

LIFE OF DAVID (16): DAVID'S LAST WORDS & JESUS' LAST WORDS

INTRODUCTION: Today we come to our penultimate sermon from our Life of David sermon series. Next Sunday Cat will conclude the series with Psalm 23 (The Lord's my Shepherd) which is arguably David's most famous Psalm. We'll also ponder Jesus' claim of being the Good Shepherd.

This Sunday we are considering David's last words – his last words in public and his last words in private. Then we'll consider Jesus' last recorded words - His last words on the cross and last words to His disciples before He ascended to heaven.

Our last words reveal something of what is going on in our head and heart.

That's true when it's the last words to our loved one as they go out the door. For example, *"Love you, see you later – hope today goes well."* Or *"Arrgggghh, I can't believe you just said that, did that, didn't do that, forgot that!"*

It's true too when it's the ultimate parting words before a loved one dies. I think it's worth pointing out that not all parting words are textbook perfect, or always the ones we want to give or hear. I remember one person speaking about their mum dying and the look she had on her face and her words and noises of pain and confusion. It troubled this person, and they shared that it made remembering the rest of her difficult. As we had chatted and prayed about this, I suggested/offered that her life shouldn't be interpreted through her final look and words, but her final look and words should be held in light of the rest of her life and words and looks. The person found this helpful.

This is not a Dan insight, it's actually one of the important principles when it comes to reading the Bible. We don't interpret the Bible through one verse or one wee part of the story; we interpret a verse in light of the whole Bible and big Jesus' story. Doing this is really helpful when it comes to knowing God's heart for us. What we will see in David's last words (public and private) is a man after God's heart who was seriously flawed, full of contradictions and conflicting motives. So, nothing like me!! Nothing like you!!

What we will see in Jesus' last words is that Jesus' public and private persona were exactly the same. His final look and words on the cross and his final words to his friends before his ascension matched perfectly and were absolutely consistent with his character and nature and his whole life, death and resurrection. Jesus (thank God) is revealed to be the greater David, the True Messiah, the One who is perfectly righteous and merciful, the ultimate King who "gets us!" in a radically different way.

Joan is now going to read from 1 Chronicles chapter 28:1-10 and chapter 29 verses 26-28. This is the word of God.

BIBLE: 1 Chronicles 28:1-10 (David's last public words) & 1 29:26-28

1David summoned all the officials of Israel to assemble at Jerusalem: the officers over the tribes, the commanders of the divisions in the service of the king, the commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, and the officials in charge of all the property and livestock belonging to the king and his sons, together with the palace officials, the warriors and all the brave fighting men.

2King David rose to his feet and said: "Listen to me, my fellow Israelites, my people. I had it in my heart to build a house as a place of rest for the ark of the covenant of the LORD, for the footstool of our God, and I made plans to build it. **3**But God said to me, 'You are not to build a house for my Name, because you are a warrior and have shed blood.'

4"Yet the LORD, the God of Israel, chose me from my whole family to be king over Israel forever. He chose Judah as leader, and from the tribe of Judah he chose my family, and from my father's sons he was pleased to make me king over all Israel. **5**Of all my sons—and the LORD has given me many—he has chosen my son Solomon to sit on the throne of the kingdom of the LORD over Israel. **6**He said to me: 'Solomon your son is the one who will build my house and my courts, for I have chosen him to be my son, and I will be his father. **7**I will establish his kingdom forever if he is unswerving in carrying out my commands and laws, as is being done at this time.'

8"So now I charge you in the sight of all Israel and of the assembly of the LORD, and in the hearing of our God: Be careful to follow all the commands of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever.

9"And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.

10Consider now, for the LORD has chosen you to build a house as the sanctuary. Be strong and do the work."

...David son of Jesse was king over all Israel. **27**He ruled over Israel forty years—seven in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. **28**He died at a good old age, having enjoyed long life, wealth and honour. His son Solomon succeeded him as king.

Yeah for King David! Well, yes and no! **SHOW PIC**

There's much here that is good. These are stirring parting words that echo Moses' and Joshua and Samuel's. **8... Be careful to follow all the commands of the LORD your God, that you may possess this good land and pass it on as an inheritance to your descendants forever.**

David's charge to Solomon sounds good – v9 **“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every desire and every thought. If you seek him, he will be found by you; but if you forsake him, he will reject you forever.**

This doesn't just sound good, this is good, really good. It's yes and amen stuff. But there is more going on in David's head and heart than this.

In 1 Kings Chapter 2, we are let in on David's last/parting words to his son Solomon. His words start off great...*I'm about to die...be strong, show yourself as a man....love the Lord you God and walk in his ways...keep his commandments...if your sons do the same and follow God wholeheartedly...you shall always have a descendent on the throne.* Good stuff isn't it! Then, in the same breath, David says to Solomon *my enemies, those who have betrayed and insulted us like Joab, Adonijah and Shimei you need to get em!* David in the midst of calling Solomon to be faithful to God and the covenant is planning multiple assassinations for political and personal reasons – to consolidate family power and get payback. Do you remember the story about Shimei from two weeks ago? **SHOW PIC** Shimei was hurling stones and insults David's way from across a ravine. In that moment David extended grace and mercy and exercised restraint because the covenant love of God and God being the one who judges and avenges was prominent in his heart and mind.

What a mess, what a contradiction, what a contrast. *Vengeance is not the Lord's it's mine! Payback business is not finished, ensuring our tribe and house triumphs over others needs more underhand, destructive and life taking work. Amen.* **SHOW PIC**

David and Solomon conspiring in this way is not a good start for Solomon's rule and reign. These are the foundations that Solomon builds on as Solomon starts laying the foundations of the temple. The conflict and contradiction and the abuse of power increases with Solomon. Solomon who starts off by asking God for wisdom (*yeah!*) makes more and more unwise choices.

Solomon marries hundreds of women for political alliances, adopts their gods, and introduces the worship of these gods into Israel. He accumulates vast wealth, builds up the army, not just for defence but to go on the attack. In the building of the temple, Solomon reinstates slavery and starts using slaves for his building projects. He does the opposite of what God has said a king should be like in Deuteronomy chapter 17. 'Wise' Solomon is revealed to be incredibly unwise. The author is deliberately highlighting the contradictions. By the time Solomon dies he resembles Pharaoh the king of Egypt that God's people needed delivered from.

Solomon's son Rehoboam is even worse. There is civil war and the Kingdom of Israel splits into two rival kingdoms. The Southern Kingdom with Jerusalem at its heart is Judea. The Northern Kingdom is Israel whose capital ends up being Samaria. Two rival kingdoms with rival temples and centres of worship. The Samaritans go on to be viewed by many in Jerusalem and Judea as ungodly, unclean heretics and half breeds to be despised and fought.

The north/south rivalry plays out in awful ways. Out of the next 39 kings none of the 19 in the north are said to be faithful to God. In the south only 8 out of the 20 are described as faithful to God. Neither the north nor the south gets a pass mark.

Things get so bad - violence spirals out of control, coup follows coup follow coup, horrible injustice abounds, the worst kind of idolatry and practices are practiced even in the temple. Enough is enough so God uses pagan Babylon to judge his people. The temple is destroyed, and many are taken captive back to Babylon. God's people are in exile. Is God done with Israel? Is God done with his people? Is God done with royal line of David? Is God done with us sinful humans? Is God done with his covenant and commitment? The answer is...no. God is not done because God is not like David or Solomon or Rehoboam or Abraham or Moses or you and I.

I swear to God I'll keep up my end of the deal.

I swear on my life I won't let you down.

I promise to be faithful, cross my heart hope to die.

Our relationship will be broken? Over my dead body.

These are promises none of us have kept or can keep because we are compromised, conflicted, self-centred, sinful humans.

But God literally and personally keeps these promises.

What we find is that God's covenant is sealed in his blood.

David's and Solomon's sin is serious - deadly serious.

God can't just turn a blind eye to that.

God can't just turn a blind eye to our sin.

O well, never mind.

As Apostle Paul in no uncertain terms tells us in Romans chapter 6 verse 23 **the wages of sin is death.**

So, what is God to do about David?

God would take the punishment David was due on himself.

Jesus would take the wages of David's sin – death, death on a cross.

The divine righteous anger and punishment due to David for his idolatry, treachery, abuse of power, adultery and murder would be poured on God the Son.

The covenant would hold because it was literally over Jesus' dead body.

The cross doesn't just show that God takes suffering seriously.

The God of the cross shows us that he takes sin deadly seriously.

God/Jesus took his commitment to David deadly seriously.

Jesus died for David and his mercy was in a way backdated/credited to him.

Forgiveness does not mean saying something wrong is ok and doesn't matter.

Grace and mercy don't mean there isn't earthly justice or consequences or punishment. That is to be pursued.

What about you and I?

What is God to do with our sin?

In the same way, God/Jesus doesn't just take our suffering seriously, he takes our sin seriously - deadly seriously.

In the same way, on the cross he pays the price.

He is punished in our place.

God's righteousness is credited, His mercy is extended, His grace is gifted to all who come to Him on the cross.

Again, that doesn't mean there isn't earthly justice or consequences. That is to be pursued.

Jesus dying for us doesn't magically make our wrongs right or mean there aren't difficult things to work through or that everything is instantly resolved.

But it does mean that the wages of sin against a holy God have been paid for. **For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.** That's how Apostle Paul completes that verse (Romans 6:23)

On the Cross in the Gospel according to John, we read Jesus' final words. This is from Chapter 19 verse 28 and 29. **SHOW PIC**

BIBLE: John 19:28-30 **28**After this, knowing that everything had now been accomplished, and to fulfil the Scripture, Jesus said... **29****"It is finished."** And bowing His head, He yielded up His spirit.

In these last words God reveals his heart for the ones he loves who are complex, conflicted and compromised humans. These last words are in line with all of Jesus' words - public and private. Jesus' words and actions line up in his death on the cross as they lined up in his life. Jesus is dying at the hands of his enemies, at the hands of those he created, and what we find is that His '*get em*' is so different from David's.

It's not *get em* with wrath - It's *get em with mercy*.

It's not It's not *get em* with vengeance – it's *get em with grace*.

It's not *get em* with payback – it's *get em with love*.

It's not *get em* with underhand, destructive, life-taking work – it's *get em* with a public demonstration of his love and life-giving and life-saving atoning work.

When Jesus says *it is finished* it also means his saving work, this saving work is complete because he is not a sacrificial lamb but the Lamb of God and the once and for all atoning sacrifice.

As the poem goes...

*Take heart, for my saving work is complete,
It cannot be added to by mighty feat,
Nor improved upon by your prevailing,
Nor undone by human frailty or failing.*

Jesus last words on the cross are connected to Jesus' last recorded words to the disciples. In Acts chapter 1, what the crucified and risen, just about to ascend to heaven Jesus says is fascinating. Here we get to see God/Jesus' heart laid bare. We get to see the kind of King Jesus is and the kind of Kingdom he brings.

Acts 1:1-7 **1**In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach **2**until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. **3**After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God.

So, what's Jesus doing with the earthly time he has remaining? He's teaching his friends about the Kingdom of...David? Solomon? Israel? Judah? No, he's teaching them about the kingdom of...God!

40 days of Jesus demonstrating and teaching them... *I'm this kind of king not that kind of kind. My kingdom is this kind of Kingdom not that kind of kingdom.* And goodness they, I, we need help with understanding this. We need divine help in seeing who King of Kings Jesus really is and we need help to join in with his kind of rule and reign.

4On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. **5**For John baptized with ^a water, but in a few days you will be baptized with ^b the Holy Spirit."

6Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

40 days of teaching them about the Kingdom of God and they ask...*so Lord are you going to restore the kingdom to Israel!* In essence - *are you going to restore the Kingdom to the good old days under David! Are you going to favour us over them, my tribe over their tribe? My kind of people over that kind of people?*

Argghhhhhh! But my goodness Jesus is patient with them and us. **7**He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8**But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus' *get em* is so different from David's and Solomon's and yours and mine.
Go get em...

...with my love and truth and grace and mercy and justice...

...with the good news that God has come on the ultimate rescue mission.

...with the good news that sin and death has been defeated and that all who die with me will rise with me.

Go get em in...Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the world.

Yes, go get em Samaritans or Samaritan equivalents, the people you take issue with

Go get those who are like you and not like you.

Go get them who are from your tribe and not from your tribe.

Go get em and bless them and love them and pray and seek their well-being in Jesus' name amen.

Go reflect my character and nature and heart to the world.

*Go tell the world my love and covenant and saving work and forgiveness and friendship is on offer not just to one tribe or tongue or nation but to all. **you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.***

PRAY

Lord Jesus, would you come and get us.

Get us with your righteousness and holiness.

Get us in a way that opens us up to your beauty, glory, majesty and splendour.

Get us in a way that knocks me and us off 'the throne'

Yours is the kingdom and power and glory.

Lord Jesus, get us with your love and grace and mercy.

Get us in a way...

...that helps us to come clean in front of one another.

...that stops us from looking good in the presence of judgement and helps us to look bad in the presence of love.

Holy Spirit come. Help us know, love, enjoy, obey and reflect Jesus.

Help our *get em* to be in Jesus' Spirit and in His name we pray. Amen.