

The Weekly Word
May 29 –June 4, 2017

Memorial Day is past... so I guess summer is really here. Keep up your devotions and Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

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

Monday, May 29: 2Samuel 10- Pray for your national leaders...

I found myself wondering about the pressures of running a country. Oh, the pressures and decisions David faced. He tried to do a nice thing, sending condolences on the death of a neighboring king. However, the son and his new advisors misread the intention and things escalated until a war broke out.

As a citizen I never face decisions like this. My decisions might affect my household or extended family, my decisions may even affect some people where I work, but my decisions will never send a country to war. Country leaders face an entirely different magnitude of decisions than I will ever face. This diplomatic misunderstanding resulted in the death of 40,000 soldiers and very possibly the destruction of cities.

As I considered this one incident it occurred to me how significant national leaders are. No wonder God enjoins His people to pray for leaders, and those in authority... (1Timothy 2:1-2).

I am not very good at remembering to pray for my country leaders... certainly God is reminding me to do so today...

Oh, Lord, I pray for President Trump, for the men and women who advise him and for the congress – Representatives and Senators. I pray that these people would govern wisely and honorably before You and for the people of my country and the world. Give them wisdom to read diplomatic situations wisely. Give them restrain when it comes to sending soldiers into harms' way or deploying weapons of mass destruction. Help them to lead our country to be a force for good and the betterment of humanity throughout the world. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Tuesday, May 30: 2Samuel 11- David is human after all...

We have been reading about the life of David for some weeks now and at times it felt like David was perfect. He prayed at the right times and heard from God when he needed a word. David was king and a strong leader. He was a man of military might, and yet, he could play an instrument and sooth a wounded soul. There were times I wondered, "Who is that good?"

Well, today I learn David is not perfect, he is human after all. While sin is never something to smile about, there is a part of me that did smile when I read this chapter, not because of David's sin, but because he was real and now I can relate to him. Yes, I have sins and failures but I can also be someone who cultivates love and relationship for God that makes a difference for Him and good in this world like the great David did.

David's actions also remind me that I have areas in my life where I am particularly weak. As I watched David, he seemed to lean into the opportunity to sin, rather than turning away from it. When his eyes spied a woman bathing, he leaned in first inquiring about her and then sending for her. There were any number of moments along the way that he could have repented and stopped pursuing passion and sin. There were any number of times a voice of reason could have spoken

truth to him. However, he sought no counsel and servants don't question the master, they just do the master's bidding. So David was flying solo... no help, no counsel, no accountability.

Flying solo in our areas of weakness is a dangerous proposition.

Oh, Lord, help me to see my weak areas and to find a 'wing man' whom I trust. Someone who will give me grace-filled, God-honoring advice that can stem the rising tide of sin within me and lead me back to the safety of mature godly behavior. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Wednesday, May 31: 2Samuel 12- Accountable to God's word...

The story of David and Bathsheba is a sad one. The consequences of David's sin have ramifications for years to come. Even though the Lord removed David's sin (13), there still were some consequences that David had to face.

Nathan's rebuke in verse 9 caught my attention. It reads, *Why did you despise the word of the LORD by doing what is evil in his eyes? You struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword and took his wife to be your own. You killed him with the sword of the Ammonites.* God revealed all the sorted details to the prophet. I thought, "Wow, God really does know everything!!!"

But what struck me most forcefully were the words, *Why did you despise the word of the LORD.* The importance of knowing God's Word. It was not just that David despised the Lord; it was that he despised the word of the Lord.

Way back in Deuteronomy, God gave Moses a word about when Israel would ask for a king, Among the regulations set by the Lord for the king, it says:

When he takes the throne of his kingdom, he is to write for himself on a scroll a copy of this law, taken from that of the Levitical priests. It is to be with him, and he is to read it all the days of his life so that he may learn to revere the LORD his God and follow carefully all the words of this law and these decrees and not consider himself better than his fellow Israelites and turn from the law to the right or to the left. Then he and his descendants will reign a long time over his kingdom in Israel (Deuteronomy 17:18-20).

Assuming David did this, he had his own copy of the law which he was to read daily. This is how he would know what God expected of him. The law was to be a guide for his life. Such is the value of being in God's Word daily.

Like David and the kings, so with us today... day after day, year after year in God's Word is meant to shape our life and living *so that we may learn to revere the LORD our God and follow carefully all the words of His law and these decrees.*

And God will hold us accountable to His Word!

Oh, Lord, plant Your Word deeply into my soul, mind and heart. Oh, Lord, may Your Word be a guiding light and path for me all the days of my life until I live with You forever in eternity. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Thursday, June 1: 2Samuel 13- Nothing good comes from sweeping sin under the rug...

The Lord promised that calamity would not depart David's family due to his treachery with Bathsheba... *"This is what the LORD says: 'Out of your own household I am going to bring calamity on you. Before your very eyes I will take your wives and give them to one who is close to you, and he will sleep with your wives in broad daylight. You did it in secret, but I will do this thing in broad daylight before all Israel' "* (2 Samuel 12:11-12).

Today we read the beginning of God's fulfillment of His Word to David.

David is faithful but he is not perfect. David chose not to deal with Amnon's rape of his sister. His inaction gave Absalom time to brood and scheme.

Nothing good comes from sweeping sin under the rug. Nothing.

As I typed in the last thought, God jolted me. “Bill, here is your meditation moment for the morning.”

Nothing good comes from sweeping sin under the rug. Nothing.

This is true personally and in family or other systems. Sin unchecked, unrepented sin grows, whether under the surface or on top of the surface, sin grows.

Repentance and confession –“Roundup” for the soul –is needed. We have to admit and confess our sin and turn from it, only this can kill it from the root.

Oh, God, help me to face me... the true me... the sin-filled me and to bring my sin to You in confession and repentance. Oh, God, help me to bring all the systems I am a part of to You in confession and repentance. That You will root out the sin and replace it with godliness and grace. I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Friday, June 2: 2Samuel 14- Speaking truthfully...

All I kept thinking about was deception. How much of life is filled with deception. People telling half-truths or all out lies to get their way. People thinking they know what is best for someone else so they manipulate the situation to get a person to act. Case in point was Joab who resorted to a rouse to get the king to bring his son back.

Paul counsels the Ephesians to *put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body* (Ephesians 4:25). How many interpersonal problems would be avoided if we could live up to Paul's counsel?

How truthful are you with your circle of friends, coworkers and neighbors? How truthful am I?

My thoughts for today...

Lord, I surrender my tongue to You. Purge wickedness from my lips. I pray through Jesus, my Lord's name. Amen.

Saturday, June 3: 2Samuel 15- Bullet prayers...

Well, David's kingship certainly hit a snag. His son Absalom planned and executed a coup. Now David was forced to flee for his life, and as he was running he had to make a critical decision.

David, a man of action and wisdom, thrived in these situations. His strategic mind was at work, but so was his heart and his listening ear was attuned to the Lord. David was open to whatever the Lord chose to bring about from this incident. He laid no claims upon God but trusted in the Lord's will. *Then the king said to Zadok, "Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the LORD's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him"*(25-26).

David also employed what I shall term 'targeted prayer.' We have only one reference to prayer; it was pointed and specific. *Now David had been told, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." So David prayed, "LORD, turn Ahithophel's counsel into foolishness"* (31).

There is, it seems to me, a lesson in David's prayer. When possible be direct and be specific in prayer. Prayers need not be long; short and direct are just as meaningful and effective. Six words was the extent of David's prayer. But it was a powerful from a strategic point of view. If

David was to survive this coup then the wisdom of Ahithopel needed to be corrupted. So David targeted his prayer.

There are times, like when running for one's life, when we cannot linger in prayer. Hours on one's knees are simply not possible. Heartfelt direct prayer keeps us connected, expresses our heart's desire, even as we run for our lives. David modeled this.

As I wind down this morning, I am realizing that prayer takes many forms. There is a place for 'bullet prayers' even as there is a time for 'soaking in the presence of the Lord' prayers...

Oh, Lord, allow me the grace of both seasons of prayer. Those quick prayers when time doesn't allow for more and more extended periods when I can soak in Your presence and have a conversation with You. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sunday, June 4, 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.