

Humility In Wisdom: 9

The Humble Shepherd Servant [part 2]

Over these last few weeks we have been looking at humility from the aspect of grace. “God gives grace to the humble” One of the greatest examples of the outworking of grace in the lives of the Old Testament characters is in the life of David. The Scriptures show us that as David humbled himself he too experienced a tremendous outpouring of God’s grace which exalted him and raised him up.

Last week we were looking at how the grace of God brought him to the place where he was anointed to be king by Samuel. We saw how humbling himself before God lifted him up in the sight of those around him. A servant in the royal house said of him:

“Then one of the servants answered and said, "Look, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, *who is skillful in playing, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a handsome person; and the LORD is with him.*" Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse, and said, "Send me your son David, *who is with the sheep.*"" (1 Samuel 16.18-19)

In David we now have a man who has been anointed to be king. What does he do with this?, how does he react?

Although he was anointed king, he remained humble and did not raise himself to that position. He waited for God to elevate him. The time span between his anointing and actually assuming the position of king is some years

2. Battling the giant Goliath - 1 Samuel 17.

This chapter tells of the battle between the Philistines and Israel.

- Three of David’s elder brothers are with Saul in the battle (v13)
- David is back at home for a while when Jesse asks him to go and take food supplies to his brothers (v15, 17-18)
- While David spoke with his brothers the Philistine giant presents himself with taunts, threats and verbal defiance, which David hears (v22-23; v8-11)
- David learns what reward will be given to the man who kills the giant (v25-30)
- David has an audience with Saul (v31-39)
- David goes out to fight Goliath in the name of the Lord and defeats him (v40-51)

In this chapter a great opportunity arises for David to ‘get noticed’ and raise himself up yet he remains humble.

His own brother thinks the purpose for his visit was to ‘make a name for himself’

“Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have

you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle.” (v28-29)

Eliab thought:

- David was too proud to look after the sheep – *why have you deserted the sheep?*
- He was only there to advance himself in the army and to secure a position
- He was seeking out his own vanity and ambition

Eliab knows little of his brother's character – he is so far from the truth. In fact Eliab is probably comparing David to his own character.

The truth was that David was humble. Yes he had been anointed king, he did have a position in the royal house – but when he returned home he went back to the sheep. What David was proposing was not out of any impure motive but for the glory of God and the honour of the people of Israel, who were both being reproached.

Let us look at how he conducts himself in front of Saul. (v32-39)

- He knows God has chosen him to be king but he never mentions it.
- He tells Saul how God delivered him from the lion and bear and confirms his faith in God that He will deliver him again
- He talks about his covenant with God, and how the Philistines did not have that covenant
- He tells Saul how the giant is challenging God – and that would prove to be his downfall.

In all this David does not build himself up – He humbles himself and submits to God, exalting Him and giving God all the glory and credit. God gives him the victory.

In all things David behaves wisely – he is humble before God. He is elevated to a position of responsibility and is accepted in the sight of the people. So much so that they hold him in high esteem.

“So David went out wherever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely. And Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of all the people and also in the sight of Saul's servants. (6) Now it had happened as they were coming home, when David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all the cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet King Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. (7) So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands.” 1 Samuel 18.6-7

This displeased Saul and he viewed him with suspicion from that day, even to the point of hunting him to kill him.

But again the Bible tells us that David behaved wisely in all his ways, being humble before God.

“And David behaved wisely in all his ways, and the LORD was with him. Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was afraid of him.” 1 Samuel 18.14-15

3. David's opportunities to kill Saul

In the years before David became king, He had many opportunities to advance and elevate himself, yet he chose to act wisely and be humble. Because Saul was wanting to kill him, David went on the run to escape but Saul continued to hunt him.

On a couple of occasions David had the opportunity to kill Saul and take his position, but let us see how he acted:

1 Samuel 24.1-22

- David and his men were hiding out in a cave in the Wilderness of En Gedi.
- Saul stopped in this cave to refresh himself
- David cut off a small piece from the corner of Saul's robe
- When Saul left the cave, David went out after him and told him everything
- (v8-11) David had no evil intention toward Saul. Even when there was opportunity, he did not raise his hand to harm Saul.

David humbled himself before God, taking heed of the Word which says "Touch not the Lord's anointed" (Psalm 105.15)

1 Samuel 26.5-25

- On another occasion David crept into Saul's camp while all his bodyguards were sleeping
- David's men wanted to kill him but David prevented them again – Do not touch the anointed of the Lord
- David took Saul's spear and a jug of water which were by him.
- David crossed over the valley to the other side and called out to Saul and Abner, his bodyguard
- David told all and then returned the king's spear (v22)

Once again, David humbled himself and did not presume to kill the king to get the position he had been anointed for – He waited on the Lord, for His timing.

The time eventually came - Saul was killed in battle but even then David did not push himself forward, he waited on the leading and direction of the Lord (**2 Samuel 5.1-4**)