

Prayer Points

Please continue to pray for those who are recovering at home or in hospital. Pray for John Morton, Alan Wellington, Marie Clarke, Shellagh Robertson and Margaret Buck

Greece and Cyprus have had to bear an inequitable share of bearing up the lives of those fleeing their home countries. Pray that BMS and All4Aid will help advocate to make Greece and Cyprus fairer places for people on the move and to keep their plight high on the agenda of European nations.

Sermon Notes



BIBLE STUDY

July 23rd 2023

The Life of David:

David's Error

2 Samuel 24:1-5 & 10-25

David is an extraordinary person in the Bible. He was a skilled musician, he was a formidable warrior who won a legendary battle against a great champion and he attracted the greatest soldiers of his day to serve under him. He was a poet, writing Psalms that expressed the deep longing of the human heart for God. His words were so personal and powerful that thousands of years later, they remain. As much as all the things listed earlier are impressive to other human beings, God was far more interested in David's heart. A close study of the life of David will open our eyes to both how much God cares about the condition of our hearts and the foreshadow of Jesus who truly redeems our hearts. The world spends a lot of time pressing us to focus on exterior issues, but God looks on the inside.

If you would like to join a Connect Group, please contact the church office 01424 730001

Today's title is 'David's Error'. However, having read this passage a few times, I am not certain that the error made was, in fact, David's. Go back again to verse 1 which says that 'the Lord incited David'. God was angry with Israel [again] and, as a Righteous God, a punishment was due. That said, I am not certain how doing a roll call of men eligible to fight constituted a punishment, although it did make David's commanders annoyed. If David had said that 'The Lord God commands it' I expect their reaction would have been different – but he didn't. I wonder why?

Now look at verse 10. David is wracked with guilt for ordering the census, but wasn't that what he had been driven to by God?

Then we get to meet Gad, a prophet. These prophets always seem to get the mucky end of the stick, and he has to offer David three choices, none of which are good, in order for God's wrath to be turned aside.

I wonder, in David's shoes, which choice I would make? I think he probably made the best from an unpleasant choice which, nevertheless, took the lives of 70,000 people [verse 10].

Chapter 24 opens without reference to what brought about God's anger, does that suggest that people can fall foul of God's anger almost inadvertently?

Read 2 Samuel 24:1-5 & 10-25

The God of the Old Testament rarely comes across as the 'kindly old man' seen in many artworks. How do you perceive Him?

1. Mistakes are actions and actions have consequences. Based on today's reading alone how would you rate David's performance? What could he have done differently?
2. Whose idea was it to take the census? Why, do you think, the army commanders would be against it? Discuss.

3. There may be some confusion as to what David was asking Joab and others to do. The taking of a census (a counting of population) was not always sinful. Indeed, Numbers is a whole book about numbering God's people! But David's census is clearly sinful (24:10), although we are not explicitly told why. Based on a recurring theme in the book (see 1 Sam. 2:9-10; 10:23-24; 14:6; 16:7; 17:4-11, 45, 47), why do you think David's census could be sinful?
4. David as king was a very powerful man, he was, after all, God's appointed King over Israel yet look again at verse 10. Was he at fault? How good are we at admitting/confessing our mistakes? [see also Vv. 17]
5. Why do you think that God spoke to Gad and not directly, as before, to David? Was David part of Israel's problem or was God including David in His punishment of Israel? Discuss.
6. Look closely at verses 12 & 13. God tells Gad to say that there are three options for David. Gad gives David three options. Is there any reason to suppose that they may differ? Why would that be – or not?
7. The short story of Araunah consists of a dilemma of etiquette. Read verses 21 – 24 and discuss if either party acted with honour, honesty or decorum? What does David mean in v24? What does this say about the value of worship?
8. While 2 Samuel 24 ends on the happy note of David's intercession and the Lord's mercy (vv. 18-25), something even more significant is happening. Read 1 Chronicles 21:28-22:1, which retells the same scene with more detail. What is the significance of this moment for the broader plan of God and Solomon?