediate answer to that prayer...
David later stepped into that same shepherding role...
And ultimately, we know that Jesus is the perfect Shepherd...

But here in 2 Samuel...
This was the kind of king the LORD was calling David to be.

He was to be a shepherd who found strength in the LORD...
Not a warrior king who used his own strength to take whatever he wanted.

Remember what Samuel warned Israel about when they first demanded a king?

He said:²
*He will **take** your sons...*
*He will **take** your daughters...*
*He will **take** the best of your fields...*
*He will **take** a tenth of your grain and vineyard...*
*He will **take** your servants...*
*He will **take** your livestock...*

Israel experienced that...
They were taken advantage of for decades...

But now...
Israel was finally ready to receive a different kind of king...
Not simply a king who would rule over them...
But a shepherd who would actually care for them.

And so...

² 1 Samuel 8:10-18

[SLIDE 8] 2 Samuel 5:3 - When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

This is the moment we've been waiting for since 1 Samuel 16!

It's interesting to me that the writer doesn't spend a lot of time on it.

We don't really get a lot of details.

But the details we do get are pretty important...

*"The king made a covenant with them at Hebron...
Before the LORD..."*

In other words...

David is now Israel's king...

But David himself still had a King.

Remember...

The kingdom ultimately belonged to the LORD.

David would reign under the LORD's authority...

David's strength was not his own...

His strength would be found in the King of kings.

And so the text tells us that David was 30 years old when he became the king...

He reigned over Judah for 7.5 years...

Then over Israel *and* Judah for the next 33 years.

The next thing the writer wants us to see...

Is when David and his men captured Jerusalem...

[SLIDE 9] 2 Samuel 5:6-7 - The king and his men marched to Jerusalem to attack the Jebusites, who lived there. The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off." They thought, "David cannot get in here." Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion—which is the City of David.

Okay, who were the Jebusites?

This is important...

When Moses met the LORD at the burning bush...
 The LORD said: *I have seen the misery of my people in Egypt.
 I have heard them crying out...*

[SLIDE 10] Exodus 3:8 - So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land into a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey—the home of the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites.

So the Jebusites were among the people that the LORD promised to drive out.³
 They were living in the land that Yahweh promised His people long ago.

But when the time came to fight...
 The people of Judah failed to drive them out...
 Then, years later, the Benjamites failed.

After that, the LORD allowed some of these nations to remain in the land...
 Not because He couldn't drive them out...
 But because Israel was becoming more and more disobedient.

And it's interesting...
 The Jebusites only lived a few miles south from where Saul lived...
 Yet we have no record of Saul trying to drive them out of Jerusalem.

So when David marched against Jerusalem...
 Israel was returning to something that had been left unfinished for generations.

And apparently the Jebusites were pretty confident they weren't budging...
 Because when David arrived, they basically laughed at him!
 They said...

[SLIDE 11] 2 Samuel 5:6b - “You will not get in here; even the blind and the lame can ward you off.”

They said that because where they lived provided a geographical advantage...
 They had the high ground...

³ Exodus 23:23

The steep slopes made it difficult to get near...
But they also had defensive walls that protected the city.

So they look at David's men and were basically like:
Good luck getting up here!

But David knew of a way...

[SLIDE 12] 2 Samuel 5:8 - On that day David had said, "Anyone who conquers the Jebusites will have to use the water shaft to reach those 'lame and blind' who are David's enemies." That is why they say, "The 'blind and lame' will not enter the palace."

David believed the best way to get past Jerusalem's defenses...
Was through their ancient water system.

Their water system was extensive!
So we don't know the exact path David's men took...
But the cool thing for me is that I was in that water system!

Here's what it looks like...

[SLIDES 13-22] Pictures of the ancient water system
(**explain**)

So again, we don't know the exact route David's men took...
But this is basically what it would've looked like for them.

And David's plan worked!
They took the city and called it the City of David.
And as he built up the city even more...

[SLIDE 23] 2 Samuel 5:10 - ...he became more and more powerful, because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

And I don't want us to miss the name the writer uses for God here.

"The LORD God Almighty."

This is the only time in 1 & 2 Samuel that the writer uses this title for Yahweh.

**[SLIDE 24] In Hebrew, it's: *Yahweh Elohe Sebaot*...
Or more literally: "The LORD, God of Hosts."**

Hosts is the language of armies...

And so this title pictures Yahweh as the sovereign ruler over the *heavenly host*.

Think about how appropriate that is here...

David was now the king of Israel...

He commanded Israel's army...

But David himself served a King.

Yahweh...

The King of kings...

The God of Hosts.

So David's power and influence is growing...

But not because of his own strength...

It's because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

Again, that echoes Hannah's prayer...

[SLIDE 25] 1 Samuel 2:9-10 - "It is not by strength that one prevails ... He will give strength to his king and exalt the horn of his anointed."

And that's exactly what we're watching happen.

The LORD has given strength to His king.

But here's what struck me as I was thinking about this passage...

This isn't just the story about David conquering Jerusalem...

In some ways...

**The story about David conquering the Jebusites is a mini-episode
That mirrors David's life.**

Years ago, the LORD promised David the throne.

But from that moment on...

There always seemed to be something standing in the way...

First it was Goliath...

Goliath said to David: *I'll feed your flesh to the birds!*⁴

Saul declared: *David must die!*⁵

Then for years Saul went after David.

Abner was loyal to Saul and his family most of his life...⁶

Which is why he also fought against David...

And after Saul died...

Instead of David getting the throne...

Ish-Bosheth was made the king.

So for years, everything seemed to say:

"David, you're not getting there."

And yet...

Here he is.

Not because David was strong enough to remove every obstacle...

He wasn't.

The LORD brought him to the throne.

And then almost immediately after David finally becomes king...

He walks up to Jerusalem...

And what do the Jebusites say?

[SLIDE 26] 2 Samuel 5:6 - The Jebusites said to David, "You will not get in here" ... They thought, "David cannot get in here."

Nevertheless...

David got in.

And the more I thought about David's story...

The more I realized that we've been watching the same truth unfold for years...

[SLIDE 27] No one can stop what the LORD intends to accomplish.

⁴ 1 Samuel 17:44

⁵ 1 Samuel 20:31

⁶ 2 Samuel 3:8

When everyone else said:

You won't defeat Goliath...

Saul will kill you...

Saul's kingdom will continue without you...

You will not get into Jerusalem...

Nevertheless...

You can't stop God.

Even when we're weak and feel like things are out of our control...

You can't stop God.

Last week we saw David admit his own weakness in chapter 3...

Then in chapter 4 he says the LORD is his deliverer...

And now in chapter 5...

We see that it's the LORD who was giving him the strength he needed.

Everything is pointing to the fact that nothing can stop the LORD.

Hannah's prayer took that truth to the "nth" degree...

She said: *"The LORD brings death and makes alive;
he brings down to the grave and raises up."*⁷

In other words:

Not even death itself is beyond the LORD's power.

But catch what I'm not saying...

I'm not saying that the LORD will remove every obstacle...

Joab was a thorn in David's side...

And when David felt too weak to do anything about him...

He left it to the LORD...

But the LORD never removed Joab from David's life.

⁷ 1 Samuel 2:6

Sometimes God removes the obstacle...
Sometimes He doesn't...

Sometimes He opens the fortress...
Sometimes He allows the thorn to remain...

**But no matter what's going on in our lives...
The truth that stands above it all is that...
Nothing can stop the LORD from accomplishing His purposes.**

The ultimate example of that truth...
Is Jesus.

The religious leaders wanted Him gone...
Rome crucified Him...
They sealed the tomb...

From a human perspective, it looked finished.

Nevertheless...
He rose from the dead.

Nothing can stand in the way of the LORD.

You know...

Last week we talked about when we're feeling weak and things are out of our control...

And we reflected on the truth that Jesus is King over everything...
Therefore we can let go and trust Him in everything...

And some of you said that really resonated with you...
—it did for me as well...
Because when the burdens of life feel too heavy to carry...
Or too uncertain to move forward...
We remember we serve the God who's in control.

Nothing can stop His purposes.
Nothing.

That's why when David admits he's weak...
He also remembers: *The LORD is my deliverer.*
And: *The LORD God Almighty is with me.*

The truth is...

[SLIDE 28] Whatever stands in front of us is not more powerful than the purposes of God.

Our worries...
Our uncertainties...
Our fears...
Financial pressure...
Grief...
Loss...

None of it is more powerful than the Almighty.

...God doesn't promise to *remove* these things...

But...

[SLIDE 29] Nothing that stands against us, outranks Jesus.

His name...
Is Matchless.

I'm hitting this hard because I need to hear this truth as well.

This is an especially hard time of year for my family and I.

But we know who our Deliverer is.
Jesus.
He's with us...
His Spirit is within everyone who believes...

And so it's through His strength...
That all of us can say...

Even though we are weak...
He is strong.

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.