

Sermon Title: When Everything Belongs to the King

Series: Seeking God's Kingdom, Part 40

Scripture: 2 Samuel 8

Main Takeaway: Seeking God's Kingdom means surrendering everything the LORD has given us and learning to use it for His glory and for the sake of loving others.

Last week we saw that David had a good idea...
He wanted to build a house for the LORD.

That seemed like a great way to honor the LORD...
But the LORD had other plans.

And that left us asking ourselves a question...

[SLIDE 1] Am I surrendered enough to allow the LORD to redirect my plans?

David listened and surrendered his plans to the LORD...
But he's not perfect.

I mean...
Some of what you just heard in 2 Samuel 8 was pretty brutal!

So what's going on?
Did God tell David to disarm the Moabite army...
Make them lie down...
Then execute 2/3rds of them?

That feels a little extreme!
So let's take a closer look.

Chapter 8 is full of battles...
And there are two verses that really stand out...

[SLIDE 2] Picture – The Refrain of the Passage

In 2 Samuel 8, verses 6 and 14, it says that:

“The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.”

That’s repeated twice in the chapter...

Which means...

Despite David’s growing strength...

But the LORD is the source of his strength...

And this is really part of a continuing thread we’ve been seeing in Samuel...

[SLIDE 3] Picture — The LORD Gives Strength

In 2 Samuel 3, David’s commander took matters into his own hands...

And David felt like there was nothing he could do about it...

So he admitted in verse 39:

“I am weak.”

But in the next chapter, David declared that...

The LORD has delivered him out of every trouble.

Then chapter 5 tells us that David:

“Became more and more powerful...

Because the LORD God Almighty was with him.”

Chapter 5 gave us an example of this when the Philistines came up against David...

Before David did anything, he went to the LORD...

And the LORD gave him specific instructions...

He told him to wait until he heard marching in the tree tops...

He said that would be the sound of the LORD going out before him!

Then in chapter 7, David wanted to build a house for the LORD...

But the LORD turned the tables on David and said:

“I will make your name great.”

And now in **chapter 8**, we're watching that promise come true.

The LORD is giving David victory after victory...

The Philistines, the Moabites, the Arameans of Zobah and Damascus...

All defeated.

And now David's kingdom is growing...

But not just his kingdom...

David's **name** is growing...

The surrounding nations were taking notice...

Verse 13 says "David became famous"!

And this isn't the first time David's victories caused him to be famous...

Remember the song people used to sing about him?

[SLIDE 4] Picture — 1 Samuel 18:7 & 2 Samuel 8:13

After David defeated Goliath and became one of Saul's commanders...

David was winning battle after battle...

And people started singing:

"Saul has slain his thousands...

And David his tens of thousands."

But that was years ago...

David isn't one of Saul's commanders anymore...

He's the king!

And once again, his victories are piling up...

His name is spreading...

But the narrator wants us to know who really gets the credit...

The text says two different times:

"The LORD gave David victory wherever he went."

So there's no doubt in anyone's mind...
The LORD was with David...

But that brings us back to an uncomfortable question...

Did God approve every decision David made during these battles?

Look at verse 2 again...

[SLIDE 5] 2 Samuel 8:2 - David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought him tribute.

This is brutal.

There's just no way around it.

One bible scholar I read said that these were:

"captured unarmed Moabite soldiers."¹

Another said that David's actions were a **"horrendous ... massacre."**²

Another called David's actions an **"atrocious."**³

Another noted that this was a **"terrible vengeance"** on a nation which had once received him and given his parents asylum (1 Samuel 22:3-4).⁴

I say all this because I want us to wrestle with the reality of:

What the text says David did...

And what the text says God did.

¹ Harry A. Hoffner Jr., 1 & 2 Samuel, vol. 2, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 344.

² W. Dietrich, The Early Monarchy, 222. (quoted in) Harry A. Hoffner Jr., 1 & 2 Samuel, Evangelical Exegetical Commentary (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015).

³ Ronald F. Youngblood, "1, 2 Samuel," in The Expositor's Bible Commentary: 1 Samuel–2 Kings (Revised Edition), ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 402.

⁴ A. F. Kirkpatrick, The Second Book of Samuel, with Maps, Notes and Introduction, The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1890), 105.

That's really important...

Because **the text never says that the LORD told David to do this.**

It says that the LORD gave David victory over the Moabites...

It doesn't say that the LORD told David what to do with them after they were defeated.

Now, technically...

It's possible that as the king...

David might not have been on the battlefield...

And maybe his commanders were simply acting in his name.

But we can't know that for sure.

The text doesn't tell us.

But, the text does hold David responsible.

It says **David** defeated the Moabites...

David made them lie down...

David measured them...

And two-thirds were put to death.

So whatever happened on that battlefield...

The narrator places responsibility on David.

But again...

[SLIDE 6] God giving David victory doesn't mean God approved of every decision David made with that victory.

And that distinction is really important...

David is becoming incredibly powerful.

The LORD has given him victory...

His kingdom is expanding...

His name is becoming great...

Just like the LORD said it would...

Remember what the LORD said to David through Nathan?

[SLIDE 7] 2 Samuel 7:9 - Now I will make your name great, like the names of the greatest men on earth.

And that's exactly what's happening.

With every victory, David's gaining power...

He's gaining influence... wealth... land...

But now the question is...

[SLIDE 8] What's David going to do with everything the LORD's given him?

Chapter 8 gives us a few answers...

Look at verse 3...

[SLIDE 9] 2 Samuel 8:3 - Moreover, David defeated Hadadezer son of Rehob, king of Zobah, when he went to restore his monument [control/power] at the Euphrates River.

During this battle...

[SLIDE 10] 2 Samuel 8:4 - David captured a thousand of his chariots, seven thousand charioteers and twenty thousand foot soldiers. He hamstrung all but a hundred of the chariot horses.

Hamstringing meant permanently disabling the horses from being used in battle.

But why wouldn't David just keep them?

I mean... if you're building an army...

A thousand chariot horses are a lot more useful than a hundred!

Well, this takes us back to Deuteronomy 17...

Where Moses gave instructions to the future kings of Israel...

Moses said...

[SLIDE 11] Deuteronomy 17:16 - The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself...

Why?

Well, in the ancient world, horses weren't just for transportation.
Chariots and horses represented military strength and security.
It's the kind of power that could make a king less dependent on the LORD.

I think that's why David only kept 100 horses.

The LORD gave David the victory...
David could've kept everything and made himself stronger...
But instead, he showed restraint.

There's another example of this in 2 Samuel 8...

After each battle, there were a lot of valuables that David's men could take and bring back to Jerusalem.

Watch what David does with them...

[SLIDE 12] 2 Samuel 8:11 - King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued

That word "dedicated" is really important.

It means that David was setting these things apart as holy...
He was essentially saying:
"These belong to the LORD."

Honestly, think about what David could've done...
He could've kept it all for himself...

But like the horses...
Moses also had something to say about this...
He said that the king...

[SLIDE 13] Deuteronomy 17:17 - ...must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

Again...

It's not that having a lot of wealth and stuff is a bad thing...

But imagine what that kind of power could do to David's heart...

Remember the warning Samuel gave Israel about kings?

He said a king would **take**... and **take**... and **take**.⁵

And we watched Saul become that kind of king.

But here, David is showing some serious restraint.

His actions aren't perfect...

But at least he's trying to follow the Word of the LORD.

And so, one of the things we can take from 2 Samuel 8 is this:

[SLIDE 14] The LORD gave David victory, and David gave back to the LORD what came from those victories.

There's a beautiful thing happening here...

The LORD gives...

David receives...

Then David gives back.

That in itself is a good reminder for us...

But there's another really important detail in 2 Samuel 8...

David gave back a lot to the LORD...

But what about the rest?

[SLIDE 15] Picture for 2 Samuel 8:15

⁵ 1 Samuel 8:11-18

2 Samuel 8:15 - David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.

I want you to notice those words:

“just and right.”

In Hebrew, those are two really important words...

***mishpat* and *sedaqah*.**

In fact, several years ago I took a BIC Core Course with Dr. Terry Brensinger.

Terry is a professor and was a pastor in the BIC...

He actually wrote a commentary on the book of Judges.

Anyway, I remember him highlighting these two words:

mishpat and *sedaqah*.

Separately, they feel very similar:

- *mishpat* can refer to justice, fairness, rightful judgment, protection from oppression
- *sedaqah* can refer to righteousness, doing what's right, moral integrity and faithfulness

Terry helped us think about these ideas in terms of authority and expectation.

He said that when someone has *mishpat*...

When they have “the say”...

There are still righteous expectations for how that authority is exercised.

For example...

Parents have “the say” over their kids...

But they also expectations for the kids to do what's right:

Things like: bedtime, chores, homework, etc.

And that actually helps us understand David.

As the king, David had enormous authority.

But he didn't have the authority to do whatever he wanted.

Instead... He was supposed to use that authority to do what was **just and right for his people.**

Terry put it like this...

[SLIDE 16] Israel's kingship was to be more in ministry than in mastery.

And in that way...

David was "doing what was just and right for all his people."

The LORD gave him victory...

Along with that came wealth and stuff...

But instead of keeping it for himself...

David dedicated it to the LORD...

Then he used his authority do what was just and right for all his people.

That reminds me of 1 Samuel 30...

When the LORD gave David victory over the Amalekites...

The Amalekites were raiding towns in the region...

And eventually they attacked Ziklag...

Where they took David's family and the families of his men.

So David prayed...

Then he and his men attacked the Amelekites...

The LORD gave them the victory...

But even more than that...

David recovered everything they took.

But instead of keeping it all for himself...

He sent a lot of it to the elders of Judah...

And to the different towns in the area.

So even before David was king...

We were already seeing him use what the LORD gave him for the good of others.

Maybe this is part of what it means when David is described as a man after God's own heart?

He's definitely not perfect...
Chapter 8 makes that pretty clear.

But as Israel's king...
 He's trying to follow the Word of the LORD...
 By doing what's just and right for his people.

And so, what we've been seeing is that...

[SLIDE 17] Chapter 8 shows us "power" in all kinds of forms...

The LORD gave David:
 Strength, authority, wealth, influence, reputation, opportunities,
 and people under his care.

Now... Technically, we're not a king like David...
 But the LORD does bless us with things like...

Relationships, family, time, money, abilities, opportunities and responsibilities...

But today's chapter should help us look at our own heart and ask...

What am I doing with what God has given me?

Or maybe an even better question is...

[SLIDE 18] What have I been given that hasn't yet been dedicated to the LORD?

In other words...
 Everything I have belongs to the LORD...

But are there parts of my life where I'm still saying:
"This belongs to me"?

My money...
 My time...
 My abilities...

My influence...
My plans...

**What have I not yet placed back into the LORD's hands and said:
"This belongs to You"?**

I think I've talked about this before...

But when I was a teenager,
I remember going to church one day and being challenged with a prayer.

The pastor said it's probably one of the boldest prayers we could pray.
So naturally, my competitive teenage brain said:
Challenge accepted!

I took that prayer home and taped it to the headboard of my bed.

The prayer said this...

[SLIDE 19] Wesleyan Covenant Prayer (part 1)

"I am no longer my own, but Yours.
Put me to what You will, place me with whom You will.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be put to work for You or set aside for You,
praised for You or criticized for You.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

[SLIDE 20] Wesleyan Covenant Prayer (part 2)

I freely and fully surrender all things to Your glory and service.
And now, O wonderful and holy God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer,
You are mine, and I am Yours.
So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth,
Let it also be made in heaven. Amen."

I doubt "teenage me" fully understood what I was praying!

Because the older I get...

The more I've realized this is a prayer you spend the rest of your life learning to live.

[SLIDE 21] *"Let me have all things, let me have nothing."*

In other words...

Whether I'm in a season of abundance like David was experiencing...

Or I'm in a season of loss...

Either way...

The prayer is saying:

Jesus...

Whatever You place in my hands...

Belongs to You.

[SLIDE 22] *"Let me be put to work for You or set aside for You, praised for You or criticized for You."*

David's reputation belonged to the LORD too.

And that's a harder thing to surrender than we might realize.

Because it's one thing to say:

"LORD, You can have my money."

It's another thing to say:

"LORD, You can have what people think about me."

You can have my reputation... My recognition...

Whether I'm praised or criticized...

I will trust in You.

Which brings us to the foundation of the prayer...

[SLIDE 23] *"I freely and fully surrender all things to Your glory..."*

In other words...

My life, my everything is Yours...

Now...

Teach me Your ways, LORD...

Show me how to use what You've given me...

Because... Church...

The reality is...

Everything we have...

Everything we are...

Every opportunity...

Every ability...

Every relationship...

Every resource...

It all belongs to Jesus.

So maybe the question we need to leave with today is the one we asked earlier...

[SLIDE 24] What have I been given that hasn't yet been dedicated to the LORD?

What am I still holding onto and calling *mine* instead of *Yours*?

Because Seeking God's Kingdom means...

Surrendering everything the LORD's given us...

And learning to use what He's given us for His glory...

And for the sake of loving others.

Because the reality is...

Everything we have belongs to the King.

Let's Pray