

Be the Kind of Person God Uses

2 Samuel 23

- I. INTRO → We live in a world that values fame, influencers, celebrity status
 - A. But when we read the Bible, we realize it's largely filled with nobodies
 - 1. Sure there are some names, but even they aren't the star of the show
 - 2. The Bible is about God and how he is redeeming the world through Jesus
 - 3. Jesus is the star of the show.
 - B. The Bible essentially is the unfolding story about how God is saving a lost and broken world through his son, Jesus Christ
 - C. From beginning to end, it points to Jesus, the cross, the empty tomb, and the reality that he is coming again to make all things new
 - D. There's nothing mankind can do to start that or to stop it
 - E. We are, essentially, side characters in a beautiful unfolding story
 - F. One of those amazing things about the Lord is that in this story — even though it doesn't depend ON you — God invites you to be a part of it
 - 1. He invites you to further the kingdom, build the kingdom, for Him
 - G. In this chapter, we encounter David's final musing and the list of mighty men
 - 1. He reflects on how his kingdom stands because of God's covenant
 - 2. He reflects on the reality that this is — ultimately — God's kingdom, not his
 - 3. He lists a group of men, his mighty men, who get a shout out
 - H. Some of them performed incredible feats... most of them are just names.
 - I. The message of the chapter is simple: **God establishes His kingdom by promise, and advances it through people.**
 - 1. Not perfect people, not flashy people → forgiven, faithful people
 - J. God builds His kingdom with people most history barely remembers, but he does
- II. God establishes His Kingdom through covenant promise (vv1-7)
 - A. *2 "The Spirit of the Lord speaks through me; his words are upon my tongue. 3 The God of Israel spoke. The Rock of Israel said to me: 'The one who rules righteously, who rules in the fear of God, 4 is like the light of morning at sunrise, like a morning without clouds, like the gleaming of the sun on new grass after rain.'*

5 "Is it not my family God has chosen? Yes, he has made an everlasting covenant with me. His agreement is arranged and guaranteed in every detail. He will ensure my safety and success. 6 But the godless are like thorns to be thrown away, for they tear the hand that touches them. 7 One must use iron tools to chop them down; they will be totally consumed by fire."
 - B. If you read this the wrong way, David come almost come across as arrogant, but that's not his tone → David is humble. He realizes his entire life is b/c of grace.
 - C. God chose David to be king. Not because he was the oldest, strongest, fiercest, or anything else. God looked at David and saw a man after his own heart

1. His heart didn't "earn" David the right to be king, but it did make him the kind of king God wanted to use
 - D. And since his heart was for God, David knew (most of the time) that God was the true King of Israel and David was just his steward.
 - E. Look at what David says:
 1. I only speak b/c the Lord speaks through me
 2. True kingly strength hinges on living in godly fear, not arrogant strength
 3. My family was chosen, and when God makes a promise it is guaranteed
 - F. The most important idea here is that **God secures the kingdom by covenant (promise) as seen in v5**
 1. David's house isn't perfect, but God made a covenant
 - G. Our salvation is confirmed by covenant as well (it's called the New Covenant)
 1. God made a promise to save, and he did all the work to make it happen
 2. Jesus died on a cross for our sins so we could be forgiven
 3. Jesus rose from the grave, conquering death, so we could live forever
 4. Jesus sent us his Holy Spirit, empowering us, transforming us, and guaranteeing us a future with him
 - H. My current and future reality (and yours if you're a follower of Jesus) is secure because of Jesus and his promises
 1. That shouldn't me arrogant, but humble (like we see in David)
 2. You and I should be able to say:
 - a) The right way to live is in godly fear of the Lord, knowing who he is and what he has done
 - b) What did I do? Nothing, but God made a promise to me and his promise is secure forever!
 - I. **God establishes His kingdom by promise (in David, in us)**
 - J. But here's where God is so crazy. His kingdom is established through a covenant promise, BUT God uses ordinary people to build the kingdom out
- III. God builds his kingdom through faithful servants (vv8-39)
- A. 8 These are the names of David's mightiest warriors. The first was Jashobeam the Hacmonite, who was leader of the Three—the three mightiest warriors among David's men. He once used his spear to kill **800 enemy warriors in a single battle**.*
- 9 Next in rank among the Three was Eleazar son of Dodai, a descendant of Ahoah. Once Eleazar and David stood together against the Philistines when the entire **Israelite army had fled**. 10 He killed Philistines until his hand was too tired to lift his sword, and the Lord gave him a great victory that day. The rest of the army did not return until it was time to collect the plunder!*
- 11 Next in rank was Shammah son of Agee from Harar. One time the Philistines gathered at Lehi and attacked the Israelites in a field full of lentils. The **Israelite army fled**. 12 but Shammah held his ground in the middle of the field and beat back the Philistines. So the Lord brought about a great victory.*

1. The Three → exploits for the ages!
2. Most men I know wish this could be their epitaph → guts and glory
 - a) Jashobeam and his spear
 - b) Eleazar and his sword
 - c) Shammah and his lentils...
3. What do these three men have in common besides being total chads
 - a) Each one stands when others retreat → Courage
 - b) Jashobeam stood against 800 warriors, Eleazar held his ground once everyone had run away, and Shammah refused to abandon the plot of lentils when everyone else fled
4. How do you learn to be courageous?
 - a) Practically I think you can develop in grit (which is severely lacking in today's culture)
 - b) Biblically, courage is rooted in covenant
 - (1) When you know the promises of God... the presence of God... the truth of God... with confidence? Courage!
 - c) Why could David stand before Goliath? B/C he trusted in God's covenantal promises
 - d) Why could Shadrack, Meshack, and Abednego say to the king, "Throw us in the furnace, God is able to save us if he wants"? B/C they trusted in God's promises
 - e) Why has the church stood against great evil throughout history? B/C she trusts in the promises of God
5. Truth: God's kingdom advances through people who stand firm when others run.
 - a) In Iraq... In the public sphere... In school...
 - b) But that courage is actually confidence in God's character and promises, not in yourself! It's living for something bigger than you

B. 13 Once during the harvest, when David was at the cave of Adullam, the Philistine army was camped in the valley of Rephaim. The Three (who were among the Thirty—an elite group among David's fighting men) went down to meet him there. 14 David was staying in the stronghold at the time, and a Philistine detachment had occupied the town of Bethlehem.

15 David remarked longingly to his men, "Oh, how I would love some of that good water from the well by the gate in Bethlehem." 16 So the Three broke through the Philistine lines, drew some water from the well by the gate in Bethlehem, and brought it back to David. But he refused to drink it. Instead, he poured it out as an offering to the Lord. 17 "The Lord forbid that I should drink this!" he exclaimed. "This water is as precious as the blood of these men who risked their lives to bring it to me." So David did not drink it. These are examples of the exploits of the Three.

1. Paul writes in *2 Timothy 2:4*, "No soldier gets entangled in civilian pursuits, since his aim is to please the one who enlisted him."

2. David wants a drink from the well in his hometown. These guys, so devoted to their king, are willing to do whatever it takes → even though it seems completely ludicrous
3. These men were devoted to their king
4. But this is what David had modeled his whole life for them, isn't it?
 - a) Standing before Goliath, David says that the giant isn't allowed to taunt his God
 - b) His devotion to God's glory and honor, to see God famous, high and lifted up... coupled with his courage born out of conviction and belief in the promises of God led David to challenge Goliath
5. Courage. Conviction. Confidence. These are intertwined with devotion.
6. Just like these men, God wants us to be devoted to the king - Jesus.
7. Devotion is defined as love, loyalty, or enthusiasm for a person
 - a) For the Three, it was King David. For us, it's King Jesus
 - b) We want to have love, loyalty, and enthusiasm for him!
8. What's the enemy of devotion to the king? Distraction and lesser loves
9. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus talks about what keeps a man from the kingdom of God... It's not what you would expect
 - a) Some new oxen... a new field... a beautiful bride...
 - b) The things of life that distract us and derail us aren't necessarily sin; they are often good things, good gifts
10. What's the solution to build devotion? Fix your eyes on the author and perfecter of your faith. Every day, every morning, every moment.
11. *Psalm 123:2, Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, so our eyes look to the LORD our God...*

C. 18 Abishai... once used his spear to kill 300 enemy warriors in a single battle... Benaiah son of Jehoiada did many heroic deeds, which included killing champions of Moab. Another time, on a snowy day, he chased a lion down into a pit and killed it. 21 Once, armed only with a club, he killed an imposing Egyptian warrior who was armed with a spear. Benaiah wrenched the spear from the Egyptian's hand and killed him with it... David made him captain of his bodyguard.

24 Other members of the Thirty included: Asahel and Elhanan and Shammah and Elik... [all the way down to] Uriah the Hittite

1. A long list of names I can't pronounce. No description of exploits. No crazy stories. Just men... important men... mighty men... who the king valued.
2. It would be easy to be jealous, wouldn't it?
3. Surely these guys performed heroic deeds as well, but none achieved the fame of the "three."
 - a) Our culture trains us in a lie, and the lie is this: If you have value, people will know who you are
4. Is that success? Is that what God is looking for? No.

5. Do not equate success with the spotlight.

- a) These men served without lengthy epitaphs, biographies, or songs
- b) No one was writing poetry about their exploits
- c) There's no record of how many giants they killed
- d) Nobody talks about their family line or heritage
- e) They simply did what they were called to do
 - (1) For the glory of their King
 - (2) For their love for the kingdom
- f) They were courageous. They were devoted. They loved their king.

6. God's kingdom is built by people like this → faithful people who history barely remembers.

- a) Don't worry if nobody watches your videos, reads your books, wants to interview you, or even remembers your name
7. Their names are included b/c the king remembered them. The king valued them. The king saw them. The king loved them.
8. But God remembers... God sees... God will say, "Well done, good and faithful servant..."
9. If you want to be used by God... be faithful even if nobody cares to remember your name

IV. CONCLUSION: 2 Samuel 23 leaves us with two powerful truths.

A. God establishes His kingdom by promise

- 1. David knew his house wasn't perfect. He knew his reign had failures.
- 2. David's confidence wasn't in his own performance, but promise.
- 3. The same is true for us → your future, your value, your worth is determined not by your perfect resume or your rap sheet, but by the covenantal promise of God spoken over you
- 4. God began a good work in you. God will complete the work he began.
- 5. God will build his kingdom, his church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it
- 6. God will do amazing, mighty works to glorify his name
- 7. The nations WILL be reached. People WILL be forgiven. God WILL be glorified.
- 8. How do I know? He promised as much.

B. God establishes His kingdom by promise, and advances it through people.

- 1. That's what the rest of this chapter shows us.
- 2. A group of men who loved their king.
- 3. Men who stood firm when others ran.
- 4. Men who risked everything simply because they wanted to honor the King
- 5. Some of them performed incredible feats.
- 6. But then there are dozens of names we don't even know...
 - a) Men who fought, served, and died for the king and his kingdom
 - b) And history barely remembers them. But the king did.

C. And that's the point. God's kingdom is not built by famous people. It is built by faithful people.

- D. The world tells us that what matters is influence, platform, & followers.
 - 1. But in the kingdom of God, what matters is faithfulness.
- E. Most of the names in this chapter mean nothing to us today. But they meant everything to David. They meant everything to the King!
- F. Similarly, one day, every quiet act of obedience done for Jesus will be known by the King. Jesus Himself will say: "Well done, good and faithful servant."
- G. So the question is simple is this: "What kind of person does God use?"
 - 1. God uses people who are courageous when others flee, people who are banking on the promises of God more than the fear in front of them.
 - 2. God uses people who are devoted to their King at great cost, being attentive to his needs and desires.
 - 3. God uses people who are faithful even without the spotlight, b/c the world might not take notice, but the King does
- H. Be that kind of person