

Wisdom From War

(2 Samuel 10)

4/27/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

For those of you not familiar with baseball, it is a much slower moving game than football and basketball.

The action is a lot less hectic for sure.

Because of that, baseball is known for its meetings.

Sometimes the catcher will go out and talk to the pitcher, especially in a very important situation in the game.

On one occasion in the 1930s Yankee pitcher Lefty Gomez called his catcher, Bill Dickey out to the mound...

It was an intense situation, the bases were loaded and the Yankees were leading by just one run...

So, Dickey heads to the mound and has a conversation with Gomez...

Thinking that Gomez wants to talk about what pitches to throw the current batter, the catcher begins to think strategy.

When he gets there, Gomez says...

“Hey Bill, my wife and I would love to take you and Sally out for dinner tomorrow night.”

Dickey is shocked at what he hears and tells Gomez, “Lefty I don’t think this is the time to talk about dinner plans. We got to get this batter out.”

Buy Gomez simply replied, “I forgot to ask you earlier and since you are only 60 feet away, I couldn’t think of a better time to do it.”

Gomez then proceeded to strike the batter out and the Yankees won the game...

When a reporter asked the catcher what he had said when he went on to the mound with the game on the line, Dickey simply told him, “We talked about a double date with our wives.”

The reporter didn’t believe Dickey, but Gomez gave the exact same story.

Sometimes, what we see doesn’t match what actually happened.

In 2 Samuel chapter 10, we see a real plain story in a sense...

David is king, David is insulted, David sends his army and David wins.

If you read the chapter, that is really what our eyes see and nothing more...

One commentator said that there is no real value in chapter 10.

It is simply a bridge from David's goodness to Mephibosheth in chapter 9 to David's badness with Bathsheba in chapter 11...

I beg to differ with him tonight as we try to look at this chapter and squeeze some juice out it to help us understand ourselves better and the Lord better...

I have entitled this chapter Wisdom from War...

Because that is what we need to seek tonight...

The better part of the chapter details a war between Israel and the Ammonites and Aremeans....

But tucked in between all of the fighting are some nuggets of wisdom that we are going to dig out...

I have divided the chapter into 2 parts...

In verses 1-5, we will see kindness and unkindness...

And from verse 6 to the end of the chapter, we will find War and Peace...

Let's just begin by reading the first 5 verses of chapter 10...

I. Kindness and Unkindness (1-5)

10 Now it happened afterwards that the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son became king in his place. 2 Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, just as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent [a]some of his servants to console him concerning his father. But when David's servants came to the land of the Ammonites, 3 the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "[b]Do you think that David is honoring your father because he has sent consolers to you? Has David not sent his servants to you in order to search the city, to spy it out and overthrow it?" 4 So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half of their beards, and cut off their garments in the middle as far as their hips, and sent them away. 5 When they told it to David, he sent to meet them, for the men were greatly humiliated. And the king said, "[c]Stay at Jericho until your beards grow, and then return."

The more I study the Bible, the more I am convinced of the need to move verse by verse in my preaching...

I was convinced of that before I went to seminary.

I was taught how to do it and reminded of the importance of it in seminary...

But it gets to be a deeper and deeper conviction as I preach through books in my ministry..

Because how many times in 2 Samuel alone, have I asked you to recall something that you learned a few chapters back in 2 Samuel or all the way back to 1 Samuel?

And I am going to ask you to do it again tonight as we dig into our memory banks all the way to 1 Samuel 11...

Now, it should come as no shock to us as we do this..

The Bible has one author, right?

All of Scripture was inspired by God.

Therefore, it should make sense to us that the story builds on itself from Genesis to Revelation because

God was revealing Himself over time through a running narrative..

And when you have stories, they usually build on themselves..

Therefore, we shouldn't be surprised to have to look back and remember past characters or places...

You would do that with a novel or a saga...

And it should make sense to have to do that with the Scriptures...

What doesn't make sense is that most people don't approach the Bible that way at all...

Anyway, that's just a little preaching but also an encouragement to understand the whole story as well...

And so when we get to verse 1 of chapter 10, we are taken back to 1 Samuel 11...

You can flip back there if you like, but in 1 Samuel 11, we first met Nahash...

Who was the "snake king" of the Ammonites...

If you look at our map, you will remember that Ammon is the country to the east of Israel...

And in chapter 11 of 1 Samuel, Nahash and the Ammonites attacked Israel and seized the city of Jabesh Gilead...

Well, this was the first opportunity for Saul who was Israel's new king to flex his muscle a bit...

And he did by rallying a huge group of Jewish soldiers and defeating Nahash the snake king.

That defeat really led to the popularity of Saul for a while and got his rule off to a good start...

Well, time has past since that defeat of Nahash, but the Ammonites are still around...

And in chapter 10, we find out that Nahash died and his son, Hanun, took over his rule...

Well, in verse 2, we get a juicy bit of information that David want to send condolences to Hanun over his father's death...

And the reason is this...

Nahash has shown kindness to David on a previous occasion..

Now, why would David be friends with the snake king?

Well, numerous thoughts have been offered...

Some suggest that since Nahash and David were both Saul's enemies, it is only natural that he was David's friend..

Some suggest that Nahash may have helped David or hid him at some point as David was fleeing from Saul..

The bottom line is this....

The Bible doesn't list the specific kindness that Nahash showed David, we just know that he did and David felt obligated to show kindness to him...

So, David sends some men to share his condolences with the son, but it doesn't turn out too good....

As David's men leave half shaved and half naked...

Now, shaving a man's beard and removing his clothing were the worst insults of the day....

And add to that the fact that the men belonged to the king of a neighboring country, and war is almost imminent...

But before we get to that, let's just pull out a few truths from these verses...

#1 - We see David once again show loyalty in his reign as king over Israel..

Last week, David was loyal to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth...

And this week, David is loyal to Saul's former enemy...

In fact, if you look at the first verse of chapter 9 and the second verse of chapter 10....

They contain the same important concept....

David wants to "show kindness to someone."

In chapter 9, he is looking for a descendant of Saul...

And in chapter 10, he is showing kindness to a defeated enemy of Saul...

I don't think that is an accident on the part of the writer of the book of Samuel...

I simply think God is trying to show David as a king loyal to his commitments...

And remember, who is King David a preview of?

Of King Jesus, right?

And what do we know about Christ?

Is he a promise-keeping King?

You bet He is...

And it is also interesting to see here that David is loyal in chapter 9 to a fellow Israelite, but in chapter 10, he is loyal to a Gentile king...

I don't want to make too much of this because you can carry it farther than what we see here...

I would simply say this...

David is a king that places priority on loyalty...

Now, next week in chapter 11, you are going to see a disloyal David...

You are going to see the picture of David that disqualifies him from ever being the perfect king by a long shot...

But for now in chapters 9 and 10, we simply see the kinder and gentler David....

And I think we find an application in the sense that we should be promise keeping people to everyone we make a pledge....

We shouldn't just our promises to fellow believers, we even need to keep them with an unbelieving world...

And David is that model in chapter 10...

The second nugget of wisdom is completely different and found in verse 3 of chapter 10....

It is interesting to me to see the influence that people have on others...

David is sending his condolences in a formal way as the king of a neighboring country, yet some people are always looking for the negative....

Because in verse 3, Hanna's princes convince him that David is up to no good...

He is only coming under the cover of sending condolences to spy out our city for an attack....

Now, the city would have been the city of Rabbah that you can see on our map here...

And due to their counsel, the king insults David's men and sends them away...

Now, I want to be careful here in what I say...

But we need to be careful about the wisdom we listen to and act upon...

Is it wrong to seek the counsel of others?

Not as long as they are believers and are informed by the Bible in the advice they give...

But can advice backfire?

Sure, and that is exactly what happens here...

From what we know, David was simply sending a sincere "I'm Sorry to Hear About your Loss" group of men...

But skeptical men convicted the Ammonite king otherwise...

And I would simply say,....

Be careful with your counsel, and be prayerful about your advice...

Certainly, it is often fine advice to warn people, but we must be careful to not always assume the worst...

Sometimes, assuming the worst leads to war...

However, sometimes assuming the best leads to war as well....

That is certainly what happened at Pearl Harbor, where the US showed little concern for Japan to wake one day to the greatest secret strike of all time.

Bottom line, give counsel but make sure it is biblical and prayerful..

Well, the half-neared, half naked men anger David and he heads off to see them...

Well, word gets back to the Ammonite king that David is upset and he begins preparations for war, as we move to the second section of war and peace in verse 6...

II. War and Peace (6-19)

6 Now when the sons of Ammon saw that they had become odious to David, the sons of Ammon sent and hired the Arameans of Beth-rehob and the Arameans of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob with 12,000 men.

In verse 6, the Ammonites look for help with Israel on the way and they turn to their northern neighbors...

And if you look at our map, you will see Beth-rehob right here and Zobah to the far north....

Macacah here, and Tob right here...

And so, Hanun, the new Ammonite king is bringing in a ton of help for this war with David...

And David responds likewise in verse 7....

7 When David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army, the mighty men. 8 The sons of Ammon came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the [d]city, while the Arameans of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the field.

David takes his best men led by Joab and they set up on the battlefield ready to fight...

However, there is a twist...

The combines armies of the Ammonites and Aremeans have split up...

The Ammonites set up in front of the gate of the capital city, while the Aremans spread out in the fields around the city....

The obvious plan is to draw Israel into a battle in the city and let the Aremans ambush from behind...

Well, Joab is a superior soldier and he comes up with a plan in verses 9-12...

9 Now when Joab saw that [e]the battle was set against him in front and in the rear, he selected from all the choice men of Israel, and arrayed them against the Arameans. 10 But the remainder of the people he placed in the hand of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the sons of Ammon. 11 He said, "If the Arameans are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the sons of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come to help you. 12 Be strong, and let us show ourselves courageous for the sake of our people

and for the cities of our God; and may the Lord do what is good in His sight.”

Long story short, Joab divided up his army as well..

Putting the best soldiers to guard behind them and letting the less capable men attack the city...

And then he put his plan in the hands of the Lord at the end of verse 12....

“may the Lord do what is good in His sight.”

So, the battle field is ready and the soldiers are in place....

Let's see how it all turns out in verses 13-14...

13 So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to the battle against the Arameans, and they fled before him. 14 When the sons of Ammon saw that the Arameans fled, they also fled before Abishai and entered the city. Then Joab returned from fighting against the sons of Ammon and came to Jerusalem.

For all the drama that led up to this battle, the ending wasn't nearly as dramatic...

Israel took out the Aremeans in the field first, and then the Ammoonites fled inside the city gates, and it was over before it started.

However, it wasn't over for the Aremeans....

They may have fled home to the north, but it was only to come back for more....

Verse 15....

15 When the Arameans saw that they had been [f]defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. 16 And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Arameans who were beyond the [g]River, and they came to Helam; and Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer [h]led them.

Hadadezer is another name you may remember from chapter 8...

He is a king in the northern part of Aram...

And he gathers all these men and heads south to Helam to take on David once again...

And they ready themselves for yet another battle with David...

I think most of you can predict who will win by now...

Verse 17....

17 Now when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Arameans arrayed themselves to meet David and fought against him. 18 But the Arameans fled before Israel, and David killed 700 charioteers of the Arameans and 40,000 horsemen and struck down Shobach the commander of their army, and he died there. 19 When all the kings, servants of Hadadezer, saw that they were [i]defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Arameans feared to help the sons of Ammon anymore.

This second war lasts about as long as the first one in Rabbah....

This time, the Aremeans are destroyed physically and mentally...

They dont just run off to regroup this time, they seek to make peace with Israel and serve them..

And then you read this sentence...

So the Arameans feared to help the sons of Ammon anymore.

That is what you call an understatement..

This is like walking up to the Empire State Building and looking up at it and saying....

“Wow, that’s a tall building.”

Or going to the North Pole and saying, “its really cold up here.”

The Aremeans had learned a lesson that many need to learn today...

God is undefeatable..

It is best to bow the knee and serve Him, rather than continue to fight against him...

It is never a good idea to help the enemies of God, and a person will learn that sooner or later....

And sooner is always better...

A final piece of wisdom to draw from this last section centers on the person of Joab...

If you flip back to 2 Samuel 2:26-30, you will find Joab killing Abner...

If you remember, after the death of Saul, Israel split into 2 parts...

A northern kingdom led by Saul's only remaining son, Ish-bosheth...

And the southern kingdom united under David...

Well, Abner was the commander of the north...

Ish-bosheth was only a figure head, the military might of the northern kingdom was under Abner...

Well, Abner got mad at Ish-bosheth, so he left the northern kingdom to join with David in the south...

Well, Abner may have had good intentions, but he had enemies in the south...

Not the least of which was a man named Joab and his brother Abishai...

You see, Abner had killed Joab and Abishai's brother...

And so when Abner gets into town and tells David that he wants to be on his team, all seems well until he leaves...

And Joab and his brother go out and strike down Abner...

Because of that murder, David calls down a curse on Joab and his descendants...

And we don't hear from Joab again until one small mention in chapter 8 and then here in chapter 10...

And then we get this nugget of wisdom from him as he makes his battle plans and gets ready to head into an ambush...

“and may the Lord do what is good in His sight.”

Simply put, that is the truth that every believer rests upon....

We don't know the future or the plans of God, we simply ask and pray that God would do what is good in his sight...

And that is exactly what Joab says here...

But how can he say that?

Does he believe that?

This military minded, hard nosed, murderer saying something like that??!!

All his life, Joab has only seemed to do what was good in his own sight...

And now, we get a great truth coming from his lips...

So, what are we to make of it?

Well, we are going to get to see a lot more of Joab in the chapters ahead, so I will reserve judgment on him...

But I would simply say this....

Truth is truth no matter whose mouth it proceeds from...

And the truth that we need to hear tonight is this...

Let God do whatever He had decided to do, and we will trust in that action even it brings troubles and trials into our life...

Ultimately, God always does what is good in his sight...

But we have limited information, so what is good in God's sight may not often match up with what we think is good in our sight...

And that is when we run into problems...

The Christian life is not a race to please yourself; it is a race to make yourself available to God to serve His purposes and plans...

Joab set his plans on who to best fight the battle, but even He was not dumb enough to not allow for the plans of God...

And though we may be living lives that are pleasing to God and we may be doing all we can to love and serve Him, we cannot be shortsighted enough to know that God may have different plans...

We set ourselves to be disappointed by God when we think that He has to do this for me....

God is not bound by our will, but by His own....

And when we try to impose our will on Him, we are setting ourselves up for disaster...

That job may be great for you, but God knows enough to prevent you from getting it...

That choice may be clear as a bell for you, but God knows it would lead to too much temptation for you...

That friend or family member may be very important to you, but God prevents a relationship for a reason...

Make no mistake...

We obey, we live our lives led by the Spirit, we make choices....

This is not a call to throw your hands in the air...

But it is a reminder that a bigger hand is guiding your life...

And when we rest in the truth that we all do what we can but in the end we trust in the way of the Lord, we don't get disappointed...

Instead, we praise the Lord knowing that He has done what is best in His sight.

And we sleep well even if it wasn't the way that we thought best...

That is the wisdom of Joab, and even though we have our doubts about Joab....

Even thugs can speak truth at times...

Conclusion

Chapter 10 is an opportunity to overlook truth to get the drama of chapter 11...

But we should not be that short-sighted...

Every word of God is valuable, and I think we have found some value for us tonight...

1) We are to honor our promises both to those in the church and those outside...

2) We are to be careful of our counsel that we offer to others. Thinking the worst can lead to unnecessary and bigger problems.

3) God will always do what is best in His sight, even when it isn't the best in our sight..

And the best in God's sight is always the best for us even when that doesn't heal the sickness or land the job or get the position we wanted...

We need to be people who don't just say and pray, "Let the Lord's will be done."

We need to be people who live that truth as well...

Let us pray...

