

2 Samuel 10

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[0 : 00] Unmute myself here.

Are we good? Well, it's good to see you all here tonight. Let's ask the Lord for our help as we look at his word.

Please pray with me. Lord, be with us now as we open your word. God, I pray that you will graciously and kindly, Lord, by your spirit, open our hearts and our minds to understand and to know what you are saying through your word tonight.

Lord, I ask that you would speak through me, that my words would be useful as you teach us about who you are.

The greatness of your love. Lord, we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Who died and made you king?

[1 : 12] It's one of the great playground retorts. Right up there with, says who and am not, right? Who died and made you king when you grab the kickball and say, I'm the captain and I get to pick first.

Or whatever it is. When someone asserts themselves in a position of authority or control over something that you care about, maybe a little, maybe a lot, how often do we respond with this? We resist it.

But if we remember correctly, this is in fact the very spirit that infected Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden back in the beginning of creation.

When they lived in a paradise, a world where everything was provided for them as they lived under the kingship of God himself. And the serpent, Satan, came and whispered doubt.

[2 : 42] Is he really good? Can you really trust him? Is it really better to submit to him than to try to be like him?

To be his peer? To be independent of his rule? To find life on your own? Who died and made you king?

Is ultimately what Adam and Eve said to God with disastrous results. If you've been coming to evening service, you know we're continuing the book of 2 Samuel.

In the series of 2 Samuel, we've been looking at God is establishing his physical kingdom for a period of time in the nation of Israel.

And he is starting with his chosen anointed king, David. And that's what 2 Samuel is all about in many ways. God establishing his king and answering the question, what kind of king can rule over his people?

[3 : 44] We've seen in the first couple of chapters, David consolidating his power. His rivals fleeing or disappearing and being eliminated.

Most importantly, in chapter 7 of 2 Samuel, we see God coming and making a covenant with David. And saying, I will set you on a throne where your descendants will reign forever.

I will build you a house that will last for all of eternity. And now we're in this section of chapters 8, 9, and 10, where we see David in light of this covenant sitting upon this throne and extending his kingdom.

It shows David in many ways at his best, giving us a glimpse of the kind of king that God would have rule over his people.

And in fact, because we all know the story that's coming in chapter 11 with Bathsheba, it's setting up a contrast between David at his best and David at his worst, which is going to confirm our fears that who can sit in that role?

[5 : 00] Who could ever do that? God is doing this to point us to a greater son of David who will come at the end of the ages. And we'll come back to that at the end of our sermon.

There will be another who will follow David who will sit on that throne. And we will never have to worry whether we can trust him. But in this chapter, we're in chapter 10, which is on page what? I forgot to look it up. 261, page 261 in your pew Bible. 2 Samuel chapter 10. We see God establishing the rule of his king, David, by his covenantal love, extending grace to the nations and producing courageous faith in his people.

That's what this chapter is all about. So turn with me to that passage, 2 Samuel chapter 10. And even as we dive in, it's going to be a bit hairy because there are a lot of names and there are a lot of people and, you know, this kind of happens sometimes.

So let me give you a few quick pointers before we even read the text. All right? First of all, the Ammonites are a key people in this story.

[6 : 16] And who are they? If you have a mental map of the Middle East, here's the Mediterranean Sea here, right? Okay? Wait, did I do that right? Am I backwards or forwards? Yes. Okay. So here's the Mediterranean Sea.

Here's Israel, right? To the east of Israel. Am I doing this right? Okay. To the east of Israel, along the eastern border, there are a couple of nations.

There's Moab down here. And then just north of that is the Ammonites, right? And just north of that is the Syrians, right? The Ammonites live in vaguely what is now Jordan today.

Moab may also cover it. Syria is mostly where Syria is today, although it extends further up. So these are where those people live, right? And what we've learned is that the Ammonites are enemies of the people of Israel.

They're people whom Saul, in 1 Samuel chapter 11, had a big military conquest against. In fact, it was his victory over them that established Saul as the unified king over all the various tribes of Israel.

[7 : 27] Right before he completely blew it and showed that he wasn't actually the one that God had intended to start his kingdom with. We also see that, as if you were here a couple weeks ago when Justin talked about how David was expanding his kingdom, the land that the Ammonites were in was not actually a part of the promised land.

It was outside of that. But it was part of the area where David was extending his kingdom in order to create a buffer of peace around Israel so that they could dwell in safety and worship God rightly.

Alright? So that's a couple of just key things. We'll see some names here. Nahash and Hadadezer and some things like that. But, you know, don't get caught up with those.

Just follow along a little bit as best you can. I'll give a little commentary along the way just to follow along as we read 1 Samuel chapter 10. After this, the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun, his son, reigned in his place.

And David said, I will deal loyally with Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father dwelt loyally with me. So David sent his servants to console him concerning his father.

[8 : 46] And David's servants came into the land of the Ammonites. But the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun, their lord, Do you think because David has sent comforters to you that he's honoring your father?

Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and to spy it out and to overthrow it? So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half their beards of each and cut off their garments in the middle at their hips and sent them away.

When it was told, David, he sent to meet them. For the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return.

When the Ammonites saw that they had become a stench to David, the Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-Rehob and the Syrians of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maaka with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob, 12,000 men.

And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men. And the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the gates.

[10 : 05] And the Syrians of Zobah and Rehob and the men of Tob and Maaka were by themselves in the open country. Okay, let's just stop and say, so what's happened here so far?

David sent a consolation to the people of the Ammonites, to the king, right? His advisor said, don't trust him. He's just trying to rule you.

And he completely embarrassed and shamed those messengers. Sending them back, unmanning them in the way that he shaved their beards and exposed their privates is basically what he's saying

by cutting their trousers.

Right? And he sent them back in shame. And here's the thing. You don't even see David's reaction except mercy to his things. What happens? The Ammonites know we have blown it.

We have now made ourselves so offensive to David that we've got to muster our army against him. And so that's what they do. And they call out, they hire, they make treaties with these Syrian kings from various places.

[11:11] And they gather together in an army. And David sees this and he calls out, Joab is general. And he sends out the mighty men to meet them in battle. Right? That's just a summary.

Case you missed with all those names, what was going on. That's where we are. So, when Joab saw that the battle was set against him, both in front and in the rear, he chose the sons of the best men, he chose some of the best men of Israel and arrayed them against the Syrians.

The rest of his men he put in charge of Abishai, his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. And he said, if the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me.

But if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. Be of good courage and let us be courageous for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the Lord do what seems good to him.

So, Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians and they fled before him. And when the Ammonites saw that the Syrians fled, they likewise fled before Abishai and entered the city.

[12:19] Then Joab returned from fighting against the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem. But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together.

And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates. And they came to Helam with Shobach and the commander of the army of Hadadezer at their head.

And when it was told, David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan and came to Helam. The Syrians arrayed themselves against David and fought with him. And the Syrians fled before Israel.

And David killed the Syrians, the men of 700 chariots and 40,000 horsemen, and wounded Shobach, the commander of their army, and so that he died there.

And when all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer saw they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became subject to them. So the Syrians were afraid to save the Ammonites anymore.

[13:22] Okay, brief summary. We'll get back to some of the details of this because it's important in the second half of what we're going to talk about. But brief summary. So they go out to battle.

Israel wins, right? And the interesting thing is the Ammonites don't say, shoot, we just got our tails handed to us. We've got to go and try again. It's the hired guys who say, how did we get beat by them?

We can muster a better team than that. So they go back and they pull all these Syrians from, remember the map? Across the Euphrates is like way out here. They're drawing this huge army over to try to defeat Israel.

David hears of it. He goes out to battle. The battle's won. Right? So that's a very brief story about what happens. Right? And what we will see, just so you know, is that the end of the story happens at the end of chapter 12.

David finally, well, Joab actually leads the army to the capital city of Rabat. He lays siege to it. He finally defeats it. As he defeats it, he calls David.

[14:27] David comes and rides in as the conquering king. And that's the end of the battle with the Ammonites for the foreseeable future in the Bible. And so there's an end to this. And it doesn't actually end here.

What does end here is the Syrians, who have been kind of the hired hands, are out of the picture. No longer will they help this Ammonite country. Because David has defeated them roundly and soundly.

Multiple times. So here's the question. Why did the author put this chapter in the Bible? Right? There's a great theologian, 20th century theologian, who said, This chapter in the Bible has no theological significance whatsoever in the canon.

I don't believe that. But it's interesting that a really learned Bible scholar said, What the heck? Why is this in here? So this is the question. This is the question that I want to explore for just a few more

minutes tonight.

The narrator, I think, gives us two indications in the middle of what is basically a very clipped account of a battle. It doesn't say much about what happened during the battles.

[15:35] They went out to battle and the bad guys fled. That's all it says when you look at it. There's very little in the story. But there are two places where the narrator inserts something that seems to be more significant.

In verse 2 and in verse 12. And I think that what you see in verse 2 is actually a very core and central idea that any Hebrew reader reading this story would think, Wow!

There's something more going on here. I think what the reader would see is that God is doing what he's doing in this chapter because of his covenantal love and his loyal faithfulness.

Why do I say that? Look at chapter 10, verse 2. There's this word here that you don't see. It doesn't stand out very much.

David says, I will deal loyally with Hanun, the son of Nahash, as his father dealt loyally with me. The word loyally there is a very rich word in the Hebrew Old Testament.

[16:46] It is the word that is used of God's faithfulness to Joseph when he's sent to prison after being falsely accused by Potiphar's wife.

It is the word that God uses to describe himself when after the people of Israel had made themselves an idol of a golden calf and begun to worship it at the very time that God was revealing himself to them by giving Moses the Ten Commandments in the law.

After that event, God comes to Moses. Moses says, I have to see you. I have to know who you are. You know the story. God hides Moses in the cleft of the rock and God passes by and he says, The Lord, the Lord, slow to anger.

His steadfast love, this is the same word, his steadfast love is never ending. It is the same psalm that David in Psalm 51 will begin as he's confessing his sin about what happens with Bathsheba in just a few chapters.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, according to your loving kindness. So this word, loyally, steadfast love, loving kindness, is translated variously in different places.

[18:04] But it has this very central and weighty idea in the Bible. And what it is is that the God of the Bible is a God who makes gracious covenants with his people.

And those covenants are certain enough and secure enough to put their whole weight of trust and faith in. And they are characterized not by the harsh lex talionis of the day, the eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth that normally governed relationships in the ancient Near East, but instead were characterized by abundant kindness, graciousness, undeserved favor and goodness towards his people.

And that's what David says, I'm going to extend to these people. And that's what, if you were here last week, that's what David said that he wanted to show to Mephibosheth.

This idea of covenant love and loyal faithfulness, that this is the character of God and therefore the character of the king who would rule over God's people, is I think the key to understanding this passage.

Because what you see then is, on the basis of this kind of God, we see God's king extending this kind of love to his enemies, to the nations, right?

[19:31] David doesn't have to do this. He's beaten everybody he's gone up against so far. But he goes to the Ammonites and he says, hey, let's make a covenant, you and I.

Let's be at peace together. And it's remarkable how they respond, isn't it? Do they respond and think, wow, peace, unmerited favor with a powerful nation.

That's great, let's do it. No. How do they respond? Fear, suspicion, scorn, derision. If you've ever seen the great Kenneth Branagh version of Henry V, there's a great scene at the beginning where the Henry, young Prince Hal, who has just descended to the throne and everyone's wondering whether this playboy could ever be a king, is sitting on the throne with his counselors and he has this first court audience with the French ambassador.

And he's made claims saying, we own part of northern France that seemingly are legitimate. And the French send him a tribute, not of gold, not of silver, but of tennis balls.

It is an act of scorn. You are a king, but you are really a playboy. We don't fear you. We don't honor you. And we're not going to give you what you have claimed.

[21 : 01] It's a remarkable scene, if you've ever seen it, of this kind of thing that wells up, I think, in our hearts as well. Because I think we are often like the Ammonites.

God comes to us with his loving kindness and grace and says, I offer you a covenant if you will be at peace with me and honor me as your king.

But like trying to pet an abused dog, God finds that we instead snap at him, run away, cower in fear in the corner.

We struggle so much to receive this gracious initiative from God. Our hearts well up instead with resistance, suspicion, fear, and sometimes even scorn.

That's what we do to our God. This is what Adam and Eve did in the garden. No, God, I won't submit and receive from you.

[22 : 12] I choose rather to be independent, even though that means death, even though that means expulsion from the garden, all the separation from providence, provision.

We are like the Ammonites. We are not like David. Are we?

We are so rarely willing to extend grace, kindness, compassion, peace to those that we are afraid of, to those who we view as our enemies.

Maybe in this world today, the church struggles to do this. In America, we may struggle to do this towards radical Islamists or to hardened atheists.

We don't extend grace and invite them into relationship with ourselves and with the creator God out of fear as well.

[23 : 20] We often want to win the battles of our day out of fear rather than winning people with offers of covenantal kindness.

Because that's what David was doing. He was saying, let me extend to you grace and peace so that we can have peace with one another rather than conflict.

They refused it, just like we often do. But at the end of the day, it reminds us that the God of the Old Testament is a God of mercy who has extended this to us.

God has shown mercy to me. How have I received it? The story goes on, doesn't it? Verses 1 through 5 tell that story and then it goes on to tell the story of the battle.

They array themselves up against David. And Joab comes out and he finds himself in actually quite a predicament. It's a little difficult to tell because the narrator doesn't seem to make a big deal about it.

[24 : 27] But Joab finds himself with his band of mighty men but he's between a rock and a hard place. He's between two large forces with a small force in the middle.

And any military tactician would say, this is a really terrible place to be. You've got to somehow get yourself out of this so you can fight only on one front. Particularly when you're outnumbered.

But what we see what we see with Joab is that God's covenantal faithfulness his covenantal commitment to his kingdom means that David can live with courageous faith in these circumstances.

Right? He takes action he says alright this is where we are. You go there we go there we agree to help each other if we see that one of us is in trouble and at the end of the day may God do what is good.

It's fascinating. Joab wasn't a particularly pious person. This is about the greatest statement of trust and faith that we see in the whole Bible from Joab. Right? But what he does is in the face of overwhelming odds with no promise of victory Joab knew that God would ultimately establish David's kingdom but in contrast to some other places where God clearly says David go up here and do this and I will give you victory.

[26 : 02] There's no promise here. There's no clarity. There's no evidence that God has promised Joab you will win this victory today and yet in the face of that Joab lives with great faith and do you see what his faith is in?

His faith is not in the victory. He says let's go be courageous. Let's defend God's kingdom God's people. Let us go and lay ourselves down in this noble battle not because we trust that God will give us the victory but because we trust that God will be good.

The only way that Joab could do that is because he knew the covenant that God had made. He knew the kind of covenant faithfulness that this God had showed to his people and so at one level what Joab is saying is hey let's go and let's fight the good fight let's be courageous and we will trust God that whether we win or lose whether we live or die today God will be good.

God will not abandon his kingdom God will not forsake his covenant and his king. Amen. what does it look like for us to trust God like that?

What does it look like to trust God when what seems good to you doesn't seem good to him? What does it look like to take courageous steps of risky faith without confidence in the outcome?

[28 : 04] It reminds me of five men who back in the 1950s heard of a tribe back in the jungles of Ecuador people who did not know the name of Jesus Christ people who lived in a stone age culture that was marked by violence they would kill one another over petty disputes all the tribes that surrounded this tribe were afraid of them because of their ferocity and because of their effective violence against people but these five men said for the sake of Christ we will go and may God do what is good with us they found where they lived they made contact from the air they finally went in and landed their plane and set up a camp and waited for the tribe to come knowing that they would come and explore them so these five men

I can remember all their names Nate Saint Jim Elliot Roger Ewardian I got that wrong who are the other two anyway I forgot to write them down these five men went and they interacted with the tribesmen for two days and the third day the warriors came and they were slaughtered and it was a tragedy tragedy in the eyes of the world it was a tragedy in the eyes of the American press that wrote stories about it but these men said let us go and fight the battle for the name of Jesus being known throughout the world for these men and women who are living in darkness of this incredibly violent and destructive culture who need to hear of the grace and love that can be theirs in Jesus Christ and they took a risk and they died for it was it a waste was God not good to them no others came behind them and the gospel was preached in fact the very act of killing these men some reported that they had visions of seeing angels the very site where the men were killed and that was the beginning of God speaking to them and God drawing them to himself in faith it's a remarkable story about trusting

God without knowing what the consequences are if you were in church a couple weeks ago you might have seen Stanley and Laura Kolisar come and tell the story of one of their colleagues named Yusuf who recently was executed in front of his home for his faith in Christ for his fearlessness in proclaiming Christ and yet the chesed that's the word for covenant loyalty the chesed God has not changed he has not failed us you see friends what 2 Samuel 10 points us to is that there is a king who will sit on the throne of David to come and his name is Jesus and that Jesus comes and offers this covenant faithful love to us he actually establishes a covenant with all who have faith in him by laying down his very own life he establishes a new way for us to come to him that doesn't require us to do anything but to admit our sinfulness and our need to admit that we are like the

Ammonites who run away from the grace of God and this Jesus comes and he says I've laid down my life for you now come believe in me trust in me and in my new covenant you will find life new spiritual life now and life everlasting in my death and in my resurrection I have overcome the greatest battles that you will face in the world against your own sinfulness I have died to break the power of sin and offer you forgiveness that can change you so that you no longer need to be slaves to your sinful hearts and death itself the thing that we most fear if we are really honest with ourselves Jesus rose from the dead to say death has no hold on those who have faith in me because I have risen and all who are with me will rise again and so we live in the world like Joab in between knowing that there is a king sitting on the throne and yet not experiencing the fullness of peace and victory and being called to trust him in the meantime trust him with our singleness when it goes on and on and we wonder will it ever change will God ever provide trusting God as we face chronic or terminal illness not knowing will God heal and extend or will God end this life trusting God to change your career so that you will be free to share the gospel in another part of the world trust in God to make it through one more day on the street in the shelter Jesus has come to establish a covenant with his people that is certain and secure because of his death on the cross he is the king of

[34 : 35] David who offers now this grace to all the nations of the world and because of his death and his resurrection we can live with great courageous faith facing the challenges where we feel overwhelmed in between a rock and a hard place with courage saying maybe God will show us his goodness today and so friends this seemingly worthless chapter in 2nd Samuel points us to a great God who has done great things for us let's pray Lord thank you for this chapter in the scriptures and thank you that it points us to your unfailing love your steadfast love your loyalty and faithfulness

Lord you have shown us this most of all in

Jesus Lord that he is the king who has established a covenant that will never fail and a kingdom that will never end Lord you have graciously invited us to come and to be at peace with you and to be in your kingdom Lord I pray tonight for those here who are seeking and who are far off from you Lord that they would respond to your grace and love and turn to you in faith hope Lord for all of us may we learn to live with courageous faith because of what you have done for us we pray in Jesus name Amen