

# DAVID – The Triumph and Tragedy of a Leader

## Wk 1 Loyalty to God's Anointed

2 Samuel 1:1-27 | Acts 2: 22-36

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What does it mean to obey God?

- Is it about keeping his commandments?
- Is it about believing in His son Jesus?
- Is it about being a good husband or good wife? A good parent? A good community minded citizen?

What do you primarily think about when I talk about obeying God?

That's the question I want you to be thinking about as we look now at David.

This morning we start a new series in 2 Samuel entitled "David the Triumph and Tragedy of a Leader". So this series will touch on issues of leadership, but whether you're a leader or not everyone experiences triumph and tragedy in their lives and can learn from David. Most importantly we are going to see how David's life points us to Jesus and what it means to follow him today.

Firstly, let us look at where David comes in the overall story of God's people under the Old Covenant. The story of Israel begins with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Through Joseph they end up in Egypt but then Moses leads the people out of slavery in Egypt. He gets them to the verge of the promised land but then it is Joshua who leads the battles by which they enter the promised land. They are ruled by a series of Judges until the time when the prophet Samuel anoints Saul as their first King. Saul looks like a very promising leader for God's people about fails to fulfil that promise. So Samuel anoints David to be Israel's second king. [The story of Saul is important for understanding our reading today about David.] That is a very potted summary of the back story leading to the event we have read about in 2 Samuel Ch1 today.

What did you make of this story?

Was the Amalekite treated fairly by David?

It sounds like Saul was about to die anyway. So wasn't it merciful for him to put him out of his pain? He was only obeying what Saul asked him to do wasn't he? Saul was David's bitter enemy. A number of times Saul had quite unjustly sort to kill David even when David had been so good to him. Shouldn't David have been pleased that his enemy was dead; that there would be no more threats on his life? Shouldn't he be glad that the crown now belonged to him?

Well the Amalekite certainly thought he was bringing David good news. He thought as most people think that if you win the battle and the opposing leader is killed and therefore you become king, that this is good news. Surely it is especially good news for the Israelites if the victor is David, a man after God's own heart, a man who had shown himself to always seek God's will first rather than his own, and a man who God had honoured with great military victories and leadership gifts.

But it is possible to read the story differently.

What if the Amalekite is an opportunist? What if his story is actually a lie?

If you look at 1 Samuel 31 we get a very different version of events.

READ vv 3 - 6.

What if the Amalekite, realising that Saul and his forces were defeated, decided that he would curry favour with the new regime and its leader. He wanted to be the one to bring David what he thought would be good news. He would make himself the hero of the story by finishing off David's arch enemy. He would curry favour by bringing David the crown and declaring himself his loyal subject. Maybe he was expecting some monetary reward or maybe incorporation into the people of God and a position in David's government.

But surprise! The Amalekite doesn't fully appreciate the significance of the Lord's Anointed. He probably hasn't heard about David's high regard for the Lord's Anointed. On two occasions previously David had the opportunity to run the sword through Saul.

Once David was hiding in a cave and Saul came into the cave to relieve himself so David could very quickly have taken advantage of him. A second time David snuck up on him while he was asleep at night and once again could have very easily put Saul to the sword. He would have been quite justified in killing him because Saul was in a mad jealous rage trying to kill David. But David shows complete selflessness in honouring Saul's position as King of Israel and therefore God's anointed.

So David refuses to strike Saul on two occasions, and he refuses to condone someone else who is claiming to have struck him down.

The Amalekite's motives are not pure. They are not Godly. He is actually only thinking of his own position with no real concern for the glory of God. He meets a swift end.

Let me share with you what maybe a controversial illustration. Can you remember a few years ago there was a Four Corners program looking at youth detention. We saw graphic scenes from a youth detention centre in Darwin. On CCTV we saw graphic pictures of a young person in a straight-jacket and with a hood over his head being manhandled by staff. It looked very cruel and immediately got a big response across all the media and the Prime Minister of the day Malcolm Turnbull immediately called for a judicial inquiry. Well as the days went on more facts emerged and it turned out this was a very angry young man who was regularly violent towards staff as well as spitting on them. Things were not as they immediately appeared.

Well in a similar way this Amalekite is not all he appears to be. There is more to the story when you dig a little deeper. This Amalekite paints himself as the hero when in actual fact he is a lying, self-seeking, scoundrel.

I wonder when he started to twig that things mightn't be going to plan. Did he note David's immediate reaction to his news.

vv 11-12. READ

The Amalekite might have expected David and his men to be jumping for joy at the news their enemy had been defeated but no, the reaction is to mourn and weep and fast, for the Lord's anointed has been killed. The Amalekite learns very quickly the high regard in which the Israelites hold the 'anointed of the Lord'.

So the theme this morning is loyalty to God's anointed. David shows absolute loyalty to Saul both during his life and now following his death. It is a loyalty, however, born not out of love for Saul because he was such a great chap, but a loyalty born out of enormous love for God.

In stark contrast to David's attitude to the Lord's anointed let's now look at Acts Chapter 2 where we find a very different attitude to the Lord's anointed.

Acts 2 is Peter's address to the crowd on the Day of Pentecost where he of course is pointing people to Jesus.

-In a couple of places v's 31 & 36 he refers to Jesus as the Messiah, a word which literally means 'anointed one'.

-He also on three occasions refers to Jesus being raised to the right hand of God, verses 25, 33, 34. This is the place of great honour and power. It also points to God's anointed one.

Peter is very bold with the crowd. What does he accuse the crowd of doing with God's 'anointed one.'

Verse 23, *"You, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross."*

And verse 36, *"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah."*

What is the people's attitude here? Certainly not loyalty to God's anointed one. Rather it's gross disloyalty.

First century Israel had not just a King Saul or a King David in front of them; they had King Jesus, they had the Son of God walking in their midst. As Peter says in verse 22 *"Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know."* To read the gospel accounts of these miracles, wonders and signs should leave no one in doubt that Jesus is indeed the Messiah, God's anointed one. He deserves loyalty. But the Israelites response was the opposite.

Peter's speech makes specific reference to David because David was seen as the prototype of the Messiah. The 1st century Israelites believed that when the Messiah appeared he would be like King David. Peter is concerned to show that Jesus is the descendant of David who would sit on his throne v30, but also that he is the one far superior to David. After all David grew old and died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. As Peter says in v29. The tomb however could not contain Jesus body. Peter says God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. v32

Peter quotes from two of David's psalms and applies the words to Jesus. Let me just refer to Psalm 16 where Peter says David is pointing to Jesus.

It is Jesus who is at the right hand  
who will not be shaken,  
he will not be abandoned to the realm of the dead,  
he will not see decay,  
he will be raised to life.  
He will be vindicated because he is the holy one of God, God's anointed.

The Kings of Israel, even the greatest king, David, pale into insignificance before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Jesus is the one who was completely righteous unlike either Saul or David. He deserves our complete and total loyalty.

So I come back to my original question, what does it mean to obey God?

I bet for most people they think it has to do with their behaviour - trying to be a better person. But for King David it was something quite different, it was loyalty to God's anointed. It's not so much about behaviour it's about attitude, his attitude to the Lord's anointed.

David could have lifted his sword against Saul and he would have been quite justified in taking Saul's life. Firstly, it would have been about self defence. Saul was trying to kill David. The only way to escape was to kill Saul. Secondly, it would have been justice being served up to Saul for his murderous rages. But David wasn't concerned about what was acceptable or reasonable behaviour. His only concern was to obey God.

And this meant honouring God's anointed, whoever might be in the position. Saul didn't deserve loyalty but David nevertheless gave him loyalty because of his position, not because of his character.

David had the possibility of snatching power and glory and would have been perfectly justified in doing so but he refuses to go down that path because his only concern is to obey God not expected behaviour. He in fact shows enormous character in rejecting personal ambition and honouring the Lord's anointed.

Fortunately for us the Lord's anointed who we have to honour is Jesus. Not horrible king Saul, but King Jesus. He is the one who calls forth our absolute loyalty. Given who he is how can we do anything less than lay down our lives in his service. As we do that of course our behaviour will improve but our obedience to God is focused, not on the law, not on behaviour, but a person the Lord Jesus - who is the Christ, the Messiah, God's anointed one.

Let us pray

*Lord thank you for King David and his loyalty to your anointed one. Father show us what it means for us to be loyal to your anointed one no matter what the personal cost. Thank you for our King Jesus. Show us what it means to give him our sole allegiance and serve him all our days. Amen.*