

Power of Testimony

2 Samuel 22 (David, Jesus, & Us)

I. INTRO

- A. It's hard to argue with the power of a story, an eyewitness account
 - 1. There's a big difference between me telling you facts about love (for example) vs. a true story to illustrate it
- B. The Bible refers to this as a witness or a testimony → God's creation proclaiming a testimony or a witness to who God is and what he's done
- C. Psalm 19 says that creation is a witness to his glory, proclaiming his splendor.
 - 1. So, which is more powerful, me saying, "God is glorious," or you standing before a spectacular sunrise at the Grand Canyon?
- D. Like the rest of creation, Israel was set aside as a witness
 - 1. God gave them the exodus so they would have a witness (a story) to pass on to future generations
 - 2. Parting the Red Sea, destroying their enemies, providing for them in the wilderness, even exiling them in their disobedience → each of these serves as a witness
 - a) To God's character // From Israel to the Ancient world
 - b) Israel was called to pass the testimony to their kids, not just to explain it to them technically
- E. Jesus comes as the ultimate witness to the Father, telling what he saw/heard
 - 1. *John 18:37 – "For this purpose I was born... to bear witness to the truth."*
- F. And Jesus then commissions the church to be His witnesses (Acts 1:8).
- G. Today, we are going to look at King David's witness as recorded in 2 Samuel 22, which v1 explains, *"David spoke to the LORD the words of this song on the day when the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul."*
 - 1. As David recounts the story of God's faithfulness in his life, it leads him to worship → This is the testimony of God's love to David
- H. As you look at your life, realize you have a witness as well. And it's not about
 - 1. Dredging up the past, war stories
 - 2. It's not about how faithful you've been or your accomplishments
 - 3. It's about God's faithfulness, God's character, God's work → what he has done for you, in you, and through you
 - 4. *Romans 15:18, For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me...*

II. David begins with a summary of sorts

- A. *2 Samuel 22:2-4 "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer, [3] my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge, my savior; you save me from violence. [4] I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, and I am saved from my enemies."*

1. David's 15-second testimony
 - a) He was facing enemies and violence
 - b) He called upon the Lord
 - c) God proved himself to be a rock, fortress, deliverer, savior, & (ultimately) worthy of praise
- B. Ultimately, that is the message behind every testimony, every story → We have need, we cry out to God, God saves & is worshipped in response
 1. Worship is the goal of your life → worship in your heart, worship in the hearts of others as we witness
- III. His life before he encountered his Savior (Part 1 of every testimony)
 - A. Vv5-6, *"For the waves of death encompassed me, the torrents of destruction assailed me; the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me."*
 - B. God often meets you at your lowest point.
 1. Not everyone has to hit rock bottom, so to say, but there's nobody who comes to Jesus who doesn't acknowledge their deep need for him
 - C. This was the purpose of the Law (the 10 commandments) → to be a measuring rod to show you that you don't measure up!
 - D. The reason you need God is b/c without him there's a few things true of you:
 1. The waves of death are coming for you, torrents of destruction will assail you, the grave will entangle you, and death is coming to get you
 - E. Now, that might look like you're face-to-face with an attacking army, like David, or it might look like a cancer diagnosis, a car accident, or old age
 1. But one day, you too will face the oldest enemy of all: Death
 2. Before that, you'll face a lot of challenges, pain, and difficulties
 - F. If you experience this, it doesn't make you unique; it makes you normal
 - G. This, amazingly brief summary, is the entirety of his remembrance of the days of old. It's actually quite shocking how brief it is → think about all David experienced
 - H. Why is it brief? This song isn't about David any more than your testimony is about you. It's about the LORD → what the LORD has done
 1. This isn't YOUR story, this is HIS story.
 - I. But the story begins with a face-to-face encounter with truth → I needed help
- IV. How he encountered his Savior (Part 2 of every testimony)
 - A. Vv7a, *"In my distress I called upon the LORD (YHWH); to my God I called."*
 - B. I had no sense of purpose in my life, and no hope for the future, but then...
 1. I called upon the LORD! I called out to God!
 - C. I was facing certain death, I was in between a rock and a hard place, but then...
 1. I called upon the LORD! I called out to God!
 - D. How about you? What's the story of your life?
 1. You hit rock bottom, your marriage falling apart, your family falling apart, you found yourself at the bottom of a bottle, or in a pit of debt, and what?
 - a) You tried harder? You self-justified? Or, you called out to God?
 - E. When faced with despair (either b/c of your own sin or getting punched in the face), what was, what IS, your default?

- F. There's no crying out to the Lord without acknowledging a few realities:
 - 1. You are not God → you are powerless to solve this problem
 - 2. You are part of the problem → the problem is deeper than the situation of the day
 - 3. Only God can truly save you from this world, your own sinful flesh, and the devil who wants to destroy you & your family!
- G. And what does God require of you? What does he require of me? Of David?
 - 1. In my distress I called upon the LORD... (Now that implies a lot)
 - 2. *Hebrews 11:6, it is impossible to please God without faith. Anyone who wants to come to him must believe that God exists and that he rewards those who sincerely seek him.*
- H. Isn't that amazing? That's the entirety of what David offered to his own salvation account. "I cried to the LORD!"
 - 1. Not: I researched and experienced, I explored and learned, I studied and proved. Instead, I knew I was dead in a pit, and I cried out to God!
- I. This is the heartcry of faith. I looked at my situation, I saw I could do nothing, I cried out to the LORD → the cry to the LORD embodies so much
 - 1. You wouldn't cry out if you didn't think he was real... powerful... cared
- J. When you are a witness, when you think about or share your testimony, part of the story is sharing how you cried out to God:
 - 1. "Fine, God. You win. I give up. You can have it all."
- V. What God did (Part 3 of every testimony)
 - A. Make a note, church... verses 7b–51 are all about what God did and David's response of worship to the mighty works of the Lord.
 - 1. That's 44 verses focused almost entirely on God.
 - 2. David literally becomes an extra in his own story as YHWH takes center stage. And that's the reality for each of our stories too.
 - 3. Yes, we have remarkable value and worth, but the story of redemption is ultimately about Him, not us.
 - 4. We are vessels through which God displays His glory.
 - a) He gets the glory and the fame, we get the grace, the mercy, and the privilege of belonging to Him.
 - 5. David is in a mess. David cries out to the Lord. And then the focus shifts completely to what God does.
 - B. Vv7b–16 – The LORD hears and comes like a rescuing warrior
 - 1. "...From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry came to his ears."
 - 2. The God who created galaxies...the God who commands oceans...the God who rules heaven and earth...hears the cry of one man AND ANSWERS!
 - 3. God is not distant. God is not indifferent. God is not distracted. He hears.
 - 4. And when God responds, David describes it like a cosmic storm. God moving heaven and earth on his behalf
 - a) The earth trembles. Smoke pours from His nostrils. Lightning flashes. He rides on the cherubim.

5. POINT: When God decided to save him, nothing could stand in His way.
 6. When God moves to rescue His people, creation itself seems to shake.
 7. And church, the same is true in the gospel.
 - a) When God moved to rescue humanity, He did not send an angel.
 - b) He sent His Son. God Himself stepped into the battle.
- C. Vv17–20 – The LORD rescues because He delights in His people
1. “He sent from on high, he took me; he drew me out of many waters.”
 - a) David uses the image of someone drowning. The water is overwhelming. The current is too strong. He cannot save himself. The more he swims, the worse it gets. But God reaches down and pulls him out.
 2. Notice verse 20: “He rescued me, because he delighted in me.”
 - a) That’s astonishing. God didn’t rescue David reluctantly. God didn’t rescue David because David forced His hand. God rescued David because He delighted in him. God was driven by LOVE
 - b) And that’s the same truth behind our salvation.
 - (1) God wasn’t obligated to save you
 - (2) He wasn’t tricked into it
 - (3) You didn’t earn it.
 - c) But because God, in His mercy, set His love on us, he moved
 3. The gospel begins not with our goodness, but with God’s love.
 - a) We love b/c he FIRST loved us
- D. Vv21-29 – David’s heart before the Lord
1. Now this part feels strange to us b/c it feels like David is claiming to have earned his salvation, but remember what you know about David’s life
 2. But compared to Saul, the king before him, what was the difference?
 3. David’s heart!
 4. The key verse here is *2 Samuel 22:28, You save a humble people, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them down.*
 5. David cried out to God b/c he was a humble man. You never see Saul cry out to God.
 6. God always gives grace to the humble, but he opposes the proud
- E. Vv30–46 – The LORD equips His people for victory
1. Once God rescues David, He didn’t just leave him there, but strengthens him, equips him, uses him for His purposes. (Eph 2:10, Titus 2:14)
 - a) “By you I can run against a troop, and by my God I can leap over a wall.”
 2. God gave him strength for battle, trained his hands, and made his feet like a deer’s. God gave him stability, skill, courage, and victory.
 3. POINT: God doesn’t just save you from something. He saves you for something. → This is often the unshared part of the gospel
 4. God delivers you — and then He transforms you → for a purpose
 - a) He changes how you think, the way you live, what you love

- b) AND he has purposes for you that he wants to empower you to fulfill → good works for you to do.

F. Vv47–51 – The only appropriate response: worship

1. After recounting everything God has done, David ends with praise. “The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock.”
2. David looks back over his life and sees the hand of God everywhere.
3. And the only response that makes sense is worship.
4. Not “look at me”, but “look at Him” bc when you truly see what God has done for you... you realize the hero of the story was never you
 - a) It was always Him.

VI. CONCLUSION

- A. The beginning of David’s testimony is need. The end of the testimony is worship.
- B. When God saves someone, the natural result is praise.
- C. But notice something important — David isn’t just journaling this to himself. This isn’t a private journal entry. This is a song b/c we are called to ANNOUNCE the wonderful works of God to others
 - 1. Evangelism is just worship shared horizontally**
- D. David is declaring publicly what God has done
 - 1. Vertically, that’s worship // Horizontally, that’s evangelism, exhortation, education, strengthening
- E. A testimony does two things: (1) It glorifies God; (2) It strengthens the faith of others
- F. When you hear what God has done in someone else’s life, something happens in your heart. You start thinking: “If God did that for them... maybe He can do something in my life too.”
 - 1. That’s why the Bible is full of testimonies.
 - a) Moses testifies to the Exodus.
 - b) David testifies to God’s deliverance.
 - c) The apostles testify to Jesus’ resurrection.
 - d) And the church continues that witness today.
- G. Look at how David ends the chapter: 2 Samuel 22:50, “For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations, and sing praises to your name.”
 - 1. He wants the nations to know what God has done.
- H. Testimonies don’t just say, “Yea God helped me.” They say, “Let me tell you what God did.” Your story becomes the platform for God’s glory.
- I. Every Christian testimony follows the same pattern.
 - 1. Life before Christ → I was lost. I was trapped. I was powerless.
 - 2. Encounter with God → In my distress, I cried out to the Lord.
 - 3. What God did → God saved me. God delivered me. God changed me.
 - 4. The result → Now I worship Him and tell others.
- J. That’s David’s story. But it’s also the gospel story. And God wants it to be your story too
- K. If you already have a testimony → tell it.
- L. If you don’t have one yet → today is the day to cry out to God.