

2 Samuel 2:1-7 | “The King’s First Days”

Preached on June 17, 2022 by Pastor Matt Brown

Please turn in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 2, as we continue in our study of 2 Samuel. *[pause]*

In the United States, when a person runs for President, something that they will often say is, “On my first day, I’m going to do this or that.”

Or they will say, “In my first week, I will do this other thing.”

They make big promises about what they will do in their first days in office.

And often U.S. presidents are evaluated on their first 100 days. *[pause]*

It is in those first days that the newly elected President displays their priorities and what kind of president they will most likely be like.

And it’s true, for often those first 100 days are telling of what the President is like. *[pause]*

Well as we look at the beginning of 2 Samuel 2, we see David’s first days as king.

It may not be his first day in office, his first week, or even his first 100 days, but we shall see King David’s first days, and we will see what his first days reveal about him as king. *[pause]*

What would David be like as king, especially after waiting so long?

Thankfully, he starts off really good, as we first see...

I. The obedience of the King. (1-4a)

Let’s READ VERSES 1-4a to begin. *[pause]*

What do you look for in a leader?

Most often we look for things like self-confidence, self-discipline, courage, or being a visionary, and certainly those things can be important...

...But I want you to consider something.

What would someone say if you told them that you were looking for obedience in your leader?

They would probably look at you weird, and try to understand what you are trying to get at.

And the reason why they would be confused is because most people think that a leader doesn’t need obedience, but rather, that those following him or her need obedience.

But interestingly, from a Christian worldview, obedience is a critical characteristic that human leaders should have, for they are under God, the one in authority over all leaders. *[pauseeee]*

For David, he was a good leader, not because he self-confidently led, and that's it, but rather, because he was obedient to the Lord above all. *[pause]*

This flips our world's leadership ideas on their head!

Our world's idea of leadership follows the path of Saul, who deviated away from God's commands in order to step up and lead in his own way.

But God's way of human leadership is one that is submissive to Him, like David was. *[pauseeee]*

Consider the verses that we just read...

David had waited years to become king, and now the chance to step up and become king opened up.

Saul was gone, and there was a void in the kingship.

Our world would tell David, "Come on, take what's yours! You've waited so long, and now's your chance to take over the kingship, so you decide what to do next."

Many of us in David's position would say to God, "OK, it's my time now. I'm going to go to this certain town, so make me king there."

Yet David patiently waited on the Lord's timing and direction by inquiring of God as to what to do next. *[pauseeee]*

Do you patiently wait on the Lord's timing and direction?

To do this, you have to not think that your timing and direction is best, but to believe that God's is. *[pauseeee]*

We all have plans for our lives and we have a timetable for when things will be done, but what if God wants something else?

One commentator stated that you should, "Allow God to mess with your life."¹

We want things done a certain way and at a certain time...

...But we need to be willing to let God to mess with our lives, for what we find is that when we think He is messing with our lives, He's actually arranging it in the right way. *[pauseeee]*

When you want that new job, do you patiently wait on God's timing and direction?

When you want relief from some physical ailment, are you patient?

¹ [I found this quote while researching a different passage. This just shows how God works!] Barnes, W. H. (2012). *1-2 Kings*. (P. W. Comfort, Ed.) (Vol. 4b, p. 218). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

When you desire for that trial to end, do you trust God's ways? *[pause]*

To patiently wait on the Lord is to be obedient, for you aren't forcing your way, but submitting to God's timing and direction. *[pauseeee]*

The first thing that David did was inquire of the Lord.

He asks God if he should go up into any of the cities of Judah, and God tells him to go up.

And most of us would be like, "OK, I got my answer. Let's go up, and I'll choose which town to go to."

But look at what David does: he asks a follow up question to hear the *specific* city to go to, and he hears that it's Hebron. *[pause]*

Talk about a man utterly desirous of God's leading above all!

He leaves no room for himself to decide where to go, but he submits his entire next step to the Lord's will.

He was showing that he was totally dependent on God's direction. *[pauseee]*

Most of us like to be independent people.

We might ask God a question generally to get a general direction, but then after that, we think, "I'll figure out the rest and make the best decision."

But David wanted specific directions from God because he knew he needed them. *[pauseeee]*

May asking God always be our first step!

May we be people who are continually on our knees because we know that we can't survive without God's answers. *[pause]*

What if we truly believed that God's leading was like our food and drink, and if we didn't have it, we couldn't make it?

Inquiring of God would be our regular practice, if we truly believed that, wouldn't it?

Go to God in prayer! Go to His Word!

He is ready and willing to lead you in the way you should go, but are you ready and willing to inquire and to listen? *[pauseeee]*

You know, it's one thing to seek the Lord's leading, but it's another to follow it - that's a lot harder, isn't it?

David seeks the Lord's leading, and then notice verse 2, "So David went up there."

He obeyed! *[pause]*

He didn't hear God's answer and say, "I don't know if I want to go to Hebron, for I want to go to Bethlehem or Carmel instead."

No, he obeyed what God said.

And for us, we may think that our plan is better or wiser, or we may think that God's way is too hard, and want to avoid it.

But we need to obey once we hear what He says. *[pauseeee]*

When God's Word pushes you out of your comfort zone to go help that needy person, what do you do?

Do you listen and obey?

When God's direction leads you to take a lower paying job that will make more kingdom impact, what do you do?

When God's teaching leads you to be more generous with your money, do you hold onto your money tightly, or give it freely?

Obedience is not completed when we merely hear what He says, but when we act on what He says. *[pauseeee]*

So this is all good, but the question remains: *how* can we obey?

Do we just muster up the ability?

No, we can only obey rightly because Christ, the son of David and true King, obeyed perfectly.

We obey because Christ obeyed in our place, securing our adoption and giving us new birth.

Scripture says, "For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's *obedience* the many will be made righteous."²

How did he obey?

Philippians 2:8 says, "And being found in human form, he humbled himself by *becoming obedient* to the point of death, even death on a cross."

He perfectly did the will of the Father, and submitted himself to the Father on this earth.³ *[pause]*

² Romans 5:19 (italics is mine).

³ See John 5:19, 5:30, 6:38 & Matthew 26:39.

What obedience of the true King, Jesus!

David's obedience is only but a small glimpse of His!

It's only because of His obedience leading all the way up to the Cross that we can be saved, for He became the perfect sacrifice on our behalf.

And now we walk in obedience, empowered by the Spirit and motivated by his example and grace.

Are you lacking in obedience, look to Christ for the power! *[pauseeee]*

Not only do we see the obedience of the king, but we also see in this story...

II. The love and faithfulness of the King. (4b-6)

So David goes up to Hebron as he was told, and he was anointed there by the elders of Judah.

Now David is king, but only of Judah.

Yet how would he treat those outside of Judah?

Well we find out in the second part of verse 4 through verse 7, LET'S READ THAT. *[pause]*

Here we find that David wants to be king of all of Israel before Saul's son is instituted as king in the next passage.⁴

He reaches out to the town that was the most loyal to Saul, and wants to unite them to himself.

This is Jabesh-gilead, the town that out of devotion to Saul went and took Saul's body down from the wall and gave him a proper burial.⁵ *[pause]*

So David recognizes their loyalty and bravery, but also wants them to follow him, for he is the new king.

And in this act of reaching out, we see David's love and faithfulness. *[pauseeee]*

In American politics, something that is common when a new president starts their term is to constantly attack the prior president's actions.

So they will come into a mess and make it clear that if it wasn't for the previous president's actions, we wouldn't be in this situation.

But what does this do?

⁴ See 2 Samuel 2:8-10.

⁵ See 1 Samuel 31:8-13.

This often pushes away those who were loyal to that previous president and so it is actually a very divisive tactic. *[pause]*

Yet David doesn't do that.

He doesn't blame his situation on Saul.

He doesn't bash those who were loyal to Saul, and make them feel bad for their loyalty to Saul, but he actually tries to unite them in love under himself!

He recognizes their loyalty, he shows gratitude for their act, and reaches out in love to them. *[pause]*

He shows love for those who many would deem his enemy because they were loyal to Saul.

He shows love for those outside of Judah, desiring to love those outside of his camp. *[pause]*

This is radical and shows the radical nature of love!

It shows kindness to even those considered to be enemies. *[pauseee]*

David had waited a long time to become king, and faced a lot of tribulation because of Saul.

So from a human standpoint, it would come naturally to want to go after Saul's most loyal followers.

He could have made an example out of them, and did something to put them down, but instead, he reaches out in love. *[pauseee]*

Do you show this kind of love to your enemies?

This kind of love is radical in our world, and it goes against our natural, sinful inclinations. *[pause]*

Do you love people who are different from you?

Do you love those who seem rough around the edges, and bring with them lots of baggage?

What about this one: do you love someone who is passionate about a different political party than you?

Don't you remember the Lord Jesus' statement, "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them."⁶ *[pause]*

We need to be challenged outside of our comfort zone to actually love those who don't love us.

⁶ Luke 6:32.

When you see that person who is different from you at church, why not go talk to them?

When there's someone who is antagonistic towards you, pray for them. *[pauseeee]*

I'm certainly not perfect in this area, as I continually struggle with loving my enemies, but there was this time in my past where there was someone antagonistic towards me.

And my first reactions were to be angry and upset, and to not really love that person.

But God convicted me, and I started praying for that person.

And let me tell you, it was hard at first. *[pause]*

When you start praying for your enemy, it's hard to pray for them to be blessed and helped.

But then I actually asked God to help me to love them more because I really didn't want to say the words.

And God softened my heart, so that I started praying for that person, asking God to help them in their day.

And it's amazing what prayer for your enemy can do in your own heart.

It softens your heart for them, so that you start to care about their soul. *[pause]*

Is there someone in your life who you don't get along with, who you need to start praying for?
[pause]

You see, not only did David show love and faithfulness by simply reaching out to Jabesh-gilead...

...But he also showed love and faithfulness by desiring for them to experience the love and faithfulness of God.

He says, "May the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you." *[pauseeee]*

One of the most loving things that you can do is to desire for others to experience the love of God.

If I want someone to experience the love and faithfulness of God, then I want them to experience the best thing in the world!

What's better than the love and faithfulness of God towards sinners!?!? *[pause]*

It's a *steadfast love*.

It's a love that is a loyal love based simply on his choice to love out of Himself.

Jabesh-gilead's loyal love for Saul didn't even compare to the loyal love of the Lord that they could experience!

It's a love that doesn't fail, give up, or become unfaithful. *[pauseeee]*

To wish this steadfast love upon anyone is to wish the most marvelous thing upon them.

He is so loving, He is so faithful, and those who experience his love and faithfulness are forever changed.

It's a love that reaches out in grace, and never lets go.

It's a love that won't falter, even when you do.

May the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you! *[pause]*

Amidst your sin and weaknesses, His steadfast love upholds you, and His faithfulness never leaves you. *[pause]*

Have you experienced the steadfast love and faithfulness of God?

He has shown it through the Cross!

He has reached out through Christ amidst our sinfulness, and he says, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest!"⁷

He takes us who were enemies, takes our hand, makes us children, and he says, "I will never let go!"⁸

"See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; *and so we are*"!⁹ *[pauseeee]*

Those who experience the love and faithfulness of God want others to experience it.

This is the driving motivation for evangelism!

We want not only our friends and family to experience the love of God, but even our enemies!

It's too great and too transformative to hold for ourselves.

If you are lacking in a desire for others to experience the love and faithfulness of God, then you must dwell upon the love and faithfulness of God for you.

His love and faithfulness are the bedrock of our faith! *[pauseeee]*

⁷ Matthew 11:28 (NIV).

⁸ See John 10:28-29.

⁹ 1 John 3:1a (italics is mine).

Why do we act like our faith is just a small segment of our lives?!

Why do we just go through the motions of church?!

Our lives have been changed by God's love and faithfulness, now let's live like it!

And when we live like it, then we will determine to also do good to others. *[pauseeee]*

The ESV translation is actually missing a key word in verse 6 that they chose not to translate.

David actually says in the original language a word which means 'also'.

So like according to the NASB translation, he says, "and I *also* will show this goodness to you."
[pause]

This means that not only does David want them to experience the love and faithfulness of the Lord, but he also wants to show them that same love and faithfulness.

He wants to do good to them, as the Lord does good to people.

He wants to reflect the Lord in how he treats them! *[pause]*

May that be our desire!

May we love others because he first loved us!¹⁰

May we want to be faithful to others because God is faithful to us! *[pause]*

The Christian life isn't one where we say, "God will be good to you, but I can treat you however I want."

No, as God's children, we seek to be holy as He is holy.¹¹

We are the light of the world, and when we let our light shine before others, they see our good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven.¹² *[pauseeee]*

Do you not only want people to experience the love and faithfulness of God, but also to show this same love and faithfulness to them?

Take time right now to think.

Have you been showing love and faithfulness to others? Have you done good to them?

May we desire to reflect God's love and faithfulness to others this week. *[pauseeee]*

¹⁰ See 1 John 4:19.

¹¹ A reference to 1 Peter 1:14-16.

¹² See Matthew 5:14-16.

In David's words, we also see a third point. We see...

III. The invitation of the King. (7)

Whenever you get an invitation to something, you need to decide whether to do it or not.

So if someone invites you to a wedding, you have to decide.

If someone invites you along on a hunting trip, you need to choose, although for many of you, that's an easy choice. *[pause]*

Now those are decisions that are not very significant because choosing them doesn't change your life too much.

But then there are invitations that change our lives greatly. *[pause]*

The proposal to marry someone is a big deal that you have to decide on.

The invitation to accept a job offer will change your life dramatically.

Those are big deals, right? *[pause]*

Well David gives Jabesh-gilead an invitation that could change their lives.

He says in verse 7, "Now therefore let your hands be strong, and be valiant, for Saul your lord is dead, and the house of Judah has anointed me king over them." *[pause]*

What's he saying?

He's saying, "The one who you were loyal to is dead, and now I'm king, so as you were courageous in retrieving Saul's body, so be courageous now and follow my kingship."

His invitation was essentially to pledge allegiance to him as king and to follow him. *[pauseeee]*

At that point, they were leaderless, so now was the time of decision.

Would they follow God's chosen leader or would they rebel? *[pauseeee]*

Yet the question is, why does he emphasize the need to be strong and courageous?

Because following David as king at this point would be a bold, courageous move. *[pause]*

David was only king of Judah, and they were in the rest of Israelite territory.

Saul's son was about to be made king of Israel, so it would take a step of faith to choose to follow the king of Judah and not Israel's king. *[pause]*

So get this: following David meant going against what everyone else was doing.

Following David was following something small and new compared to following Saul's son.

So Jabesh-gilead had to choose between David and Saul's son, and following David was the more courageous move. *[pauseeee]*

But isn't that just like following Christ?

He calls each person to follow him,¹³ but we need to choose between the kingdom of Christ and the kingdom of this world.

His kingdom goes against what you are used to in the world.

His kingdom seems small compared to those following the world.

And following Him goes against the flow of what everyone else is doing, so it takes faith to follow Him.

But once you do, you find that it's totally worth it. *[pause]*

Following Christ will mean giving up everything you once knew, but following Christ will mean gaining everything that truly matters.

Like David's invitation to Jabesh-gilead, so Jesus' invitation to follow Him promises love, faithfulness, and goodness beyond comparison. *[pause]*

Have you chosen to follow Him?

Have you taken that step of faith?

Like in the parable of Luke 14, the king invites all people to the banquet, but not all accept it, for they come up with excuses.¹⁴

What will be your excuse? *[pauseeee]*

You know, we don't hear how Jabesh-gilead responded to David's loving, reconciling message.

We don't know what they did, but it leads you to consider: what will you do?

Will you follow Christ, God's chosen King, who calls for your allegiance or will you choose to go with the flow, and follow the kingdom of this world?

Repent of your sins, and trust in the King, who shed His blood for you on Cross!

He has reached out to you in love, and He promises steadfast love, faithfulness, and goodness forever. *[pauseeee]*

¹³ A reference to Matthew 4:19.

¹⁴ See Luke 14:15-24.

Let's say that you have chosen to follow Him by believing in Him.

The kingdom of this world will constantly be wanting you to give up and pledge your allegiance to it, but will you keep following Christ?

When Christ's ways go against what everyone else is doing, will you still walk in His ways?

When His commands are unpopular among others, will you still follow Him?

When His instructions push you out of your comfort zone, will you remain faithful? *[pausee]*

The invitation of the King has gone out, as he has said, "Follow me."

Will you follow Him with your life? *[pauseeee]*

David's actions here in the beginning of 2 Samuel 2 point us forward to the truth that...

King Jesus is the true King, who calls us to follow Him, even if it costs us everything!

David as king was obedient, loving, faithful, and called on others to follow Him.

His kingship pointed to the ultimate kingship of Jesus Christ.

For he was perfectly obedient all the way to the Cross.

He was loving and faithful, for He is the Lord, who is "abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness."¹⁵

He had perfect love for his enemies, for we were enemies of God, rebelling against Him, but Christ didn't seek to destroy us out of anger.

He didn't put us down, but He reached out to us in love.

He reached out through dying for us and rising again, thereby reconciling us to God, so that when we follow Him, we are brought into the family of God, and are unified under His Kingship. *[pauseeee]*

So what's our response to all of this?

Look to your King for guidance, submitting your will to His.

Reflect upon and reflect His steadfast love and faithfulness to you.

And follow Him, even if it costs you everything, knowing that it's totally worth it, for He is the true and righteous King.

¹⁵ Exodus 34:6.