NOVEMBER 26, 2017

Leader guide

The True King of Israel

In this lesson:

SCRIPTURE

2 Samuel 22:1-23:7

CORE PRACTICE

Possessions

TAKE HOME TRUTH

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OVERVIEW OF THIS LESSON

This week we celebrate Thanksgiving. 2 Samuel 22 records for us David's "Song of Songs." The narrator of 2 Samuel (most often believed to be either Nathan the Prophet or Gad the seer cf. 1 Chr. 29:29), consider this song of thanksgiving to be a fitting memorial to David's life, and so included it at the end of 2 Samuel. The words to this song are mirrored almost exactly in Psalm 18.

There is much we can learn from David's psalms. He was a man who knew God intimately, and He trusted God completely. The result of this absolute complete faith in God was a heart of praise and thanksgiving. This is what we read in 2 Samuel 22.

Thanksgiving is a habit we need to cultivate as people. We live in a time of complete abundance when few of us want for anything. It is easy to forget the goodness of the Lord in a time when we want for nothing.

Just as a brief example, in our last lesson we were reminded of the death of President Calvin Coolidge's young son. The 16-year old boy died of an infection that started as a blister on his toe. Today, less than 100 years later, an infection like this is a non-issue. We can walk into any store and purchase an antibiotic salve that prevents this kind of simple infection. We don't even think about it. Yet, in the 1920, this caused the death of the son of the president of the United States!

Oh, beloved, we have so much to be thankful for! If we take a moment and pause and reflect, as David does in this chapter, we should see the thanksgiving pouring out of a grateful heart.

This week's lesson is shorter than others so that you can give significant time to a period of testimony and sharing as a group. Help your group stop and reflect and share. The final question of this week's lesson is the one that is designed to serve as the introduction for this time of reflection. Don't short-change your group and rush through this. Give them time and encourage them to reflect and share in a spirit of thanksgiving.

MEMORY VERSE

2 Samuel 22:50 – "Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name."

CORE PRACTICE

Possessions (Luke 16:11–12): I seek to maintain an eternal perspective on money and possessions, realizing God has given me all that I have, and that he expects me to manage it wisely for His glory.

INTRODUCTION

Make sure you ask this question this week. It gives people the opportunity to discuss questions or issues that come up beyond the written questions. People's responses can often lead into one of the questions in the "Digging Deeper" section. Also, some weeks this question will result in a lot of discussion, other weeks, not so much.

How did your family celebrate Thanksgiving when you were a child?

What is your favorite Thanksgiving memory from your childhood?

Looking back at your notes from this week's sermon, was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?

READ THE TEXT

Second Samuel 22:1-51 and 23:1-7 mark the final songs sung by David. They parallel Hannah's Song of praise in 1 Samuel 2:1-11 in major themes. As such, they provide the "bookends" of the entire story of 1–2 Samuel and establish the major themes of the book. Read 2 Samuel 22:1-23:7.

DIGGING DEEPER

In this section, feel free to develop your own questions to help guide your group's discussion. Below are some suggestions. Remember, if you are hearing from everyone in your group, chances are you won't have to time to discuss every question. You may start with one that catches your attention so you don't run out of time. For example, it's not odd to start with Question #6, then go to Question #5 and if you have time come back to Question #4.

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NOTE: the commentary for questions 1 and 2 is adapted from the Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary – Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel, by J. D. Greear and Heath A. Thomas.

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How does this passage help you understand God?

Verses 2-3 of 2 Samuel 22 pile up first-person pronouns one on top of the other (11 in all) to present the extraordinarily personal tone of the entire song. This is not a recounting of a God that David does not know—Yahweh is his God! Through the entire journey from his anointing to the later years of his life, Yahweh is eternally "my God" for David.

And what is the nature of Yahweh for David? Yahweh is the deliverer:

- *The One who protects from external threat: He is the rock and fortress.*
- *The One who protects from enemy arrows: He is the shield.*
- *The One who hides David from harm: He is a refuge.*
- *He is the One who anoints David for purpose: He is the horn of salvation.*

In all this Yahweh is "my deliverer." David has seen his fair share of enemies. His own father-in-law wanted him dead and tried to kill him multiple times! David learned that Yahweh delivers. He encountered enemy nations like the Philistines! David learned that Yahweh is his salvation. He learned that revenge is not his but in the hands of the Lord. He learned from Nabal that God is the One who rights wrongs. In this, David discovered that Yahweh is the One who saves him from violence. Verse 4 crystallizes David's praise in verses 2-3: "I called to the Lord, who is worthy of praise, and I was saved from my enemies."

Verses 5-7 take the image of God's salvation from personal distress further. In these verses, Yahweh delivers at a cosmic and eternal scale. David says that death, destruction, and Sheol threatened to swallow him whole. But he called to Yahweh in his distress and the Lord heard his voice. Verse 7 says that God heard David's cry from "His temple." Why is this significant, and why does David say this? In the Old Testament, the temple (particularly the throne of God) is the place where God hears cries of distress and issues divine verdicts. From the temple, God moves to act in justice. We see this in other passages as well. In the Minor Prophets, for example, the prophet Jonah longs for this place in his time of trouble; his petition goes up "toward Your holy temple" (Jonah 2:4,7). Jonah's prayer goes before the Lord in the temple so that he could receive the divine verdict on his prayer of distress. In Micah 1:2, from the "holy temple" Yahweh is a witness against all the peoples and all the earth. As a witness against the lawlessness of His world, God renders judgment from the temple against His people and land (Mic 1:3-7). Yahweh's faithful

ones look to the temple because it is there He will give His divine decree. This is the place where God vindicates the righteous and punishes the wicked. So from the temple, God hears and responds.

Yahweh's response is deliverance. Verses 9-16 present the earth responding to Yahweh marching out to deliver His anointed, David. Similar presentations occur in the Old Testament—Habakkuk 3:3-13 is a good example (see Thomas, Faith Amid the Ruins, esp. ch. 4, "Habakkuk's View of God"). David summarizes the deliverance in verses 17-20. Why did Yahweh do this? Because David had prayed for help (v. 7), but the text also says that Yahweh delivered for another reason: "He rescued me because He delighted in me" (v. 20). The connection of Yahweh's delight in David has to do with the fact that David was a man after God's own heart (1 Sam 13:14) but also the fact that David is Yahweh's chosen leader. David has found favor in Yahweh's sight, and Yahweh has brought him back to rule in Jerusalem, thus answering his prayer from 2 Samuel 15:26.

How does this passage of Scripture exalt Jesus?

The hero of David's songs of praise is none other than the incomparable Yahweh. We should not miss this all-important point. Yahweh is the hero of Samuel!

But many would object: surely Jesus is the hero. Some have argued that in preaching and teaching surely Jesus is the one we sing—Yahweh plays second fiddle. Actually, we should not drive a wedge between Jesus and Yahweh. This would lead to a division of the triune God for our people. Sidney Greidanus helps us avoid this pitfall by reminding us that to be Christocentric is necessary to be God-centered. Another way to say it is this: to preach Christ will mean to preach the fullness of God, including the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Greidanus reminds us that "the first New Testament principle to remember is that Christ is not to be separated from God but was sent by God, accomplished the work of God, and sought the glory of God" (Preaching Christ, 179).

When David and Hannah exalt Yahweh in all His glory, they are by necessity exalting Christ. For Jesus is always there in the Godhead. And Yahweh's redemptive plan and work through the earthly messiah are gloriously fulfilled in the ministry of Jesus, the Son (John 6:57). Jesus lives to do the will of the One who sent Him. And we know who He is through the Old Testament. So how do David's words glorify Yahweh and His divine Messiah?

Side Note

There is a movement within Christianity that sees Jesus and Yahweh as the same person. This is called Oneness Pentecostalism. Adherents of this belief system argue that there is only one true God, Jesus, who manifests Himself in three modes—the Father, the Son,

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and the Holy Spirit—not a Triune God consisting of three distinct personalities. This belief system is also referred to as modalism.

As a proof text for this belief, modalists often cite John 10:30: "I and My Father are one." They interpret this verse to mean that Jesus is God the Father. Ron Rhodes speaks to this misinterpretation:

> *When Jesus said "I and the Father are one," he used the first person plural esmen ("we are"). If Jesus intended to say that he and the Father were one person, he certainly would not have used the first person plural, which implies two persons. Also, the Greek word for "one" (hen) in this verse refers not to personal unity (i.e., the idea that the Father and Son are one person) but to unity of essence or nature (i.e., that the Father and Son have the same divine nature). This is evident in the fact that the form of the word in the Greek is neuter, not masculine.*
>
> *Contextually, the verses that immediately precede and follow John 10:30 distinguish Jesus from the Father (e.g., John 10:25, 29, 36, 38). It is also the uniform testimony of the rest of John's Gospel (not to mention the rest of the Bible) that the Father and Jesus are distinct persons (within the unity of the one God). For example, the Father sent the Son (John 3:16–17); the Father and Son love one another (3:35); the Father and Son speak to one another (11:41–42); and the Father knows the Son just as the Son knows the Father (7:29; 8:55; 10:15). [Norman L. Geisler and Ron Rhodes, When Cultists Ask: A Popular Handbook on Cultic Misinterpretations (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1997), 177.]*

Modalists/Oneness is considered a heresy because they deny the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, and is, therefore, a cult of Christianity.

As we celebrate a time of thanksgiving as a church and nation, if you were to write a "song of thanksgiving" like David wrote in 2 Samuel 22, what things would you list as examples of the Lord's faithfulness and goodness to you during your life thus far? Take time as a group to share these with each other.

NOTE TO LEADERS: Be sure to prepare ahead of time for this question. This time of testimony and sharing can be the bulk of your group time this week. The question will require reflection, however, so be prepared to start this discussion with your own brief testimony of thanksgiving. Encourage everyone in your group to share one thing they are are thankful for as they reflect on God's goodness in their life. If their response is a simple one—my family, for example—then

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life. If their response is a simple one—my family, for example—then ask them to explain why they are thankful for their family.

Times of sharing and testimony like this are essential to your group's sense of closeness. As we share with one another, we learn to appreciate the life of one another as people. Explain this to your group. For some, it may be uncomfortable, but each one of us has a story to tell, and it is a story that God is writing through each individual.

NEXT STEPS

Questions to consider as you continue to reflect on what you learned this week:

- **Take Action**: In what ways have you experienced God as a "refuge" and "rock" as David did? Take time to write these times in your journal and reflect on them this coming week.
- **Take Courage**: In another one of his many songs of thanksgiving, David wrote, "Oh, give thanks to the Lord! Call upon His name; Make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him; Talk of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord!" (1 Chronicles. 16:8-10). This week, let David's "attitude of gratitude" inspire you to be more thankful for the Lord's abundant provision in your life.

Work to memorize this week's memory verse: 2 Samuel 22:50 – "Therefore I will give thanks to You, O Lord, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name."

Our Core Practice this week is Possessions (Luke 16:11–12): I seek to maintain an eternal perspective on money and possessions, realizing God has given me all that I have, and that he expects me to manage it wisely for His glory.

Remember to use the daily Bible reading plan as part of your walk with Christ, taking the time to reflect on each passage and what it means for your lives.

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