

Walkers of the Lost Ark

(2 Samuel 6)

3/23/16; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

I kept a bolo tie that belonged to my granddad for a few years after his death...

A bolo tie is just a cord looped around the neck and joined by a pendant..

My granddad had a bolo tie with a real scorpion inside the pendant...

After he died, I wanted it...

Now, it wasn't anything special about the tie if you saw it in my closet...

It had very little value at all; it was just special to me because my granddaddy wore it more than any other his other bolo ties...

In order to appreciate something, you need to know its significance to the person..

The same can be said for the ark of the covenant in the OT...

If you read the OT, you find a description of an ark of the LORD that was simply a 3x2x2 wooden box overlaid with gold...

Here is a drawing of what the ark may have looked like...

The ark was a symbol of God's presence with Israel.

The ark went before Israel as they traveled and did battle..

It represented Israel's God to the world...

For us in the church age, the meaning and value of the ark to Israel is lost...

We don't have an ark that we set up in the church...

WE have God's presence through His Holy Spirit that indwells believers...

So, it is easy for us to just see a box covered in gold and carried by poles without much affection for it...

But we need to understand as we come to 2 Samuel 6 that the ark of God was important to the people of God in the OT...

And it was very important to David...

Chapter 6 is going to be the story of the ark of the LORD being taken to Jerusalem...

If you remember from the last few weeks, David is now the king of Israel...

Though it didn't come without some opposition, David was finally crowned as the king over all of Israel...

And he went to work to establish his kingdom rule from the city of Jerusalem...

Jerusalem was a central location and a well protected city, and once David had removed the Jebusites from Jerusalem, he sets up shop from there...

And first renovation project in Jerusalem is to get the ark of God into the city...

Now, the question you may have is....

Why is it so important for the ark to be in Jerusalem?

What's the big deal?

Well, since the ark represented God's presence with His people and since David wanted to honor the Lord as their new king...

It was important for the symbol of the Lord's presence to be in the town that was going to be central in David's kingdom....

It is kinda like the flag is the symbol of our country, and you would expect to see flags in our capital...

David is going to make his capital in Jerusalem, and as a man who wants to honor God in all things in His kingdom, it only makes sense to move the ark of God's presence to the capital city...

Now, the process of moving the ark to Jerusalem is no easy task.

God had laid out very specific guidelines for how the ark was to be built and how the ark was to be handled.

It could only be moved by the priests, but even then, God was detailed in his instructions about the ark...

All of that is going to be very important as the ark makes the trip to Jerusalem...

For us tonight, let us consider the reactions to the ark of God by the people in this chapter...

As a symbol of God's presence, the ark caused a various reactions, so let's dig into chapter 6 to find a proper reaction to he presence of God...

We are going to look at chapter 6 in 3 parts...

I. God's Presence Causes Fear (1-11)

Let's begin by reading the first 2 verses of chapter 6...

1 Now David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. 2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him to [a]Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the Name, the very name of the Lord of hosts who is [b]enthroned above the cherubim.

We are going to have to reach deep into our memory banks to set the stage for verses 1-2..

If you remember way back in 1 Samuel, the last time we got a report about the ark, it was in Israel...

Here is map that may jar your memory...

In 1 Samuel 4, Israel was at war with the Philistines, and the ark was captured by the Philistines and taken to the Philistine town of Ashdod.

In Ashdod, they had a false god that had the head of a man but the body of a fish.

The god's name was Dagon, and if you remember, the Philistines took the ark of God and put it before their god to show that Israel's God was the servant of their god....

But overnight, the statue of Dagon had fallen down to the ark and broke into two parts...

In the days after that, the whole town of Ashdod broke out in tumors...

The people of the town may have been pagans but they were no dummies...

They figured that the ark must be causing all their problems, so they shipped it to another Philistine town, the town of Gath...

And to make a long story short, every Philistine town that the ark went to, God brought trouble on the people..

Eventually in 1 Samuel 6, the Philistines tell Israel to come get the ark of their God...

And the ark is retrieved from the Philistines and is eventually located to the town of Kiriath-Jerim to the household of Abinadab.

This town was also known as Baale-Judah, and it remained there for the rest of 1 Samuel up until 2 Samuel 6 and the verses we just read...

I think it is interesting to note that Saul never expressed any interest in the ark as part of his reign over Israel...

It seems that David's aim to get the ark back to a place of prominence in Israel is another way to see how different David and Saul are...

So, David and 30,000 men and probably a huge crowd of others go to Kiriath-Jearim to get the ark of God from the house of Abinadab..

Let's read verses 3-5....

3 They [c]placed the ark of God on a new cart that they might bring it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were leading the new cart. 4 So they brought it with the ark of God from the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Ahio was walking ahead of the ark. 5 Meanwhile, David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with all kinds of instruments made of [d]fir wood, and with lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets and cymbals.

Now, things are going pretty good at this point, but you need to take note of verse 3...

David and his men make a mistake in putting the ark of God on a cart...

In the book of Exodus and in the book of Numbers, God designed the ark to be carried by the priests...

You can see from this drawing of the ark that God designed rings for the ark and poles to place in the rings so that the priests could carry the ark with the poles..

However, David appears to have forgotten the word of God or is ignorant of it as he places the ark on a cart to be pulled to Jerusalem....

And everybody begins to party that the ark is headed to Jerusalem...

However, the party is interrupted in verses 6-11...

6 But when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out toward the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen nearly upset it. 7 And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzzah, and God struck him down there for [e]his irreverence; and he died there by the ark of God. 8 David became angry because [f]of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah, and that place is called [g]Perez-

uzzah to this day. 9 So David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" 10 And David was unwilling to move the ark of the Lord into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. 11 Thus the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.

As the ark leaves town on a cart and the celebration begins, all is well until the threshing floor in Nacon...

Wherever this is, we simply know that the ground must have been bumpy and the ark began to slip off the cart...

And good ole Uzzah simply reaches out his hand to keep it from falling off the cart...

However, touching the ark was forbidden by God and punishable by death...

So, the music stops in verse 7 as the whole crowd watches Uzzah die by the side of the ark..

This upsets David and fills him with fear of the LORD.

Why was he angry?

Maybe he was angry at himself for forgetting God's commands about the ark and being partially responsible for the slip of the ark..

Maybe he was angry at Uzzah for doing an incredibly dumb thing like touching the ark...

Maybe he is angry at God for striking down Uzzah for an what seems to be an honest mistake...

I think David was simply angry at himself for putting Uzzah in this position..

David should have known better.

He should have remembered the word of God better to protect himself but also all the people around him...

And look there's lesson for us here...

We know the Lord; we love the Lord; but we are never to forget the holiness of God...

God requires obedience and sometimes what seem to be harsh penalties for disobedience are simply reminders to us that God takes our obedience seriously.

It is easy in the church to fall into the same trap..

It is easy for Christians to all into the same trap...

We have a tendency to overlook what we think are minor sins, presuming that the Lord is ok with them..

We tell little lies...

We speak gossip but dress it up in “prayer requests.”

We hold back a little on our giving..

We watch movies that take the Lord’s name in vain...

We are entertained by TV that glorifies adultery and murder and violence of all kinds...

We think evil thoughts but that’s ok as long as we don’t act on them...

Yet, all of this is sin and disobedience to God’s revealed Word...

And God takes it very seriously...

So we sometimes need to be shocked back into our pursuit of holiness by the severity of discipline that we sometimes see from the Lord...

The Lord was not severe in his punishment of Uzzah; he touched the ark and he died, which is what God had commanded in His Word...

And we need to be mindful that though the church age is different in some ways from the OT, God is still just as holy...

Remember Ananias and Sapphira?

They were members of the church but they were killed for telling a little white lie about how much they were giving God...

God takes his holiness seriously and so should we...

All of this really shakes up David....

He is angry and then filled with fear...

He thought God would be pleased with his efforts, but he had forgotten that God is not just concerned with effort but also with obedience..

So, David simply leaves the ark with Obed for 3 months...

Maybe David was thinking that God's wrath would be poured out on Obed and his family, but that didn't happen at all..

In fact, the ark brought blessing to Obed for the 3 months it was there...

However, the lesson of these opening verses is this...

The presence of the Lord brings fear...

God is holy and his punishments for disobedience were sure..

However, we also need to see another side of God's presence in the next set of verses...

II. God's Presence Causes Joy (12-19)

Verse 12...

12 Now it was told King David, saying, "The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God." David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness. 13 And so it was, that when the bearers of the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. 14 And David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, and David was [h]wearing a linen ephod. 15 So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouting and the sound of the trumpet. 16 Then it happened as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David that Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart. 17 So they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent which David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. 18 When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offering, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. 19 Further, he distributed to all the people, to all the multitude of Israel, both to men and women, a cake of bread and one of dates and

one of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed each to his house.

David gets word that Obed isn't dead after all...

Instead, God had blessed Obed and his family for all the days the ark had been in their possession...

This changes David's fear into joy...

Maybe God's wrath is over and God is now pleased of the ark to be carried to Jerusalem..

David realizes what he thought before, the ark brings blessing for obedience and judgment for disobedience....

And though it isn't spelled out clearly in this next section, it appears that David went to the book of Numbers and figured out that God wanted the ark carried, not rolled on a cart into the city...

You notice in verse 13 the phrase, the "bearers of the ark" which suggests they were carrying the ark now...

And then you see that David takes note of their steps as well...

Which suggests that they were walking with the ark and not rolling it on a cart..

Either way, the ark has brought joy to David...

As he dances before the LORD and was celebrating with all the people with music and shouting...

Now, take note of what David was doing here..

Verse 14 says that David was wearing only a lined ephod...

And ephod was close fitting garment worn by the priests as they ministered before the Lord..

For David, he would have worn the ephod under his kingly attire of a fancy robe and the like..

The ephod would be like the undershirt that is worn by men under their business attire...

It would be like Barak Obama pulling off his suit and dancing in his undershirt at his inauguration..

Now, not everyone liked this...

You can see one of David's wives reactions in verse 16....

She despised David for his dancing and carrying on before Lord..

We will get back to that in a minute, but before we do, take note of verses 17-19...

David delivers the ark to a tent that he had pitched for it and he offers sacrifices to the Lord and the gives everyone a couple cakes to take back to their house and celebrate...

The focus of these verse with the exception of Michal is the focus of joy in being in the presence of the Lord.

David is happy when the ark makes it to Jerusalem.

The people are celebrating when the ark reaches Jerusalem..

There is joy in knowing that God's presence is now associated with David's kingdom in Israel...

We all understand that or we should understand that there is joy in the presence of the Lord.

Heaven will not be a place of peaceful rest, but a place of unending joy for believers...

There is joy in knowing the Lord.

I often tell people that true happiness, meaning happiness that lasts, is only found in being in a right relationship with the Lord.

Christians are not people who have had their joy taken but they are people who have found true joy.

That is why a complaining and bitter Christian is a contradiction to what it means to know the Lord.

That is why a frowning, sulking, pouting Christian is the opposite of what a Christian should look like...

I am not saying that the world doesn't pull us down at times, but if the pattern of your life is bitterness and complaint, I would be concerned about my salvation...

If you are truly saved and your sins are truly forgiven, you can always find joy in this life...

And David was filled with joy as the ark made its way into the city of Jerusalem...

God had called David out of the shepherd fields..

God had protected David from the murderous threats of Saul.

God had cleared the way for David to be king over all of Israel..

Today was a day of joy and celebrating...

And David was dancing and shouting in response to what the Lord had done for him...

Now, these two sections....

Verses 1-11 and verses 12-19 are right beside each other for a reason...

In verse 1-11, we are reminded that the presence of the Lord is a reason to be reverent and fearful...

In verses 12-19, we are reminded that the presence of the Lord is a reason to be joyful and celebrating...

So you say, make up your mind preacher, which is it?

Are we to be filled with fear or joy in the presence of the Lord?

And the answer is both.

The Lord would fill us with a fearful joy.

Let me give you an example of what I mean...

If you have ever performed before a crowd, you will know what I mean....

Let's say you are called to sing at a wedding...

Well, you love to sing and it brings you great joy to use the talent that God gave you...

But as you step onto stage, you are filled with fear looking at the crowd...

There's never a time I get up to preach that I don't feel the same tension of fear and joy....

I get great joy out of taking God's Word and delivering it to His people with explanation and exhortation...

But I never stand up that I am not struck with the fear of knowing I am standing before God and His people when I do it...

It is a fearful joy...

But let me offer you one more application of this, and we will see this more in the final section...

But let me introduce it...

A fearful joy also guides our worship of the Lord.

There is no doubt that we should worship the Lord with joy, but there is also no doubt that we should worship the Lord with fear as well...

Some churches and some Christians get so out of balance here...

Some only want happy upbeat worship of the Lord...

Some only want fearful worship of the Lord...

But the truth is that you need both forms of worship in your life and in the church...

Too much fear makes God a distant and cold God and you lose the sense of God's love.

Too much joy makes God your buddy and friend and you lose the sense of God's holiness..

That is why a balanced Christian and a balanced church worships God both ways on regular basis...

Sometimes, we simply need to be still before the Lord in our worship...

And sometimes, we need to express our joy before the Lord in our worship...

Now, here is where it gets tricky...

Our pride sometimes gets in the way...

Some people want to appear so reverent and holy in their worship so that people will look at them and say, “wow, he sure has a great relationship with the Lord.”

And some people want to appear so joyful and happy in their worship so that people will look at them and say, “wow, he sure has a great relationship with the Lord.”

Regardless of how we worship the Lord, the focus of worship is always on the Lord and never on ourselves...

And we need to be careful, lest our pride lead us to draw attention to ourselves and not too our Lord.

Here is great verse of Scripture that should guide your life and your worship...

Psalm 2:11....

11

***[k]Worship the Lord with [l]reverence
And rejoice with trembling.***

Rejoice with trembling...

That is great balance to our reaction to and our worship of the Lord...

David trembled but David danced.

That leads us to our final section of this chapter in verse 20-23...

III. God's Worship Causes Division (20-23)

So the ark is in Jerusalem.

The people are happy.

David is happy.

But he gets home and one of his wives throws a bucket of water on his happiness...

Verse 20...

20 But when David returned to bless his household, Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel distinguished himself today! He uncovered himself today in the eyes of his servants' maids as one of the foolish ones shamelessly uncovers himself!"
21 So David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel; therefore I will celebrate before the Lord. 22 I will be more lightly esteemed than this and will be humble in my own eyes, but

with the maids of whom you have spoken, with them I will be distinguished.” 23 Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

David arrives home preparing to bless his family, but instead he is blessed out by Michal..

Notice how Michal is referred to in this chapter..

With one exception, she is called Michal, the daughter of Saul..

The Lord inspired the writer of 2 Samuel to draw attention to where Michal was coming from with her remarks...

She was acting like Saul's daughter and not David's wife in this chapter...

And her main concern was how David had worshipped the Lord in front of all the people...

He had stripped off his kingly outfit and was down to his fruit of the loom ephod...

And on top of that, he was dancing in it before the PEOPLE...

David simply responds, “Look, I was dancing before the Lord. I wasn’t concerned about the people that were there. My focus was the Lord.”

I was worshipping Him.

He is the One who has made this day possible.

I am really a nobody who God has made a somebody...

Sure, I may be king, but God is my king and I am just a humble servant who was worshipping my King...

And here you see division over worship...

Michal is only concerned with the outward appearance of her husband...

What will people think David?

You were only in your ephod when you were dancing...

Our neighbors will be so embarrassed..

I won’t even be able to show my face at the Walmart in Jerusalem for weeks...

What were you thinking, David?

We have a kingly image to maintain!

Michal wanted David to be a model of dignity for the people...

David on the other hand became a model of worship.

Now, that is not to say that worship must include dancing and shouting in your underclothes...

But it is to say this...

True worship is not concerned with image...

True worship is concerned with the Lord.

Now, let's step back and apply this to our world..

I see churches that are too concerned with traditions and customs and they end up creating environments where it is hard to worship the Lord...

On the other hand, I see churches out of control with people running the aisles and shouting and screaming where it is equally hard to worship the Lord..

Then let me add this...

Everybody has their own opinion of the best way to worship the Lord, and they are quick to share it with you to get you to worship like they do...

When you add all that up, you end up finding division in churches and people usually end up at places that fits their style of worship...

That can be good or bad...

Because worship style is not the only factor in choosing a church....

Sometimes, they may sing the songs you want but the pastor couldn't find a biblical sermon if their lives depended on it...

Other times, their worship style may not be perfect but you know you are going to get a biblical message...

In those cases, I choose the teaching over the worship style...

I can always close my eyes and worship the Lord without the distraction of having to look around.

That is why I love sitting up front...

Fewer distractions...

And I will tell you this...

Nothing is more distracting than having to look at someone who is trying to draw attention to themselves in worship...

That was not the case with David in this passage...

He was worshipping the Lord with humility and reverence.

Unfortunately, Michal was only concerned with image and dignity...

David was only worried about what God saw.

Michal was only worried about what others saw.

And to show how serious God takes worship, He prevents Michal from ever having children.

Conclusion

What do we take home with us tonight?

1. God's presence fills us with fear.
2. God's presence fills us with joy.
3. God's worship fills us with Him.

David was a man after God's own heart.

He wanted the Lord at the center of His kingdom..

And he wanted the Lord at the center of his worship.

As we look at the OT, let me end by reminding us of the presence of the Lord in our day...

We don't have an ark that we carry around with us...

But don't think for a minute that the Lord isn't present with you wherever you go...

You take Him with you when you are tempted, and the fear of Him should lead to your obedience...

You take Him with you when you are suffering, and the joy of knowing Him should give you hope...

You take Him with you in your worship of Him and
He sees you when you sing, when you give, and
when you listen to His word being taught...

And his presence with you should cause you to
worship Him fully from the heart with your words,
your money and your attention...

Let us pray.