

Message #2**II Samuel 1:17-27**

If you really want to hear some good things about a person, attend their funeral. It is a strange thing but at a funeral or memorial service you hear things and learn things that are so positive about an individual. That really is kind of sad because you would think you would hear those things and know those things about a person long before the person had a funeral. Actually it is a sad commentary on life. We wait until the person is dead to find out the good things a person did in life.

It doesn't matter who the person is or how successful or famous the person was, in the end they end up dead. The mighty do fall. Death catches up to everyone.

Years before this episode, David was anointed by Samuel to be the next King of Israel at the time he was a teenager. David did not know the details of how it would all happen; all he knew is that he is supposed to be the next king. To get David to be the next king, God determined that Saul would be dead.

So what becomes interesting is what the new king would say about the old king.

In our world, when one President replaces another, there is nothing but insults and verbal attacks against the previous administration. It doesn't matter what the political party; they all cut the other down. That is not how David did it.

The truth is Jonathan and Saul were dead and David was sad. The way David saw it was “the mighty have fallen” (**1:19, 25, 27**). What we see here is this:

NO MATTER HOW MIGHTY ONE MAY BE FOR A WHILE AND NO MATTER THE IMPACT, THE MIGHTY WILL DIE AND THE MIGHTY DO DIE.

Now the reference to the mighty has to do with what God did with the person. David considered Saul and Jonathan to be mighty men of God. What we get to see here is David's first act as king.

It was not one of joyous elation or celebration. David was deeply moved by the fact that one who had been chosen by God to lead the nation of God was dead.

It is true that Saul made life miserable for David. For 10 years of David's life he had been hounded by Saul. But David was saddened by the fact that in order for the problem to be resolved, God had to kill Saul. David always wanted Israel to remember Saul and honor Saul and that is what this part of II Samuel is all about.

Now this lamentation communicates eight main messages to Israel:

MESSAGE #1 – David tells Israel to teach the story of Saul and Jonathan to Israel. **1:17-18**

David never wanted the life story of Saul and Jonathan forgotten. In fact, David chanted a lament. What that means is that his lament was personal, but it was not private; it was public. The lament was specifically about Saul and his son, Jonathan.

According to **verse 18**, the story had been put into some poetic form called “the song of the bow.” People in this country need to realize that bows and arrows were not invented by Indians; they were invented by God in the book of Genesis (Gen. 21:20; 27:3).

This lament was to be taught to the people of Judah. David wanted his own people of Judah to know the truth of Saul, who had been the first king of Israel and Jonathan his son.

In fact, David said that this song was written in “the book of Jashar,” which means the book of the upright. This specific book is only mentioned here and in Joshua 10:13.

Apparently this book was one that contained a journal or log or collection of key historical events in Israel’s history. Some of the stories were in poetic form and obviously the book contained righteous war stories and heroes of those stories.

Now the thing to see here is that God inspired His word and He wants His people to be taught specific history as it relates to His people. Saul had fought many battles for Israel and had brought great blessing to the people (I Sam. 14:47-48). David did not want him forgotten. I believe this is a mandate from God to remember great men of God and their stories that have died. To think lightly about great leaders of God is to sin against God. David does not say one negative thing.

We should never forget the esteemed men of God who have been greatly used by God. We should not forget about Martin Luther and the Reformation; Jonathan Edwards and the Revivals; C. I. Scofield and Lewis Sperry Chafer and their development of Dispensationalism. We should not forget about John Walvoord or John Miles, who was so important to the undenominational Bible church movement. These are great men of God and they need to be honored for what God did with them.

MESSAGE #2 – David teaches Israel that beautiful and mighty men of God have been slain.
1:19

The word “mighty” is in plural form so it is not just a reference to Saul, but also his son and may include the sons of Israel who also died. This is the key to the section - **1:19, 25, 27**. David never wanted Israel to forget the fact that Saul and Jonathan were killed and so were many other Israelites.

David actually specifies that they had been killed “on your high places.” This is a reference to Mt. Gilboa (I Sam. 31:1).

Wise is the nation that remembers there have been people who have died for the freedoms and blessings we have.

I refuse to watch any sport that has players who will not stand for the National Anthem. I have not watched an NFL game in years and refused to watch the Superbowl. You are pathetic if you don't remember those who have given their lives for the freedoms we enjoy. David wanted God's men who had fallen remembered.

MESSAGE #3 – David teaches Israel to keep information from the enemies. 1:20

Gath was a very important Philistine headquarters. We may recall that Achish, the Philistine king, had been headquartered in Gath (I Sam. 27:2).

Ashkelon was one of the five main cities of the Philistines. In fact, when John Garstang excavated the city around the year 1920, he discovered that Ashkelon had a fortified council house where various leaders met.

David did not want enemies of Israel to get their hands on this information about Saul and Jonathan. One of the main reasons why would be their mockery. The women would use this temporary setback for a celebration. They would rejoice that Saul and many Israelites were dead and David did not want that knowledge made public.

There are some people who have no sense of loyalty or class. Too often people run their mouths and it can destroy God's work. As soon as they learn something, they get on the phone and tell everyone. David did not want that happening.

It is shameful when God's people tell godless people about negatives or setbacks with the family of God.

MESSAGE #4 – David prays that the place that destroyed Saul will never prosper. 1:21

David never wanted the place to prosper that had been the scene of Saul and Jonathan's demise. A shield was typically coated with oil to prevent from rusting. Everyone who has ever hunted in the mountains knows that trick.

But now that Saul was dead, the shield would no longer be oiled and David prayed that Mt. Gilboa would become a desolate spot.

David is praying that God would forsake this place and not send rain or dew to give farmers any harvest even though it would mean that no grain offerings could be given from this area.

It is interesting that to this very day Mt. Gilboa does have a few flowers and flora, but it does not have any major crops growing. There are some reptiles and rodents and birds, but it certainly is not one of the rich crop production. With the exception of a few shrubs, it is a barren land.

God did answer David's prayer.

People think that you must always pray lovey-dovey prayers. That is not the truth. You can talk to God about anything. David never wants God to even bless this property.

MESSAGE #5 – David wants Israel to know that Saul and Jonathan fought until death. **1:22**

Saul and Jonathan were not cowards and they were not quitters. There is nothing heroic about giving up in battle. Heroes don't give up. David wanted God's people to remember that Jonathan and Saul kept fighting to the end. They did not stop fighting and even though they were killed, they also took many people with them.

It is noteworthy to remember that when Saul met with the spiritist medium who contacted Samuel (I Sam. 28:19), he knew that he and his sons would die. But they kept fighting even knowing that.

God honors people who stay in the warfare until the end.

MESSAGE #6 – David wants Israel to remember how Jonathan and Saul lived and died. **1:23**

Saul and Jonathan were greatly loved and at times very gracious. Jonathan specifically was a very gracious man. They did much for God. They led Israel and fought for Israel and they even stayed together until the moment of their death.

Jonathan knew that his father had issues, but he was a loyal son and stayed by his father's side.

MESSAGE #7 – David wants Israel to remember the positive impact of Saul's ministry. **1:24**

Notice the daughters of the Philistines would rejoice over the news Saul was dead (**1:20**), but the daughters of Israel weep over it.

Saul had done much for Israel. He was responsible for many positive things that God had done using him.

It spite of his lapses and failures, Saul was Israel's first king and he did bring stability to the nation. Saul led Israel in a series of victories that made life better for the nation.

They prospered under his leadership. They had reaped many spoils and David wanted the people to remember the good things Saul had done.

It seems to me that when we are eulogizing someone we should do our best to remember the positive and not the negative.

MESSAGE #8 – David wants Israel to remember his friend and brother Jonathan. **1:25-27**

David considered Jonathan as a brother, a close relative. Jonathan was a mighty man of God. David refers to him that way two times here. In fact, he put his death on par level with the loss of a mate.

David had lost Michal in that Saul gave her away. Jonathan was more loyal to him.

David certainly had his share of women problems. He lost his wife Michal; Abigail was loyal and he would have some problems with Bathsheba.

But his friend and brother Jonathan never wavered. These were two friends who loved each other. **Verse 26** means that Jonathan and David had a friendship that was based on a deep commitment to God and His word, which most wives and married couples do not have.

They had made a covenant agreement to be friends for life.

By the way, to suggest that this is a reference to a perverted homosexual relationship is to butcher the very context of what David is saying here. This relationship was one that honored God, not one that was an abomination to God.

There is nothing more honorable than a true love between brothers or sisters in Christ.

Some of the best friends you will ever have will be in the church. And the best friend any of us will ever have will be Jesus Christ.