

2 Samuel 1:1-27 | “A Shocking Reaction”
Preached on July 3, 2022 by Pastor Matt Brown

You can turn in your Bibles this morning to 2 Samuel 1.

We have concluded the book of 1 Samuel, but now we move into 2 Samuel.

You kind of have to go into 2 Samuel from 1 Samuel, for it’s like only reading half of a book, if you didn’t.

In fact, 1st and 2nd Samuel were originally just one book in the Hebrew text.

So here we are entering into 2 Samuel. *[pauseeee]*

Have you ever been shocked by how someone responded?

Back in early 2014, there was this video that was going around of a man who fell through the ceiling.¹

It was in a golf shop, and in the video, everything seemed normal until a man came crashing down, falling through the ceiling and landing on the floor.

You would think that the reaction of the man who fell, and for those who watched it happen would be one of shock and making sure that the guy was OK.

But instead, they had a shocking reaction. *[pause]*

A couple seconds after the man fell through the ceiling, one man who watched him simply said, “Hey Ryan.”

And in response to this, the man who fell said, “Hey Billy.”

But that’s not all, the man who watched it happen, tells him not to move, as he gets his phone, and you’re thinking, “OK, he’s going to call 911.”

But instead, he gets his phone in order to take pictures of the ceiling.

Now that’s a shocking reaction. *[pause]*

Well as you look at 2 Samuel 1, we see that David has a shocking reaction to the death of Saul.

Saul had just died at the end of 1 Samuel, and now the news will get to David in the beginning of 2 Samuel.

But what will be his reaction? Let’s READ THE PASSAGE to see it. *[pauseeee]*

¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mfMVVAoMXj4&t=7s>.

This Amalekite comes to David with the news of the death of Saul, and he explains that it was actually *he* who killed Saul at Saul's request. *[pause]*

Now if you remember from last week, this goes against the true account of how Saul died.

So we see that this Amalekite is making up the story in order to get something good from being the one who killed Saul for David. *[pause]*

He thinks that he will be rewarded, but sadly for him, David responds in the opposite way of what he expected...

...And instead of getting rewarded, he's executed. *[pause]*

But why? Because he should have known better than to kill the Lord's anointed.

So the Amalekite gets killed for something that he didn't do, but justice is still done, for he gets killed for the horrible lie that he tells. *[pause]*

And in the midst of telling us what happens with this Amalekite, the writer includes David's response of grief.

David is utterly grieved about what happened to Saul, Jonathan, and the army of Israel.

And then David laments their downfall in a poetic lament that was to be taught to Israel. *[pauseeee]*

As you consider this chapter, what's amazing is that David responds in this way at all.

Wouldn't you rejoice if you were in David's shoes?

But that's not how he responds, instead, we see love emerge out of David.

And through David's response, we see that no matter what we go through, we should have...

I. A love for God and God's people.

Love for self is always tempting, but sometimes love for self is especially tempting.

This is because some situations make it harder to show love for ourselves. *[pause]*

When people are over at your house and watching if you will love your spouse, it makes it harder to love yourself over them.

But in situations where people expect you to be focused on yourself more, love for self becomes really tempting. *[pause]*

Think of David's situation.

He was anointed and promised the kingship, but for years he was prevented by Saul and hunted down by him.

Now Saul was out of the way.

You would think that David's ambition would kick in, and he would take advantage of Saul's death.

And even the Amalakite thought that's what David's response would be.

All eyes were on how David would respond, and people expected him to put himself first. [pause]

Wouldn't David step up and say, "OK guys, make me king now, right this instant."

Wouldn't David be starting to measure and look for a place to set up his throne? [pauseeee]

A great temptation for David at this moment in time would be *self-promotion*.

Self-promotion is our world's way, and it's seen in our "dog-eat-dog" world.

One article on *Forbes* even claimed that "Self promotion is a leadership skill."²

But what do you see in David here?

He doesn't show a love for self, but a love for God and God's people above all.

You see a passion for the things of God, not for personal gain, as he was all about God's kingdom and glory. [pause]

He doesn't seize the kingdom by force and rejoice over Saul's death.

He definitely wasn't someone removing his political rivals.

In fact, he even killed the person who claimed to have killed his political rival! [pauseeee]

David didn't need self-promotion because he trusted and patiently waited on the Lord's promotion of him.

Everything was placed under the Lordship of God. [pauseeee]

Through the incident of killing the Amalakite, David showed the utmost respect for the position of the Lord's anointed.

You can't simply kill the Lord's anointed and be guiltless, for it is the Lord's anointed. [pause]

² Marcus, Bonnie. "Self Promotion Is A Leadership Skill." *Forbes*, 2 Mar. 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bonniemarcus/2015/03/02/self-promotion-is-a-leadership-skill/?sh=6b56d04c4e77>.

For most of us, we would be like, “Eh, I know he was the king, but it was Saul, you know, so it’s not a big deal that this guy is claiming to kill him. In fact, it greatly benefits me.”

But David didn’t see the fall of Israel’s king as a thing to rejoice over, but something that should be grieved. *[pauseeee]*

To not pursue self-promotion, but to be upset over the killing of the Lord’s anointed, who kept trying to kill him, is a testament to what God can do in a life, as it goes directly against our world’s ways. *[pause]*

Imagine Christians who don’t self-promote when others fall, but who think about what’s best for God’s kingdom.

That should be us. *[pauseeee]*

David’s love for God is also seen in the fact that he doesn’t want the Philistines to rejoice and exult in this.

Why not? Because he was concerned with God’s renown.

He could have just thought, “Eh, let them rejoice now, for I’ll be in power soon and will quiet them down.”

But no, he’s thinking of what it means for God’s name, not his own name. *[pauseeee]*

Here’s something to think through: when a well-known Christian leader is exposed for doing horrible things, how do you respond?

Certainly we can say that what he or she did was wrong, and I’m sure David would admit that Saul did sinful things.

But are you concerned for the renown and reputation of the Lord? *[pause]*

Some people after hearing of that person’s fall would try to scramble for the platform and popularity that that person’s fall now opened up.

But do we grieve?

Do we grieve about the potential rejoicing that the world will have over the fall of yet another Christian leader?

Do we grieve for the people of God that that person has now left hurting? *[pauseeee]*

David’s refusal to be self-seeking here during this critical moment is seen in how he’s not thinking of himself, but of God’s people.

Their dejection was more important to him than his exaltation.

He weeps for the people of the Lord and the house of Israel.

He proclaims, “Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places!”

To see God’s people go through this grieved his heart, for they were *God’s people*. [pausee]

Do you have a deep love for God and God’s people, the church? [pause]

If a fellow church is struggling, do you “weep with those who weep”?³

Or do you try to self-promote, using that situation to make our church look better? [pause]

We may try to say, “Look at us, we don’t have to go through that type of situation because we make wiser choices.”

Or, “We can handle things better than that church when we go through trials.”

But that shows such a lack of love for God’s people! [pauseeee]

Genuinely reflect upon this question: what’s more important to you - God’s kingdom or your own personal kingdom?

What are you all about?

Here’s an easy way to evaluate this in your own life...

When you make decisions, what influences your decisions?

For many of us, we think, “Well is it good for *me*? Will it make *me* happy? Will it promote *me* and make *me* look better?”

But what drove David’s reaction and decisions here was, “What does God value and care about?”

“If it’s the Lord’s anointed, how could I just flippantly let this guy claim to kill the Lord’s anointed and not bat an eye, even if it helps me out?”

“If God’s people were just slaughtered on the mountainside, how could I not be broken over this?” [pauseeee]

I think one of the most revealing things is how you respond when something is against God, but benefits you.

That’s really what David experienced - something that benefited him (the killing of Saul), but someone claiming to do something wrong against God (killing the Lord’s anointed).

And how David responded showed a love for God rather than a love for self. [pauseeee]

³ Romans 12:15.

Let's say that there was someone who was mean to you and had a higher up position than you at your job.

Another co-worker lied about that person to the boss and got them fired.

Now your rival and persecutor is out of the way and you can get their position, the position that you've always wanted!

How would you respond?

That opening benefits you greatly, but your co-worker did something against God to create that opening.

Are you happy or are you grieved over what happened? *[pause]*

Let's say someone gave you some money.

You find out where they got the money and you find out that they got it through some sinful way.

Are you simply happy because you get more money, and you move on with life?

Or are you upset that something was done against God to get it? *[pauseeee]*

Maybe you're thinking, "OK, but how do I start to become more passionate about the things of God?"

By seeing God for who He is, and cherishing what He has done for you. *[pause]*

He is the great Creator God, who is over all, and if I want God to get the glory, then I won't seek the glory for myself.

He is the gracious Lord, who saved me, so how can I not want to serve Him?

Like David, may we love God and God's people. *[pauseeee]*

We also see that no matter what we go through, we should have...

II. A love for others, even our enemies.

How do you grieve?

Often *how* we grieve reveals more about us than we think. *[pause]*

When we grieve, if we treat others horribly, what are we showing?

We are showing a lack of love for others, and a sole focus on self.

We are essentially saying, "I'm the only one that matters right now." *[pause]*

When we grieve, if we never cry out to God, what are we showing?

That we don't believe that He cares or that He listens, so we must handle it alone.

But how does David grieve, and what does his grief show us about him? *[pause]*

First, we see that he lamented.

To lament in the Bible is to express sorrow or grief in words to God.

It's not merely meant to vent and that's it, but really it's a crying out to God, meant to take our grief to God for the purpose of renewed trust.

It's a way to talk to God about the pain that we are feeling. *[pause]*

Sadly, the church in America has really neglected the truth of lament, but it's throughout the Bible, and it's the healthy way to process grief.

And to be honest, many of the reasons that we struggle so much with grief for so long is because we haven't lamented. *[pause]*

You see, the Christian is not called to just bury their feelings of sorrow, and act like they are fine.

It is not shameful to mourn, for even David mourns here.

Instead, God wants us to take our brokenness and our sorrow to Him.

He wants us to express our feelings. *[pauseeee]*

David didn't hold back here, did he?

Even though David knew that God was still in control, he still grieved.

And we can grieve, even still being people who believe in the sovereignty of God through and through. *[pauseeee]*

David expressed his sorrow for Saul and Jonathan, showing how much he was torn by their loss.

And the interesting thing is that he wanted this lament taught to others, showing that he wanted others to grieve in this way.

He helped direct their grief in a healthy way, instead of letting them grieve in all these other unhealthy directions. *[pauseeee]*

This displays that the way that we grieve can actually be a teaching moment to others. *[pause]*

Parents: how you grieve teaches your kids how to grieve.

You are showing them what to do with their sadness when they have it. *[pause]*

Those who have a job: how you grieve can teach your co-workers how to grieve. *[pause]*

You see, David was not only showing Israel that it was permissible to grieve the loss of Saul and Jonathan, but that they *should*.

He was teaching them the significance of what happened here.

If they were pro-Saul, they could have let this moment turn them to despair, and if they were anti-Saul, they could have let this moment turn them to gloating.

But David is slowing Israel down, instructing them that there is time for grief, and now is that time.

This wasn't a time to just move on, but to reflect and process. *[pauseee]*

David also had his lament written down, and it was a poetic lament.

This shows us that his lament wasn't some quick, thoughtless lament, but it was a lament that was reflective and thoughtful. *[pauseeeee]*

There's something about reflective and thoughtful grief that helps us to process what happened.

If you have lost a loved one, try writing down your lament to God.

Writing it down and processing through your grief can be a helpful practice, as it helps you to actually think deeply about your thoughts and emotions and to reflect upon what has happened. *[pauseeeee]*

Brother or sister in Christ, the Bible tells us that there is time for everything- there is a time to weep and a time to mourn.⁴

So don't gloss over that time, but process through the grief by taking your grief to God. *[pause]*

When you don't process your grief, what you find is that you don't heal, and David wanted not only himself, but Israel to heal from this tragic event. *[pause]*

Maybe you're here today and you know that you haven't taken your grief to God, and because of this, you haven't been healed from something that happened years ago.

I'm not saying that the grief will totally disappear, but that we can be free from despair or bitterness.

If that is you, see the need to express your sorrow to God.

⁴ See Ecclesiastes 3:1,4.

Turn to him, share your emotions with him, ask him boldly for help, and choose to trust Him.⁵
[pauseeeee]

Not only did David simply lament and teach Israel to lament, but his love was expressed in his grief. *[pause]*

They say that the more we love, the more we grieve.

And that's true for David, as you see his love for Saul and Jonathan manifest itself in this lament.
[pause]

What's interesting is that David laments over Saul.

You would think that he would be happy and joyous, for the man who has hunted him down and tried to kill him for years is now gone.

Wouldn't he be rejoicing over the downfall of his archenemy?

For any of us in that position, we would be tempted to *gloat*. *[pause]*

Most people would have been like, "Haha, look at what happened to him. He got what he deserved. I won."

But no, he doesn't. *[pause]*

Even if David didn't gloat, he could have been tempted to simply *vent his anger* to others.

He could have used this moment as a time for he and his men to talk badly about Saul.

Like, "Remember how bad he was? He threw a spear at me so many times. He wouldn't stop. He even tried to kill me in my sleep! Remember that, he was just such a horrible person."⁶

But instead of gloating or venting, he grieves over Saul and even paints a nice picture of Saul, who won battles for Israel and provided them with prosperity.

In fact, he doesn't say one bad word about Saul in this whole story. *[pauseeeee]*

How could he say these things about Saul, and not say even one bad thing about him after everything that Saul did to him over the years?!

Well it points us more towards who David was than who Saul was. *[pause]*

David loved his enemies, and what he does and doesn't say reveals to us that he has forgiven Saul in his heart. *[pause]*

⁵ Adapted from: Higginbottom, Ryan. "Biblical Lament: What It Is and How to Do It." *Open the Bible*, 13 June 2022, <https://openthebible.org/article/biblical-lament-what-it-is-and-how-to-do-it/>.

⁶ See especially 1 Samuel 19.

That's the power of forgiveness!

It prevents you from becoming a bitter person, but instead shows great love for others, even our enemies!

This is because true love doesn't gloat or vent in anger, for it doesn't boast, and keeps no record of wrongs.⁷

This true love actually helps us heal through forgiveness. *[pauseeee]*

You see, David was a king not like the world, for every other king would have gloated and rejoiced over the fall of his enemy.

And David prefigures Christ, who is a king with a kingdom not of this world...⁸

...And who loved his enemies so much that even as he was hanging on the Cross and as they were about to cast lots for his garments, he said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."⁹ *[pauseeeee]*

This is not something that only David and Jesus could do, but Jesus calls each of us to love our enemies and to pray for them.¹⁰

How could David love and forgive Saul? How could *we* love, forgive, and pray for those who persecute us?

It doesn't make sense apart from the grace of God in the gospel. *[pause]*

We remember that we were sinners, who had rebelled against the good and perfect Creator of the heavens and the earth.

Yet even in our rebellion, God sent forth His Son to live the life that we needed to live and to die the death that we deserved.

He took our rebellious deeds and nailed them to the Cross, paying the penalty with his shed blood.

And through His voluntary sacrifice, we are forgiven because we simply placed our faith in Him.

Enemies of God, we were, but now forgiven children, we are!

And as we reflect upon how Jesus loved us and forgave us, we are empowered to forgive others, no matter what they do to us.

⁷ See 1 Corinthians 13:4-5 (NIV).

⁸ See John 18:36.

⁹ See Luke 23:34.

¹⁰ See Matthew 5:44 and Luke 6:27-36.

For the grace of God towards us now flows through us, out to others. *[pauseeee]*

The Bible shows us that...

No matter what we go through, we are to love God and others.

Even if you are grieving, you are to (and can) love God and others and not be focused on self.

Even if you are sinned against, you are to (and can) love God and others in forgiveness. *[pause]*

No matter what you go through, God is to be your one highest love.

David's example shows us that we can't say, "Well, this situation is different, I can be about myself this time."

No, we put His kingdom first, and not our own personal, little kingdoms.

He is worthy of everything, and His ways are best. *[pause]*

So as you go through this week, is love for God going to drive you?

Will you make decisions based on His concerns, or your own? *[pause]*

And out of love for God, we also love others, even our enemies.

We show radical forgiveness because Christ radically forgave us.

We love others deeply, for we have a Savior, who was the better Jonathan, whose love is truly extraordinary and whose love surpasses all others.