

First Day on the Job

(2 Samuel 2:1-11)

2/24/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

The first job I ever had was working after school at a warehouse in Clinton SC.

I had been there about 20 minutes and went through orientation and then I was standing in the back of an 18 wheeler and loading it with boxes...

The conveyer belt came into the back of the truck, which was about 150 degrees...

And you had to keep getting the boxes off the conveyer belt and stacking them neatly in the truck at a pretty fast pace so that it wouldn't back up...

It was like trying to put a puzzle together in 15 seconds with every box...

And it was hot and fast without any breaks...

The guy on the truck training me was a master at it...

Great worker and great attitude, but in knew 30 minutes into it that I would never make it loading trucks..

The first day on the job can be an eye opening experience to say the least...

Trying to keep up with all the rules of the workplace...

Trying to be nice to everyone you meet and remember their names...

And trying to learn the basics of your new job can leave someone overwhelmed in a hurry...

I have been here for almost 20 months and some days, it still feels like the first day on the job with situations I encounter at times...

But that is part of learning, and I love what I do so it isn't all bad...

As we come to 2 Samuel 2, we come to what can be called David's First Day on the Job as the King of Israel...

Now, that is a little misleading because he won't be the king over all of Israel in an official capacity until chapter 7...

But now that Saul is dead, David begins his new role as the next king of Israel in a limited way in the

verses that we will look at today in 2 Samuel
2:1-11...

And David is going to learn a lot about his new job
in verses 1-11 tonight...

Let's look at these verses in 3 little sections
tonight...

In verses 1-4a, we will see how

I. Kingdom Work Requires Dependence (1-4a)

Followed by...

II. Kingdom Work Requires Kindness (4b-7)

And then finally...

III. Kingdom Work Brings Opposition (8-11)

Let's begin by reading verses 1-4 in 2 Samuel 2...

I. Kingdom Work Requires Dependence (1-4a)

2 Then it came about afterwards that David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up to one of the cities of Judah?" And the Lord said to him, "Go up." So David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron." 2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the [a]widow of Nabal the Carmelite. 3 And David brought up his men who were with him, each with his household; and they lived in the cities of Hebron. 4 Then the men of Judah came and there anointed David king over the house of Judah.

When we start on it chapter 2, we are just coming off news of the deaths of Saul and Jonathan in 2 Samuel 1...

Saul, the first king of Israel, was killed along with his son Jonathan at a battle in northern Israel on Mount Gilboa...

Word eventually spread to David in chapter 1 that these men had died...

That was important for 2 reasons...

One, David was really close to Jonathan.

They had been friends for years, even though Jonathan's father Saul had been trying to kill David for some some time...

But two, news of these deaths was also important because God had already anointed David as the next king over Israel way back in 1 Samuel 16..

God had sent Samuel to anoint David as the next king after Saul's continued disobedience...

And everyone including Saul knew that David was going to be the next king of Israel...

And so the news of Saul's death began a new era in the history of Israel as a nation...

This was the life-changing information that David was waiting to hear...

In His time, God had brought about the death of Saul and now David was going to be called upon to lead Israel...

Now, what makes 2 Samuel interesting is that this change in power isn't going to be like what we may think...

Next January, Barak Obama will peacefully hand over his presidency to the newly elected president and he will move out of the White House as the new president moves in.

We are blessed in this country to have peaceful exchanges of power in the top levels of government...

We take that for granted, but we shouldn't..

Many nations war for years over who their next leader will be...

People often die in clashes over who will rule next...

The same will be true for Israel after Saul's death..

Some people are going to make too kindly to David being the next king of Israel...

And we are going to see that unfold in the chapters and verses ahead...

But for now in chapter 2, you just need to see that David now has a new job...

And his life will never be the same...

That is what makes verse 1 of chapter 2 all the more important...

Usually a new job, a promotion, a raise, a better paycheck, a new car is a chance for us to pat ourselves on the back...

To reflect on how much we have accomplished and to let our head grow a little bigger and our view of God grow a little smaller...

Yet, not David.

What is the first thing that he does after the dust settles on the news of Saul's death?

He goes to the Lord and asks Him what to do next...

We would expect David to start making his own decisions at this point, right?

Isn't that what we do at times....

We say to ourselves...

"Well, we have been doing this long enough... We are kinda experts at how to live our life."

"I think I can handle this decision on my own."

So the thought of turning to the Lord for instruction often comes in a distant second to what we think we should do..

I mean there is no doubt that David probably has a good idea of what to do next now that Saul is king...

Leave the land of the Philistines where he has been hiding...

Head back to Israel and begin ruling as the next anointed king of Israel...

However, David never presumes to know the next step in his journey as the new king...

Instead, he seeks the word of God to know what to do next...

He doesn't even assume that he needs to head back to Israel until he hears it from the Lord...

And then he also doesn't assume that he can just pick any city in Israel, so he simply ask the Lord where to go...

That is a man who realizes that a promotion does mean that he has finally made it in life....

But rather it means that God has gotten him there,
and God is the only one who will keep him there...

For David, being a king did not bring independence
but rather kingdom work brought more dependence
upon the Lord...

How much do we need to learn from this ourselves,
right?

We tend to grow old and grow more dependent on
our wisdom rather than the Lord's wisdom at times..

It is easy to say to ourselves...

“Oh, I know how to handle this, and never offer a
prayer to God to include him in the decision at all.”

As we grow in the Lord, let us learn to be more de-
pendent rather than independent..

Let us turn to God's Word more and to our own
thoughts less and less...

David teaches us that there is much truth in
Proverbs 3:5-6...

***5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.***

***6 In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight.***

May we also be people that turn more and more to that verse even when we advanced in life..

David may be the new king, but he has not outgrown his britches....

And we may be mature believers but we never outgrow the wisdom of Scripture....

Therefore, David goes to the LORD and is told to go and settle in Hebron...

Here is map that we have seen for a number of weeks....

David has been in the Philistine town of Ziklag for a while living there with his family and his men and their families...

Yet now that Saul is dead, it is safe for David to return to Israel and God sends him to Hebron...

Here is another map that we will use tonight that shows the town of Hebron...

Why didn't God send David to Jerusalem?

Well, we are going to see that Hebron was chosen because it was a place of greater security for David...

It was the highest city in Judah...

It was centrally located in Judah...

It was the place where Abraham and the other founders of Israel were buried...

So, it had much symbolism for the people of Judah...

David will make it to Jerusalem, but for now, God sent him to Judah as the next king of Israel...

So, David left the land of the Philistines with all his men and their families...

And then we see in verse 4 that once he got there, the men of Judah came and anointed him as king over the house of Judah...

Now, remember is but one tribe in the land of Israel...

And their anointing of him was only a validation of the anointing that the Lord has given him back in 1 Samuel through the prophet Samuel..

And so, God's chosen King is now beginning his reign in Israel with a very small start...

David is a few chapters away from being king over the whole nation, but make no mistake about it...

Though God starts small, He completes what he sets out to do...

David will be the king over Israel, but for now, it is just encouraging to see David's kingdom get started...

That small start is a great picture of how God works in our lives at salvation...

When you are saved, you don't wake up the next day and have all of life mastered...

God starts small in our lives as the Spirit takes hold but the wonderful truth of sanctification is that God will complete his work on us...

And though we will never arrive at sinlessness in our lives, the Lord will grow us over time...

All of Israel will eventually come to David, but for now, it is simply encouraging to know that God is slowly working to bring that nation under David's rule..

And sometimes, it is just simply encouraging to know that God is slowly working to bring every part of our lives under His rule as well...

The kingdom of God is like a mustard seed, right?

You put it in good soil and it eventually grows to spread its shade over a wide area...

That was certainly of his David's kingdom began, and it is certainly true of how lives as believers grow as well...

And David's rule is simply going to grow because David trusts the Lord to grow it in His time...

Kingdom rule requires dependence upon the Lord..

So, he takes off to Hebron and in the middle of verse 4, we see another principle of kingdom rule...

II. Kingdom Work Requires Kindness (4b-7)

As David relocated to Hebron, his first act as king is to extend an olive branch of sorts to a part of Israel where he isn't king yet...

Though we haven't seen it yet, the northern tribes of Israel are not going to be on the David for King bandwagon...

For now, David is only king over Judah, and instead of bowling his way over the tribes in the north and taking them by force...

He simply begins to seek his kingship over all of Israel with an act of kindness...

Let's read about it and then we will talk about it...

Verse 4...

4 Then the men of Judah came and there anointed David king over the house of Judah.

And they told David, saying, "It was the men of Jabesh-gilead who buried Saul." 5 David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh-gilead, and said to them, "May you be blessed of the Lord because you have [b]shown this kindness to Saul your lord, and have buried him. 6 Now may the Lord [c]show lovingkindness and truth to you; and I also will [d]show this goodness to you, because you have

done this thing. 7 Now therefore, let your hands be strong and be [e]valiant; for Saul your lord is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

Once Judah affirmed David as their king, they tell David of how kindly the people of Jabesh-Gilead treated Saul's body...

This will take some serious concentration but if you think back to Saul's death in 1 Samuel 31...

Saul's body was captured by the Philistines who cut off his head and paraded it around their towns...

And then took his body and hung it on a city wall for everyone to see...

Well, the men of Jabesh-Gilead, which is Jewish town located near the place where Saul was kill, did not take too kindly to that...

So, they traveled all night to rescue Saul's body from the wall in Beth Shan...

They took it back to their town, cremated him, and then buried his ashes in their town..

It was a great show of respect for Saul because the people of the town owed a huge debt to Saul...

If you remember way back in 1 Samuel, Jabesh Gilead was about to overrun but the Ammonites, but Saul had rallied 300,00+ men to go to Jabesh and save the town...

And that town had never forgotten what Saul had done for them...

So, they came to his resume by taking his body down from the wall and giving it a proper burial as their king...

Needless to say, the town of Jabesh-Gilead was a fan of Saul in every way...

If there had been an election for king of Israel, Saul would have gotten every vote in Jabesh-Gilead..

They loved him, and rightly so...

So, David knows that the people of that town and others in the north will not take to kindly to a new king, even if God had anointed him to that role...

So in verses 5-7, David simply honors that town for their act of bravery to give Saul a proper burial..

Is this political?

Sure, I am sure that David hopes to gain from his act of kindness to them...

But don't think for minute that David wasn't sincerely grateful for their act of kindness to Saul...

David respected Saul in every way as the Lord's anointed king...

And I think he was truly grateful for their act of kindness to Saul's body...

And he simply calls on the Lord to bless them, and then David makes an incredible transition in the middle of verse 6...

Where he promises to also show kindness to them for their act of courage...

This is important because it David is now in a position to show kindness to them....

He is going to be their king, and these simple words in verse 7 affirm that fact when David simply says that Saul is dead and I am now king in Judah...

You know some people are so gifted in their speech...

They can cut you to pieces but smile while they do it and even make you smile while they do it...

David wasn't cutting the people of Jabesh-Gilead to pieces but he snuck in a gentle reminder that he is now king...

There is a lesson for us here...

Truth hurts at times...

But we need to tell it to people at times...

If not, we do them and the Lord a disservice...

But when we share truth, we don't have to be a bulldozer that just rolls over people with the truth...

We don't have to be a fire hose that knocks people down when we speak...

We simply can speak the truth but wrap it in kindness...

David didn't go to Jabesh-Gilead and hang up a big banner on main street that he was now their king...

He didn't cram the truth of his kingship down their throat, even though he could have as the rightful king over Israel....

But rather, David showed them kindness by praising their courage and then reminds them that he was now the king..

Now Jabesh is not a part of Judah, but when David said, I am now king in Judah, the people would know what that meant...

Let me just make a simple point here, and I have said this before...

But I was once a bulldozer of truth...

I would speak truth but I could be very unloving when I did it...

I could drench people with a firehose of truth when all they needed was a sprinkler..

And I know men like this today who think that being kind is the same as being political....

It is not.

Being kind is how believers should act...

Being gracious listeners and slow speakers is what we are commanded to be...

Jesus sends us out into the world and calls us to be as shrewd as serpents but as harmless as doves...

David was shrewd here in getting the truth across but he came across as a harmless dove by simply acting kind and complementing the people of Jabesh..

We could learn much from that ourselves...

Someone once said...

If you always give truth out of a fire hose, people will start avoiding the fire truck...

But if you put up a sprinkler, every kid in the neighborhood will show up..

And who is the greatest model of this?

Our own Lord who always spoke truth wrapped in compassion and kindness...

It is an amazing fact of the Christian life that people expect others to learn truth 10 times faster than it took them to learn it...

Let us speak truth, but let us be kind in doing it...

Kingdom Work Requires Dependence,...

Kingdom Work Requires Kindness...

#3..

III. Kingdom Work Brings Opposition (8-11)

Though we dont know how Jabesh Gilead respond to David's message and reminder of his kingship..

We do know how much of the rest of Israel respond to the thought of David as their next king....

Let's read verses 8-11...

8 But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, had taken [f]Ish-bosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim. 9 He made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, and over Benjamin, even over all Israel. 10 Ish-bosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he became king over Israel, and he was king for two years. The house of Judah, however, followed David. 11 The [g]time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

In a surprise move or maybe not a surprise move, the men of Saul have no interest in David as their next king...

We need to meet some of these people real quick...

Abner was Saul's right hand man...

He was a general in Saul's army but he was also Saul's cousin according to 1 Samuel 15..

And when Saul fell dead on Mount Gilboa, Abner took charge and simply placed Ish-bosheth on the throne of his father...

Ish-bosheth was Saul's only remaining son...

Jonathan had died with his father, so Abner installs Ish-bosheth as the king to succeed his father...

Now, some questions come up...

Well, maybe Abner didn't know that David was going to be the next king of Israel...

Maybe he was just doing what was customary by placing Saul's only son as his successor..

Two things to say here...

One, even Saul knew that David was to be the next king of Israel...

So it is highly unlikely that his general wouldn't know that as well...

But two, in the coming chapters, Abner is going to almost admit that he knew David was the next king...

So, what we see here is a rejection of David's rule in northern Israel...

Let's go back to our map for a second...

After Saul died, Abner took Ish-bosheth and set him up as king with headquarters in Mahananim..

Now, notice something here...

Saul's headquarters were in Gibeah which is on the heart of Israel...

So, why would Abner set up the next king so far east, almost on the outskirts of Israel...

Most likely, the Philistines controlled a large part of northern Israel at this point...

Remember when Saul was killed, the whole army of Israel was defeated and ran for their lives...

It is highly likely that the Philistines were actually in charge of much of the north....

However, Abner makes Ish-bosheth king of all of Israel...

So, what you have in effect is nation torn in two pieces...

One kingdom is led by David ruling Judah in the south and the other is led by Ish-bosheth ruling Israel in the north...

This is going to set up the conflicts that we see in the coming chapters...

And even the eventual split of the nation that will occur under David's son Solomon in the distant future...

But for now, we just simply need to observe that the kingdom of God brings division and opposition into the world...

We all know this...

Jesus talked about this...

Not only will nations fight over how they view God...

It will filter all the way down to families being split over their views of God...

Ahler is simply acting like so many people in Scripture in opposing the will of God..

He simply joins with others in the Bible and in world history who refuse to submit to the Lord's will...

David has been anointed king by God, but the simple truth is that people often reject the plans of God and insert their own plans...

And that leads to trouble on many fronts...

People are going to die because Abner has rejected the plan of God...

Now, let's bring this bear to our own lives...

First, the easy thing to apply to us is that we should be people submissive to the revealed will of God in our lives...

When God commands you to go and share the gospel, you don't reject that command because you have a better plan of saving people..

When God commands you to cut yourself off from certain sins, you don't tell God that you have a better plan and you are going to ease your way of that sin..

When God commands you to give with a cheerful heart, you don't reject that and give from a selfish heart..

Where God has clearly revealed his will, you are to obey, not insert your own ideas...

But a final word I would share about these last verses is this...

David is set to become king...

He has waited patiently for a long time, even refusing to kill Saul on a couple of occasions even knowing that would speed up the process...

And here he is with the road finally cleared after the death of Saul and he once again finds opposition to him being king...

Saul is dead, but it is like he is still fighting David from the grave...

I am sure that is frustrating but that is the life of those who follow the Lord...

There is trouble and opposition at every turn...

And may we learn from David here...

He doesn't lose patience and take matters into his own hands...

He simply trusts the Lord even in the face of people who oppose him and he continues to wait on the Lord's plan to unfold...

It is easy to sit here and say that is the right thing to do, but that is tough in the moment when your whole life has been geared to be king...

I would say this to us tonight...

Even when the path looks clear, be ready for another roadblock...

But never let that tempt you into clearing your own path...

If God has cleared all the road before, he will clear it again...

And if He doesn't that roadblock was for your own good....

God is going to clear the way for David eventually but it is going to take some time...

And we will look at that in the next few weeks...

Conclusion

For tonight, let's simply leave by recognizing that the first days on the job for David as king were a learning experience....

He learned that dependence on God is a right attitude even when life is good...

He learned that kindness is the best thing to wrap the truth in...

And he learned that opposition will come even when things seem to be going well...

And I pray that we have learned those same things as well...

God may not have chosen us to be the king of Israel but we are his kingdom citizens...

And I pray we live that way in a world that has rejected God as their king...

Let us pray.