

“Our Need for a Great King”
2 Samuel 5
August 23, 2020
Faith Presbyterian Church – Evening Service
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We return again this evening to the Book of Samuel.

After years of division between the tribe of Judah and the other tribes of Israel, Ish-bosheth the king of Israel is dead, and David the king of Judah is ready to receive the throne over all of Israel – the throne that was promised to him by God twenty chapters earlier, in First Samuel sixteen.

With that said, we come to our text this evening, Second Samuel, chapter five.

Please listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this evening:

^{5:1} Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Behold, we are your bone and flesh. ²In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And Yahweh said to you, ‘You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.’” ³So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before Yahweh, and they anointed David king over Israel. ⁴David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. ⁵At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

⁶And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, “You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off”—thinking, “David cannot come in here.” ⁷Nevertheless, David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David. ⁸And David said on that day, “Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack ‘the lame and the blind,’ who are hated by David's soul.” Therefore it is said, “The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.” ⁹And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward. ¹⁰And David became greater and greater, for Yahweh, the God of hosts, was with him.

¹¹And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house. ¹²And David knew that Yahweh had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.

¹³And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David. ¹⁴And these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.

¹⁷When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. But David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁹And David inquired of Yahweh, “Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?” And Yahweh said to David, “Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.” ²⁰And David came to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. And he said, “Yahweh has broken through my enemies before me like a breaking flood.” Therefore the name of that place is called Baal-perazim. ²¹And the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.

²² And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ²³ And when David inquired of Yahweh, he said, “You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees. ²⁴ And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself, for then Yahweh has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.” ²⁵ And David did as Yahweh commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.

This is the Word of the Lord. (Thanks be to God.)

Let’s pray ...

Lord, with the psalmist
we ask that your steadfast love would be upon us,
according to your promise.
Take not your word of truth from our lips,
for we know that our hope is in your revelation spoken to us.
Help us to keep your commands continually,
to walk in your ways in all areas of life,
to speak your truth to the people and the powers around us,
to find our delight in your testimony to us,
and to love your revelation to us.
Grant this now as we turn to your word together,
and all the days of our lives.

In Jesus name, Amen.

[Based on Psalm 119:41,43-47]

INTRODUCTION:

There are a number of events described in our text this evening, and the first thing we need to consider is how they relate to one another.

As a number of commentators point out, in this chapter we are not given a series of events that came one after the other, but a thematic collection of events – like a collage of several scenes meant to give an overall picture of David’s kingship. This fact is indicated in the text itself. Solomon’s birth is mentioned in verse fourteen, but Solomon won’t be born for another seven chapters. Also, interactions with Hiram are described in verse eleven, and it is likely that Hiram’s rule came more towards the end of David’s reign. [Alter, 221; Davis, 59-60; Firth, 361]

And so, instead of a step-by-step account of events, what we’re given here is a big picture overview of the nature of David’s kingship.

What is the value of that for us?

Well, the story of David instructs us in a number of ways. It gives us moral guidance in some cases. It shows us how God interacts with us in other cases. It points to events that played out in history in all cases.

But one of the most important things that the story of David does for us, as we have seen again and again in his life so far, is that it points beyond David himself, to the one who was to come after David.

The Apostle Matthew begins his Gospel by referring to Jesus Christ, our Lord, as “the son of David” – a title that he and others in the Gospels repeatedly apply to Jesus.

Of course, Jesus is a descendant of David. But his connection to David is deeper than that. And one aspect of that connection is that David again and again points forward to Jesus.

And our text tonight is another case of that.

In three different ways our passage tonight puts David forward in a way that points to our need for a great king – our need for a king like Jesus.

It does this by holding before us:

- David as a conquering king
- David as a defending king, and
- David as an insufficient king.

Tonight we will consider how each of these themes emerge from the collage we are given here in Second Samuel chapter five, and then how each one points us to our need for a great king – a need which only Jesus is able to fill

I. DAVID IS A CONQUERING KING:

The first thing our passage tonight does is it holds David before us as a conquering king.

And it does this in three different ways – and each of those ways is important.

And, actually, the first way that David conquers is easy to miss, but it’s crucial to all that follows.

1.1 – HE CONQUERS THE PEOPLE OF GOD

The first thing this chapter shows us is that David conquers the people of God.

Remember, at the end of chapter four David was the king of Judah only – of one tribe of Israel. But in the first three verses of chapter five that all changes. There we read:

^{5:1} Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, “Behold, we are your bone and flesh. ²In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And Yahweh said to you, ‘You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.’” ³ So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before Yahweh, and they anointed David king over Israel.

The first thing David had to do – the thing he has been working towards for the last twenty chapters – was to conquer his own people. He had to become their king.

Which is a good place for us to be thinking about what we need from our King. We needed a King who would start by conquering us – who would start by bringing us to a place where we would bow before him and accept him as our Lord and King.

And how did David do that? Well, the Israelites identify three things. First, he is of their bone and flesh. Second, even before being enthroned he served them faithfully. And third, and most importantly, he has been appointed to the role by God himself. [Davis, 60; Leithart, 204]

And Christ our King has conquered us in much the same way – though with greater depth and greater intention.

God the Son *took on* our nature, choosing to become of our bone and flesh so that he might be our true king.

Not only that, before he ascended to the heavenly throne, Jesus Christ our Lord served us faithfully, in many ways, but most pointedly in his death on the cross and resurrection from the grave, in order to save us from our sin.

And finally, Jesus has been appointed to the role by God the Father – he has been called, anointed, and elevated to the role of shepherd, prince, and king over the Church, the people of God – seated on the throne of heaven.

And in all of this, he has conquered us. He has united himself with us, he has cleansed us, he has purchased us for himself and we are his – he has entered into a covenant with us, just as David did with Israel in verse three.

We need a great king who is a conquering Lord, and the first thing we need him to conquer is us.

1.11 – HE CONQUERS HIS MOCKING ENEMIES

But that's not the only thing we need him to conquer. We also need him to be a great king who will conquer all his and our enemies.

And that is what David shows us in verses six through ten.

And we need a little context to appreciate this.

Because the conquest of Jerusalem and the defeat of the Jebusites is not just some random battle that came after David's installation as king.

The Jebusites had been a difficulty for the people of God from the beginning.

In Genesis 15:18-21, the Lord – Yahweh – promised the land of Canaan to the descendants of Abraham. He said to Abraham: "To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the

great river, the river Euphrates, the land of the Kenites, the Kenizzites, the Kadmonites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Rephaim, the Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites and the Jebusites.”

By the time we come to Second Samuel chapter five, that promise had been made about a thousand years earlier. And still it was not fulfilled. Because still the Jebusites held Jerusalem. [Davis, 64]

Four hundred years earlier Joshua had led the conquest of the promised land, and had driven many of the enemies of God and God’s people from the land. But not the Jebusites. Joshua 15 lists all the land allotted to Judah and all the success the Israelites had in driving their enemies from the land. And then the last verse, Joshua 15:63, says: “But the Jebusites, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the people of Judah could not drive out, so the Jebusites dwell with the people of Judah at Jerusalem to this day.”

But then we hear of Jerusalem and the Jebusites again. In Judges chapter one, in the next era of the conquest after the death of Joshua, we hear that Judah struck Jerusalem again, and seems to have had some level of success [Judges 1:8]. But then just a few verses later we read “But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, so the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.” [Judges 1:21] [Leithart, 204]

A thousand years earlier God had pledged to defeat the Jebusites. But still they remained. And as we see in our text tonight, they had not exactly grown humble in their victory.

They mock David for even attempting to defeat them. From their fortification they shout to David in verse six: “You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off.”

They’re taunting David – they’re saying that they are so secure that the blind and the lame among them could defend the city against David and all his men. [Davis, 62]

David’s frustration and his determination are expressed when he speaks of how his soul hates “the blind and the lame” in verse eight. David, of course, is not here speaking of the physically disabled, but he’s using the phrase of the Jebusites to refer to the Jebusites. [Leithart, 206]

David is determined to conquer the enemies of God – the enemies of God’s people. And then, where Joshua and those who came after Joshua failed, David succeeds. David proves to be a greater Joshua. [Leithart, 204]

We’re told that David and his men used the Jebusite’s water shaft to defeat them, but it’s unclear how exactly they did that. [Firth, 364]

There was a spring outside of Jerusalem, that flowed to a place where the Jebusites inside Jerusalem could access the water through a shaft.

It may have been that David and his men found the shaft and prevented the Jebusites from drawing water from it by seizing their buckets when they let them down, in order to force the Jebusite’s defeat. [Davis, 63]

Or it may have been that David's men found the water shaft, cut off the supply of water and then climbed up the shaft in order to attack the city. [Leithart, 205]

We don't know for sure.

But whatever the means was, David and his men took Jerusalem from the Jebusites, and it became known as the city of David.

David was a conquering king who defeated the mocking enemies of God and God's people.

And there's a couple things to take from that.

For one, it should be a reminder to us to have a Biblical view of history. We are so minute-to-minute – looking for the latest news, the latest update, the latest success or victory in the world.

God promised the land of Jerusalem to Abraham's descendants ... and he determined that the right time to fulfill that promise was through David, a thousand years later.

A thousand years. God is the Lord of history. And he knows what he is doing. We should trust his timing. He knows better than we do.

But along with that, David's conquering of the Jebusites is also a signpost pointing us to Christ as the conqueror of our enemies.

For Christ not only subdues us, but he defeats his and our enemies. He has vanquished the devil in his death and resurrection. He has put our sin to death on his cross. He has defeated death in his resurrection. And he will bring the world to full submission in his second coming. Christ is a conquering king, and he will conquer all who stand against him and mock.

The Westminster Shorter Catechism sums up these first two aspects of Christ's conquering work well. It asks, "How does Christ execute the office of a king?" And then it gives the answer: "Christ executes the office of a king, in subduing us to himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all his and our enemies."

And that is what we see here in Second Samuel chapter five.

LIII – HE CONQUERS NEW VOLUNTARY SUBJECTS

But ... that's not all the conquering that we see. We see a bit more in verses nine through twelve.

In verse nine we hear of the building projects that David takes up in Jerusalem. Verse ten speaks of the success that Yahweh gave to David as he built up his kingdom and his house.

And then something unexpected happens in verse eleven. There we read: "And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house."

What is going on here? Why is this detail included?

One commentator explains it like this – he writes: “Once he had conquered, David got to work on various building projects. In 2 Samuel 5:9, he built up all around the stronghold from the “Millo” and inward, and verses 11-12 indicate that David also built himself a house of cedar and stone. Hiram of Tyre assisted with this project, a Gentile pitching in to build the house of Yahweh’s anointed. Later, Hiram would provide materials and expert builders for Solomon’s temple. David’s friendship with Tyre was the beginning of a long history of interaction between Tyre and Israel, in which Tyre became a paradigmatic converted Gentile city. Like Melchizedek and Jethro before him and Cyrus after him, Hiram was a ‘Gentile sponsor’ of a new covenantal order. [...] Hiram contributed voluntarily to the building of God’s kingdom in Israel. Under David’s shepherding, Israel was beginning to fulfill the calling she had received at Sinai, to be a priest to the Gentiles.” [Leithart, 206]

We mentioned a couple minutes ago how God promised to Abraham that his descendants would conquer his enemies in the land. But that’s not all that God promised Abraham regarding those outside of Israel. He also said to him in Genesis chapter twenty-two: “In your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.”

In other words, not all will be conquered in judgment. Others – many others – will be conquered in blessing. And that is what we see here. Here we see Tyre voluntarily offer itself to David – to help build a house for the anointed king of Yahweh, and in return to be blessed. David has conquered King Hiram and the land of Tyre for blessing.

And it is a helpful reminder. In our combative culture we very easily want to make our people Israelites and everyone else a Jebusite, and we want to fight and destroy our enemies.

But sometimes winning does not look like defeating the Jebusites in judgment – sometimes it looks like conquering the people of Tyre in love, incorporating them into the blessings of God.

And that is what Christ is seeking as well. He is seeking, as he told his apostles, to make disciples of all nations [Matthew 28:19]. I wonder who he might be working to conquer in that way in your life. I wonder what non-Christian in your life will be a Hiram before your eyes. And I wonder how God might use you as he does that. Do you have your eyes open for that possibility? Are you looking for how you can serve Christ your King as he does that work?

The first way that David points us to Christ our king is that David is a conquering king. He conquers the people of God to rule over them. He conquers the enemies of God in might. And he conquers voluntary subjects for himself who offer themselves to serve God’s kingdom.

II. DAVID IS A DEFENDING KING:

But there is more than that in this collage that is set before us.

David is not only a conquering king – he is also a defending king. He is a king who defends his people.

And we see this in verses seventeen through twenty-five, in the conflict with the Philistines.

And once again we need a little historical context to grasp the significance of what we read here.

Before the events of this chapter, the Philistines had already taken over territory from Israel. They are occupying Israelite land.

But we haven't heard much of them lately in this book.

It would seem that so long as Israel was divided against itself – so long as David and Ish-bosheth were at war, the Philistines could comfortably hold on to the land they had taken from Israel, and didn't feel much need to go after the people of Israel. Why waste effort trying to weaken them when they were fighting amongst themselves and thus weakening themselves? But once Israel was unified, the Philistines knew Israel could present a threat to them – Israel might try to take their land back. And so the Philistines launched a pre-emptive strike on Israel. [Leithart, 207]

In fact, in attacking Israel, the Philistines may have hoped to re-divide Israel to once again make them more manageable. [Firth, 371]

It's worth noting that we see here again a theme that we mentioned this morning: We often worry so much about forces outside the Church. And we should be concerned about forces outside the Church. But once more we see here that the Church, divided against itself, can often do much more damage to itself than outsiders ever will.

In any case, the Philistines launch a pre-emptive strike on Israel. We have seen David act as a conquering king for the people of God. But now the question is: What kind of defender will he be for the people of God?

And again, our text answers this question in three ways. It tells us where David looks for direction, who he looks to for power, and what is his ultimate purpose. His direction, his power, and his purpose.

II.1 – DIRECTION

First there is where David looks for direction. And we see that in verses seventeen through nineteen and then again in verses twenty-two and twenty-three.

In verses seventeen through nineteen we read: “¹⁷ When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. But David heard of it and went down to the stronghold. ¹⁸ Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ¹⁹ And David inquired of Yahweh, ‘Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?’ And Yahweh said to David, ‘Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.’”

When David hears that the Philistines have come, in their attack, to the Valley of Rephaim, the first thing he does is turn to the Lord for direction. David gets his direction from the Lord.

In David's case that presumably meant inquiring of Yahweh through Abiathar the priest, who was using the ephod – a tool given by the Lord to ask him questions and determine his will. [Firth, 369]

And lest we think that this was just a formality, and that the real driving force was David's own wits, we need to consider what happened then a few verses later.

David obeys the direction from God, and he defeats the Philistines. But then, in verse twenty-two they attack again. And the same phrase is used in verse twenty-two as we read in verse eighteen. We read in verse twenty-two: "And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim."

The same situation as before. So – does David do the same thing, which worked so well last time?

No. We read in verse twenty-three: "And when David inquired of Yahweh, he [Yahweh] said, 'You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees.'"

David's seeking direction from the Lord was sincere and genuine. It wasn't a formality; it wasn't a way to rubber-stamp his own plans. David truly sought God's direction.

When we face difficult decisions or challenges ... do we do that? Do we earnestly pray for guidance and wisdom? Do we seek the Scriptures earnestly? Do we consult wise and godly Christians for their input and listen? Or do we use prayer and devotion as a rubber stamp on our own desires and intentions?

David is a defending king who truly sought direction from the Lord.

II.II – POWER

But he didn't only seek direction from the Lord. He also sought and received power from the Lord.

We see that in verses twenty-three through twenty-five. There we read: "When David inquired of Yahweh, he said, 'You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees. And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself, for then Yahweh has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.' And David did as Yahweh commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer."

What's going on there?

Yahweh is reminding David whose power he must rely on as he fights the Philistines.

One commentator writes: "The sound of marching in the tops of the shrubs was the signal for David to attack, because it was the sign that the Lord's army, the host of angels, had marched out before the armies of Israel." [Leithart, 208]

David is called to be a king who does not rely on his own strength, but on the strength of the Lord.

And we are called to the same.

When you see the challenges before you or the challenges before Christ's Church, do you evaluate them only in terms of your strength – in terms of your earthly abilities and power? Or do you make the plans you make with the constant knowledge that you will not succeed by your own strength in anything of significance, but only by the strength of the Lord, as he sends his heavenly army out to fight on your behalf?

David is a king who defends his people in reliance on the power of God.

II.III – PURPOSE

With that, the third thing we need to consider is the purpose for which David defends his people.

Of course, one of his purposes is simply to defend the people themselves. But our text reminds us that that is not to be his chief purpose. His chief purpose is to defend them for the glory of the Lord – for the glory of Yahweh.

And this comes across in a few ways.

First of all, it comes out in verse twenty in the name that David gives to the place where he defeats the Philistines. David names the place “Baal-perazim” which means “Master of the Break Through” – a name that is meant to point to the fact that it is Yahweh, and not the gods of the Philistines who has proved himself to be the true Master and Lord. [Leithart, 207]

But even more than that, there is verse twenty-one, which tells us that as David defeated the Philistines, “the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.”

As David, by the power of God – by the power of Yahweh – defeated the Philistines, the Philistines abandoned their idols ... showing their gods' true lack of power. [Leithart, 207-208]

An account of the same battle in First Chronicles 14:12 adds the detail that David commanded the abandoned idols to be burned. [Firth, 370]

David's primary purpose was not the glory of Israel against the glory of the Philistines ... it was not the glory of David against the glory of the lords of the Philistines ... it was the glory of Yahweh against the glory of the false gods. And David wanted it to be sure that Yahweh was revealed in his efforts as the one true God.

Is that what motivates us? Is that our purpose in the good things we do – that the Triune God would be known and glorified in our success, and all his rivals would be laid waste?

We saw that David is a conquering king, and now we see that David is also a defending king, and he defends the people of God through the direction of God, by the power of God, and for the glory of God.

III. DAVID IS AN INSUFFICIENT KING:

Now ... as we consider how David defends the people of God, we can find ourselves thinking of how those concepts especially apply to us.

We think of how we can seek the Lord's direction as he did. We wonder what it looks like for us to rely on the Lord's power in the situations we face. We search our hearts and we exhort ourselves to seek the Lord's glory, not the glory of idols.

And that is all good – we *should* consider those things; we should apply those things to ourselves and imitate the good examples we find here.

But lest we shift our gaze too much from our King to ourselves – lest we begin to put our hope too much in our own performance instead of Christ's defense of us, and rule over us – we must consider one more way that David points us to Christ our king.

Our text shows us that David is a conquering king. It shows us that David is a defending king. But third and finally, it also shows us that David is an insufficient king.

And we see this in verses thirteen through sixteen. Let's hear those verses again: “¹³ And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David. ¹⁴ And these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, ¹⁵ Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, ¹⁶ Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.”

These verses might just seem like an odd aside, but commentators use words and phrases like “ominous” and “dark foreboding” to describe the effect these verses have on the text. [Leithart, 207; Firth, 363]

Why is that?

Because these verses highlight the third way that David points us to our need for a greater king. They highlight the fact that David, for all his greatness, is still an insufficient king. In fact, he is still a wildly insufficient king.

And that's not just a clever sermonic move, because I need to find a way to talk about how Jesus is better than David before the end of this sermon. No – these verses intentionally send up red flags, and they are designed to be red flags that any Israelite who knew his Bible would clearly recognize.

There are four of them.

First, there's the number of wives and new concubines that David has collected.

For one thing, an Israelite who knew the law of Moses would read this and think of the laws God had set down for any future king, in Deuteronomy seventeen. There Moses wrote that a king in Israel “shall not acquire many wives for himself, lest his heart turn away.” [Duet. 17:17]

David was made king of Israel in verse three. Ten verses later we are being shown how he has begun to violate Israel’s law for kings.

That’s the first red flag. But there’s more.

Second, we should note where these additional wives and concubines came from. In verse thirteen we read “David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem.” “From Jerusalem.” But in the context of this chapter, the only kind of people who would be *from* Jerusalem would be Jebusites. [Firth, 361]

While the text doesn’t confirm this, it seems to suggest it with its word choice. And if that’s the case then David’s actions would be in direct violation of Deuteronomy chapter seven, which lists the pagan groups whom Israel will face, naming several of them, including the Jebusites, and then commands that the Israelite’s are *not* to intermarry with them. [Duet. 7:1-4]

Third, we should pay attention to the third word of verse thirteen: took. David’s polygamy is described in terms of him taking. Which, for anyone reading this book through in a shorter period of time than we’ve taken so far, would remind them of Samuel’s words back in First Samuel chapter eight.

There Samuel warned Israel about what a bad and worldly king would look like, and the way he described him was as a king who would be characterized by “taking.” [Firth, 366] And in fact, it’s the same word here that will be used in chapter eleven to describe David “taking” Bathsheba.

Fourth and finally, in case that was all too subtle, we have the sudden mention of Solomon in verse fourteen. And no one who knows the story of David would miss the significance of that. As one commentator puts it, the mention of Solomon in verse fourteen is “a dark foreboding of David’s relationship with Bathsheba.” [Firth, 363] Which will lead to David not only committing adultery, but murder.

All of this points to David’s wild insufficiency. And that is key if we are to learn what we need to from this passage.

As one commentator puts it – these observations: “should be deeply instructive. They should check our tendency to Christian hero worship, our passion for becoming so enamored with certain kingdom servants that we fail to remember that they too are sinful people who will inevitably disappoint in some way or another. Even David compromises and mars the kingdom over which he rules; ultimately, the kingdom is only safe in the hands of David’s Descendant who *always* does what pleases the Father.” [Davis, 67]

We are all tempted in ways to claim someone other than Christ as sufficient. In every case, our right and appropriate acknowledgement, and praise, and admiration and imitation of the virtues

and gifts of others morphs into a belief in our hearts that those we admire are sufficient in themselves.

We might do this with our Christian heroes. We might do it with our political heroes. We might do this with people around us whom we look up to. We might even do it with ourselves. If we are successful, in our career, with our family, in the external aspects of our Christian life, then we can soon find ourselves believing that we really are sufficient in ourselves.

David reminds us that we are not sufficient.

David reminds us that even he was not sufficient. And neither was nor is anyone else whom you may look up to.

The author of Samuel, in highlighting this, in putting it at the center of his collage in this chapter, does us a service. He points us to our need not just for a great king, but for a greater king. He points us to our need for Christ.

This chapter should lead you to give thanks that God has not left us to ourselves and to the best that we can do. This chapter should lead you to give thanks that God has not left us to the best that our spiritual heroes can do. This chapter should lead you to give thanks that God has given us a greater king. He has given us Christ.

Christ is the conquering king who will conquer our hearts and unite us to himself. He is the conquering king who will defeat all his and our enemies, and who will draw new willing subjects to himself.

Christ is the defending king who will always walk in the ways of God the Father, who will be victorious by the power of God the Father, and who will do all for the glory of God the Father.

Christ is the king who will succeed where all others fail. And he alone is sufficient to secure our salvation and to carry us to our eternal home with him.

And God has given him to us.

Let us give thanks that Christ is our king.

Amen.

This sermon draws on material from:

- Alter, Robert. *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel*. New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*. Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 1999.
- Firth, David G. *1 & 2 Samuel*. Apollos Old Testament Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009.
- Leithart, Peter J. *A Son to Me: An Exposition of 1 & 2 Samuel*. Moscow, ID: Canon Press, 2003.