

09/06/26 - Order of Worship

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **WELCOME**
- **Labor Day** - Office hours this week: Wed - Friday, 9am - 2pm
- **Garage Sale**
 - Indoor Church Garage Sale: Sept 18 & 19, 8am-2pm
 - Drop off times:
 - This week: Sept 9-11 (Wed-Fri) 9am-2pm
 - Next week: Sept 15-17 (Tues-Thur) 9am-2pm
 - Place items in the gym against the far wall
 - If these drop off times don't work for you, or if you have large items (furniture), contact Pastor Mike
- **Church Picnic** - Mark your calendars for Sunday, Sept 27th, immediately after the church service - at Huffnagle Park in Quarryville. There's a sign up sheet on the Information Desk - More details in the church newsletter.
- **Sonshine Visitor Birthday Cards**
 - Sonshine Visitors is an outreach that we do to keep connected with people from our church that cannot attend regularly because of health reasons. If you would like to send cards, there are address labels on the Information Desk.
- **BIC Life Podcast** - Ep53: When God Says No (available tomorrow)
- **Church Newsletter - How did the texts go? [spam?]**
 - Need help? See me after the service
 - Sign up by emailing us: office@reftonchurch.org, or check the box on the connect card and be sure to add your email (clearly)
- **Today's Sermon** — Last week, David became king—but now what? This morning, we'll see what Israel's king was supposed to do, what really happened, and how, even though David wasn't perfect, he learned to rely on the LORD—the One who goes before us.
 - Sermon notes are available in the church lobby & online
- **Connect Cards** — Connect Card - Lord's Prayer - Who We Are [invite]

PRAYER

WORSHIP (3 Songs)

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER

SCRIPTURE READING — Marcia Hall

MESSAGE
PRAYER
RESPONSE SONG

Sermon Title: The One Who Goes Before Us

Series: Seeking God's Kingdom, Part 37

Scripture: 2 Samuel 5:11-25

Main Takeaway: We may not know the way ahead, but we know the One who goes ahead of us, Jesus, our Good Shepherd and King.

One of the things I really like to do is to show how Scripture connects to itself.

The Bible *is* the inspired Word of God...

But it's not just one book...

It's a library of 66 different books...

Written by over 40 different authors...

All inspired by God...

All of which were from three different continents on the other side of the world...

And all of it was written over the course of 1500 years.

And the amazing thing is...

It not only all connects with itself...

But no matter where you start...

It all points to Jesus.

And so this morning we're going to keep talking about 2 Samuel 5...

But it's helpful to know some context of what came before...

So we'll briefly visit Genesis and Deuteronomy...

Books that talk about events that took place centuries before David lived...

And yet they help us understand David's life.

Then after we talk about David in 2 Samuel...

We'll also see how the events in 2 Samuel 5 point us to Jesus.

And so... (I know I already said this)...
But here's our framework for this morning...

[SLIDE 0] We'll see what Israel's king was supposed to do, what really happened, and how David learned to rely on the LORD, the One who goes before us.

So before we get into it...

Let's Pray

Last week we talked about Hannah's prayer...
And how it makes so much more sense in light of David's life.

Long before Israel had a king...
Hannah prayed...

[SLIDE 1] 1 Samuel 2:10 - He [The LORD] will give strength to His king and exalt the horn of His anointed.

Israel had been looking forward to having a king for a long time...

In fact...
It was always part of God's plan for Israel to have kings.

If we rewind all the way back in Genesis 17...
When the LORD made a covenant with Abraham...
The LORD said...

[SLIDE 2] Genesis 17:4-6 - This is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and *kings will come from you*.

The LORD said this to Abraham more than **1000 years** before David became the king.
Granted, this is talking about many nations...
But it included Israel...

So if we fast forward to the book of Deuteronomy... (Gen, Ex, Lev, Num, Deut)
 Just before the Israelites went into the promised land...
 Moses gave instructions for the future Israelite kings...

He said...

[SLIDE 3] Deuteronomy 17:14-15a - When you enter the land the LORD your God is giving you and have taken possession of it and settled in it, and you say, “Let us set a king over us like all the nations around us,” be sure to appoint over you a king the LORD your God chooses.

Israel wouldn't say this for another 350 years...

[SLIDE 3A] 1 Samuel 8:5b - “...appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have.”

So the LORD gave Israel Saul as their king.
 Initially, things seemed to be going well...
 But over time, Saul drifted from the LORD...
 And he steadily became more and more like the kings of the other nations.

But David would be a different kind of king...
 The kind of king who, at his best...
 Lived in dependence on the LORD.

But David wasn't perfect...
 Moses specifically said...

[SLIDE 4] Deuteronomy 17:17a - He [the king] must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.

But what did David do?
 Just after he became the king...
 The narrator tells us...

[SLIDE 4A] 2 Samuel 5:13 - After he left Hebron, David took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem, and more sons and daughters were born to him.

So while David is said to be a man after God's own heart...
Clearly we're already starting to see some cracks.

David loves the LORD...
But he isn't perfect.

Now, when David took the throne...
There were certain things he was supposed to do.

Moses laid out some rules for the Israelite kings in Deut 17...
He said...

[SLIDE 5] Deuteronomy 17:18 - When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests.

[SLIDE 6] Deuteronomy 17:19-20a - It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left.

I don't know if David literally wrote a copy of the law and kept it with him...
But we do know that David understood the importance of keeping the LORD's Word.

In one of his writings, David said...

[SLIDE 7] 2 Samuel 22:23 (& Psalm 18:22) - All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees.

Again, David wasn't perfect...
He didn't always obey what the LORD said...
But David understood that he was under the authority of another King...

The LORD God Almighty...
The King of kings!

And so not long after David became the king...
A major problem showed up...
The Philistines were gathering for battle...

[SLIDE 8] 2 Samuel 5:17-18 - When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, *they went up in full force to search for him, but David heard about it and went down to the stronghold. Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim...*

Remember, the Philistines had defeated Israel only about 8 years before this...
And it wasn't even close...

So when the Philistines show up in full force...
They spread out across the Valley of Rephaim...
Their presence alone would've been intimidating enough...
But even the name of the valley carried some pretty frightening associations.

The word, ***rephaim***, is a loaded Hebrew term that can refer to:
Spirits in the realm of the dead...
Or ancient giant clans.

So this is easily the kind of scene that could make a king panic!
Death. Giants. A powerful enemy ready for battle.

But David doesn't give into fear.
Instead, he goes to the LORD.

[SLIDE 9] 2 Samuel 5:19 - ...so David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go and attack the Philistines? Will you deliver them into my hands?" The LORD answered him, "Go, for I will surely deliver the Philistines into your hands."

You know...
A similar thing happened to Saul several years prior to this...

Just before Saul died...
 This same Philistine army stood before him...
 And the Scripture says that “terror filled his heart.”¹

Saul even inquired of the LORD...
 But the LORD didn’t answer him.

Because if you remember...
 At this point in Saul’s life...
 He’d already spent years rejecting the Word of the LORD.

But David isn’t Saul...
 So when David inquired of the LORD...
 He gets an answer.

Despite the strength of the Philistines...
 The LORD said:
Go... I will deliver them into your hands.

So now the question is...

Will David trust the LORD enough to obey His Word?

He does!

In fact, there seems to be no hesitation...
 The text says...

[SLIDE 10] 2 Samuel 5:20-21 - So David went to Baal Perazim, and there he defeated them. He said, “As waters break out, the LORD has broken out against my enemies before me.” So *that place was called Baal Perazim*. The Philistines abandoned their idols there, and David and his men carried them off.

Baal Perazim is interesting.
 We don’t know exactly where it is - it’s somewhere along the valley of Rephaim...
 But it seems that this place was actually named after David’s victory...

Baal Perazim is a Hebrew phrase that means: ***the LORD who breaks out***.

¹ 1 Samuel 28:5

It's a phrase that reminds me of when the LORD flooded the earth during the days of Noah...

[SLIDE 10A] 2 Samuel 5:20 picture

Genesis 7:11 says that on the day the Flood began...

*"All the springs of the great deep burst forth,
And the floodgates of the heavens were opened."*

I don't know if you saw the movie, Noah (with Russell Crowe)...
But I remember seeing water bursting up from the ground...

Nothing could hold the waters back...
They were unstoppable...

That's the kind of imagery David's using.

"As waters break out, the LORD has broken out against my enemies."

The LORD came with such force that the Philistines fled...
Leaving their idols behind on the battlefield.

These were the symbols of their gods...
The gods they trusted to give them victory.

And there's some irony here...
Years earlier, the Philistines defeated Israel
and **carried away the ark of the LORD**.

But now the Philistines are defeated...
And **their gods are carried away**.

We said this last week but yet again we see the same truth:

Nothing can stop what the LORD wants to accomplish.

But apparently the Philistines didn't learn their lesson...
Because in the very next few verses...
They come back to the Valley of Rephaim to face David again...

[SLIDE 11] 2 Samuel 5:23 - so David inquired of the LORD...

Let's pause on that for a second...

Did you notice that David didn't assume anything?
He didn't think: *The LORD told me to go last time...*
So I'll just go ahead and do the same thing!

Instead of assuming he knew what was best...
He went to the LORD and asked what to do.

And it's a good thing he did...
Because this time he got a slightly different answer...

[SLIDE 12] 2 Samuel 5:23-24 - so David inquired of the LORD, and he answered, "Do not go straight up, but circle around behind them and attack them in front of the poplar trees. As soon as you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the poplar trees, move quickly, because that will mean the LORD has gone out in front of you to strike the Philistine army."

So for whatever reason...
The LORD wanted David and his men to hit them from behind...
But the LORD wanted them to wait for a signal...

Did you catch that?

The LORD said...
*"As soon as you hear the sound of marching...
In the tops of the poplar trees..."*

As soon as you hear that...
Then attack!

Now...
As a modern reader of the bible...
We might think the LORD caused wind to rush through the trees...
And maybe that was the signal?

But personally...
I don't think so.

I believe this was the LORD's heavenly army
literally attacking in front of David's army.

The LORD said that the sound of marching in the tree tops means that...
The LORD has gone out in front of David's men to strike the Philistine army.

Remember what we talked about last week?
 Yahweh is the LORD God Almighty...
Yahweh Elohe Sebaot — Yahweh, God of Hosts (armies)

His heavenly army broke out in front of David's army...
 They were to follow behind quickly.

And I love the phrase:
The LORD has gone out in front of you.

Because David fights in both battles.
 And in both battles, the LORD gets the credit for victory.

In the first battle...
 David said: *The LORD has broken out against my enemies before me.*
 In the second: *The LORD has gone out in front of you.*

And so what we have here is...
 Again...
 A lived example of Hannah's prayer.

Here's the progression we've been seeing over the past several weeks...

[SLIDE 13] Chart

Hannah prayed:
It is not by strength that one prevails. (1 Samuel 2:9)

David admitted:
I am weak. (2 Samuel 3:39)

But David also remembered...
 The LORD delivered him out of every trouble. (2 Samuel 4:9)

Then the narrator tells us...
 The LORD God Almighty is with Him. (2 Samuel 5:10)

And now...

We're seeing that the LORD goes before him. (2 Samuel 5:24)

And so after the LORD gave David his instructions...

[SLIDE 14] 2 Samuel 5:25 - *David did as the LORD commanded him, and he struck down the Philistines all the way from Gibeon to Gezer.*

So David didn't just go down and fight again...

He did as the LORD commanded him.

That's almost Deuteronomy 17 language coming to life...

Remember what Moses said the king should do with God's Word?

[SLIDE 14A] Deuteronomy 17:19 - *...follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees*

This is what Israel's king was always supposed to look like...

Not a king who simply does whatever seems best to him...

But a king who lives under the authority of God's Word.

Again, David wasn't perfect...

But in this moment...

He did as the LORD commanded.

And so this leads me to one of the main takeaways for us this morning...

[SLIDE 15] Trust in the presence and power of God.

Not just *believing* that God is with us...

But actually *living* like He is.

That means going to Him *before* we take charge...

Trusting His Word...

Waiting for Him...

And *following* wherever He leads.

But what if we go to the LORD...

And we're *not* getting an answer?

And I don't mean like Saul...

God's silence came after years of Saul rejecting His Word.

I'm saying...

Even faithful people don't always get the answers they're looking for.

Job never really learned *why* he suffered the way he did.

David himself cried out, "*Why?*" and "*How long?*" in the Psalms.

Habakkuk asked God why He tolerated what he saw.

Paul asked three times for the thorn in his flesh to be taken away...

But he didn't get the answer he wanted.

I'm sure most of us (if not *all* of us) have asked God:

"Why?"

I've asked that question many times.

And the truth is...

Even though we're imperfect followers of Jesus...

Even though we don't always follow His Word carefully...

He still invites us to ask our questions...

And even if we don't get a direct answer...

We do have promises directly from God that we can stand on.

David trusted that the LORD was *with* Him...

And that the LORD went *before* him...

And in Jesus...

We're given those same promises of His presence...

In John chapter 10, Jesus calls Himself the Good Shepherd.

He calls His sheep by name and leads them out...

[SLIDE 16] John 10:4 - When he has brought out all his own, *he goes on ahead of them*, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice.

And so this is saying...

We may not know the way ahead...

But we know the One who goes ahead of us.

That's trusting in the presence and power of God.

And David's example is striking...

Because trusting in the presence of God wasn't his only option.

He had two realities in front of him.

The presence of the LORD (2 Samuel 5:10)...

And the presence of the Philistines (2 Samuel 5:17-18)...

One required trust...

The other was a visible, immediate threat.

But David didn't let the presence of his enemy...

Have more authority over him than the presence of the LORD.

Of course our battles might not look exactly like David's...

But as Christians, we fight a spiritual battle everyday...

And all of us know what it's like to have challenges standing right in front of us.

Our struggles in this life are very real...

But so is the presence and power of God.

And so...

Again...

[SLIDE 17] We may not know the way ahead, but we know the One who goes ahead of us... Jesus, our Good Shepherd and King.

And His promises give us solid ground to stand on...

Promises like what He said in John 10:27-28...

He said: *"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; No one will snatch them out of my hand."*

And Matthew 28:20 where Jesus said:
"Surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Again...
He knows us...
He leads us...
He gives eternal life...
No one can take us away from Him...
And He's always with us...

Even when we don't get the answers we're looking for...
These promises are all rooted in the unmatched presence and power of Jesus.

And so I can't sit up here and say:
Just be like David...
Go to the LORD and He'll give you the answers you're looking for.

It's not even about saying the right words...

It's really all about living in the reality of God's presence.

I can't say we'll always understand why things go the way they do...

I definitely can't say we'll never feel angry for the way things turned out...

Or that we'll never have to question God, "Why?"

But at the end of the day...

We can trust God's Word that says we have a Shepherd who goes before us...

The King of kings who is always with us...

A Savior who loves us more than we can imagine.

And He now calls us to follow Him...
Seek Him...

Cry out to Him...
And live in the reality that **He is with us.**

Even when we don't understand...
Even when we're afraid...
Even when all we can ask is, "*Why?*"

We can know beyond a shadow of a doubt...

Our Shepherd-King is with us...
And goes before us.

May that truth strengthen us this morning.

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.

**[Reminder for me] – Stick around for people that might need help with
the Church Newsletter texts**