



Belpres Church

The Joy of Sacrifice

Opening Question: Looking back to last week's sermon and scripture... How did you live differently or practice what we talked about in your life this week? What did you do and how did it go?

This Week's Scriptures:

2 Samuel 24:18-25

"On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." ¹⁹ So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. ²⁰ When Araunah looked and saw the king and his officials coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground.

²¹ Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?"

"To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped."

²² Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever he wishes and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. ²³ Your Majesty, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you."

²⁴ But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen and paid fifty shekels of silver for them. ²⁵ David built an altar to the LORD there and sacrificed burnt

offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered his prayer in behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel was stopped.”

Scripture Reflection Questions: Read this week’s scripture together and discuss the following (note: we use the same scripture reflection questions each week so that we can practice using the same tools over time as we examine different scriptures):

- What do we learn about God (e.g., traits, personality, what matters, priorities) in this passage?
- What do we learn about people, and ourselves in particular, this week?

Sermon Reflection Questions: Reflecting on this week’s sermon, discuss the following:

- Araunah generously offered to give David the threshing floor and the necessary animals and wood for the sacrifice for free. David refused, insisting, “I will not offer to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing” (24:24). What does this statement teach us about the nature of true worship and sacrificial giving?
- How can we apply David’s principle of “costly worship” to our own lives and service to God today?
- The threshing floor of Araunah later became the site of Solomon’s Temple (2 Chronicles 3:1). What is the significance of this location as a place of atonement and worship for Israel’s future generations?

NOTE: The first part of 2 Samuel 24 presents some tricky theological questions such as why does it say that God incited David to take the census, why was it wrong after he did it and why the punishment for the whole nation for David’s sin? The parallel account in 1 Chronicles 21 is less tricky. There the text says that Satan incites the census, not God. There a couple of things to keep in mind to guide us through these questions:

- The Chronicles account says Satan incited the census, 2 Samuel said God did it. They are saying the same thing. God is sovereign over everything. That does not mean he causes everything, but he is sovereign over it. What 2 Samuel is getting at is God allowed Satan to incite David, but because it is happening by God allowing it, the author of

Samuel wrote it as if God incited it. It's the difference between God's passive will and his active will. The 2 Samuel account is referring to God's passive will (what he allows) vs. his active will (what God causes).

- David sinned by taking the census because God commanded him to take a census of all Israel, but David just counted his fighting men. In other words, he was glorying in and relying on his own power rather than in God's. It's a subtle difference in the text, but important.
- Why did God send the plague when it was David who sinned? This is harder, but there is a reality that people suffer when rulers sin. And often the people suffer more than the ruler. In David's case, however, he owned up to his sin and asked God to visit the punishment on him. David recognized his sin and repented of it and so God stopped the plague.

Closing Question and Application: Given what we've discussed together today, how might God want you to apply these learnings to your life or in the life of your community this next week? Who might you share this with?

Closing group prayer: Spend a few minutes together in your group sharing prayer requests and then praying together for each other. Take the challenging parts of your conversation to Jesus. Thank God for the time together, the conversation shared, the other people in the group, and for encouragement in the week ahead.