



Studies in the Life of David

Text

First Samuel 25:1

Topic

Samuel dies and all Israel gathers at his funeral to lament his remarkable life

Title

"Life as It Was Lament to Be"

Introduction

A wonderful funeral was in progress. The pastor talked at length about the good traits of the deceased, what an honest man he was, and what a loving husband and kind father he was.

In the middle of the eulogy the widow leaned over and whispered to one of her children, "**Go up there and take a look in the coffin and see if that's your dad.**"

I've heard a lot of eulogies over the years and, quite frankly, a lot of them do stretch the truth. The person in the eulogy bears little resemblance to the person you knew in life.

I can understand the desire to put a positive spin on someone's death. But the time for doing that isn't at death. **It's during life!** You're writing your eulogy right now.

Israel's last judge and the first person to hold the office of prophet had died. The man whose mother had dedicated him to serving the Lord while she

was barren, who heard and responded to the voice of God as a youth, who had anointed the first king of Israel and his successor, had died. It was the end of an era, a monumental event.

Like all deaths, Samuel's preaches to us about how to live life. It reminds us that we are working on our eulogies every day.

We believe that the coming of Jesus to resurrect and rapture the church is imminent. But like the Thessalonians, while we await this imminent return, many "fall asleep." Put plainly, they die.

I'm ready to be raptured, but what if my part instead is in the resurrection of the dead? There will be a funeral. There will be a eulogy. What will be said?

Using Samuel and David, who are both mentioned in our verse, let's think about our eulogies. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 The Death Of Samuel Can Help You To Concentrate On Achieving Spiritual Milestones, and #2 The Life Of David Can Help You To Concentrate On Apprehending Spiritual Moments.

#1 The Death Of Samuel Can Help You To Concentrate On Achieving Spiritual Milestones

It's always hard to pin down an age for these guys unless the Bible explicitly states it. Comparing various timelines and some verifiable historic dates we'd say that Samuel was certainly in his 70's, probably in his 80's.

1 Samuel 25:1 Then Samuel died; and the Israelites gathered together and lamented for him, and buried him at his home in Ramah. And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

The Israelites "gathered" to "bury" him. The only detail we have about Samuel's funeral was that there was "lamentation." I have a tendency to think of that as just a bunch of crying. I'm sure there were tears but that isn't all.

A “lament” is some verbal expression of great grief or sorrow. You find them throughout Scripture - such as in the Book of Lamentations that Jeremiah penned regarding the fall of Jerusalem. Laments are beautiful literature, often employing analogies and illustrations, often performed as songs.

While there was probably not a eulogy in the sense we are used to, there was “lamentation” that had content, probably employing analogies and illustrations, to celebrate the spiritual milestones of Samuel’s life.

What if you had to write your own eulogy? How would you organize it?

Every two years Lemoore High sponsors what is called *Every 15 Minutes*. It derives its name from statistics that show someone is killed in an alcohol related car crash every fifteen minutes. Part of the program involves certain students being taken out of class as if they had been killed in a crash. Their parents have to write an obituary for them which is read out loud to their classmates. It turns into a eulogy about their life. It’s really pretty emotional.

What’s the first thing that comes to mind when you hear a person has died? It’s the destination question. Where are they? Where have they gone? Where will they be spending eternity?

The most important thing in life is receiving eternal life through Jesus Christ. Because when you have it, you can confidently start your eulogy by saying, “to be absent from the body [at death] is to be present with the Lord [for eternity].”

Have you ever wondered why people die at all? The Bible says that “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Death is the direct result of sin.

Sin is an offensive word, so let me put it in perspective. Jesus once said, “Be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). The standard for getting into heaven is to be perfect – to be as perfect as God Himself.

Think of it this way. We're coming up to playoffs in Major League Baseball. What if Joe Girardi told C.C. Sabathia, "Throw a perfect game. Anything else and you're headed back to Triple A."

Even if a pitcher could throw a perfect game every time he took the mound, we're talking about an internal perfection of heart, mind, and soul. *It's not possible for us as human beings.*

No one is perfect; no one can become perfect. All of us, therefore, are in the category of being sinners. That is why the Bible says "there is none righteous, no not one" (Romans 3:10). You may not be as bad as others... Or you may have many good works to your credit... But all of us fall short of God's standard of perfection, and none of us can ever hope to achieve it by our own efforts.

A little girl was once watching a sheep eat grass and thought how white it looked against the green background. But when it began to snow she thought, "That sheep now looks dirty against the white snow!" It was the same sheep, but with a different background. When we compare ourselves to man's standard we look pretty clean, but when we compare ourselves to the pure snow-white righteousness of God's standard - His Law - we can see ourselves in truth, that we are unclean in His sight.

God's Law is summarized in the Ten Commandments. Before you say you have obeyed the Commandments, this is what someone would be like if he kept the Law. He will always love God with "all of his heart, mind, soul, and strength," and love his neighbor as much as he has loved himself. He has never made a god to suit himself (either with his hands or in his mind). He has always given God's name reverence, kept the Sabbath holy, honored his parents implicitly, and never once has he been "angry without cause." He has never hated anyone, had lust in his heart, or had illicit sex. He has never stolen even a paper clip or ball point pen, or told as much as a "white" lie, and not once desired anything that belongs to someone else. He is, and always has been "pure in heart," perfect in thought, word, and deed.

Sound like anyone you know? **Only one person was ever like that.** It was Jesus Christ. And that's why you can claim this promise:

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

Jesus was God in human flesh. He and He alone was perfect. He died on the Cross to pay the wages of sin for the entire human race – including you and I. He now offers all who believe in Him eternal life. When you believe you are a sinner and Jesus is your Savior, He takes your sin and gives you His righteousness so you will go to Heaven when you die.

I'd encourage you to put your name in that verse. "For God so loved [Gene] that He gave His only begotten Son, that [Gene] by believing in Jesus should not perish but have everlasting life."

If you've been born-again and you die, at death you will be absent from the body and present with the Lord. You will find yourself at what the Bible describes as the Reward Seat of Jesus Christ.

The Bible says some of us will not die! The Lord will come to rapture us off the earth and we shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye. We, too, will find ourselves at the Reward Seat.

2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

1 Corinthians 3:13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

It's too much for us to discuss the subject of our individual review and its rewards this morning. We can summarize it in a small spiritual sound byte.

*Only one life, will soon be past;
Only what's done for Christ will last!*

The awareness I am headed for a spiritual review at the Reward Seat of Jesus ought to encourage me to concentrate on spiritual things in life. The only milestones that matter will be what was done as a believer for Jesus. That can include all kinds of everyday, mundane activities - but only as they are infused with a sense of His presence in them and my yielding to Him.

#2 The Life Of David Can Help You To Concentrate On Apprehending Spiritual Moments

Returning to our verse we read at the end of it,

1 Samuel 25:1 ... And David arose and went down to the Wilderness of Paran.

David could not attend the funeral of Samuel. If he did, a murder was liable to break out as King Saul was still bent on killing him.

This was quite sad on a personal level. Samuel had anointed David to be the next king. David at one time had fled to Samuel for safety and had experienced an amazing outpouring of the Holy Spirit's power. Samuel was a key figure in David's life. Though David may have had minimal contact with Samuel, knowing he was still around, still walking with the Lord, still available, must have provided a great deal of spiritual strength to him in his exile. Samuel had judged and prophesied in Israel for decades, all of David's life.

David undoubtedly felt he was in a spiritual wilderness as well. It was a moment that I'm sure he would have liked to spend in some other way.

Looking at David, shut-out from mourning Israel's hero and his spiritual mentor, still on the run, his life topsy-turvy, we realize that life is a series of moments. If you prefer, you can call them 'seasons' (the usual term Christians employ).

If you are a Christian, **you are creating your eulogy in those moments.** God has designed them, crafted them, just for you. He's completing the work He began in you when you were saved. He is conforming you into the image of Jesus Christ - making you more like Jesus.

Here is one of the ways the apostle Paul once described the succession of those moments in his life:

Philippians 4:11 ... I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content:

Philippians 4:12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

You might be in an abounding moment, feeling “full.” Are you learning how to abound in Jesus? *Abounding isn't as easy as it sounds!* Often it is in times of prosperity or relative ease that backsliding begins. It's too easy to think you are being blessed because of something you've done, because you've earned it or deserve it. No; it's all of grace when you are abounding. If you aren't both grateful to God and generous to others you are likely to fall.

You might be in an abasing moment, “hungry” and “suffer[ing] need.” Are you learning to be content while being abased? Backsliding is a problem there, too, but it's more likely that you will grow bitter - especially if the abasing, the hunger, the suffering need drags on. Trust the Lord as the Potter working with you as His clay. He knows what kind of vessel you need to be shaped into.

You can apprehend, take hold of, each moment, each season. As Paul said, “learn.” Let the Lord use what He's doing to make you more like Jesus.

If you die, will you ‘lament’ well? **Or will people wonder if it's really you in the casket!**

It might not be such a bad idea to write your own eulogy, at least up to this point in your life. It should follow a two-point outline.

1. Point Number One: Gene was saved.
2. Point Number Two: Gene served the Lord.

(Insert your own name, of course).

We're going to spend some time worshipping the Lord in song. If you are saved, it's a time to sing from a grateful heart, as well as to let the Lord search your heart.

If you are not saved, it's a time to give serious thought to your destination at death. As you hear the singing of the saints, whose hearts are filled with the wonder of God's love, the Lord can show you that He has placed eternity in your heart - and that it can only be filled by Him in a relationship with God through faith in Jesus.

Conclusion

Are you saved? Have you realized that you are a sinner and can do nothing about it without divine help?

Have you broken even one of the ten commandments - either in your behavior or in your mind? Then you are a sinner and cannot hope to go to Heaven when you die. Which is why God did something to save you. He came to earth as a man in the person of Jesus Christ. He took your place as a sinner by dying on the Cross. He died for you, in your place, as your substitute. When you acknowledge you are a sinner and that Jesus is the Savior, He gives you His righteousness. You are declared righteous. It's by grace, through faith.

If you are saved, you can look back on some spiritual history already. Can you see some spiritual milestones? Again, remember, they don't have to be extraordinary. I think most of the truly great milestones, the ones we will be rewarded for, involve simple obedience and perseverance.

Then look ahead. None of us knows how long we have. We could be raptured any moment. Some of us may "fall asleep." Either way it makes sense to concentrate on achieving spiritual milestones.

"Only one life, will soon be past; Only what's done for Christ will last."

We call upon nonbelievers to get saved. Then we call upon believers to rededicate themselves. Mostly we think of 'rededication' as something a

backslidden Christian does who wants to come back and walk with the Lord.

That's great! But that isn't the only reason we might rededicate ourselves. Mature believers who are not walking in habitual sin can benefit from a sincere prayer of rededication. Maybe you desire a deeper, more fulfilling experience with God. Maybe you want to know God's will. Romans 12:1 & 2 are written for you, applicable everyday.

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

That's certainly a call to rededicate ourselves. **Let's do it!**

