

2 Samuel 8:1-18

SI: We’re studying the life of King David so we can know Jesus Christ better. David is the greatest of all the Old Testament prototypes of Jesus Christ.

Many of the ways we know Jesus as our Lord and Savior and relate to him are through our understanding of David.

In David’s victories over his enemies we get an Old Testament glimpse at Jesus Christ’s victories over his enemies. That’s what this chapter is about.

INTRO: After seminary I was called to be an assistant pastor at a church on Marco Island, Florida. And when we moved there I got the motorcycle bug. Warm, sunny weather all the time.

We only had one car. If I took it to work, then Allison was stranded.

So getting a motorcycle was really all about taking care of wife.

But the problem was we had no money.

So I started asking around, hoping to find some old motorcycle I could afford, and I hit the jackpot.

A man told me he had a motorcycle that had been sitting in a shed for years.

Somebody had left it there and didn’t want it, wouldn’t come get it.

He wanted it out of his shed and said I could have it for free.

He didn’t even know what it was, so I was imagining a classic of some kind.

Well, not exactly. It was actually a scooter.

Little 50cc engine, twist and go.

I don’t have anything against scooters, they can be cute and fun.

But this thing was weird and ugly.

You can Google it and see what I mean. It was a Honda NU50.

It was also really rough, rusty, flat tires, gummed up carburetor.

I finally got it running. I could get it up to about 35 mph.

I thought I could improve the looks a little bit if I painted it.

I stopped by a body shop to buy some aerosol cans but the owner said: I’m painting a Corvette tomorrow, there will be enough paint left in my spray gun for this.

You sand it and mask it and won’t charge you anything. It will take me 10 minutes.

I said thank you. That’s great. What color are you painting the Corvette?

He said yellow. And I thought, ok. That will work. It’s going to look good.

But it didn’t look good. It looked ridiculous.

Allison said: It looks like you’re riding a banana.

Fast forward to our Cullman years.

I bought a motorcycle, a 2002 Moto Guzzi Special Sport.

1100 cubic centimeters of fuel injected Italian power.

And not just Italian power, Italian styling—the chrome and the paint and the sound.

I got compliments all the time.

Now let's imagine those two side by side.

The yellow banana scooter and the Moto Guzzi.

At first glance, there is no connection between the two.

One is beautiful and powerful and appealing, the other is weird and embarrassing.

And yet, at a deeper level, there's a connection.

They are both two wheeled motorized vehicles that hauled me around.

And both of them made me grin in their own ways.

This chapter is about David's victories. That's the theme repeated twice, 6 & 14.

The LORD gave David victory wherever he went.

David was a forerunner and prototype of Christ.

He's in the Bible to show what the Messiah would be like.

But there appears to be no connection between David's victories 3,000 years ago, and Jesus Christ's victories today.

In fact, David's victories may even seem embarrassing and hard to reconcile.

There is blood and gore and war and violence.

Prisoners are lined up and 2/3 of them are killed.

Horses are hamstrung. Spoils of war are taken.

What possible connection is there between David's victories and Christ's?

On the surface, not much. But at a deeper level David's victories demonstrate in very graphic ways what is true of Christ's victories today through the church, and his future victories when he returns in glory and brings in the new creation.

So let's look at David's victories and three things they show us about Jesus

that he is extending his kingdom, claiming his spoils, governing his people.

And with each of those we'll consider some faith lessons for ourselves.

MP#1 David's victories show us that Christ is extending his kingdom

There's a significance to David's victories that is not apparent unless you read this chapter looking at a map.

David defeats the Philistines in the west.

He defeats the Moabites in the east.

He defeats Hadadezer and the Syrians in the north.

And he defeats the Edomites in the south.

The whole of the land, all the points of the compass, come under David's dominion.

The reason it's significant is because that's what the Lord promised Abraham.

A thousand years before David, Abraham was an alien in the land of Canaan and

The LORD said to Abram . . . "Lift up your eyes from where you are and look north and south, east and west. All the land that you see I will give to you and your offspring forever.

That's Genesis 13. It was part of God's covenant with Abraham.

Then the Lord reaffirmed that promise with Jacob. In a dream he told him:

Your descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring.

So finally, a thousand years later, David is the one who fulfills the promise.

Why is this important?

Because God's promise to give Abraham's descendants the whole land of Canaan was itself just a foreshadowing of a greater promise to give them the whole earth.

Even Abraham knew God's promise wasn't just Canaan.

One day his descendants would be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the sand on the seashore, and through them all nations on earth would be blessed.

In Luke 13:29 Jesus himself says:

People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God.

That sounds familiar, doesn't it? It's an echo of God's promise to Abraham.

But it's changed. It's not just east and west, north and south of Canaan.

It's east and west, north and south of the whole world.

And it's not just territory at the four points of the compass—it's people.

Jesus is extending his rule in the hearts and lives of people from every tribe and language and nation. That's the story of the last 2,000 years.

The spread of the Good News of Jesus and his church around the world.

The faith lesson for us is that we should be hopeful, optimistic people as we see Christ extending his kingdom. We shouldn't be pessimists.

Of course there are going to be troubles.

David had enemies he had to fight and re-fight.

Jesus wins people to himself through Gospel, he build and extends his church, and then there is opposition from anti-Christian ideologies and hostile governments. Christians are oppressed, the church loses ground.

But Jesus preserves his people and in time, he always, always defeats the forces that oppose him, and gives his people the freedom and space they need to grow.

We ought to be encouraged by this and train ourselves to see it.

There are so many examples, even close to us.

I think about our missionary partners Tobi and Hanna Daum.

They live in what was East Germany and they are faithfully sharing the Gospel and providing Christ-centered marriage and family counseling and conferences. It's hard work but just 30 years ago they would have been arrested.

The communist East German government was at war with the church.

Where is that repressive government now? Christ defeated it in 1989.

Back in October I shared with you the amazing story of widespread Christian conversions in Iran that are even being reported by some secular news agencies.

The particular article I cited was produced by NPR.

Numbers are hard to nail down but it's generally agreed that in 1979, at the beginning of the Islamic Revolution, there were only 500 Christian converts in all of Iran. Now everybody agrees there are at least 500,000 and perhaps as many as a million Christians.

So many of them are fleeing to Turkey and starting churches, that it's making the Turkish officials nervous. Of course Iran has been in the news this week.

Only the Lord knows what will happen in that country.

But there is a lot of disillusionment with the Islamic revolution.

King Jesus is at work, extending his reign and we're seeing it happen.

I've talked about China many, many times, and a lot recently.

I'm worried about what's happening there and try to pray every day for China.

I think the repression is going to get a lot worse and will last for some time.

I also know that the Chinese church has grown from 500,000 to 60 million over the past 50 years and that it did so in spite of previous attempts to stop it.

There are certainly defeats and setbacks from our perspective.

You could make the case that in the West the church is under attack from a several enemies and is even losing ground.

But this passage encourages us to take the big view.

King David's greater Son is winning victories and extending his rule.

MP#2 David's victories show us that Christ is claiming his spoils

His loot, his trophies, his plunder. To the victor belongs the spoils!
I'm sure you noticed that a big part of this chapter is about David's plunder.

There was a lot of precious metal, silver and gold.

The gold shields that belonged to King Hadadezer's officers captured in battle.

The silver and gold tribute brought by Joram, son of subjugated King Toi.

David took all this back to Jerusalem and what did he do with it?

He dedicated it to the Lord..

The other metal mentioned is a great quantity of bronze.

1 Chronicles says that a generation later, Solomon used this very bronze David had taken in battle to cast important articles for the temple.

Two decorative pillars that stood at the entrance of the temple.

And then the basin called the bronze sea, used for ceremonial washing.

You can read all about those in 1 Kings 7. Very ornate and very large.

So David did not use the wealth he captured to make his own life more extravagant, he used it to magnify the glory and worship of God.

The other plunder that's mentioned is chariots and horses.

But David barely kept any of them.

He apparently destroyed most or all of the chariots and he hamstrung all but 100 of the chariot horses. Hamstringing means crippling a horse by cutting the large tendon on the back of the leg.

I read an article that said David actually gelded these stallions, castrated them.

It's well known that stallions were used to pull chariots in the Ancient Near East, so by turning them into geldings, that made them unsuitable as chariot horses.

That sounds plausible, but that's not what this verb means.

It means hamstring.

And the author of the article admitted he was looking for some alternate meaning because it was intolerable to think David destroyed these horses in this way.

Why would he destroy these spoils of war?

Why didn't he take all these chariots and horses for his own army?

Horses and chariots were the Reaper drone of the Ancient Near East.

They were the greatest military technology of the day. It makes no sense.

It's very interesting how often the Old Testament warns Israel and Israel's kings not to accumulate horses and chariots.

Why? What would be wrong with David keeping all of them?

Let me read you two verses and you'll understand.

Psalm 20, a Psalm of David.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.
And Isaiah 31

Woe to those who . . . rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.

David knew his own heart. He knew that if he kept them all, he would start to trust them instead of the Lord, especially when he used them to get victories.

So what's the connection with Jesus Christ?

When Jesus conquers the heart of a sinful man or a sinful woman with his love and forgiveness, that person is a trophy of his grace.

We are all, in a sense, spoils of war that Jesus has taken for himself, through his battle with sin and death on the cross.

And when he saves us, he demands everything for his worship and glory. And he often times even requires us to give up good things that we trust too much so that we trust him most of all.

Let's get practical. This means your money. This means tithes and offerings. King Jesus expects you not to use all your financial resources on yourself.

He expects you to give to his kingdom causes.

He expects you to develop the grace of generosity.

Like David did. Like Jesus did! He didn't just give up gold shields.

He took on the form of a servant. He gave up his life for our salvation.

And deep down when it comes to giving and generosity, it's always a matter of trust, isn't it? If I give this up for Christ, what's going to happen? Not just \$ I knew a woman who was a Christian, her boyfriend was not, he wanted to get married, but she knew what King Jesus wanted her to give up.

God's word is clear on this. Christians must marry in the Lord.

There were many emotions but it came down to who she would trust.

This horse and chariot looked pretty good. She wanted to let him carry her away. But Jesus had captured her rebel heart and forgiven her, so she trusted him.

She said no and broke up with her boyfriend.

What does Jesus want you to give up that you are trusting?

He has claimed you as his spoil of war, the war he fought on the cross.

The war for your forgiveness and eternal life. He wants your whole life. So King Jesus is expanding his kingdom, he's claiming his spoils, and

MP#3 David's victories show us that Christ is governing his people

David reigned over all Israel, doing what was just and right for all his people.

Another version says:

So David reigned over all Israel. And David administered justice and equity to all his people.

All Israel, all his people. All is emphasized to show that even though David was from the tribe of Judah, and even though there were historic tensions among the tribes and between the north and the south, David showed no favoritism.

Justice and equity for all.

It wasn't perfect. These head officials who are mentioned, Joab and Zadok and so forth, some were good men and some were not. But they were competent. And under David's leadership and influence, they governed well.

David's sin with Bathsheba did significant damage, as we'll see later.

But in spite of that, things were good under David.

Three thousand years ago, there was no better place to live in all the world than in King David's kingdom and under his government.

So let's connect this to Jesus Christ and then to ourselves.

One of our Advent readings this past Christmas was Isaiah 9.

All of you know this.

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.

He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty will accomplish this.

So when Jesus was born and when he came into the world,

he took upon himself the government of David's throne and kingdom.

What does that mean?

It means the church. The church is Christ's government on earth until he comes.

We read earlier in the service the Revelation 19 image of Christ as the rider on

the white horse. When he comes again, he's going to establish perfect justice.

Until then he is governing his people with justice and equity through the church.

But the church is in many ways a basket case!

The church is like the yellow banana scooter.

There are divisions, bad doctrine, injustices, sins, favoritism, misuse of money.

But it was perfect in the early church, right?

Just read the New Testament epistles.

Paul and the Apostles were dealing with all sorts of problems in the churches. There were those very early days in Jerusalem when the believers had all things in common and that was a particularly sweet time.

Even then there was a complaint that the Hebrew widows were being shown favoritism over the Greek widows in distribution of food.

So the Apostles had the church elect Deacons to deal with that inequity.

Choose seven wise men who are filled with the Holy Spirit.

That's Christ's government.

Elders and deacons and pastors.

The structure and practical things to make that all happen, like meetings and budgets and voting, the periodic upheavals caused by sin and life in a fallen world that have to be mediated and dealt with.

But because Jesus Christ is in it, the church is the best place in the world to live.

Paul says the church is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and that Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone.

So what does this mean for us? What's the faith lesson?

Love the church. Be grateful for the church. Be loyal to the church.

It's Christ's government on earth. He died for the church.

He established the church. He's building his church.

I'm not saying it's always wrong to change churches. Of course not.

Sometimes Christians need to move to another congregation or denomination.

But don't make the church of peripheral importance in your life.

Don't abandon the church.

This is where Christ governs and where you learn to come under his rule.

Jesus, with thy church abide, be her Savior, Lord, and Guide,

while on earth her faith is tried, we beseech thee, hear us.

Keep her life and doctrine pure, grant her patience to endure,

trusting in thy promise sure: we beseech thee, hear us.

Save her love from growing cold, make her watchmen strong and bold,

fence her round, thy peaceful fold: we beseech thee, hear us.

May she holy triumphs win, overthrow the hosts of sin,

gather all the nations in: we beseech thee, hear us.