

Reading Schedule for November 20-26, 2017

David had waited a long time to become the king after being anointed as a young man by Samuel. These chapters will highlight his advances and victories. David is king now, and he is conquering the people around him, bringing them into submission, and having the people of God be strong and in harmony throughout the land. His strength was that he was a warrior and he believed God with great faith. But one day he didn't go to war, and that was his biggest downfall. You will read about it as we conclude this week.

November 20 – 2 Samuel 5: “David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.” (vv.4 & 5) This is the culmination of David's call to be the king of Israel. This would be his third anointing as king, beginning with Samuel, and then before the tribe of Judah, and now all of Israel, where he reigned in Jerusalem. I remember studying to be a pastor in seminary for five years. Those five years seemed so long, and they were challenging because seminary was also expensive. But looking back, I see those years as short, as well as important, for my development as a leader and a follower of Christ. David had a similar experience, as God would shape him to be King. We can sometimes pray that God would hurry up and accomplish his promises in our lives. But there is nothing like waiting that develops character, and then patience. David wrote, “I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong and take heart and wait for the Lord.” (Psalm 27:13 & 14) That's what God was doing in David, and that's what he wants to do in you. Do you agree?

November 21 – 2 Samuel 6: “Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might . . .” (v.14) I am sure you recall the fact that David danced before the Lord. You probably remember that his wife thought he looked silly. She probably was more concerned about how things look, and David was more concerned about his love for God. There is a story about David's wife behind David's excitement in praise and worship to God. Michal, David's wife, probably struggled with bitterness and resentment already. She was without child and would remain so. She was not dealing with her emotions in a healthy way, to say the least. I appreciate David's unabandoned worship of God. He challenges me to be more expressive in my love and praise to our great God. Is that true for you? How do you respond?

November 22 – 2 Samuel 7: “Then King David went in and sat before the Lord, and he said: ‘Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far?’” (v.18) I believe that David was a sincerely humble person. He wrote these words, “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalm 51:17) Nathan gives David some very encouraging words and he responds with humility. This is carrying on the very covenant of God, and would assure David that the promised Messiah would be born in his line. If God is going to do something, he will be sure to perform it; you can count on that. But David realized that he didn't deserve one bit of what was so extravagantly shared with him. I am glad that he knew that. We are similar. We have been given abundant grace and eternal salvation by no merit of our own. The only proper response to God's amazing goodness to us and his gracious redemption must be humility. How do you see humility in David? How do you measure your own humility before God?

November 23 – 2 Samuel 8: Happy Thanksgiving! “He put garrisons throughout Edom,

and all the Edomites became subject to David. The Lord gave David victory wherever he went.” (v.14) I would suggest that David had much to be thankful for. Why would he have victory over all of his enemies each and every time? God wanted to bless Saul and bring great victory through him, but his heart was not right. David's reign would be characterized by doing what was right and just. He was the kind of man that God could bless. His character was trustworthy; his allegiance to the law was just; and he was fair in the way that he treated those who served alongside him. Why do you think God delighted in giving David victory after victory? What wonderful blessings and victories has God given that you can remember on this special day of Thanksgiving?

November 24 – 2 Samuel 9: “‘Don't be afraid,’ David said to him, ‘for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.’” (v.7) David displays his integrity in how he will keep a promise. He treated Mephibosheth graciously because he was Jonathan's son. He honored the covenant that he had formed with his friend, who is now dead. No one would have paid attention to the fact that David would avenge his former adversary by wiping out Saul and Jonathan's family. But he would not do it. David's kindness is an example to us all. God knew David had made a promise to Jonathan, and that is what mattered to David the most. When we focus on honoring God and remember that he knows all, it will shape our character and help us to honor our promises. What stands out to you in this chapter?

November 25 – 2 Samuel 10: “Be strong, and let us fight bravely for our people and the cities of our God. The Lord will do what is good in his sight.” (v.12) There are two factors at work in this story and many other events in the Bible. You see the brave action of God's people, and also the incredible faith that God will take care of them. There is a balance in life between our actions and our faith in God. You see both of these statements in the verse I have highlighted. We use our best technics and utilize our resources, knowing that the outcome is in God's hands. You might suggest that trusting God is more important than the courage to fight for the wellbeing of God's people. But in this story they are both important. I think that remains true still today. How do you understand your involvement and God's ability? How hard should your effort be, and how deep should your trust in God correspond to your actions?

November 26 – 2 Samuel 11: “In the spring, at the time when kings go off to war, David sent Joab out with the king's men and the whole Israelite army. They destroyed the Ammonites and besieged Rabbah. But David remained in Jerusalem.” (v.1) You know this story very well so I don't have to pick another verse to bring out the message of lust and adultery, and even murder. But the key to me was that David stayed in Jerusalem. Our action in being purposeful in life is essential to remaining focused. I don't mean we always should be busy. I mean we always have to be thinking about why we are doing what we are doing. If we lose a sense of purpose, we will wander aimlessly and be susceptible to the temptation of the devil. Just ask Eve. This was true in this story. This has to be one of the most disappointing moments in all of our reading, and definitely grieved the heart of God. David seems oblivious to his error. This past Sunday we talked about being dead to sin. What if David would have realized that he was dead to sin? How would he have responded to lust?

Prayers: As we transition from Thanksgiving to Christmas, pray for the right heart to be alive in us as we celebrate the true meaning of Christmas.