



Studies in the Life of David

Text

Second Samuel 6:1-23

Topic

David builds a cart to bring the Ark of the Covenant back to Jerusalem but ends-up leaving it at the house of Obed-Edom

Title

"I Left My Cart in Obed-Edom's"

Introduction

Traditional hymns versus contemporary choruses. The debate rages on with no end in sight.

The solution is really quite simple. **It has to do with your clothing!**

I'm not talking about your physical clothing. (That's a whole other debate).

No, I'm talking about your *spiritual* clothing. Regardless hymns or choruses, what are you really 'wearing,' spiritually, as you approach God in your worship?

We have in our text an illustration of two types of clothing we might put on as we seek to worship Jesus. King David plans and then participates in two worship services involving bringing the Ark of the Covenant back to its rightful place in the Tabernacle. In each case he wears different clothing to a very different result.

- In the first he was clothed as the king. The worship service was a disaster. It was 'killer worship,' but not the kind you wanted.

- In the second, he took off his kingly attire and dressed as a common priest. This worship service ended blessedly with the Ark back in its place and all Israel being prospered.

David's physical attire illustrates the two types of spiritual clothing we can put on in the presence of our God:

- In the first service we see him clothed with **pride**.
- In the second service he was clothed with **humility**.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Clothe Yourself With Pride And You're Not Really Worshipping The Lord, and #2 Clothe Yourself With Humility And You'll Be Fully Worshipping The Lord.

#1 Clothe Yourself With Pride
And You're Not Really Worshipping The Lord
(v1-10)

I want to make an important point as we begin. **David didn't set out to promote himself or to clothe himself with pride.** He was absolutely sincere in his desire to worship the Lord. He was trying to do the right thing. It's just that he went about it the wrong way. We'll see that his entire plan for transporting the Ark speaks of man's wisdom, of human effort, of worldly pomp.

You and I don't set out to promote self or to clothe ourselves with pride. We are sincere in our desire to worship the Lord. Nevertheless we can come clothed with pride that speaks of our own effort rather than God's grace. We, too, can go about trying to do the right thing in the wrong way.

2 Samuel 6:1 Again David gathered all the choice men of Israel, thirty thousand.
2 Samuel 6:2 And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the Lord of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim.

If you've seen *Raiders of the Lost Ark* you've got a pretty good idea of what the Ark looked like. The Ark was a rectangular chest (2' 3" wide, 3' 9" long, and 2' 3" high) made of acacia wood and overlaid inside and out with gold.

The lid of the Ark, featuring two cherubim angels with their wings touching, was considered a separate piece of furniture and was called the Mercy Seat. Usually when we mention the Ark we mean both it and the lid.

It was there at the Ark between the cherubim inside the holy of holies of the Tabernacle that God manifested His presence to the Israelites. His glory literally lived there among men.

The Ark hadn't been in the Tabernacle for many decades. The Philistines had captured it. They took the Ark to several places in their country, and at each place misfortune befell them. After seven months they sent it back to the Israelites. It eventually ended up at a place called Kearsath-jearim in the house of Abinadab.

2 Samuel 6:3 So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart.

I'm sure the "cart" was a thing of beauty, crafted especially for the occasion. Uzzah and Ahio guys probably somehow earned the right to "drive" the ox drawn cart.

2 Samuel 6:4 And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark.

2 Samuel 6:5 Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the Lord on all kinds of instruments of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrams, and on cymbals.

Can you picture the excitement in this crowd? This was the Super Bowl of worship. A huge crowd of over thirty-thousand... The choicest men... All new instruments... Music that was undoubtedly written by David especially for the occasion... The best worship voices in the land... A whole new way of transporting the Ark. It would have required months of planning, lots of money invested, rehearsals round the clock. *And it was all for God!*

2 Samuel 6:6 And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled.

2 Samuel 6:7 Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.

That's quite a buzz killer! Just when everything was going so well, God let it be known He was not pleased with their efforts.

Why not? I see Uzzah's action in reaching out to steady the Ark as symbolic. It represented in one moment everything that was wrong about this procession. It was all man's attempt to carry God along, to help God out, rather than submitting to Him by following His simple instructions.

In the case of transporting the Ark, God had clearly described His 'way' of doing it. According to Moses in the Book of Exodus it was to be carried only by Levites who first sanctified themselves and then bore the Ark on their shoulders by poles fitted through rings in it (25:10-16). Simple!

If you step back from the procession David planned and was carrying out you see **man**, not God. All of David's preparations obscured the Ark. You didn't see the Ark so much as you saw lots of human effort surrounding it.

No matter David's intentions, this was man on display; this was pride. See how subtle it was? It snuck-up on David at a time when his intentions were good. His ideas, his plans and those of others he commissioned, ignored God's Word in favor of methods that they must have thought were an improvement.

2 Samuel 6:8 And David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day.

2 Samuel 6:9 David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?"

2 Samuel 6:10 So David would not move the ark of the Lord with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.

Anger, fear, and failure were the results of David's worship service. Worshipping God wasn't 'working' for him.

Maybe you feel that worshipping God isn't working for you. You feel anger, or fear, or you are experiencing failure in your walk with the Lord. It could be, it just might be, that you're going about things your way, obscuring the presence of God.

Simplify! Go to the Word and find out what you ought to be doing and do it. God has clearly described His way of doing things, especially in the big, important areas of life, like home and church and society. Too often we try to go beyond the simplicity of His instruction in those areas.

If you want an example, I'd point to Christians who would rather embrace the psychological theories of godless men rather than sticking with the simplicity of soul care as revealed in the Word of God. It's an attempt to modernize God, to bring Jesus up-to-date. But it's really a new cart driven by men and surrounded by man's wisdom. **I don't want to touch it!**

Pride comes naturally to us and, so, if we're not careful it will express itself even as we seek to worship the Lord. We'll do things our way, not God's, then expect His blessing because we were sincere.

You know that expression, "It's my way or the highway?" We could modify it as if God was saying, "My way *is* the high way," meaning by that the 'higher' way, the way of the Spirit.

What is that 'way?' The Bible encourages us to clothe ourselves with humility. The apostle Peter said, "be clothed with humility, for "GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE" (First Peter 5:5). It's a choice we make. It assumes we are clothed with pride and need to daily pursue humility.

#2 Clothe Yourself With Humility And You'll Be Fully Worshipping The Lord (v11-23)

One thing I love about David: He wasn't one to let a setback cripple him. He sorted things out.

2 Samuel 6:11 The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

2 Samuel 6:12 Now it was told King David, saying, "The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness.

The Ark was a blessing. God wanted to bless His people. David simply needed to do things God's way.

God still, always, wants to bless His people!

2 Samuel 6:13 And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep.

Likely this occurred only once, after the first six paces, and *not* every six paces - *otherwise they'd still be there!*

2 Samuel 6:14 Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod.

2 Samuel 6:15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

There's a terrible movie called *King David* starring Richard Gere. In this scene he strips down to his underwear and dances like a drunken man staggering along ahead of the Ark.

David wasn't in his underwear. And I'll bet he was a great dancer!

David took off his kingly attire and dressed like a common priest. Why? Well, who else do we know that, in a sense, took off His kingly garments to function as a priest? **Jesus left Heaven, laid aside His rights to deity, and as the God-man became our great High Priest.**

David's actions are a powerful outward representation of the humility of Jesus Christ and the humility we, His followers, ought to clothe ourselves with.

Skip verse sixteen for a moment and look at verses seventeen, eighteen and nineteen.

2 Samuel 6:17 So they brought the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

2 Samuel 6:18 And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts.

2 Samuel 6:19 Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

Quite a different result, wouldn't you say? Everyone in Israel was blessed and it was signified by the material blessing of food.

Well, not quite everyone. Back to verse sixteen.

2 Samuel 6:16 Now as the ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping and whirling before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart.

I can't help but notice that Michal was at home, looking through a window. She had no desire to be at this worship service - even though it was arguably the most important worship service of that era. Her staying home tells us a lot about where her heart was at.

2 Samuel 6:20 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!"

Want to have a way of measuring whether or not you are really worshipping the Lord clothed with humility? If you are, you will be a blessing in your home, when no one is looking but your family.

Michal thought it was beneath the dignity of David's position as king to act like a common worshipper. She was clothed with pride and it embarrassed her as one of the king's wives.

David had learned from his previous attempt that he needed to divest himself of that very attitude, to humble himself before the Lord, to clothe himself with humility.

2 Samuel 6:21 So David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel. Therefore I will play music before the Lord.

2 Samuel 6:22 And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor."

In the earlier attempt to transport the Ark, David had forgotten what kind of a king he was supposed to be. He needed to be "humble in [his] own sight" in order to be the kind of shepherd-king God had called him to be. He needed to be like his own future descendant, the greater son of David, the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Samuel 6:23 Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

Michal was still the wife of the great king of Israel. His first wife, nonetheless. She still went to state functions and such. But her womb, and thus her life, was barren and empty - representing the life of pride as opposed to one clothed with humility.

In the end it doesn't really matter if you sing hymns or choruses. It doesn't matter if you ban instruments or utilize every instrument under the sun. It doesn't matter if you dance or discourage dancing.

All of those things are cultural and generational and are merely matters of style in a particular place at a particular time.

What matters is how you are clothed. Our default clothing is pride and, unfortunately, we can be clothed with it **even when our motives are sincere.**

Better to clothe ourselves with humility, submitting to one another in the fear of the Lord.

If there is some area in your life in which you feel worshipping God isn't 'working' for you, get back to basics. Do the simple things God instructs. Realize that results may not always be immediate but that they will be eternal.