

2 Samuel 5:1 to 5 and 9 to 10 9.30 am

May the words of my mouth and the thoughts of our hearts be acceptable to you O Lord our strength and our redeemer Amen.

Today's theme is David succeeding Saul as king over the united kingdoms of Israel and Judah, our reading is from 2 Samuel chapter 5

But before we look at our reading we are going to look at some of David's history, which led up to him becoming king.

In 1 Samuel chapter 13:14, Samuel said to Saul that the Lord has sort out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler over his people, because you have not obeyed God's command.

St Luke, in Acts at chapter 13, confirms that it was David that Samuel was speaking about, where Luke wrote, "I have found David, son of Jesse, to be a man after my own heart."

David was a man after God's own heart because as a shepherd boy he was humble, reverent, and respectful, he was trusting in God demonstrated when he faced up to Goliath.

He was loving, as we can see when he declared his love for God in psalm 18, he was devoted to God, faithful, obedient and truly repentant; as we can see in psalm 32, which I recommend we all read, because it is very encouraging to us who also lapse into sin.

But at the beginning of Samuel's account of the life of David, which starts at 1 Samuel chapter 16, one thing that stands out above all else is that God was always with David.

If you remember, in 1 Samuel chapter 16, Samuel went to see Jesse, David's father, in order to anoint the next king of Israel.

Now Jesse brought seven sons to Samuel so that he could anoint one of them, but God rejected all of them in turn, telling Samuel that while Samuel looked at their outward appearance, God looked into their hearts.

Then Samuel said to Jesse you must have another son somewhere and Jesse said yes his name's David, and Samuel said, 'go and fetch him'. and when he came, God told Samuel to anoint him the next king of Israel, and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David.

Then in 1 Samuel 17 we heard how David, in the power of the Holy Spirit, came up against Goliath, and when Goliath taunted him, David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with sword and spear and javelin; but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel."

And we then read how David, through the power of God, slew the Philistine, and how the Israelites won the day on that occasion.

In 1 Samuel chapter 18 we read how Saul gave David leadership of an army and sent him out against the Philistines, and wherever David was sent in battle he was always successful.

One day when David was returning from battle with Saul all the women came out to meet Saul with tambourines, with songs of joy and with musical instruments, and one of the songs they sang was, 'Saul has killed his thousands and David his ten thousands'.

Now Saul became very jealous of David's achievements and the way people were looking up to him, so Saul decided to kill him.

In the later chapters of 1 Samuel we read that although Saul was hunting for David in order to kill him, God was protecting him, and Saul never got near enough.

But David got within a sword length of Saul on two occasions, without Saul being aware of it, and although Saul, at that time was David's sworn enemy, David still would not take the life of God's anointed king.

At the end of the first book of Samuel we read that David had realised that Saul was so relentless in his pursuit of him that he fled and joined the Philistines who had befriended him, but then the Philistines planned an attack on Israel, and the Philistines wouldn't let David go with them.

At the beginning of 2 Samuel, David was told of the death of Saul and of his son Jonathan in battle, and David was grieved over the death of God's anointed one, and also for Jonathan his great friend.

It was then that God told David to go up to Hebron in Judah and it was there that the people of Judah crowned David king of Judah.

Now at the death of Saul, Abner, son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken Ishbaal, one of Saul's sons, and made him king over Israel.

Now Ishbaal son of Saul reigned for two years over Israel, and David reigned at Hebron over Judah for seven years and six months.

Now in 2 Samuel chapter 4 we are told that people went to Ishbaal's house and entered it while Ishbaal was resting on his couch in his bedroom and killed him, and rather gruesomely beheaded him, and took the head to David as proof that he was dead.

But David was incensed at these men who had killed God's anointed king and had them executed for their crime as indeed he had Saul's killer executed for the same reason.

We now pick up the story from chapter 5 where we hear that all the tribes of Israel had come to David at Hebron in Judah, and declared that all the people of Judah and Israel are all brothers under God, and that it's time that Israel and Judah were reunited.

So in verse 3 of our reading, Samuel anointed David king over the united kingdoms of Israel and Judah.

This is not too surprising because David had built up a very good reputation defending Israel in the past against the Philistines, who at that time were Israel's constant enemies, and of course God had already declared his desire, some years ago, that David should succeed Saul as king of the united kingdom.

In verse 4 of chapter 5, we read that he was thirty years old when he became king over the united kingdom, and that he reigned for a further thirty three years.

Our reading now skips to verse 9 and 10, but in Verse 6, not read this morning, we are told that David marched on Jerusalem against the Jebusites the inhabitants of the land, and took the strong hold of Zion, a hill fort in Jerusalem, and in verse 9, read this morning, we are told that David occupied the stronghold and renamed it the city of David.

There were considerable advantages in relinquishing Hebron in favour of making Jerusalem his capital in that it was more or less on the border of Israel and Judah, and had been in the hands of the Jebusites for a long time, and was therefore something of a neutral country, these two things would have made Jerusalem acceptable to all the people's of the now reunited kingdoms.

That's a very brief summary of the events which led to David becoming king over the united kingdom of Israel and Judah and why he decided to reign in Jerusalem.

But let us now turn to verse 10 of our reading, which I will read again, “And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts was with him”.

All the things I had spoken about concerning David, were all made possible through the grace of God.

David demonstrated great faith in God when he confronted the giant Goliath, and when he refused to kill his enemy Saul, even though he had Saul at his mercy, these are just two examples of David's greatness.

But David also made mistakes such as his sin with Bathsheba when he committed adultery with her and then the murder of Uriah her husband in order to cover up his sin, but what ever his crimes they not only broke God's heart they also broke David's heart as well.

And David admitted his crime not only to God but also to his own people as you can see when you read his psalm 32, and many other psalms of true repentance and acknowledgement of his sins.

In Psalm 32 for example David wrote, starting at verse 3:

“While I kept silent, my body wasted away through my groaning all the day long.

For day and night your hand was heavy upon me;
my strength was dried up as by the heat of summer.

Then I acknowledged my sin to you, and I did not hide my iniquity; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord', and you forgave the guilt of my sin.”

In writing those two verses he was not only confessing his sins to God but also to all his own people. That's true repentance indeed, which as we heard released him from the burden of sin, and allowed him to look forward to the future with joy.

And it is in true repentance of our sins that will also release us from the burden of our sins and allow us to look forward to the future with joy and confidence.

Overall David is judged by most people as a great king and religious leader who offers hope to all of us who have also lapsed into sins, which not only breaks God's heart, but for us who like David are chosen of God, breaks our hearts also; because knowing and loving God has it's responsibilities to live up to.

As we sit let us pray

You came, Lord Jesus Christ, to teach us the way of life that you require, to show us how we are to serve you and our neighbours; make us receptive to your teaching and to your gospel, and help us to live a life of service to you, without counting the cost, to the glory of your name.

Amen