

The Weekly Word
May 15-21, 2017

What a gift mothers are... and what a gift God word is. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, May 15: 1Samuel 29- God who intervenes...

I wonder what David would have done had he engaged in the battle against Saul and the forces of Israel? We will never know because God provided a way out. The other Philistine rulers refused to have David go into battle with them, so David was sent back.

I began to think about situations that God worked out, those situations where I was concerned about something and then God smoothed the path. The Lord is a mighty God and I have so much to be thankful for... His care, His provision, His going before me.

I paused and thanked the Lord for any number of situations that came to mind where His hand brought an answer. God is so good and my heart is warming as I remember some of His mighty acts.

Then this got me wondering about how many times God intervened and I had no clue about what God did... a texting driver who looked up with just enough time to avoid hitting me, a virus God cast from my body before it could manifest into disease, and so on.

I found myself delighting in the Lord and His care for me and others I know and love. I, we, serve a mighty and great God when we serve and follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above you heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost...

Oh, Lord God, I have no way of knowing where I might be if it were not for Your grace and providential care... Your hand watching over me. I am sorry for my sin and the ways I have dragged Your name through the mud by my actions. I am sorry for all the times I have been faithless and repaid Your goodness with bad behavior in return. Thank You for forgiveness and for loving me at all time. I bless You and I praise You. Through Jesus, my Lord, I pray. Amen.

Tuesday, May 16: 1Samuel 30- When in trouble to whom do you turn?...

When David was sent away from the Philistine battle, the Lord was not only saving him from the ethical dilemma of fighting his brother Israelites, God was also giving David a chance to save the families and livestock of all his men.

The Lord God sees all and from a human perspective is working many angles at one time. Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise!!!

Watching David handle this crisis is a study in leadership and devotion.

David is a broken man and he weeps with his men (4). David's ability to enter his pain and the pain of others is incredible. Joy or weeping, his men see the real David. How many of us are that vulnerable with others in our lives, especially people who work with and for us?

In his grief, David keeps his wits enough to sense the pulse of his men... their anger and the potential of an uprising.

What does David do? He turns to the Lord (7-8) and he does so publically so everyone realizes he is seeking God, his God! This action by David speaks loudly.

When David is in trouble he turns to the Lord. When I am in trouble where do I turn? This is a question each of us should ask. When we are in trouble to whom do we turn?

I am reminded of Psalm 27, which is a Psalm written by David. It will be my prayer this morning.

The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall. Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident. One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. Psalm 27:1-4

Wednesday, May 17: 1Samuel 31- Is the world a better place because of Your life?...

Death comes to everyone. So on one hand this is the inevitable account of someone who met his last day on earth. We will all meet that day in one way or another. However, on the other hand this is a tragic story. God spoke judgment over Saul for his turn of heart away from the Lord. His death and those of his sons are the result of God's judgment upon him. His family line had to be sealed off so that the new Davidic line could be established. How sad.

How sad that Jonathan died, in part, as a result of his father's failures and sins. The Jonathan we meet in the pages of Scripture is a good man who loved David and was committed to David. He pledged his allegiance to David and offered to be his second. Truly quite amazing. Sadly, he dies alongside his father.

As I think about the folly of one man, particularly a man in power, often it results in the death of many innocents. In my lifetime too many strong men have waged wars in which regular folk died to feed the strong man's lust for power or gain. We live in what can be a sad world.

But it doesn't have to be that way. The power of Jesus is infiltrating our world one person at a time as people say 'yes' to faith in Jesus. People in Jesus have the power to say 'no' to the selfish madness of the human heart and live a better life, a God honoring life, a life that loves, and cares and lifts others up.

Does every Believer live that way? No! Christendom has perpetrated its own atrocities. BUT despite some bad apples, people of faith in Jesus have brought much good to our world. More importantly we, who are alive today, can bring much good to our world. If we will open our hearts to the Lord and allow His touch and the power of the Holy Spirit within to lead us into good, to be peacemakers, to love.

Every one of us will die. Question is, will our living make the world a better place or will it add more pain and sorry?

Consider how you are living... I am. Ask God to help you be a positive force for good in your world.

Oh, God, help me to shine Your light, Your love and Your grace today. May people see You in me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, May 18: 2Samuel 1- Is faithfulness to the Lord a highest priority in your life?...

It hit me that Saul and Jonathan were killed in the battle David was dismissed from fighting. How would things have looked if David and his men were part of the battle that killed Saul? Well, that eventuality was never faced because the Lord arranged for David to be kept from that battle.

Now in today's reading we hear how an Amalekite thought he was doing David a favor by making sure Saul was dead.

Though Saul was trying to kill David, David was heartbroken to learn of Saul's and Jonathan's deaths. David had a profound honor for Saul as the Lord's anointed. Despite their personal problems, David honored Saul because of his love and honor for the Lord who anointed Saul.

We saw multiple times how David refused to harm Saul. Now he weeps for his death.

David was a man of action and passion but faithfulness to the Lord was always of highest priority for David.

The phrase 'faithfulness to the Lord was always highest priority' hit me. Is that true of me???

Making faithfulness to the Lord his highest priority was what made David a man after God's own heart.

Faithfulness to the Lord as my highest priority... that is a profound thought. Can I truly live into it?

Oh, Lord God, may it be so. May I have the strength, the wherewithal and the drive to make You my highest priority. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, May 19: 2Samuel 2- An unnecessary war...

David continues to impress. Saul is dead and time has passed. Before David makes a move he consults with the Lord (1). Moving at the impulse of the Lord has become second nature for David.

Lord that is my dream and desire... to be so connected with You that I continually consult with You about my moves. Oh, Lord, may it become as natural as rain to consult You as I might consult my wife or a trusted friend about this topic or that. That we live in connection... me with You and You with me. Following the life of David shows me that a person can live like that. Lead me, Lord, lead me. I pray in Your name, Jesus. Amen.

A second element struck me as I read this morning. Not only were Israelites warring against Israelites, but some of the men were on first name basis with men on the opposing side. Abner and Ashael knew each other. They spoke personally and directly as one chased the other. When Ashael wouldn't stop Abner killed him.

Most often in war people vilify the enemy, often giving them slang derogatory names, which eases the burden of killing and maiming. However with this war, these men were brothers in faith and neighbors in life.

I tried to imagine what that was like, but honestly I could not.

The pain and agony and horrible situations that strong men leaders can put their people through is horrendous.

A truly sad element of this unfolding story is that God had spoken; David was the Lord's choice. The fighting from God's vantage point was completely unnecessary. All the loss of life, all the personal pain, all the families without husbands and sons... all was due to disobedience to the Lord.

How much pain in our world is similarly caused? And in Israel's case they should have known better. They were God's people. The same can be said for the church...

Oh, Lord, forgive me for the pain my sin causes. Forgive me for the times I darken Your light within me. Forgive me for shrinking back when You direct me to move forward. Forgive me. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen

Saturday, May 20: 2Samuel 3- How much of the Lord's will do I know and yet not follow and obey?...

May God deal with Abner, be it ever so severely, if I do not do for David what the LORD promised him on oath and transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul and establish David's throne over Israel and Judah from Dan to Beersheba. (9-10).

Reading this chapter it struck me how even the General of Israel, the man leading the fight against David, knew that God had anointed David to be the next king of Israel. How did he know this? How had the Lord spread the word that David would be king?

Then as the chapter progressed I learned that all Israel wanted to make David king *Abner conferred with the elders of Israel and said, "For some time you have wanted to make David your king. Now do it! For the LORD promised David, 'By my servant David I will rescue my people Israel from the hand of the Philistines and from the hand of all their enemies' "* (17-18). So now whether Abner told the men for the first time or reiterated what they already knew, Abner and all his fighting men knew that the Lord has promised the kingdom to David.

What struck me in all this is how widespread the Lord's plan was known and still Israel warred against each other. So deep is the human propensity for sin.

How much of the Lord's will do I know and yet not follow and obey?

Too much...

And as this truth sunk in, my humanness and need for a savior sunk in as well.

How much we all need Jesus... His forgiveness, atonement and love.

Oh, Lord God, You have done for me what I could never have done for myself. You have saved me from the folly of sin and given me the joy of knowing You. Words cannot convey the love and appreciation and joy which You have graciously given to me. I praise You, my Lord and my Savior. Amen and amen.

Sunday, May 21, 2017, Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the PCOG website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@pcogonline.org.

Click here for a link to my sermons on the web. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days.