

Thought for Sunday 18th October 2020

Pastor Gordon Hamilton

Read 2 Samuel 7:1-29

We are missing out a great chunk of the books of Samuel, which includes the death of Saul, (1 Samuel 31) and the time when David becomes the king of Israel (2 Samuel 5) and we move into 2 Samuel 7 and God's promise to David. Rather than the promise being given direct to David, it is given first to Nathan, and Nathan has the task of telling David. If we go back one chapter, we see David is given a bit of a warning of how God can act, if we don't do his will. In 6:6 we see Uzzah doing what he felt was the right thing to do; *'Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled.'* It may seem tough, especially if Uzzah was doing what he felt was the right thing. The implication is, he felt, that unless he intervened, the ark could fall to the floor and be damaged, I guess that if we had been in his position, we may also have reached out a hand to stop it from falling. The problem is the law, is the law, is the law. Unless you were a Levite permitted to carry the ark, you were not allowed to touch the ark, or do so at the peril of your life. Verse 7 tells us; *The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God.'* There are some commentators who say one of the guards of the ark may have killed Uzzah with their spear because they knew it was their job to keep the ark safe and anyone else touching the ark had to be killed. There are no occasions when anyone other than a Levite are allowed to touch the ark. In Acts 5:5 we read of Ananias and Sapphira who died for telling a lie, and I'm sure there will be some people who felt they were dealt harshly. It was in the light of the way Uzzah was dealt with that, David didn't know what to do with the ark. In 7:5 onward we see David is given a promise, which ends; *'My love will never be taken away from you, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your house and your kingdom shall endure for ever before me, your throne shall be established for ever.'* Now that may sound very nice, but thereby hangs a problem. In 1 Samuel 9 and 10 we see Samuel being told by God to anoint Saul as King of Israel, because that was what the people said they wanted., they said they wanted a king, like all the other nations, (1 Samuel 8:5), and yet as we have read in 2 Samuel 7:5 God took his love away from Saul, then promises David; *'My love will never be taken away from you.'* God's promises never fail, but we will see over the next few chapters, David appears to take advantage of that promise. I believe that there are times when God warns us about our behaviour. It is not a problem to have doubts, but it depends what your doubts are based on. You may remember, in Mark's gospel 9:23-24, Jesus having been challenged by a boy with an evil spirit and his father, Jesus says; *'Everything is possible for him who believes.'* *Immediately the boy's father exclaimed, 'I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief!'* That may be something that some of you feel, you believe, but!!! David knew God's promise to him, and he made some very important decisions because he knew God was with him, David also made some very stupid decisions, which he later regretted, but God was faithful to his promise, and remains faithful to his promise, even to this day, 2 Samuel 7:25; *'And now, LORD God, keep forever the promise you have made concerning your servant and his house. Do as you promised, so that your name will be great forever. Then people will say,*

'The Lord Almighty is God over Israel!' And the house of your servant David will be established in your sight.' It begs the questions, do we adhere to what God expects from us, and do we sin trusting in God's faithfulness? In Paul's letter to the Romans chapter 6, Paul writes; *'Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We are those who have died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? Or don't you know that all of us who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.'* Yes, God has forgiven us, and yes, he will continue to forgive us but as Paul writes, *'Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means!'* David was forgiven for his errors and if you read Psalm 51 you read of this humble man; *'Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions.'* In verses 18-21 we see that David recognised what the Lord had promised him. It was Spiderman, Ben Parker, who said; *'With great power comes great responsibility,'* and It was Lord Acton, who wrote that *"power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely"* David was given power, I don't believe he was corrupted by it, but I do believe that at times he put himself above the law, not thinking of the consequences. We all need to be aware of the words of **Psalm 139:1-12 Read:** If we come to the realisation that God sees everything we do, then surely we will not be inclined to deviate from his will. John Wesley once, well most probably more than once said this; *'Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.'* If we are doing that, then we will be doing God's will. As Jesus said in John 13:34; *'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.'* You can do that by doing what John Wesley advices. Amen.

Let there be love shared among us,
Let there be love in our eyes;
May now Your love sweep this nation,
Cause us, O Lord, to arise.
Give us a fresh understanding
Of brotherly love that is real;
Let there be love shared among us,
Let there be love.

Dave Bilbrough.
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