



Studies in the Life of David

Text

Second Samuel 2:1-11

Topic

King Saul's death opens the way for David to become Israel's rightful king but instead one of Saul's sons claims the throne

Title

"The King is Dead. Long Live the Conflict"

Introduction

I read in an article the other day, "You know you've arrived when the name of your company becomes a verb, as in 'Google' it."

How do you know when **you** have 'arrived,' that is, you've reached the place or position or prominence you've been seeking?

There are probably different indicators that you've arrived depending on what sphere of life we're discussing. One thing you're usually not prepared for is that once you've arrived things don't always fall into place and get easier. In fact, they are liable to get a whole lot more difficult.

David found that out. He had been anointed at age fifteen or sixteen by Israel's last judge and first prophet, Samuel, in order to fulfill his calling as king over the nation. It started a chain of events that found him fleeing for his life out in the wilderness for the next fifteen or so years.

Finally Saul was removed as king, removed by God by being killed in battle at the hands of the Philistines. It cleared the way for David to take the position he had been anointed for and called to by God. David had arrived. *Not so fast!* Of the twelve tribes only the tribe of Judah recognized him as king. That's all he'd rule for the next seven and one-half years as the remaining tribes followed Saul's son, Ishbosheth.

David would finally unite the kingdom and be crowned its king only to have the Philistines immediately come out against him. And there would be intrigue in his own household, and new temptations to overcome.

David learned that you never really 'arrive' in the sense we sometimes think. You don't get to a point where you can kick-back and put the stewardship of your calling on cruise control.

It's important we learn that as long as we are alive and in these bodies we never 'arrive.' Our arrival is through resurrection after death or at the rapture if we are alive at the coming of Jesus for the church.

Mean time we all have callings. We're called to be Christians, first and foremost. But after that there are many roles and responsibilities that we either choose for ourselves or that are chosen for us.

Here's the really great news: **We are anointed for our callings!** David, when he was called to be king, was anointed with oil by Samuel. In our text he will be anointed with oil by the men of Judah as he assumes the role and responsibilities of king. The outward physical anointing by pouring oil over him represented the fact God would give David the Holy Spirit to accomplish his calling.

If you are a Christian, you have the Holy Spirit in a much greater sense. He indwells you, lives in you, to teach, lead, guide, and prompt you.

Our time this morning is going to be spent recognizing that we often get stalled in our callings, or we abandon them outright, because we think we've 'arrived' and it's not what we had in mind. *It's hard work!*

But it can be spiritual work when we realize we won't truly arrive until we see Jesus and that our anointing empowers us to press-on and persevere.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You've Been Anointed To Press On In Your Calling, and #2 You've Been Anointed To Persevere In Your Calling.

#1 You've Been Anointed
To Press On In Your Calling
(v1-7)

The apostle John, in his first letter, said that you "have an anointing" (2:20). A few verses later he said, "the anointing you have received... abides in you... (2:27). He was talking about God the Holy Spirit Who indwells believers. Then he says that, because we have this anointing, we "know all things" and we "do not need that anyone teach you." In other words, everything we need to know about life and godliness can be found in a relationship with God through Jesus Christ empowered by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Why so much failure, then, in our ranks as Christians? One reason, at least, is the failure to press on in our callings when things aren't working out exactly as we'd planned or hoped. Whether it's your marriage or your career or some other calling, you're to press on.

The king of Israel was dead. It was time for David to make a move.

2 Samuel 2:1 It happened after this that David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?" And the Lord said to him, "Go up." David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron."

Having been anointed king over a decade earlier, David had come to respect God's timing. He wanted to know, he needed to know, if this was God's timing.

We are almost always in a greater hurry than God to get to where we're going. In that sense we can be like shoddy contractors, cutting corners and

building with sub-par materials. For His part God is a master craftsman who is taking His time to complete the good work He has begun in us.

David also needed to know the place God was calling him to. Not just anyplace will always do. We shouldn't make decisions on what is obvious and logical without first talking to the Lord.

2 Samuel 2:2 So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite.

2 Samuel 2:3 And David brought up the men who were with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron.

This reads like an inventory. Two wives... an army of fighting men... multiple households. God had grown David even before he came into his calling. He was already acting like a king, in the best possible ways, to those who were depending upon him.

Each day we are to walk with the Lord in the place He has put us. We should have desires and dreams, goals and plans. But it's in our daily walk with Him that we will find satisfaction, not in our achievements.

2 Samuel 2:4 Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah...

The men of one tribe out of twelve recognized that David was king. It was a great moment, but pretty reserved. Not a lot of fanfare.

Some of your great moments are going to come and go with little fanfare in this life. They are between you and Jesus.

I've noticed, too, that often we tend to overlook great moments in people's lives because our ideas about what constitute 'greatness' are more worldly than spiritual. The most common example is the person who builds what we would call a great ministry or career but sacrifices his or her family along the way to achieve it.

There's not much fanfare in the daily grind of loving your wife, submitting to your husband, and training your kids. But it's those things we ought to recognize as great.

2 Samuel 2:4 Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah. And they told David, saying, "The men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who buried Saul."

Not just buried him. Saul and his sons had been taken from the battlefield, their bodies mutilated and hung on a wall for the Philistines to mock. These men of Jabesh Gilead had risked life and limb after Israel's army had been defeated to retrieve the bodies and treat them with respect. They were heroes.

2 Samuel 2:5 So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and said to them, "You are blessed of the Lord, for you have shown this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him.

2 Samuel 2:6 And now may the Lord show kindness and truth to you. I also will repay you this kindness, because you have done this thing.

2 Samuel 2:7 Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened, and be valiant; for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

Think of all the ways David might have described and honored these heroes. He might have called them brave, or courageous, or bold. He might have built a monument to them, or pinned them with medals of honor.

Instead he twice emphasized their "kindness" and promised to show "kindness" to them. He indicated the Lord would show them "kindness."

That's it? I rarely even use the word 'kind.' Excuse the pun, but what 'kind' of reward is recognizing "kindness?"

It's a big one, turns out, because "kindness" is an attribute of God. In Psalm 136 the word is used twenty-six times to proclaim that God's "kindness" is eternal. In reviewing the psalm, one author concludes,

The entire span of creation to God's redemption, preservation, and permanent establishment is touched upon in this psalm. It all happened, is happening, and will continue to happen because of the Lord's covenant faithfulness and kindness.

You might say that His “kindness” motivates God to act as He does. Motives, therefore, are in view as David seeks to reward these guys. Yes, they did a great thing, but it was because of a great motive, a godly motive.

It’s a reminder to us that, like David did with the men of Jabesh Gilead, so Jesus will do with you and I. He will judge us as to our motives and reward us for those that were godly. I can’t always know another person’s motives but I can let the Lord reveal my own to be sure they are in line with His nature.

David was called to be king at a young age. He was anointed by God for the position, recognized twice in his being physically anointed by men. Now he had arrived and it was pretty dismal. Nevertheless he put his whole heart into it. He determined to be the best king of one tribe that he could possibly be.

He decided to press on despite the possible disappointment and the obvious difficulties. And that is what you and I can do everyday in our various callings despite actual disappointment and ongoing difficulties.

Pressing on means you keep moving forward. It may be at a pace of three steps forward and two steps back, but you are moving forward in your walk with the Lord.

#2 You’ve Been Anointed To Persevere Through Your Calling (v8-11)

Persevering is slightly different. It assumes you are pressing on and means you don’t stop.

Look at David. Just as he was pressing on, being the best king over Judah he could be, a giant roadblock was thrown-up against him.

2 Samuel 2:8 But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim;
2 Samuel 2:9 and he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel.

We can only speculate as to why Ishbosheth was not on the battlefield with his dad and brothers. For his part, Abner refused to recognize David's anointing by God or by man. He wanted to continue the line of Saul - even though Saul's kingship had ended in abject failure and his surviving son was not one to fight.

As long as we are in these bodies our desire to further the kingdom of God in our callings will be opposed by a rival king. It's Satan, the devil, who is called the prince of this world. Now the devil doesn't personally come against you. No, he utilizes people, mostly nonbelievers, to oppose you at every turn. He sadly can sometimes even utilize believers who are not guarding against his devices.

Listen: This opposition is going to continue until you die or are raptured. That is why we must talk of persevering.

Now by "perseverance" I am not talking about the Doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints which is variously understood by those of opposing theological foundations.

I'm simply talking about persevering in the everyday, ordinary sense of continuing steadfastly in your various callings. I'm talking about staying married when you have no biblical grounds for a divorce. I'm talking about hanging-in there at work when it seems your boss or co-workers are dead set against you.

I'm talking about realizing that you have been anointed for your various callings and, therefore, you can do all things through Jesus Christ Who strengthens you.

2 Samuel 2:10 Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David.

2 Samuel 2:11 And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

Seems as though there are five and one-half years unaccounted for in Israel's leadership. There are various theories, such as, it may have taken

Abner that long to eliminate the Philistine threat in the north before Ishbosheth could actually be installed as king.

Note the phrasing, “only the house of Judah followed David.” I can’t know the inflection with which that should be read, but I can hear it as a letdown, as a bummer. Not only did the northern tribes refuse to recognize David’s calling and anointing, it went on for a rather lengthy time - seven and one-half years.

Having pressed-on, would David persevere another week and one-half of years?

I don’t think it’s an odd question. I mean, David had a family - two of them, actually. He had an army that was second to none. His men had their families. He could possibly have found some ground somewhere to be ‘king’ over a much smaller group with a lot less headaches. He could have quit and even made it seem spiritual when, after all he’d done, Israel refused to recognize him.

David did not quit. He persevered.

The bigger question is for me and you. When it looks like I’ve arrived in my calling but things aren’t what I had anticipated, will I persevere? Will you?

It’s a question we answer everyday in our walk with the Lord. Sometimes we even have a fall-back position, don’t we? We can plan a way of escape, all the while thinking we won’t use it or imagining that it is really the more spiritual option.

I cannot persevere when the devil is opposing me. But I can do all things through Christ because He has given me His anointing, His Holy Spirit, to walk in my various callings.

The bottom line is this. You never arrive in this life, at least spiritually speaking. Your life is a race that often turns into an obstacle course. Will you get stuck in the mud? Be unable to get over the wall? Have a hard time with the crawl?

Sure, you can get off the course. But you don't need to because the Lord is with you.

One day you **will** arrive - in Heaven. You will be absent from your body and immediately present with the Lord at death. Or the Lord will return in the clouds and you will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, into your glorified body and be with the Lord.

Press on. Persevere. It's in Heaven you will be rewarded for it.

