

Two Kings (Saul and David) - Compared and Contrasted

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn again to the readings that we had in 1st Samuel and 1st Samuel chapter 16.

And though taking our text here is not just that that's not particularly what I'm focusing on, it's more on looking at comparing and contrasting King Saul and King David.

But it says in verse 18 of David, One of the young men answered, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehem, I do, skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him.

Which contrasts very much in verse 14 of the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord tormented him. That harmful spirit, that doesn't mean that the Lord sends evil spirits in the sense that evil spirits are in the presence of God, but that the Lord will allow and permit an evil spirit to attack and to bother and to disrupt a person's life.

And that's what happened. Because when it tells us of how the Holy Spirit, the Spirit departed from Saul, that isn't speaking about the presence of the Spirit that every believer has.

[1 : 3 4] Because the Holy Spirit will never, ever, ever leave a Christian once the Holy Spirit has come to live within you. No matter what happens or what we do, but what is the Holy Spirit's presence here was with regard to the kingship, because the Spirit of God came in a very special way of power upon the king.

And that's what it is talking about, that that power and that presence that was there, as Saul was given the authority over the kingdom, that God removed that particular presence from him there.

Now, we've come to, I suppose some of you were aware that we've been going through different characters in the Bible, and I've been doing so alphabetically, and I've come to K, but there are individuals, for instance, Kish, who was Saul's father, we could have looked at him, Keturah, if you remember, after Sarah died, Abraham remarried, and that was, who he married was this lady Keturah, he had a family with her.

Job had two daughters, we're told that they were the two most beautiful ladies or women in the land, Kessiah and Karen Huppach.

So, there are plenty names of K, but not well known. But I thought of going to K to kings, and looking at the first two kings of Israel, just to compare and to contrast them.

[3 : 1 2] And both kings, actually, both David and Saul, began well. And the chapter, as we had gone back to chapter 9, and read through chapter 10, and so on, we would have been introduced to Saul in a much clearer way.

We find him, as a rather modest man, he comes across well. He was, of course, a very handsome man, and from a human point of view, was an ideal man to be a king.

Because we're told in chapter 9, verse 2, about, there was a man of Benjamin, whose name was Kish, and then he had, verse 2, and he had a son, whose name was Saul, a handsome young man, that was not a man among the people of Israel, more handsome than he.

From his shoulders upwards, he was taller than any of the people. So from a human point of view, Saul fitted the bill exactly.

And everybody, if you were looking for the ideal king, someone who was handsome, and someone who was striking looking, and somebody who had seemed to be just so commanding in his presence, you would say, there's your man, there's Saul.

[4 : 29] But, although, we know that, Saul began well, Saul's life, went on a downward spiral. And, Saul's life, became tragic, and the end, became very, very tragic.

David, on the other hand, was very, very different. Now, when we look at the, at their lives, we find, that, at the very beginning, when Saul, is going to be actually, proclaimed king, that he goes and he hides himself.

It was, I suppose, to a certain extent, almost kind of embarrassing, that the man, that had been chosen, to become king, when it came to the point, where they were going to, there was going to be the public proclamation, Saul, had already been anointed privately, by Samuel, and now, the whole, all Israel, were called together, for almost like the coronation, there's no sign, of Saul.

And, Saul had hidden himself, amongst the baggage. No doubt, Saul was absolutely, overwhelmed, by what, lay in front of him. And, at one level, we can totally understand that, and your heart goes out, at one level, with sympathy, towards Saul.

And, you say to yourself, totally, Saul, I understand. It's quite something, to be taken from, almost, obscurity, to be thrust, into being the main man, in the kingdom.

[6 : 00] So, you can understand, why there's a reluctance, on Saul's part. But, where Saul, fails here is, this is God's appointment.

God, had set this out, for Saul. And so, Saul, wasn't at liberty, to say, oh, I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to be king. Too much for me.

Because, God, had said, no, this is, you're, this is what, the people want a king, right, the people are getting a king, and I'm choosing you, to be king. And so, I think we can all understand, a wee bit of this, in whatever, form of Christian service, we do.

There's always a sense of, not only reluctance, it's not that we don't want, to serve God, but there's always a pressure. There's always a hidden pressure. It doesn't matter, in what level, you are serving God.

If God has put you, in a particular place, and he's given you, something to do, Mark, be absolutely persuaded, that Satan, will go out, to oppose it.

[7 : 08] Because, that's the nature of, Christian service. It's warfare. And we, we mustn't lose sight of that, that all the time, there is a spiritual struggle, wherever God has placed you, and put you.

And so, there is, at one level, there is a fear, in Christian service. And unless, you're absolutely, persuaded, that this is, what God wants you to do, then, of course, it becomes, unbelievably difficult.

And, I suppose, looking at, just taking an example, of the ministry, you would never, for one moment, I wouldn't be here, and Mr. McKeever, wouldn't be, in this pulpit, if we weren't, absolutely persuaded, that this is what God, wanted us to do.

We went through all that, earlier on, where we're persuaded, of God's calling, into the work. And it's God's enabling. We can't do this, of ourselves. And so, that's, right at the very beginning, Saul, fails.

From a human point, we can understand it, but from a spiritual point, he fails. Because he doesn't, trust God. The God who has said, you're the man, is the God, who will enable.

[8 : 23] That's what God does. He gives us, an enabling, to keep going, in the face of difficulties, in the face of obstacles, because he's put you there. And so, at the very outset, we find, to a certain extent, that Saul, is failing.

Now, of course, when Israel, we saw that, when Israel sees Saul, when he's proclaimed king, of course, they rejoice, because they have, the kind of passion, that they, would like, to be king.

But even Samuel, great man, and all, though Samuel was. Now, Samuel was very, you can see, Samuel was very, very fond of Saul. That comes through, if we were to read, right through, the chapters, we would see, Saul, Samuel was broken hearted, over Saul's failings.

He really, he was grieving, because he was very fond of Saul. But God had said to Samuel, I've rejected him. And now, Samuel was not a really, really spiritual man, but he often made the mistake, of judging, by appearances, at a human level.

And we find that, right at the very beginning, where God has said, you know, Saul has, I'm rejecting Saul. He is not fit, for duty.

[9 : 42] Saul serves himself. Saul is governed, by other principles. He's governed, by people. He's governed, by his own heart, by his own pride, by his own ego, by fear of people.

I'm picking somebody, who will do, what I want him to do. A man, after my own heart. And of course, that was David. And we read, of how, the day came, where, Samuel had to go, and anoint, a son of Jesse, to be king.

And remember, how they were all, passing before Samuel. And Samuel, again, when he saw, for instance, when he saw Eliab, in chapter 16, verse 6, and when they came, he looked on Eliab, and he thought, surely the Lord's anointed, is before him.

See, one after another, of Jesse's sons, were coming, and Samuel, was judging, by what he saw, by their appearance. They looked the part. Oh, that's the man, that must be, that's the king.

God said, no, it's not the king. And then God says, to Samuel, the Lord sees, not as man sees.

[10 : 53] Man looks, on the outward appearance, but God, looks, in the heart. And you know, that's why, there are so, so many passages, in scripture, telling us, to watch your heart.

Keep your heart, with all diligence, because out of it, are the issues of life. In other words, what we say, what we think, what we do, comes from our heart.

As you see a person, live their life, and you see what they do, and what they say, and what they think, is a reflection, of what's going on, in the depth of our being. Jesus said that, as a person thinks, in his heart, so is he or she.

What are you really like? Away from everybody else. What are you really like? It's what you're thinking about. Away where nobody else can see. Your motives.

The reason why you do things, you do. The hidden things, God is seeing, and God is weighing you, and me up, by who we are, in the depth of our being.

[12 : 01] It's quite serious, so we know that, we cannot fool, ever, ever fool God. So God says to Samuel, you know, you've got your judgment all wrong.

And then eventually, of course, remember how, David was taken, and, God said, when David was brought, back from, the sheep, God says, that's him.

That's, the man. We find that, when, when the youngest son, comes, and, he sent, and brought him, and so on. And the Lord said, arise, anoint him, for this is he.

And then he tells us, how the spirit of the Lord, rushed upon David, from that day forward. So when we come to look, and I'm just going to look, very briefly, at three, very brief things, about David and Saul.

The first thing, that we find, highlighted for us, the great contrast is, that David was prepared, to await, God's time, where us, Saul, couldn't wait, for God's time.

[13 : 11] You see, as we go through life, there's a time, for everything. And our time, is always now. Isn't it? We are, we are so impatient, and we expect, everything to be happening, we are expecting it, just to go on, and to go on, and everything to fit, into place.

God doesn't work, like that. And God tests us, and God challenges us, and God brings, delays into our life, to test, what kind of person, we really are.

And through that, our patience, begins to grow. Saul, failed, drastically, when he was made, to wait.

David, on the other hand, when he was made, to wait, he flourished, and he grew. And we saw, that in chapter 13, when the Israelites, were going to fight, the Philistines, and all the people, were brought together, the soldiers, were together, and instruction, had been given, to Saul, to wait, for Samuel, to come, to offer the sacrifice.

Saul, as king, was not, allowed, to offer, a sacrifice. It was forbidden, for the king, to offer a sacrifice. And Saul, waited, day after day, he waited, seven days.

[14 : 31] And Samuel, hadn't come. And he was beginning, to see the people, leaving. And they were heading off, and he was saying, to himself, again, we go to the human point, we go to human thought, and human wisdom, and everything within, you would say, oh, I've got to do something.

Look at them, they're heading off, that direction, and there, and they're going, they're hiding, they're scared. And the Philistines, they're mustering, all their troops, and they're ready, for action.

What am I going to do? And Saul says, boy, there's only one thing, I can do. I'm just going to take the bull, by the horns. I'm going to do the sacrifice, myself. Because before we go to fight, we've got to, got to sort it out, with God.

So Saul, offers the sacrifice, and he had no sooner finished, when Samuel appeared. And Samuel said, what have you done?

What on earth are you doing, offering the sacrifice, to God? And Saul said, oh, people were going. I forced myself, to do this. Because all the people, were disappearing.

[15 : 38] What Saul, is forgetting, is, Saul, and the people of Israel, belonged to God. God was in control, of them. And we have to move, according to God's way, and God's timetable, if we are serious, about following God.

And Saul, just wasn't getting it. And Samuel said to him, Saul, you've made a terrible mistake. The kingdom, God is saying, the kingdom, would have been established, with you and your family, if you had obeyed him.

But Saul, was right at the very beginning, showing, his trust, was not in the Lord. He wasn't prepared to wait. He couldn't wait, more than seven days. David, on the other hand, waited seven years.

That's a big difference. For seven long years, after David was anointed, he waited, think of it. Saul couldn't wait seven days.

There's 365 days in a year. Multiply that by seven. That's the length of time. That's the number of days, that David waited. And that shows, the huge difference, between them both.

[16 : 53] And you know, the Lord is also, bringing us to this place, and to this point, where we learn to trust him. It's all about trusting God. Waiting upon him. The Lord waits, that he may be gracious.

And you know, we lose out so much, if we do not, trust the Lord. And learn to walk with him, every single day. Then the second big difference, between Saul and David, is this.

For seven, nearly seven years, for nearly seven years, Saul tried, to kill David. Saul, wanted to kill, the Lord's anointed.

David, refused, to kill, the Lord's anointed. even when the opportunity, was presented to him, over and over, and over again.

A huge difference. You remember, how there was a day, we read about it, when, Saul thought David, was wonderful. And even after, he had killed Goliath, he thought he was, even more wonderful, than ever, until, after the battle.

[18 : 03] And the women, in the streets, were singing, Saul has slain, his thousands, and David is tens, of thousands. Right away, Saul's heart, changed, towards David.

The big green monster, of envy, and jealousy, absolutely, took over. And little wonder, it took over, because God, wasn't with him. God, had left him alone.

And you see, that's what happens, when you're left alone, that all these things, these monsters, take over your life. And from then on, Saul's great, pursuit in the kingdom, was to destroy David.

And he spent years, of his life, hounding him. And using every opportunity, even taking, thousands of troops out, searching the mountainside, to kill him. Because a bad spirit, had come in, and the fear, of the Lord, had departed.

You know this, the fear of the Lord, is vital in our lives. If you lose, the fear of the Lord, as you walk through life, you're in a dangerous place, the fear of the Lord, will keep you, will keep you, in the dangerous times.

[19 : 17] It'll stop you, and say, well hold on. That's what, that's what kept, Joseph, from sinning, with Potiphar's wife, was the fear of the Lord. The opportunity, was there.

Potiphar's wife, wanted him. They were alone, in the house. Joseph said, I can't, because of God. That was the fear, of God, was within his heart.

And the fear, of God, will keep us, in a way, that nothing else will. And that's what, was in David's heart, was the fear of the Lord. He said, I can't raise my hand, against the Lord's anointed.

The Lord anointed Saul, and I will not, lift my hand, against him. And we should always, take that, that thinking, to heart.

But Saul, because the fear, of the Lord, wasn't there. All he could think of was, I'm going to destroy David. And so, that's another, of the, the great differences, that we see.

[20 : 18] And that's what made David, that's why, even although, he was hiding in the caves, and his life, you think of it. Here's a man, who's been anointed as king. And he was sleeping, in the rocks, and in the grass.

I was only once, in Israel, and I saw, the caves, in En Gedi. And it's very, it's dry, arid, rocky, barren. That's where Saul, was searching, trying to kill David.

That's where David, was hiding. And in these caves. The man, who should be king, just sleeping, on the, the floor of a cave. That's, that was his life.

And yet, when the opportunity, remember when Saul, actually came into a cave, where David was hiding, David's men, whispered, hey, God, and it makes sense, God has handed, your enemy, over to you, plunge your spear in, he'll be dead, before he, he knows anything.

David said, no, he's God's anointed. God, will deal with him, in his own way. I won't. And that's part of what made David, the wonderful, wonderful man that he was.

[21 : 28] Yes, he had his faults, and his failings. But he had this fear of God, that, so often, characterized his life. And that's why David, even in the caves, even while he was, life was in danger, he still enjoyed the light, and the favor of God.

Humanly speaking, you, if you had the choice, of sleeping, in Saul's palace, or sleeping, in David's cave, humanly speaking, everybody would have gone, for Saul's palace.

But Saul's palace, was a miserable place. Saul couldn't sleep. Saul was tormented. Saul would give anything, to get a good night's sleep. He couldn't, because, the fear of God was gone.

He was walking in darkness, not in the light. David, says, I lay me down, and slept in peace. You'll read some of his psalms, at the time, when he was being chased by Saul.

Slept like a baby. Why? Because God was with him. He was walking in the light. The fear of God, was within, in his heart. And you see, that's what, that's a great difference.

[22 : 38] And how it was for David, it can be, for you and for me. The fear of the Lord, is the beginning of wisdom. But then finally, one other area, of the great contrast, between Saul and David.

Both of them sinned, big style. Again, we find Saul failing, where God had told them, to go and to destroy, the Amalekites, who had been a thorn, in Israel's flesh, historically.

And the time, of their judgment, had come. And normally, in a war, you were allowed, to keep things. But Saul, God said to Saul, I don't even want you, to keep their cattle, their sheep, anything.

Because of their evil. Everything. This is a mark, of destruction. And what did Saul do? Well, he did most of what God did, asked him to do. But he kept the best, the best of the cattle, the best of the sheep, the best of the calves.

He kept all that. And Samuel appeared, and Samuel said, Saul, have you done, what God asked? Oh, yes. Well, why am I hearing, the bleating of sheep, and the, the mooing of the cows?

[23 : 52] Oh, Saul said, oh, I kept, I kept the best. I kept the best. I kept it for the Lord. So he started, to make excuses, and, and then, Saul said, Samuel said to him, Saul, you're finished.

You are refusing, to do, what God asked you to do. And Saul actually says, I sinned. I, I, he actually acknowledges, that he has sinned.

But at the same time, he is making excuses. Because, he says, I have sinned, and I have transgressed. But then he says, but I feared the people, and I obeyed their voice.

And, he starts making all the kind of excuses. His acknowledgement of sin, wasn't through repentance. David, on the other hand, he sinned really badly.

He sinned, by taking Bathsheba, in an adulterous relationship. But what really, made David's sin, just so horrendous, was that he killed, killed Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, who was a real friend of David.

[25 : 07] One of the most loyal soldiers, David had. He had him killed, to try and hide, so that Uriah, wouldn't discover, what David had done.

David's sin was, it was shocking. And the, to, the killing, of his, of his, the killing of one of his best friends, was absolutely extraordinary.

But David, he acknowledges his sin. He holds up his hand, and he says, oh, I have sinned. But it wasn't just that he said it, he meant it.

Psalm 51, which we were just singing, is where David has poured out his heart, before God. Oh, he says, I can't believe what I have done. Against you, you only have I sinned.

And he's asking the Lord, to wash him clean. Take not your Holy Spirit away. He sees what, he has seen what has happened with Saul. Oh Lord, let not that happen to me.

[26 : 09] Forgive me my sin. And the Lord did. Sin has consequences. And, although the Lord forgave David's sin, the consequences remain.

Because, when you look at the history of David's family, there was intrigue, and there was murder, and there was, a lot of, it was a very dysfunctional family.

Because, the Lord, although he forgives sin, as we say, sin has consequences. So, we need to be careful, as we journey through life.

And that's what God wants us to do, when we sin. Is not try and excuse it, or pretend it didn't happen, or forget about it. Remember, forgotten sin, isn't forgiven sin.

Big difference. We can forget about our sin, but God hasn't. So, there is no such thing, as forgotten sin, even although you forget it. God, forgives sin.

[27 : 09] But we need to go, and genuinely, repent of our sin. Acknowledge before God, our failings, and all our shortcomings. So, to highlight, what we've been saying here today, are we prepared, to wait God's timing?

Or do we always want, to push ahead? Remember, it's imperative, that we walk, and keep in step with God. is the fear of the Lord, regulating our lives, so that like David, we won't stretch out our hand, to do wrong, the way that Saul, was trying to do, by killing David.

And when we sin, which we do, do we deal with our sin, in the God-given, God-provided way, or are we like Saul, trying to excuse herself?

Or are we David's, that own up, and ask God to forgive us? Well, it's the only way. There's so much, I mean, you could spend, several sermons, looking, and comparing, and contrasting, the lives of these two men.

But even in, this short time, may God grant us, the grace, that it'll be the pattern, and the example, shown us by David, that we will seek to follow, as we journey, through life.

[28 : 30] Let us pray. O Lord, O God, we pray, that we may indeed, trust you, with all our heart. We have to confess, Lord, that it is often, one of the hardest things, that we can do.

There is an initial trust, where we come, to accept you, and to believe in you, as our Lord, and Savior. But so often, in the experience, of our day-to-day living, we do not trust you, as we should.

Far too often, we trust in ourselves, and we lean, to our own understanding. But your word says, trust in the Lord, with all your heart, and lean not, to your own understanding.

And then a great promise, in all your ways, acknowledge him, and he, will direct your paths. Lord, do us good, we pray, and grant us, your grace, in all that we do.

Bless all your servants, today, who proclaim your word, and we pray, that it will be a day, where great things, will be done, in the kingdom of God. Pray your blessing, upon the ministry, that will begin shortly, spared in Graver, and we pray, for servant Ian, McRitchie, we pray, that you will prepare him, and that you will make him, a blessing, in that congregation.

[29 : 41] Watch over us, and part us now, with your blessing, we pray, taking away your sin, in Jesus name. Amen. Our final singing, is Psalm 18, from Sing Psalms, Psalm number 18, we're going to sing, from verse 46, to the end.

Psalm 18, the tune is, where am, verse 46, to the end.

The Lord lives, praise be to my rock, my Savior God, exalted be, he has avenged me, and subdued, rebellious peoples, under me, you saved me, from my enemies, exalting me, above my foes, you rescued me, from violent men, who sought my kingdom, to oppose.

Therefore, among the nations, Lord, your praise, and song, I will proclaim, before the peoples, of this world, I'll sing the glory, of your name. You give your king, great victories, your loving kindness, you will pour, on David, your anointed one, and his descendants, evermore.

On page 22, these verses of Psalm 18, the tune is, where am. The Lord lives, praise be to my rock, my Savior God, exalted be, he has avenged me, and subdued, rebellious peoples, under me.

[31 : 36] You saved me, from my enemies, exalting me, above my foes, you rescued me, from violent men, who sought my kingdom, to oppose.

Therefore, among the nations, Lord, your praise, in song, I will proclaim, before the peoples, the world, I'll sing the glory, of your name.

you give, your king, your king, great victories, your loving kindness, you will pour, on David, on David, your anointed one, and his descendants, evermore.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace, of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, rest and abide, upon each one of you, now and forevermore. Amen.