



Man after God's own heart – King David

Sermon – Melville Junction

Dean Donaldson – 25 July 2010

In our tour through the Bible this year we have been looking at the narrative of God relating to people. We have seen God call the nation of Israel to Himself, lead them out of Egypt, give them the Promised Land.

Things fall apart as the people turn away from God and no longer follow His commands. The land is fought over, taken away, won back but essentially during the time of the Judges, Israel no longer occupies its borders.

Last week Steve, took us to a period in history where the nation of Israel demands a king, this grieves God because He knows that what they are asking for is not the best thing for them. God gives them a king. We then looked at Deuteronomy 17 which makes provision for a King in the law. It outlines what a King should be like. We looked at Saul and saw that he did not follow the ways of God to the point that God was displeased that he anointed him king.

This week we are going to look at King David, the next king in the line of Israel. David was a much more successful king and it is felt that he was the best king in Israel's history. In David's time he re-established the borders of Israel to where they were under Joshua, he finally conquered Jerusalem (City of David), he brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem and put it into a tent (tabernacle). He created a centralised government, re-established the Levitical priesthood. The army had increased to 1.5 million fighting men. Israel was successful under the rule of King David...

But that is not the most important thing about David is it? Matthew 1 starts...A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ the son of David. God makes a covenant with David that his throne shall be established forever (2 Samuel 7). This covenant sets up the hope for a future king, the Messiah or Jesus.

The thing that jumps out at me as I am preparing for this message is that in my mind David is not that great a character (he did a lot of dodgy stuff). He sets up our understanding for the Messiah though, and in my mind Jesus is nothing like David. What is even more confusing is that God says to Saul in 1 Samuel 13:14...**that his Kingdom will not endure forever, that God has sought out a man after His own heart and appointed him leader.**

So how does the man - David (who seems a bit dodgy) take after Gods own heart but at the same time Jesus who is God among us seem so different. **Has God changed?**

No, God has not changed. His heart is the same. When I work through the story of David told from 1Samuel 16 -2 Samuel 24 I start to see a resemblance, similarities between David and Jesus. I want to take us through David's life and pull out some things that should challenge us in our walk with God and discover what a person after God's own heart looks like.

1. Samuel goes to Jesse's house to anoint the new king on God's command at this stage (Saul is king) David is still a boy, the youngest in his family and the least likely to be anointed king. Samuel asks to see Jess's sons in **1 Sam 16:6-7...**

⁶ When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD." ⁷ But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

God looks at the heart, how often we compare our external appearance, our achievements with those around us. How do we compete? We think that God loves those who seem outwardly more successful than us. But that is not true, because in these stories Saul was the correct in the eyes of man but he did not follow God.

2. When Goliath was taunting the Israelites, everybody was too afraid to fight him. David, the shepherd boy steps forward...when Saul tells him he can't fight Goliath because he is just a boy, David tells Saul about a bear and a lion that he killed when defending the sheep.

1 Sam 17:37 ³⁷ The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

The temptation would be for him or any of us to say I killed the bear, I killed the lion and so I will kill this Philistine. There is a humility here that I would not expect from the great king David. He places his trust entirely in God. A man after God's heart gives God credit, allows God to claim victory through him. David's heart here allows God to be God – he removes himself and his ego.

Sometimes our actions don't allow God to work through us, we saw last week that God will not override our free will. If we choose to do something in our own strength away from God he will let us do that.

3. At a point in this story Saul becomes jealous and threatened by David. The people are singing that Saul has killed thousands but David has killed 10 thousand so he tries to kill David. David flees and gets to a place called Keilah. The Philistines are attacking this place and looting **1 Sam 23...**

David enquires of the Lord before attacking them.

There is a real sense of David having an intimate relationship with God, asking God for guidance and wisdom. We see this intimacy over and over, in the psalms that David wrote.

How often do we do what is in front of us, make a choice or set our mind on a course of action and then ask God to approve it, bless it etc.

A man after God's heart seeks God's counsel and wisdom and then obeys it. David has an intimacy with God that no other character in the bible comes close to except Jesus. Read the psalms that David wrote, look at the way he relates to God continuously.

When last did you draw close to God, tell Him what is on your heart. Ask for advice and wisdom. Because a person with God's own heart needs to be in close intimate relationship with God our creator and father.

4. Saul continues to chase David and on two occasions David has a chance to kill Saul. Let's read a bit of the first time this happens...1 Sam 24 ³

He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. ⁴ The men said, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'

The men say that God has delivered him into David's hands now let's kill him. But David stops them from doing it. He goes onto say in vs 6

⁶ He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD."

This is interesting, God delivers Saul into David's hand but David is forbidden to harm Saul. It says in vs 4 that God delivered him into his hands to deal with as he wishes. David still has to exercise the right choice here; a man after God's heart makes the choices that God would want him to make.

How often do we find ourselves in that position? God puts something in our path, an open door, financial blessing (wealth) or allows an opportunity to avenge a previous injustice. Do you go through that door; do you spend your money on the things that will make you happy like a nice expensive car? Do you take justice into your own hands?

What I see in this story is that a man with God's heart makes godly decisions even when God has placed that choice in our hands...the phrase "he who is trustworthy with little will be entrusted with much" comes to mind.

5. Saul dies, David is anointed King...during David's reign his son Absalom tries to overthrow him. He turns the people's heart against David and chases him out of Jerusalem. There is a battle between David's men and Absalom's army. Absalom is killed. In both of these occasions David mourns and grieves the loss of his enemies.

A man with God's heart grieves loss of life, of people who turn away from God, for the 1 lost sheep. A person with God's own heart does not rejoice or celebrate something that seems to be good for them but is destructive to God's kingdom.

6. David and Bathsheba...we all know this story, David sees Bathsheba from his palace. He must have her, her husband is away fighting for David. David sleeps with Bathsheba, she falls pregnant. So David in his wisdom brings her husband back to her so that he can sleep with his wife and cover up David's sin. It does not work, her husband is too loyal a man to sleep in his bed whilst the rest of the army is camping out in the cold. So David has him killed and takes Bathsheba as his wife.

What does a man after God's heart do, he does not covet another man's wife, or sleep with another man's wife. He does not lie and cheat his way out of it, he does not kill the man either. David has many wives and concubines at this stage but Deuteronomy 17 says that a king shall not take many wives or his heart will be led astray. Essentially a man after God's heart obeys the commands of God. David gets it wrong this time and God is displeased with him.

7. God sends Nathan the prophet to David to rebuke him for what he has done. Nathan tells David this story of a wealthy man with many sheep and a poor man with one sheep which he has loved and cared for. The story goes that the wealthy man did not want to use one of his many sheep to feed a hungry traveller so he takes the poor man's only sheep and feeds it to the traveller. 2 Sam 12:5-6

⁵ David burned with anger against the man and said to Nathan, "As surely as the LORD lives, the man who did this deserves to die! ⁶ He must pay for that lamb four times over, because he did such a thing and had no pity."

Even at the height of David's sin he has a deep sense of justice, a man with God's heart has a passion to correct the wrongs, to stand up for the oppressed, the weak the outcast. Jesus heals a man with a crippled hand on the Sabbath, the Pharisees were trying to accuse Jesus

the text goes onto say that Jesus looked around at them in anger and was deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts.

Can I ask you this, do you care enough for this world, what God is doing here, His kingdom to burn with anger at injustice. A man with God's heart does, I am not saying that you go and do something ungodly (against the teaching of Jesus) to right that wrong. I am just saying that our hearts should burn, we should be stirred.

I failed dismally at it this past week; I am trying to get Joshua into a school for next year. I went to Parkview primary which is a little way down the road from the church but we live outside the feeder area for the school. So the school allows people from outside the area to queue on one day in the year to try and get a place in the school. It's a first come first serve basis so I thought that I would go to the school on Wednesday because the day for queuing was Thursday just to find out more. Do I need a form, ID, proof of residence etc. I get to the school only to discover a large amount of what seemed to be black labourers outside the school. My first thought was that they were part of the building team that was working over the road. I get to the gate of the school to find a queue of people who have been queuing since Monday, there is a list of the people in the queue on the gate and the rule is that you need to have a representative in the queue at all times or you get removed from the list. So I tell one of the ladies in the queue that this is not for me, I can't believe that people have been queuing for 3 nights to get into a primary school. As I am about to leave she says to me "no doll, you get your garden boy to queue for you". I then turned around and realised that the people who I thought were labourers were employed to stand in this queue through the freezing cold nights so that some rich, spoilt white kids could have a better education – in one of our government schools. I was disgusted but I walked away and said nothing. How often do we do that, walk away turn our back on injustice...let the weak fend for themselves? I don't believe that God was pleased with me on that day.

8. This is the last thing and probably the most important. At the end of David's reign he calls for a census of his fighting men. It displeases God because he is now relying on the strength of his army and not on God. God gives David a choice of punishment, either they get given into the hands of men or God deals with them by sending a plague...David says this let us fall into the hands of the Lord for His mercy is great. He trusts God even in discipline...as the angle of the Lord is striking down the people David says in **2 Sam 24:7**

...he said to the LORD, "I am the one who has sinned and done wrong. These are but sheep. What have they done? Let your hand fall upon me and my family."

A person with God's heart lays down his/her life for the sake of others. It is the thing that Jesus did for us, it is a way of life that we have been called to.

Gareth goes onto the streets every week, to help those less fortunate than himself. This week he had his phone stolen for the second time. He cannot afford another phone, this thing has not been good for him but he gets up and does it again anyway. Are you willing to put the needs of others ahead of yours. Are you willing to sacrifice your comforts, your life style your life for the sake of others. Jesus, and David show us that a person after Gods own heart does.

Why do we do all this, why do we care if we have a heart after Gods own heart? In 2 Samuel 7 after God makes the covenant with David, David responds like this: **"Who am I, O Sovereign LORD, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?"¹⁹ And as if this**

were not enough in your sight, O Sovereign LORD, you have also spoken about the future of the house of your servant. Is this your usual way of dealing with man, O Sovereign LORD? ²⁰ "What more can David say to you? For you know your servant, O Sovereign LORD. ²¹ For the sake of your word and according to your will, you have done this great thing and made it known to your servant. ²² "How great you are, O Sovereign LORD! There is no one like you, and there is no God but you...

We stand in awe of God, he chooses to deal with man, He alone is God...

How great you are O Sovereign Lord! There is no one like you.

We do these things because we know that there is so much more to life than this, what we see. The things that hold us captive here, we can't understand why God bothers with us but we know He does and that he cares. We allow His heart to beat inside of us, we are transformed by it and the world around us is transformed by it...