

2 Samuel 6:1-23 | “Rain on Your Parade”
Preached on August 14, 2022 by Pastor Matt Brown

Please turn in your Bibles to 2 Samuel 6. *[pause]*

No one likes it to ‘rain on their parade’.

A couple weeks ago was the Clearfield County Parade and thankfully it didn’t rain on that parade. *[pause]*

We use the idiom of ‘raining on someone’s parade’ when there’s bad or disappointing news that ruins someone's excitement.

If someone is excited to get some ice cream, the news of the ice cream place being closed surely ‘rains on their parade’.

There was excitement, enthusiasm, and eagerness, but that was all crushed in a moment’s notice by the news of the closure.

Well in the chapter before us, David gets his parade rained on twice. *[pause]*

David finally was made king of all of Israel, and his kingdom was really starting to flourish.

The people were united under him, he captured Jerusalem and made it his capital, and his house and household were being built up.

Not only that, but he repelled two Philistine attacks on the nation, (God working mightily in those instances, of course.) *[pause]*

David was sort of on top of the world.

He was successful and he’s thriving.

Now he wants this prosperity to continue with God at the center, so he decides to get the Ark of the Covenant and bring it to his new capital, Jerusalem.

Let’s READ ABOUT THAT, starting in verse 1. *[read verses 1-5]*

The ark of the covenant was very important as it represented God’s presence.

It was the place that God set as the place he would meet with His people, it was thought to be his throne, and it contained the ten commandments in it.

This is why now that unified Israel has a capital, what a better place to have it stored than the capital, rather than a small town. *[pause]*

All is going so well, isn’t it?

David and Israel are thriving.

David makes a good, godly decision as the leader to center Israel around worship of God by bringing the ark of God to Jerusalem.

They are excited and enthusiastic as they start transporting the ark to its destination.

What could go wrong?

Yet this parade will soon be rained on, not literally, but as the idiom goes, and it will be rained on by God Himself. *[pause]*

Continuing in the chapter, we see what happens...verse 6...*[read verses 6-10]*

This can be a confusing story for many of us.

How come God killed Uzzah on the spot when he seemed to be just trying to protect the Ark?

How come God did this when David enthusiastically wanted the ark to be in Jerusalem, isn't that a good thing? *[pause]*

The key to this story is some Old Testament knowledge about the ark of God.

Listen to Exodus 25:12-14...God says...

"You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side of it.

You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark by them." *[pause]*

Interesting.

So the ark had these rings permanently built on it, and there were poles put into the rings so that it could be carried. *[pause]*

Numbers 4:15 explains this further when it's talking about moving items, and it states...

"...The sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die. These are the things of the tent of meeting that the sons of Kohath are to carry." *[pause]*

So God was very clear: the ark was to be carried by the sons of Kohath using the poles, and if they touched it, they would die. *[pause]*

Now go back to our story.

Did David have the ark of God carried as commanded by God?

No, for look at verse 3, "And they carried the ark of God *on a new cart.*"

So they were disobeying by not transporting the ark in the prescribed way...

...And strikingly, the way that David had it transported was just like the spiritually ignorant Philistines back in 1 Samuel 6, when they sent it back to Israel on a new cart pulled by cows.¹
[pause]

So their error was in the way they transported it, in direct opposition to what God said, but also in Uzzah touching it. [pause]

Uzzah should have known better than to touch it.

His family had watched over the ark for many years,² and God had clearly said that if they touched it, they would die.

The Lord wasn't vague about this, but said plainly, "they must not touch the holy things, lest they die."³ [pause]

In 1 Chronicles 15, David's actions in preparing to get the ark the second time emphasize what happened here.

David tells the people that no one but the Levites could carry the ark.

He gets the priests together and says this, "Because you did not carry it the first time, the Lord our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule.

...And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the Lord."⁴ [pause]

Crystal clear: they didn't transport the ark "according to the word of the Lord" the first time.

Even the chapter before us shows how David handles the ark differently the second time around in verse 13, "And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps." [pause]

David finally learned what he did wrong, though at first he didn't understand and was angry and afraid of God. [pauseeee]

What's something else that helped David learn his error? The blessing that came upon the guy who he left the ark with.

In verse 12, IT READS...

And it was told King David, 'The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.'

¹ See 1 Samuel 6:7,10.

² See 1 Samuel 7:1-2 and then look at 2 Samuel 6:3.

³ From Numbers 4:15 which was quoted above.

⁴ See 1 Chronicles 15:1-15.

So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing.” *[pause]*

David hears about Obed-edom being blessed because of the ark, and David recognizes how much he needs the ark with him.

So he goes and gets it, transports it the right way with great joy, and is able to bring it to Jerusalem. *[pauseeee]*

Now what does this whole situation teach us with the ark and Uzzah being killed?...

I. Worship should be done according to the truth.

Are good intentions the only thing that matter?

Is whatever we do OK as long as we are sincere? *[pause]*

If you asked many people, I believe that they would probably say ‘yes’.

They would say, “What’s wrong with what Uzzah did? He was sincerely trying to protect the ark.”

They would say, “What’s wrong with what David did in transporting the ark? He just wanted God’s presence and was joyful about it.” *[pause]*

There are many in our world who genuinely think that as long as someone is passionate and enthusiastic about worshiping God, that’s all that matters. *[pause]*

To give an example: My wife once read a book that essentially said, “Why not make Communion more fun by using cake and whatever drink you have on hand in the place of the bread and the cup?”⁵ *[pause]*

If you believe that sincerity is the only thing that matters, then what’s wrong with what that author suggested?

If you are sincerely and enthusiastically doing the Lord’s Supper with cake and Coca-Cola, what’s the big deal? *[pauseeee]*

But here’s the thing: we actually *do* understand that sincerity isn’t enough in every situation.

Think about the law.

Let’s say that you genuinely and enthusiastically just want to go be with your family on Christmas, so you speed.

⁵ The book was *Have More Fun* by Mandy Arioto. (I DO NOT recommend reading this book, as it has many problematic issues. We only received it because my wife was a part of the MOPS group, where Mandy is the CEO.)

You had a good motivation, didn't you?

But what does the police officer do?

He still pulls you over and gives you a ticket because it was breaking the law, no matter how sincere you were. *[pauseeee]*

Genuine enthusiasm and sincerity for the Lord can't be alone.

Uzzah's act, though appearing well-intended, was actually irreverent towards God.

Why? Because he went against what God commanded. *[pause]*

David's enthusiasm and excitement were genuine, but he disobeyed God's command. *[pause]*

God said, "This is how I want my ark handled," and by their actions, David and Uzzah were essentially saying, "No, this is how *we* want to handle it." *[pauseeee]*

Can't we be guilty of that when it comes to worship?

We think, "This is what pleases us, so let's do it."

That's like passionately giving sports tickets to someone who hates sports.

The question in worship should be, "Is this what God wants?" *[pause]*

If God says, "This is what pleases me. This is what I want." then no sincerity or enthusiasm negates neglect of what He wants.

Since it's God who we are doing this for, then it's God who directs *how* we do it.

What did Jesus say? "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."⁶ *[pauseeee]*

Anytime that we disregard what God wants in worship, we are guilty of what David and Uzzah did.

We could even be sincere and full of emotion, yet if we disobey what He has commanded, then we aren't pleasing Him. *[pauseeee]*

Some people think that as long as people were filled with emotion, then it was a good worship time.

"Oh man, the Spirit was really moving because look at how people responded emotionally."

But was it according to truth? *[pause]*

We must ask the question: why do we worship?

⁶ John 14:15.

To feel good and have an emotional high?

No, we worship God to glorify God, and we do that when we worship in the way that He has commanded. *[pauseee]*

The songs that we sing on Sunday: should they be ones that are only there because people will respond emotionally, or do we sing songs because they say true things about God? *[pause]*

I've heard people say that their "church" is being out on the lake in a boat, and that's all church is to them.

But is that according to what God has commanded?

They may genuinely and enthusiastically do that, but it's not what God wants. *[pauseeee]*

What if someone told you, "I can worship God without trusting in Jesus. I'm passionate about it!"

Does their passion nullify their need to trust in Jesus? Certainly not.

Right motives can be misguided.

Even Paul said of the unbelieving Jews, "I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."⁷

God is holy, and His commands need to be submitted to - He needs to be worshiped according to truth. *[pauseee]*

We dare not trivialize God's holiness.

We dare not presume upon our relationship with God, and think, "Me and God are buddies, He won't care if I do it this way."

Intimacy with God doesn't mean we can have flippancy with God.

He is our Father, but He is also our Lord. *[pauseee]*

Good intentions do not cover up disobedience to God's revealed truth. *[pauseeee]*

In order to worship according to the truth, we must know the truth of God's Word.

So something that helps us, especially in situations that arise quickly is to store up His word in our hearts so that we might not sin against Him.⁸

If Uzzah's mind had stored up the command in his heart to not touch the ark, then he would have most likely not touched it. *[pauseeee]*

⁷ Romans 10:2.

⁸ A reference to Psalm 119:11.

Something else that comes out of this is David's pragmatism.

Pragmatism is the belief that something is true if it works. *[pause]*

If you remember, the Philistines sent the ark back to the Israelites on a new cart and it worked, so was he thinking, "Hey, it worked for them, why not us?"⁹

Or maybe he was just thinking in terms of easier and faster.

Putting the ark on a new cart is certainly easier and faster than having the Levites carry it on their shoulders.

Maybe he was thinking, "We just need to get it to Jerusalem, that's what matters. Point A to point B."

That's pragmatism - 'the ends justify the means'. *[pause]*

But can't we be such pragmatists, too?

I've seen churches use secular music in their services.

Why? Because more people will come - it works, doesn't it? *[pause]*

Others use shallow, manipulative, or self-help preaching in order to fill the seats and get responses.

In their mind, their thinking, "Well it reaches more people!" *[pause]*

Why do some choose pastors based on charisma rather than character?

Because it produces the results they want. *[pause]*

Why not bring Santa Claus into a Christmas Eve service? Won't more kids show up to hear the Bible? *[pause]*

The truth is: any of us can slide into a pragmatic mindset because we sincerely want to see people reached.

But whatever we do, it must be grounded in what God has prescribed. *[pause]*

Evaluate your thinking: does your thinking accord with what God has commanded? *[pauseeee]*

And if you are thinking that this truth is only an Old Testament thing, consider Hebrews 12:28-29...

"Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire." *[pauseeee]*

⁹ See 1 Samuel 6.

Now that we have studied and applied the first half of this chapter, what does the second half show us?

Once again David gets his parade rained on.

The first time was good and right, for God did the raining on his parade for a legitimate reason, which helped him see his error.

But this second time that someone tries to rain on his parade is not good, and David doesn't let it ruin his parade. *[pauseeee]*

David is happy, rejoicing, and worshiping God as he brings the ark into the city, but there's someone not happy.

Look at verse 16...

“As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, 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.”

The text goes on to tell us how David puts the ark inside the tent prepared for it.

He offers sacrifices to the Lord, blesses the people, and gives food to them.

He even happily goes to his household to bless them. *[pause]*

Everyone is rejoicing, worshiping, and celebrating the ark's arrival, but Michal is just sitting in her house upset.

What should have been a joyous time is not so much a joyous time for her, and I believe it's telling that she's so distant from the whole celebration. *[pause]*

Her heart seems to be distant from God and what He wants.

She's acting more like a daughter of Saul than a wife of King David, and the text even calls her 'the daughter of Saul' three times to highlight that. *[pause]*

Yet what exactly is her problem with David?

Let's **READ TO FIND OUT**, starting at verse 20. *[read verses 20-23]*

Now at first, many people might think, “What's wrong with what Michal is saying? Wouldn't any wife not want her husband uncovered in front of others?”

But the context makes it clear that David was actually not naked when he brought the ark in with dancing.

Look back at verses 14 and 15, “And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod.

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn.” *[pause]*

So David is actually wearing a linen ephod like a priest, and it’s when he’s bringing in the ark like this that she despises him. *[pause]*

Even when 1 Chronicles 15 tells us this story it highlights what he’s wearing as he brings in the ark to the city.

Listen to what it says...

“David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as also were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the music of the singers. And David wore a linen ephod.”

Two verses later, it mentions that when the ark is coming in she sees David dancing and celebrating and despises him.¹⁰ *[pauseeee]*

We can see that connection, but the question remains: why then does Michal become upset and talk about being ‘uncovered’? *[pause]*

We’ll notice how honor and dishonor are highlighted in their conversation.

She sarcastically mentions how he honored himself by shamelessly uncovering himself in front of others. *[pause]*

In Michal’s opinion, the king should be dressed in kingly attire and act dignified.

She felt as though he was dishonoring himself as the king by wearing priestly attire and dancing and leaping around in front of others.

By laying aside his royal robes, it was like uncovering himself in front of others.

She thought that he was acting like a fool. *[pause]*

But what was his answer to her criticism?

He wouldn’t let her rain on his parade and ruin this momentous day.

His answer was basically that he did it with the motivation to worship God alone, not with a desire to please others - for it was “before the Lord”. *[pause]*

He didn’t care what others thought, he simply cared about worshipping God.

¹⁰ 1 Chronicles 15:27, 29.

And he was ready to look even more contemptible, and he was ready to be lowly in his own eyes to worship God.

But the women she talked about would hold him in honor because they could see that he was simply worshipping in joy. *[pauseeee]*

So what do we see come out of this, the second half of the chapter?....

II. Worship should be done from the heart.

If you notice, it's like the second half of the chapter balances out the idea of the first half. *[pause]*

In the first half, David was enthusiastic about the things of God, but God corrected him and showed him that he must worship according to truth.

So someone could try to deduce from that, "OK, then I shouldn't be joyous when I worship, but I just need to do exactly as God's commands and that's it."

But this half of the chapter shows us that worship should be done out of the heart, not out of a desire to put on a show. *[pauseeee]*

What's interesting is that David didn't go back and, like an emotionless person, say, "OK guys, let's just carry it the right way, that's all that matters."

No. He goes back and does it the right way, certainly -- but he also goes back with the same, if not more, emotion! *[pauseeee]*

As you can see, worshipping God according to truth does not mean that we do it as wooden, lifeless people just going through the motions to say that we did it the right way.

No, genuine enthusiasm for the Lord matters! *[pause]*

Yes, he is holy, and we must worship Him in the way He says, but His holiness doesn't dismiss joyful worship, but should lead to joyful worship. *[pauseeee]*

Do you worship God with joy, or is it all emotionless going through the motions?

Do you worship Him out of a genuine heart that can't help but rejoice in Him?

Our time together singing should be a time of celebration, rejoicing, and joy! *[pauseeee]*

What Michal was concerned about was outward appearances and externals rather than genuine worship.

She was all about the image that David should display, rather than the greatness of the Lord. *[pause]*

We can so easily become like Michal when it comes to our own worship and how we view other people's worship.

We could be concerned with simply looking the part when we come to church.

We could be focused on what others think rather than what God thinks. *[pauseeee]*

David was simply worshipping God, putting Him in His rightful place, not thinking about his own dignity and value, but God's value. *[pauseeee]*

When you worship God, are you thinking more about how you look and how others look, or are you genuinely praising your God?

Like David, we should be willing to risk looking lowly and of low value in front of others because it's not about us!

We are to worship "before the Lord" and that's what truly matters because worship is for Him -- not us, and not others!

Genuine enthusiasm for God should accompany our worship, not an outward show.

We worship God from our hearts and for His glory. *[pauseeee]*

The thing with Michal was that her eyes were focused on what David was doing instead of being focused on the Lord.

And we can so easily get into that focus when we look around and start judging how others are worshiping.

Like Michal, we are missing out on genuine worship when we do that, but we can also be guilty of imputing wrong motives on others, who are genuinely praising their God. *[pauseeee]*

Worship should be done from the heart.

We don't come to the Lord as robots just making sure we do the right things.

We don't come and put on a show for others to make ourselves look good and feel good.

We come to the Lord in truth, yes, but we come before Him with genuine hearts overflowing with praise for His glorious grace. *[pauseeee]*

As you can see from these two situations...

It matters *how* we worship God!

We don't worship God how we want, but we worship in accordance with how He wants.

But we also don't just emotionlessly worship him, either.

We worship him from genuine hearts. *[pause]*

Do you need to ask God to help you worship Him with your heart, and not just outwardly go through the motions? Do so this morning!

Do you need to talk to Him about the times you haven't worshiped according to truth? Do that!

Do you need to repent of imputing wrong motives on people and being focused on them? Go to God with that and rest in the forgiveness of Christ! *[pauseeee]*

Don't become angry and afraid of God like David.

His response led him to push away from God, instead of drawing near in reverence and awe.

So don't let your sin push you away from God, but draw near, knowing He is full of mercy and love!

Learn from your sins and errors! *[pause]*

David finally learned from his ark error, for he went back and did it the right way and worshiped the Lord.

He learned from his sin, which led to renewed fellowship and worship!

And God can do that in your life even today! *[pauseeee]*

How can we keep from worshiping such a great God, who graciously sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to save us?

While David couldn't touch the ark because of God's presence, Jesus came to us, being the very presence of God among us.

Like David, willing to be lowly and not wear his kingly attire, Jesus was willing to humble himself.

For he "emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."¹¹ *[pauseeee]*

How can we keep from singing His praises, and how can we keep from worshiping Him in Spirit and in truth?¹²

¹¹ Philippians 2:7-8.

¹² A reference to John 4:24.