

Christ in 2 Samuel

TRANSCRIPT (AUTO-GENERATED)

Well, hello, and welcome to Ponder by NorthernLife. We're having a conversation about the Word of the Lord as it was preached to us on Sundays and as we encounter it in our everyday life.

I am here pondering with Ben and Tristan, and we're pondering Ben's sermon on 2 Samuel. Ben, how are you going?

Doing well, thank you, yeah, good to be back.

Yeah, excellent. And you, Tristan? Yeah, great.

Okay, we finally got that intro out of the way. It's taken us like five attempts to do this. We're pretty rusty.

Ben, you want to give us a quick recap of that sermon and what it was about?

Yeah, sure. So as everyone knows, we are in our Christ in Scripture project, and we are as of this week, 25% through, so that's one quarter through the project.

And I was reflecting on the project as a whole and the fact that the point of this project is to see Christ in Scripture, not necessarily to see 2 Samuel in Scripture, although that is part of it.

So what we did in this sermon is really focused on the ways that 2 Samuel helps us see Christ more clearly. 2 Samuel is the Book of David. It's sort of the record of David's kingship from beginning to end.

And I think you can't understand Jesus in the Gospels and the New Testament without understanding David. And so we kind of held up a mirror from David to Jesus and compared the two.

And when you do that, you see that there are kind of at least 7 parallels. Jesus comes in the line of David, from the town of David, with the heart of David, on the path of David, to the city of David, by the words of David, and as the son of David.

And when you trace out those 7 points, you effectively get the Gospel story from beginning to end. And you see how Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, and how the background of David really helps us to see that.

And then we finished the sermon with this reflection from Matthew chapter 20 on a story where two blind men cry out for mercy to the son of David because they see him clearly.

Kind of finishing with this idea of our need to see Jesus clearly brings us to see ourselves more clearly as well and to ask for mercy. So that's Christ in 2 Samuel.

Yeah. Thanks, Ben. Tristan, any initial reflections on that sermon?

Yeah, I think it was great.

It actually pointed me to go back to a thread series that I encountered when I was in high school years ago. I like dug up this box and I found of how we can trace everything where the Messiah is mentioned and Christ in that story.

So it was just refreshing to have that reassurance that the Lamb always wins. And that line is, it's so like something we can hold on to and apply to our lives.

And the second part was, I was also reflecting on Christ in scripture, like so often we like let's look at it from an academic perspective and try and see Christ. But how do we apply this? How do we apply our findings?

And so that was helpful to look at, especially with that one last slide at the end where it's like Jesus and then us.

What's the thread series?

The thread series is you basically track from Genesis to Revelation, going back and forth with all the cross references on Christ's story.

So if there's a message or if there's a word like Messiah, it would trigger you going back to the Old Testament. So it's quite cool. And the end graphic is like this yawn like threads just all over the place, but it's just amazing.

Oh, awesome.

So obviously, David looms large in this sermon and, as you said, in 2 Samuel.

And you had this graphic in the sermon, Ben, you had Jesus' name and then David projected in the background as sort of the, I guess the context and the sort of framing of Jesus' life and work.

Of course, Jesus exceeds that framing as well, but it's a key part of it. He talked about the line of David, the town of David, the heart of David, the path of David, the city of David, the words of David, the son of David.

So, I guess my initial question is why David? Why this, like, what, 11th century Canaanite warlord? Why is he the person that sort of sets the pattern that Jesus sort of steps into?

Well, that's exactly David's question.

In the Davidic Covenant, which is 2 Samuel 7, which was our Bible reading yesterday, God gives this extraordinary promise to David that his house will last forever.

This wild promise, and then David's prayer after that in 2 Samuel 7 is exactly your question, Jack. He says in verse 18, Who am I, sovereign Lord? And what is my family that you've brought me this far?

And as if this were not enough in your sight, sovereign Lord, you've also spoken about the future of the house of your servant.

And this decree, sovereign Lord, is for a mere human, it's like David himself cannot believe the promise that God has given him and is wrestling with this question. I think the reason is that this is kind of God's modus operandi.

It's the way that he works. God loves to choose the weak and foolish things to shame the strong.

Like you look at when David was chosen by God, it's because he had a heart after God's own heart, not because he was tall and dark and handsome and strong, like Saul was. And so this is the nature of our God. This is the way that he works.

He chooses the humble things to do great things. And so, that's the, in 1 Samuel 16, God says, do not look at his appearance, for the Lord doesn't judge by outward appearances. The Lord looks at the heart.

And David had a good heart. He messed up later on, and I'm sure we'll get to that, but he had a good heart. And that's why God chose him, I think.

But that's key.

Like even though he messed up, that's so relatable. That makes it relatable for us, because God doesn't look for perfect people to like steward his kingdom. That's what we can draw on to.

So, it's a good thing.

What aspects of David's heart specifically? Let me dig into that a little bit. What do we talk about when we think about David's heart?

Well, the text says that he was a man after God's own heart.

So, David's number one passion was the glory of God's name. And you see that in the battle between David and Goliath in 1 Samuel. There was Goliath defying the God of Israel, like cursing him, cursing Israel.

And David hears this, and he has such a passion for God's name, he has such a heart for God's heart, that he wants to not let this, as he says, uncircumcised Philistine just defy the armies of the living God.

I think the cool thing is that he had a heart after God's own heart. And you see this even in the Psalms that he wrote, that he was a musician and a poet, constantly seeking after the presence of God. I think that would be the first thing.

So almost like a zeal for God and His name.

Yeah.

Yeah, I would say there's a real repentant heart that David has that we can draw onto, because it's not that he was fearful of the Lord, because he wasn't confident in him.

Therefore, he was fearful, and therefore, when he messed up, he had a repentant heart. And that was like David's fall back on always, is that he always had a repentant heart, which is encouraging.

I preached a message a couple of years ago here called David in the Secret Place, which was kind of similar to this message in a lot of ways, tracing the story of David from the shepherd boy to king, to then his downfall.

And I kind of told David's story through the lens of the Secret Place or this idea of the front stage and the backstage. The front stage being our kind of publicly visible persona, and the backstage being the hidden place where it's just us and God.

And when you look at David's life, he spends so much time in his early years in the Secret Place with God.

He's tucked off at the bottom of the hill as a shepherd boy away from his family, just hanging out with God in his presence, developing this love for God.

And then as David's career progresses, he becomes the king in the, or before he becomes king, he becomes the commander in Saul's army, and then he's fleeing from Saul, he becomes a refugee, and then he becomes king, and slowly that backstage gets

smaller and smaller, and the front stage gets bigger and bigger. And as that happens, his life falls apart. And so another thing about David's heart, I think, is he emphasized the backstage, as well as the front stage.

He consciously spent time in the secret place with God, when nobody else was watching, as well as doing the big public things for God.

You spent a lot of time comparing Jesus and David, and you've just painted a very positive portrait of David.

And certainly, there are those aspects of repentance and zeal for the Lord that really mark him out, especially compared to someone like Saul. But I think also, especially when we look at 2 Samuel, David is also quite an ambiguous figure as well.

I mean, this is a guy who, yes, he's passionate for God, but God does not allow him to build a temple because he is a man of blood. He's spent so much time, his great thing is he's a warrior, he's a war leader.

He infamously sleeps with another man's wife, has that man killed? And I think today we would say the consent situation there is also suspect. I think you pointed that out.

This is a man who does not enforce justice in his own household, who you mentioned, Absalom, rebelling against him. That's also kind of a product of David completely ignoring grievances within his own household.

And I mean, it's not, this is a guy who, I think as well as being compared with Jesus, he can contrast with Jesus in a lot of ways. Yeah, well, what do we make of that?

Yeah, I think you're absolutely right to draw this point out that David, for all his strengths, had a lot of flaws as well and was really messed up.

I think one of the cool things about the story of the Gospels is, I made the point early in the message about how Jesus does come in the line of David as the seventh son, the fulfillment of David's line.

But there's also a discontinuity because of the virgin birth. There's this kind of gap where Jesus is not technically inheriting the sin of that line. God is his father, not David, truly.

And so, Jesus comes, as you're saying, sinless and perfect and holy and righteous. And where David failed, Jesus succeeded.

And so, remembering that is really helpful, that there is no Messiah figure in the Old Testament, apart from the prophecies looking forward to Jesus, who is the Messiah, which kind of stops us from getting our hopes up from any character in our life

or in the Bible, who will be perfect and he'll never fail. But all of that points us to Jesus, who is the Messiah, who is the King and who will never fail. I think that kind of the dark parts of the Bible constantly point us to Jesus.

And we've seen that time and again in this Christ in Scripture series.

We're trying to be really honest about the hard stuff in the Bible, but not to live in the hard stuff for too long, but to let that push us to Jesus, who is the light of the world. I think that's important to hold on to.

And I think sometimes when we read the Bible, we tend to put ourselves in it, like full immersive reading. This is like, but it's also important to note, we are not David. We are not these people in the Bible.

What we are meant to do is see Christ through them and learn from that. So I think it's also very dependent on how you read the text, because there's nothing wrong with reading it the way I mentioned.

It's just don't get caught up in that spot where you're in this apathy cycle, but you're not part of it. You're part of the greater story, yes, and praise God for that, but you're not directly in the text.

I've heard it said before that the Bible was not written to you, but it was written for you, which is a helpful kind of simple way of reminding ourselves that we can't directly put ourselves in the story quite so easily.

But certainly scripture is written and inspired by the Spirit of God for us to learn things and to appreciate the character of God, and also to understand ourselves as well.

Let me jump on that actually, because you said at the end of your sermon, right, that in the same way that David kind of illuminates Jesus in the Gospels, Jesus helps us understand and see ourselves better.

And you just kind of made that statement. I wanted to dig into what you meant by that. And yeah, how we can see ourselves better through Jesus.

Yeah, that's the story of in Matthew 20 of the blind men who ask for mercy.

When you see Jesus as the son of David, the shepherd king, the king of kings and lord of lords, how could you not look at yourself and realize how far we fall short of him, and of his glory and his goodness, and also see his grace that he would die

for us even still? And so, what I really mean is realizing that we are broken and infected with the power of sin and we need a Savior.

And the point of the Gospel is that we do have a Savior, and we, in that way, we come to know who we are when we see who Jesus is.

At the end of the sermon, you came to this story, this great story of the two blind men, as you mentioned, who cry out to Jesus, son of David, have mercy on us.

And you told us that when we see Jesus, all we can ask or we can say, rather, is Lord Jesus, son of David, have mercy on us. And that's a great phrase, Lord, have mercy on me, that has echoed through church history.

What does it mean or in what ways do we ask Jesus to have mercy on us? I mean, I think partly one thinks of sin, but in that story, right, it's the blind man wanting mercy to have their sight restored.

So in what aspects, yeah, what does it mean to ask Jesus for mercy?

When I approach mercy, I always think about it in the retrospective, like if something goes horribly pear-shaped, which it usually does sometimes, then I ask for mercy and forgiveness.

But what I try to often do is just live in God's grace in the present. So I always look at mercy in the retrospective. I don't really have mercy on my mind constantly, but I always try and keep God's grace in my mind.

So that's the way I approach.

I think it's this realization of how high Jesus is and how low we are in comparison to Him. And so this request for mercy is this acknowledgement that we could never earn the favor of God. I mean, Tristan, you talked about grace.

Grace is God acting in our lives not based on what we earn, but based on His love and His mercy alone. And so to ask for mercy is to ask God to be involved in your life, not on the basis of my deserving, but on the basis of His love.

And so these blind men, the great irony is the blind men see clearly that this Jesus of Nazareth is the son of David. He's the King with all the power in the universe who can do something about their situation.

And as you said, Jack, their situation is they're blind and they want to see. And Jesus has mercy on them and He restores their sight. And so what if that question was posed to us?

You know, Jesus says, what do you want me to do for you? What would we say? You know, I think that's kind of an interesting question to think about.

But it's this heart of, like God, I need you. I'm broken and messed up on my own. I make a mess of my life when I do it my way.

In your mercy, would you descend and come to meet me where I am and by your grace lead me into a better place and do something in my life? I think that's at least part of what it means for God to have mercy on us.

As you mentioned, Jack, these words, son of David, have mercy on us, have a rich tradition in church history. It's called in Greek, it's kure eleison, which means Lord have mercy.

And I've heard it said before that it's a good kind of breath prayer of when you breathe in you say, I can't speak and breathe in at the same time, but you say, Lord, son of David. And as you breathe out, you say, have mercy on me.

And then you breathe in and out with that motion of asking God to have mercy with the confidence that he does have mercy.

I guess inherent in the concept of mercy, right? Is the idea that one party has power over the other. And I mean, I guess we normally think of mercy in the terms of threatening, right?

I have the power to do justice or do harm to you, and I, you beg for mercy. But it's calling for an act of benefit to the weaker party.

And so, yeah, I think you're right when you say that part of it is to acknowledge that the Kyrie Eleison starts with the Kyrie, the Lord, the acknowledgement that He's King, and that He's Lord. And then you say, I am the weaker party.

I have nothing to offer you but to beg for mercy for whatever act I require from you.

Which is not only, this is sort of your point, Tristan, not only the mercy of forgiving my past sin, but the grace of living today with God.

The fact that God would want to live with me by His Spirit, that would want to know me, that He would call me His son, His daughter, His child, is a great act of mercy.

That yes, my past is forgiven, but I'm also invited to live with God in the present and into the future. And that's an act of mercy on God's part as well. Because we never ever stand before God on the basis of our goodness and our righteousness.

It's always on the basis of His grace.

All right.

Well, that's been a bit of a meandering discussion. Let's go to one of our questions that was submitted online about 2 Samuel. I think this is referring to a story that takes place in Absalom's rebellion in the second half of 2 Samuel.

Ahithophel and Hushai were 2 of David's advisers. One betrays him, the other does not. David fully trusted both according to what was written.

He did not foresee the betrayal. My question is, how does a leader know who he can trust in his slash her close circle? I'm asking because despite his closeness to God, David failed to discern the duplicity of one of his most trusted men.

I think you have to build a level of emotional bank with those people.

Like there's one thing I found working in a corporate space previously and even leading in youth ministry now, especially with teenagers, is you cannot break those certain barriers and levels of trust without having that emotional bank.

And that emotional bank contains of time together, just observing, I'm not saying do a psych analysis on every person that you work with. Like you don't put test forward to make people stumble. That's not your role.

Your role is to just live life and observe in your own way on how people operate. And then, once you have that emotional bank, then you can start breaking those barriers down and forming trust. And some people don't allow that.

Over time, that's how you serve out certain relationships that are meant to be there and are not meant to be there. But it's a very tricky question, and I think it has a very specific context to it.

Yeah, I've heard it said before that trust is given, but mistrust is earned, which is this idea that we give trust freely to people. We see if they carry that trust faithfully.

But then sometimes, it's a reality that people break our trust in different ways, in a leadership context like this or more relational context as well. And in that case, there's a level of mistrust which is earned.

You realize that for whatever reason, this person can't be trusted with this type of thing. And so having the wisdom to know what level that you can trust a person is helpful here.

I can speak less to the leader aspect and more to the text itself. The listener asks, despite his closeness to God, David failed to discern the duplicity.

I would say though that just because you are close to God doesn't automatically make you wiser or smarter, especially before the outpouring of the Holy Spirit with Jesus.

I think the story of David and some of the flaws that we've as we've discussed already prevent us, I meant to prevent us from from hero and idolizing David in terms of, oh, he trusted God, therefore he must have been all wise, or he must have been

this heroic figure who had no flaws. Of course, he had flaws. Of course, he failed to discern when people lied to him.

I mean, that, you know, we shouldn't necessarily expect that just because someone is close to God, that means they're perfect or automatically smarter. And, you know, David's, this is all happening in an ancient political context, right?

And people lie in politics. Um, you know, uh, yeah, it's more, I think the greater thing to be learned here is how David responds to this. Um, because I think it's, is it, um, a hitherfell is the one that betrays him.

And the text goes on to say that basically everything, hitherfell was so wise, everything he said came true. And then David responds to hearing about this by praying to God that Absalom would not listen to a hitherfell's advice.

And that's what happens. Um, so in the face of this betrayal, um, he turns to God. And that's one of the defining aspects of David, right?

That he may fail and bad things happen to him and messed up stuff happens to him, but his response is always to turn to God.

Um, and it's not that he, he may fail to prevent bad things from happening in the first place, but when they do happen, his response is to turn to God.

Yeah, it's good.

I think it's also helpful to acknowledge that it's also a biblical warning to say, because I feel like, especially in today's world, you have a lot of these hidden agendas and manipulations and charms that is constantly getting thrown at you.

And I think it's to not find trust in those things, but rather find trust in integrity, in wisdom, in loyalty. So I think it's also a warning to not be a doormat almost.

So yeah, I think in your own discernment, just be wary of those things, because it's very prevalent today.

Well, I think that will bring us now to our palette cleanser question.

Thank you to the submitter of that question. But for our palette cleanser question today, Ben, you were talking about being the family tree guy. And obviously we're thinking about Jesus as a descendant of David.

And so I thought I'd ask, what is an interesting fact or story from your family history? Preferably not too recent.

Yeah, mine's hectic.

Oh, well, go on.

So I've heard of a story. I think I got told twice to me about how my family ended up in South Africa. And because I'm Indian, I don't know how to say it because they've never seen my face.

You look like an Indian, but you sound like a South African.

There we go.

So when my family went, came from India to South Africa, I remember my cousin telling me the story about somewhere along my mother's line, there was this kid who got lost on a boat.

So there was a boat docking into India, and then he was like me when I was a kid. I used to run everywhere, like no one could catch me. I was just speedy everywhere.

And he ended up on this boat and the boat left. And then in South Africa.

Wow.

So, there you go. Yeah.

That's crazy.

I'm thankful. Yeah, that's the story. Yeah.

I need to finalize some details on that.

Yeah.

It's like Ben's mysterious uncle.

Barry McCoustras.

Yeah, that guy. Barry McCoustras.

A fun story in my family tree is that I trace my line back to the first fleet, to the con, I've shared this story in a sermon before, that my seventh, seventh generation's back great grandfather was a convict who was convicted for stealing bread or

something and was sent on a ship. But what's kind of interesting is somewhere in my line, a man in his 80s had a baby who was my great, great grandmother, which means that's very old to be having a baby, but it kind of worked for him.

So I and my generation are really young to be seventh generation first fleeters because a man had a baby at 80 years old and that is the place that I draw my line from, which is kind of interesting and disturbing.

Yeah, mine is a bit, mine's weird and has got some unknowns. So essentially, if you look at my grandfather especially, it's quite clear that he has some sort of Asian descent and we've always been kind of confused as to where that came from.

And someone in my family went and did some digging. And basically, I think my grandfather's father would have been, I think, half Asian. And it was this big mystery for a long time, as to who were his parents.

And apparently, he was born in a brothel somewhere, in the house of Leong. And then he changed his last name to Long, to avoid discrimination at the time.

And so, it's this weird sort of, something was going on back there, and we don't really know what is this big mystery. But that's how we ended up with the last name Long.

Wow.

Yes.

Interesting. This is why we love family trees.

Yes.

Me and the other three people in this church.

All right. Well, I think that will do us for today. Thank you for listening.

Thank you guys for coming on the pod. How about I finish on the theme we were talking about this ancient cry of Lord have mercy on me. And one of the, you were talking about the breathing prayer, Ben.

And one version of that is the, it's called the Jesus Prayer. And let me finish by reciting that. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.

Amen.