

How the Mighty Have Fallen

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[0 : 0 0] 2 Samuel 1, where our passage leaves off as David hears and responds to what has happened to Saul and to Israel. Samuel was written, and it's important to see this as one book, and that's one of the reasons why we are looking at the end of 1 Samuel and the beginning of 2 Samuel together at the same time. They're supposed to be read together. In fact, part of the reason that they were broken up originally was simply because the scroll could not hold both books together, but they are supposed to be read as one, and actually what we see is that 2 Samuel, if there's going to be a break, really begins in chapter 2 with the reign of David, but the end of Saul's reign and the response to it comes here in 2 Samuel chapter 1, and so let us hear the word of the Lord.

After the death of Saul, when David had returned from striking down the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag. And on the third day, behold, a man came from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. And when he came to David, he fell on the ground and paid homage. David said to him, where do you come from? And he said to him, I have escaped from the camp of Israel. And David said to him, how did it go? Tell me. And he answered, the people fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead. And Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead. Then David said to the young man who told him, how do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead? And the young man who told him said, by chance I happen to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul leaning on his spear.

And behold, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. And when he looked behind him, he saw me and called to me, and I answered, here I am. And he said to me, who are you? I answered him, I am an Amalekite. And he said to me, stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers. So I stood beside him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my Lord. Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son, and for the people of the Lord, and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

And David said to the young man who told him, where do you come from? And he answered, I am the son of a sojourner in Amalekite. David said to him, how is it that you are not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed? Then David called one of the young men and said, go execute him. And he struck him down so that he died. And David said to him, your blood be on your head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, I have killed the Lord's anointed. And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son. And he said it should be taught to the people of Judah. Behold, it is written in the book of Jashar. He said, your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places, how the mighty have fallen. Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor fields of offerings. For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely, in life and in death they were not divided. They were swifter than eagles.

They were stronger than lions. You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle. Jonathan lies slain on your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan.

[4 : 10] Very pleasant have you been to me. Your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women. How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Let us pray together. Gracious Father, as we hear of the tragedy and lament of these chapters, we do pray that you would help us to understand the tragedy and lament that ought to be there in the mighty fall.

And at the same time, help us to know the hope that comes, in knowing that you are the God of steadfast love and faithfulness, the sovereign God who fulfills your plans and purposes for your people in Jesus Christ. Keep our eyes upon him now as we hear from his word.

In Christ's name, amen. Well, how do you respond when leaders in the church fall? How do you respond when those who seem to follow Christ and even be strong in Christ fall away from the faith? How do you respond when leaders or people who have harmed you get what they deserve?

How do you respond, in short, when the mighty fall? I think oftentimes we can be tempted to laugh at their misfortune. We can be tempted even to be happy at what comes upon them.

[5 : 30] But in our text, we are called to a different way. These two chapters record the death of Saul and then the response of David and his men. And throughout the text, both in the tone and tenor of chapter 31 of 1 Samuel, or also the response that we find of David and his men in 2 Samuel, we see something very different.

That we see, not rejoicing, not praise. We see the mark of tragedy and lament. And in this, we're going to see how we ought to respond when the mighty fall under judgment, even by their own sin.

And so first, we're going to see how we must recognize the tragedy. And second, how we must lament in humility. And last, how we must hope in God's sovereignty.

We're going to spend most of our time in the first two, and then conclude on the third, seeing the hope that we must have in God's sovereignty. So first, when the mighty fall, we must recognize the tragedy.

We must recognize the tragedy. If you recall, there has been this battle drawing near between the Israelites and the Philistines now for several chapters. All the way back in chapter 27, God told Saul that he was going to die in battle because of his sin and his sons with him.

[6 : 45] And this is exactly what now happens in chapter 31. And as it happens, and the way that it's written, we're supposed to feel and recognize and see the tragedy of what is taking place.

First, we see the tragedy of the mighty destroying himself. In verse 1, we are told how the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and were slain on Mount Geboa.

And after Saul's sons died, the battle pressed hard against Saul in verse 3, and the archers found him. And he was badly wounded by the archers, but not yet dead. And so Saul spoke to his armor bearer and told him to draw his sword and kill him because he doesn't want to be taken captive by the Philistines.

That was very logical. He didn't want to experience a slow and painful death at the hand of the violent Philistines. But the armor bearer won't do it. He's afraid to kill the Lord's anointed to his credit.

And so what does Saul do? He takes his own sword and he does it himself. And this is one of only a handful of times that we see suicide in the Bible, and it's important to see that it's never seen in a positive light.

[7 : 58] It's always wrong. It's always sinful. Now, that doesn't mean that suicide is the unforgivable sin. I think it's important to see that some people do commit suicide in times of weakness and despair and depression.

But it's also important to see with Saul that something different is going on than just that. But Saul isn't taking his life here just in a moment of weakness. But this is actually supposed to be seen as a fitting end in judgment upon him after years of rebellion and sin, in which Saul has been slowly already destroying himself.

We have seen this time and again over 1 Samuel. Saul claimed to follow the Lord. He made vows in the Lord's name, but he never showed signs of being a true believer. In fact, what we've seen with Saul is that he cares more about himself than what God calls him to do and be as king.

He gets jealous when David has success. He tries to kill him in blind rage. He pouts when people aren't helping him. He kills the priests when he thinks that they are against him.

And when God stops speaking to him, he goes to a medium for a word of guidance. And at every point, every time Saul is confronted, he never repents. He never turns away.

[9 : 14] He never admits wrong. And so for years, what has happened with Saul is that his own sin, his own selfishness, has been slowly destroying him. And as he now takes his own life, he's actually accomplishing God's judgment on himself with his own sword.

This is a picture of what is sometimes called the passive wrath of God. The active wrath of God is when God actively pours out judgment on sin.

Think of Sodom and Gomorrah as God brought judgment on those cities and destroyed them. That's God's active wrath on sin. The passive wrath of God is when he gives people over to the consequences of their own sin.

As people go their own way and don't repent. We find in Romans 1, for example, that God gives them over to whatever their desires want. He gives them over to a life outside of him, in rebellion, away from him, away from his life, away from his goodness.

And we're told that as they are corrupted in their hearts and minds by their own sin, people receive in themselves the due penalty for their error. They destroy themselves.

[10 : 27] And we see this in Saul. And we have to admit that we often see this all around us as well. When people have an affair, or embezzle money, or just live a life that is so curved in on self that they don't care about others, they bring destruction on themselves by their blindness and sin and unbelief.

And if there's no repentance, it ends in judgment. And although it's always tragic, it's especially tragic when this happens to those like Saul, who are supposed to lead and shepherd God's people.

There's a man named Roy Clements who earned a PhD in chemical physics in the 70s. But he became a pastor in 1979, and he actually gave his life to campus ministry throughout the 80s and 90s.

And this is in the UK, where he had a very fruitful ministry right around Cambridge. And he was on the board of several leading evangelical organizations, all the way until 1999, when he was found out that he was in a homosexual relationship, and he ended up leaving his wife and four kids, and was removed from all of his positions, and went into hiding.

And he never repented. He destroyed his own life. And that's just one of many stories that we seem to hear all the time. In fact, I was just on the phone with the pastor and heard of two new stories I didn't know were happening about pastors, nationally known pastors, who have ruined their own ministries and lives by their sin and blindness and unbelief.

[12 : 07] And when that happens, it's tragic. It's tragic because of what it does to them. But as we also see in our text, it's tragic because of what it does to others.

It not only ruins the lives of the person in sin, but also impacts all those around them. Notice this in verse 3, that it's not just Saul who is destroyed by his sin, but also his three sons, and the armies of Israel, and even the Israelites who lived near the battle.

Now we don't know much about Abinadab and Malkishua, Saul's other sons, but we do know about Jonathan, and how he was a faithful believer. If anyone didn't deserve this, it was Jonathan.

He was faithful at every point. But as Saul falls by his own sin and unbelief, he takes down Jonathan and his other sons, and all of Israel with him.

And that's always the case when people who lead God's people fall. They take down others with them. I think sometimes today we like to think that what we do in our private life is our business and doesn't affect other people.

[13 : 17] But it's just not true. Sin impacts those around us. Our sin impacts our spouse, our kids, those in the church. Just think of those four kids of Roy Clements, as their dad left them.

Or think of how many people had their faith shaken, or left the faith altogether, because of fallen leaders like Ravi Zacharias, if you know the name. Sin and unbelief doesn't just harm us, but also those around us.

And the bigger the leadership role, the bigger the ripple effect when the mighty fall. And that touches on another tragedy when the mighty fall, which is the worst one of all. It also brings shame upon the name of the Lord.

Notice what happens when the Philistines go, get Saul in verse 8. They go to strip off the armor of those who are dead, and find Saul and his sons. And so they cut off his head, and strip off his armor, and send messengers throughout the land of the Philistines, to carry the good news to the house of their idols, and to the people.

Then they put his armor in the temple of Ashtaroath, and they fastened his body to the wall of Bethsaan. Do you see what they're doing? They're basically saying, our God won.

[14 : 36] They're even announcing it as good news. This is the gospel of Ashtaroath being announced all throughout Philistia. Our gods have won. The Lord's king is dead.

And it brings shame upon the name of the Lord among the unbelieving nations around Israel.

And the same thing happens today when leaders fall because of their own sin and unbelief. You know what happens. The unbelieving world mocks Christianity and mocks God as though he's not real.

It happens every single time. It's always my biggest concern in reading stories about when leaders fall. People think, if that's what Christianity is, I want no part of it.

And that's also tragic. And even by the end of this chapter, as there is a ray of light with the men of Jabesh-Gilead, even here, in their valiant act, there's a note of tragedy.

[15 : 40] These inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead weren't far from Gilboa. And so in verse 12, Saul of the valiant men arose and took the body of Saul and his sons and burned and buried them in Jabesh.

And there's a reason that they wanted to do this for Saul. If you remember, at the very beginning of Saul's reign, the Spirit comes upon Saul and he went and saved Jabesh-Gilead from the Ammonites.

It was the brightest point in Saul's reign. He was doing what the king was supposed to do. He saved God's people from the Philistines. The Ammonites, I should say.

And because of that, these men wanted now to save Saul from the shame of the Philistines. But as they do so, there's this note of tragedy. Because as it's happening at the end of Saul's reign, things are very, very different than they were at the beginning of Saul's reign.

Saul isn't saving them. He has to be saved from them, or saved by them, as his headless corpse is hung upon the wall of Beth-Shawn.

[16 : 51] This is not the way things are supposed to be. This is not how things could have been. And this is really the essence of tragedy.

When you see how things are not the way they're supposed to be. Like a pastor is supposed to shepherd his sheep, but he abuses them instead. Like a husband who is supposed to love his wife, but he cheats on her instead.

Like a Christian mentor who's supposed to guide you in Christ, but they abandon him to live their own way. None of this is the way it's supposed to be. It's tragic. And we need to see that.

Lest we go the way of Saul, in our own lives and never repent, or we just witness those around us falling into the consequences of their own sin and rebellion, we must see and recognize the tragedy that comes when the mighty fall under God's judgment by their own sin.

But as we do so, we also need to see more. As we recognize the tragedy of the mighty falling, we also must lament in humility. We must lament in humility.

[18 : 03] And this is what we see as we get into 2 Samuel chapter 1. There are two different responses here to the death of Saul and Jonathan and Israel. And the first one really shows us how we shouldn't respond.

There is this Amalekite who comes from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. And he falls to the ground and pays homage to David, and he tells him what happened. He says that the people fled from battle, and many are fallen, and Saul and Jonathan are also dead.

And in response, David asks for confirmation. And so he told them that he saw Saul leaning on his spear and close to death, and the chariots and horsemen of the Philistines closing in.

And as it happened, Saul asked him to kill him. And as he saw that Saul couldn't live for long, this Amalekite young man went ahead and put him out of his misery. And he took Saul's crown, and he took the armlet, and he brought it back to David, brought them to David.

Now it's important to see as you read this chapter that this man is clearly lying. We were just told the true story by the biblical author about how Saul died by his own hand.

[19 : 08] But this now is the Amalekite story. And he probably made it up because he thought David would be happy with him. He's bringing the crown of Saul to him. And after all, Saul was David's enemy.

He was trying to kill him. And so as he comes to David with a crown and this made-up story, he's hoping to get in David's good favor. But he severely miscalculated.

David says to him in verse 14, How is it that you are not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed? In the last chapter, we saw how Saul's servant was afraid to kill Saul, and he didn't kill the Lord's anointed.

There was a degree of reverence, of fear, of humility. But this guy's not afraid. And so David takes on the role of king and judge and brings righteous judgment upon him for killing God's king.

But really, he dies not for killing God's king, but for thinking that he could get ahead by telling the news to David. He dies for using the death of Saul for self-gain.

[20 : 21] And I think that there is something for us to learn from this. Sometimes when leaders of God's people fall, or even when people in the church fall, we get a sort of glee about sharing the news with others.

Especially if there's someone we don't like. And we can even want to tell the news to put ourselves in more positive light. But we always need to remember Proverbs 24, 17, which declares to us, do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles.

Rather, as we see with David, we ought to lament and grieve and mourn. Notice this with David and his men in verse 11. As the news is confirmed to them, David took hold of his clothes and tore them.

And so did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel because they had fallen by the sword.

And then in verse 17 to 27, David even takes the time to write up a formal lament that was to be recorded and taught to the people of Judah. And in this, there are several ways that we see how we ought to respond when the mighty fall.

[21 : 42] Notice first how our immediate response shouldn't be gladness, but should be this genuine grief. Genuine grief. It was surely a cultural thing to tear your clothes and mourn and weep as they did here.

But this is also a sign of deep and genuine sorrow. In fact, at a church that we were at in Florida, they knew, they told us a story that reflected on this and how this looks.

They actually had a few men who were taking down a tree in their backyard and cutting it down. And sadly, as they were cutting it down, the tree did not go in the direction that they thought it was going to fall and it fell on one of the men and he died.

And the immediate reaction of the other young man was to cry out and rip his shirt off. It was an outlet that he had for his agony, his anguish, his grief.

He didn't know what else to do. It's the same thing that we see here with David and his men. They're lamenting in genuine grief. And notice that they do so even for the one who harmed them.

[22 : 45] Of all people who would have the right to rejoice at the death of another, it would be David. For years, Saul has been trying to kill him.

Driving him out of the land, into the wilderness, even into Philistine territory. And God has promised that judgment would come upon Saul and it would be deliverance for David. But now that it happens, David doesn't boast.

He doesn't laugh. He doesn't rejoice. But his first reaction is to weep and mourn for the death even of his enemy. And when we hear fear of leaders falling, this should also be our response too, even if there are those who have harmed us.

And I know that's a hard thing. And we'll come back to this in a minute. It doesn't mean that we should never be thankful that God has brought justice. There's a time to be thankful for God bringing justice on the enemies of his people.

But at the same time, being thankful for justice is very different than boasting or mocking or thinking, that's what you get. Think over the past several years, Rachel Denhollander has modeled this well.

[23 : 58] Rachel Denhollander was an Olympic gymnast and a faithful Christian who was one of many girls abused by the doctor Larry Nassar. And after going to prison, you may know this, last year, he was severely stabbed while he was in prison.

Which is not completely unexpected that it would happen. And in response to this, she wrote, none of the women I've spoken with are rejoicing today. We're grieving the destruction across so much.

We're grieving the reality that protecting others from him came with a near certainty that we would wake up to this someday. And that's a response that we ought to have when even our enemies are destroyed by their own sin.

It shouldn't make us happy. Our first response should be to grieve. After all, we're told in Ezekiel that God himself has no pleasure in the death of the wicked.

We are told that Christ himself wept over Jerusalem and the judgment that would come upon them for their hard hearts and what they would do to him. And as his people, even as we are thankful for justice coming upon God's enemies, it should grieve us.

[25 : 16] And at the same time, we should also grieve for everyone impacted by their fall. David and his men are weeping for Saul, but notice here that they're also weeping for Jonathan and for the people of the Lord and the house of Israel because they had fallen by the sword.

They're lamenting, in other words, the cumulative impact that has come from Saul's sin and its consequences. That even faithful Jonathan was killed. that God's people as a whole are now suffering.

And when we see leaders fall or even Christians fall and the impact that it has, we need to remember that and lament. And we need to do that more quickly than we go on to talk about it and say, did you hear that?

I think when we hear stories about leaders or those we know in the church whose lives have been ruined by sin, our temptation is to want to go and share it. But oftentimes when we do that we forget about the people who are impacted by their sin.

And it's a far better response to take time to lament for them, to grieve for them and even to grieve with them. It shows genuine care for them when just going around and talking about it doesn't show any care at all.

[26 : 35] And so we ought to grieve and lament for those impacted by people's sin. And last, we should also lament in thoughtful reflection.

We ought to grieve and lament in thoughtful reflection. In verse 19 to 27 it's interesting that David now takes time after all this happens to record a formal lament primarily for the death of Saul and Jonathan.

And if there was a title for this lament it would be How the Mighty Have Fallen. It's not hard to see that and just reading through it three times at the beginning, middle, and end David says that. How the mighty have fallen.

He laments in this that the glory of Israel, Saul and Jonathan, the royal family, has been slain. They were men who were mighty in battle as he says in verse 22 and 23 but no more.

And so he calls for the daughters of Israel to weep for Saul in verse 24. And in verse 25 and 26 he talks about his own agony over Jonathan's death because of Jonathan's love for him.

[27 : 42] And to be clear as we've seen before in saying that Jonathan's love for him was extraordinary and surpassing the love of women he isn't talking again about Jonathan's romantic love for him. He's talking about Jonathan's covenant faithfulness through thick and thin.

Jonathan gave up everything for David. Jonathan gave up the throne for David. Jonathan suffered for David. He was a faithful friend that stuck closer to him than a brother.

And now as he is gone David laments in grief because Jonathan mighty in battle faithful friend is gone. And it's important to see in this that David is doing this intentionally and slowly recording this in a formal lament that took time to write down to even put in poetic form.

As one writer puts it this is an expression of thoughtful grief. It's a carefully thought out and recorded lament before God that allows David to process his grief and also actually allows Israel afterwards to do the same.

This is for them to see to be able to take on themselves as their own lament in light of everything that has happened. And we often need this same thoughtful reflection in how we respond to fallen leaders because it's far too rare.

[29 : 06] I think that there are times when we are forced to do this as a culture and we have done this as a culture. Think about September 11th, 2001. How many songs were written and composed afterwards as a lament over what happened?

And just as that it's a lament it was a way of processing through the grief of what happened but more and more we live in a culture that just doesn't take time to reflect like that. We don't write things down slowly and thoughtfully.

We type things out with our fingers as quickly as possible and often with bad grammar. And maybe that's fine for messages but not for processing tragedy.

We often want to get through it as quickly as possible with as little reflection as possible sometimes because we just don't want to feel sad. But I think we can learn from this pattern that we find all over scripture of slowly carefully thinking through tragedy and grief and lamenting and putting it on paper bringing it to the Lord thoughtfully.

And so whether you write it out or not when you see the tragedy and grief of sin and unbelief you need to take time to reflect to pray and thoughtfully bring your agony to God.

[30 : 28] Sometimes we don't need to just get through it as fast as we can. Sometimes we need to just stay there and bring our laments to God in prayer. And so as we've seen in the mighty fall we need to recognize a tragedy lament in humility but last and briefly we also need to hope in God's sovereignty.

In both of these chapters things don't look great for the kingdom of God on earth. The mighty have fallen. The enemies of God are rejoicing and think their gods have won.

And this whole plan to have a king that this whole book is about has gone really really bad. And yet in the midst of the tragedy and lament there's hope.

Think about what's happening in 1 Samuel 31. On the outside when you read through it it looks like and feels like everything is falling apart and it is.

But what do we know from previous chapters? God already declared to David that he would judge Saul. And in chapter 28 God even told Saul that this was going to happen.

[31 : 42] And so even as it looks like everything is falling apart and God's people are mourning and lamenting another fallen leader as they should at the same time. God is fulfilling his word of judgment against Saul and he's doing it for the good of his people.

And that's a humbling reality for anyone who would lead God's people. God does judge those who harm his people. This is also a hopeful reality in the face of wicked leaders like Saul.

Samuel. Because it means that God will not give his sheep over to the wolves. And it also means that in the tragedy of fallen leaders and the impact of sin and unbelief, God is still on his throne fulfilling his word.

And we see this even more when we take a step back and think about the big picture of Samuel. In many ways, 1 Samuel is not an optimistic book.

It begins with the days of the judges, with the wicked Hophni and Phinehas, and how they're afflicting God's people. And it ends with a king who is even worse, named Saul. And there's a big mess in between.

[32 : 59] But even as 1 Samuel ends in tragedy, there's hope on the horizon. Dale Ralph Davis puts it this way. He says, 1 Samuel is simply a sad book of one disappointment after another.

The judgment on ungodly leadership in Hophni and Phinehas, the rejection of prophetic leadership as the people rejected Samuel, and the disintegration of royal leadership as we have seen with Saul.

Here is the kingdom of God, enduring one failure after another. Yet the Lord who looks on the heart has chosen a shepherd for these scattered sheep.

What is God doing in removing Saul? He is preparing the way for David. He is raising up his own king after his own heart.

He is fulfilling his word of judgment upon Saul and his word of promise to David as the anointed king at the same time. And so even when the mighty have fallen among God's people and bring destruction to others and harm the church and bring shame on God's name, we can trust the king who is sovereignly reigning over it all.

[34 : 16] God is at work to fulfill his word here and raise up his king. And he is still at work. And of course that doesn't take away the grief.

David's still grieving. But in the midst of the grief, it gives us hope. hope. And of course as we reflect on this in Christ, we have a greater reason to hope.

Because God has given us a perfect king far better than David. And in fact midway through 2 Samuel, guess what's going to happen? More tragedy.

David's going to fall again. And it's going to be tragic because of how high he seemed to reign. How faithful he seemed to be. there is going to be the brightest spot in the history of Israel, fallen by the darkest spot in the history of Israel as David falls.

And yet before his fall, God gave David a promise that he would raise up a king in his family who would never fall, who would never fail, and that king has come.

[35 : 27] Our Lord Jesus Christ descended from David as the mighty king who will never fall and never fail his people. The king who showed his love for us by giving up his life on the cross, taking on himself the tragedy of our sin.

The king who raised from the dead and now rules and reigns in power by his word and spirit, and he promises to come back as the judge, to right every wrong, to judge every wolf in sheep's clothing, and he will reign over us as God and we will be his people.

The kingdom of Christ is coming. And even now there are glimpses that we have of him breaking in as he rules and reigns by his word and spirit.

And this gives us hope no matter where we are at. Whether you experience the tragedy of sin of those around you, or you're currently undone by the tragedy of your own sin, the hope is the same in Christ.

This is one thing that Saul couldn't see, which may be the biggest tragedy of all. He died under judgment without hope. But not because it wasn't available, but because he didn't repent, he didn't turn to the sovereign grace of God.

[36 : 56] And in case you are in that place and feel that there is no hope, let me just end by mentioning another king. Later on down the line in Israel's history, named Manasseh.

And he actually was way worse than Saul. He even would have children, his own children, slaughtered as a sacrifice to false gods.

And he is the one who is responsible. for leading God's people into exile. His own sin took them away from the land in judgment. But while in exile, we are told that he repented, that he turned to God and found grace and forgiveness and hope.

And that same hope is still available to anyone who turns to Christ, no matter what kind of tragedy you have brought on yourself. And so no matter where you are, whether you have fallen under the tragedy of your own sin, or whether you're experiencing the tragedy that comes from the sin of others, what do we do?

Recognize the tragedy, lament in humility, and hope in God's sovereignty with your eyes upon Christ. Christ. Let's pray.

[38 : 21] Father, we thank you that you are our God and we are your people. And that we can say that not because of anything in us, but because of your grace and mercy that has come to us in Christ.

And so, Father, even as we think about the effect of sin, the consequences of it with Saul, and later on in 2 Samuel, as we see it with David, we ask that you would help us to also reflect on the consequences of our own sin, to see where it leads in our lives, and to see how it leads for judgment apart from your grace in Jesus.

And Father, as we see that, help us to turn to him. Help us to find hope in him, and a hope that can never be taken away, because our Savior, our King, rules and reigns, and no one can stay his hand or say to him, what have you done?

And so, Father, keep our eyes upon Christ, help us know his grace and forgiveness, and help us to know his sovereign work even now in the world. For we pray in Christ's name, amen.