*DEVOTIONS*

July 17 - 22

*David (Part One)*

**Monday, July 17 1 Samuel 16:1-23**

*“The Lord said: ‘This is the one; anoint him’”*

 God has finally and officially rejected Saul as Israel’s anointed king because he rejected the Lord’s authority structure for Israel’s kingship. David will become the ideal anointed one because he accepts God’s authority in principle and genuinely repents when he fails to accept it in practice. While it will still be quite a few years before Saul’s reign comes to an end and David’s begins (biblically, it doesn’t happen until the early chapters of 2 Samuel), the seed for that change is sown in these verses.

 In the first part of this chapter, the Lord sends Samuel to anoint David as the future king, though he is hardly more than a boy, a choice that is clearly God’s and his alone. The second part of the chapter explains how subsequent events lead to David’s introduction to the royal court of Saul. With the assertion that the Spirit of God rushes upon David with power, we are also told that an opposite effect has occurred in Saul’s case. Once appointed to the royal court, David begins to show Spirit-empowerment in a way very unlike Saul.

*Your Spirit is in me, Lord, and gives me the power to do your will. Amen.*

**Tuesday, July 18 1 Samuel 17:1-58**

*“David triumphed over the Philistine giant, Goliath”*

 David’s dramatic victory over Goliath has become a classic for the ages. It contains all the elements of great literature. Many of us became familiar with the details of the story in our early childhood, and with good reason. Who among us has not felt the terror caused by a bully like Goliath, the giant of a man who boasts as though he is invincible and appears to have the goods to back up his bravado? And who of us can resist the innocence of the young shepherd boy who simply cannot understand why this culprit is determined to defy the armies of the living God?

 Beyond the sheer power of the story, this famous chapter also plays an important role in the message of 1 Samuel. It confirms that the Lord has withdrawn his blessing from Saul, who is now king in name only, as he is fearful and helpless in the face of the enemy. By contrast, David appears to bear all the marks of Spirit-filled leadership. He seems motivated only by the impulse to defend the honor of God’s name, and his victory mobilizes the Israelite army, resulting in a great rout of the Philistines. While God has abandoned Saul, he has blessed David.

*In the power of your Spirit, Lord, I can triumph over my Goliaths. Amen.*

**Wednesday, July 19 1 Samuel 18:1-30**

*“Saul kept a jealous eye on David”*

 David’s victory in the Valley of Elah made him a national hero and entitled him to the hand of Saul’s daughter. But it also aroused feelings of jealousy in Saul, which set in motion the events that fill the rest of 1 Samuel. Suddenly David is a threat to Saul. Saul’s jealousy drives a wedge between himself and David, and with each passing day, the distance becomes greater.

 The chapter tells the story of the relational tension between Saul and David by contrasting the way Saul’s *family* relates to David with the way Saul himself relates to David. So we begin with a paragraph on Jonathan, the crown prince, and David (vv. 1-4), proceed to two paragraphs on Saul’s ill-tempered feelings of jealousy and his attempts to kill David (vv. 5-16), and conclude with two paragraphs on Saul’s daughters and their relationship with David (vv. 17-30). The love of Saul’s family for David serves as a contrastive foil for Saul’s jealousy, which oscillates between murderous hatred and gracious tolerance. Furthermore, Saul comes to understand that God is with David and that his family loves David.

*You, Lord, use those who seek to do me harm to further your purposes for me. Amen.*

*DEVOTIONS*

July 17 - 22

*David (Part One)*

**Thursday, July 20 2 Samuel 5:1-25**

*“They anointed him king of Israel”*

 Ever since that fateful day when the venerable old prophet appeared in Jesse’s home and anointed his youngest son as the future king, David has been living with this conviction – sometimes confidently, sometimes in confusion – that he will be ruler of all Israel. Even further back, beyond David’s own personal promises (and beyond the pages of Samuel), God made promises to Israel’s ancestors. Among the blessings that David fulfilled were the promises that kings would come from Abraham’s line and that royal authority would arise from Judah.

 Once David is anointed king, the story moves quickly toward the glory of God’s kingdom and its capital city, Jerusalem. The city is captured and defended, and a royal palace built. The Philistines, the ancient enemy of Israel, are defeated not once but twice by David’s forces. And David has sons in Jerusalem, one of whom will succeed him as king. As God’s salvation plan unfolds, the Davidic line and Jerusalem/Zion become prominent symbols of Israel’s belief that God will ultimately rule over all the earth.

*You fulfill all your promises, Lord, and we are blessed by them. Amen.*

**Friday, July 21 2 Samuel 11:1-27**

*“The Lord was very displeased with what David had done”*

 This is one of the Bible’s classic stories of the nature of sin. It powerfully and subtly strips David of his luster and turns the focus on us as readers. It is “more than we want to know about David and more than we can bear to understand about ourselves.” The text painfully recounts David’s premeditated and methodical disobedience of three of the Ten Commandments: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife,” “You shall not commit adultery,” and “You shall not murder.” David’s actions illustrate the progression from temptation to sin, a progression to which we are all susceptible.

 But, the text is more than a moral lesson against breaking the Ten Commandments. It *is* that, but it also teaches that manipulative abuses of power will destroy us and those around us. Regardless of whether our attitudes come to fruition in external transgressions against the Ten Commandments, as with David, we cannot escape the implications: The way we use power reflects either our faithfulness to God or our selfish ambitions.

*When I am tempted, Lord, keep me strong in you so that I will not sin. Amen.*

**Saturday, July 22 2 Samuel 12:1-25**

*“The Lord has forgiven you”*

 Two dramatic statements are held closely together in verse 13: “I have sinned,” and “The Lord has forgiven you.” They are separated only by the barest minimum narration (“Nathan replied”). Their very proximity invites us to understand the forgiving nature of God. Yet we, like the prophet Jonah, sometimes cannot quite get over the fact that God forgives, and sometimes we, again like Jonah, do not like it when he does! But this passage is a powerful example of God’s forgiving nature.

 In fact, the Old Testament has many metaphors for forgiveness. Sin may be healed like a disease, forgotten like a fleeting thought, stomped underfoot, thrown behind the back or thrown into the depths of the sea, cleansed, washed, wiped away, blotted out, or erased. Sin can be separated as far as east is from the west, borne away, or covered over. Those of us who have faced our own sin and have cried out to God, “I have sinned,” need to hear afresh the profound truth contained in Nathan’s beautiful words, “The Lord has forgiven you.”

*It is with joy and gratitude, Lord, that I receive your forgiveness. Amen.*