

2 Samuel 5-6 • The Holiness of God

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It says in the New Testament that everything that happened in the Old Testament happened to us as an example. (1 Corinthians 10:11) That means that there are things for us to learn. There are things that we are to look at and to pay attention to in the Old Testament in terms of the stories and events that take place, so that we might gain a heart of wisdom from them.

There is a whole lot in the life of David. I love teaching and studying through the life of David. It is just such a tremendous study. He is not always a perfect example, just like you and I. Sometimes David is a particularly bad example of certain things— and, so be it. But much of the time we see so much that is good from this man.

2 Samuel, Chapter 5 is the time— or talking about the time in David's life— when he is essentially now coming as king over all of Israel. In fact, that's how the fifth chapter begins.

It says that: *“Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, (and I want you to notice what they said) ‘Behold, we are your bone and flesh. ² In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, ‘You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.’” (ESV)*

The people, even though it had been many years since God had spoken those words over David, they remembered that the prophecy had been given that he was to be the rightful king of Israel.

It says in verse 3: *“So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. ⁴ David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years.”*

That means he was 30 years old when he began to reign over all of Israel. We know that it had been seven years since he started reigning in Hebron over Judah. So he was 23 when that happened. If you can imagine, he started running from Saul 10 years previous; that puts him basically killing Goliath roughly after his thirteenth birthday. And it says, he was a boy (1 Samuel 17:42), if you

do that kind of math; and the one thing that is in flux there as far as the mathematics of that is, was it exactly 10 years? That is the best guess. Some people say it was even more. I can't imagine. But, there you go— an interesting way to look at it, but “*he reigned forty years.*”

Now that means that David is going to die at the age of 70, an age that we consider to be fairly young. Young... in terms of someone passing away. Certainly, people lived a lot longer than that during David's lifetime.

What is interesting is, when we get to the end of 2 Samuel, and we deal with the death of David, it is going to say something interesting about him. It is going to say that he died “*old and full of years...*” (1 Chronicles 23:1, NIV) Now, again, if somebody passed away at age 70, I'm not sure that would be the way we would describe them.

But you have to say one thing about David, and we have seen this already. He was full of years. Do you know that I think you can be 70 and not full of years. I think you can be 70 and full of years. I think you can be 35 and full of years. I think you can be 85 and not full of years. It all depends on how you live your life.

David lived his life with this passionate lust for living. I don't say that in a negative way, but a desire for living his life fully, and he lived it that way. So when he died at age 70, it says he was “*old and full of years.*” An interesting sort of statement. We will get to it toward the end of this book.

It tells us here in verse 6, as we keep reading: “*And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who said to David, (here is what they told him) ‘You will not come in here, but the blind and the lame will ward you off.’*”

In other words, they said to David, even the blind and the lame could keep you out. That's what they're essentially saying. That is not a good thing to say. But they were thinking that there was no possible way that David could make his way in there, because— and I don't know what their confidence was exactly— but, “*Nevertheless, (we are told in verse 7) David took the stronghold of Zion, that is, the city of David.*”

Now, David called Jerusalem the city of David, and he is going to establish his throne in the city of David, Jerusalem, over all of Israel. But isn't it interesting, David called it the “*city of David.*” However, the Bible also refers to Bethlehem as the city of David. Probably should be called the town of David.

You will remember that when the angels are speaking to the shepherds, they talk about how they have good news for this day in the city of David a baby has been born, who is Christ the Lord. A child has been born unto you, and so forth. But they refer to *“the city of David.”* (Luke 2:11) Of course, that is because Bethlehem was David's birthplace. David referred to Jerusalem as the city of David because he took it in battle. Both cities get the title, the city of David. It is not a problem with Scripture.

Verse 8 goes on to say, *“And David said on that day, ‘Whoever would strike the Jebusites, let him get up the water shaft to attack the lame and the blind, (it's a little tongue-in-cheek statement) who are hated by David's soul.’ Therefore it is said, ‘The blind and the lame shall not come into the house.’* (in other words, it became a saying among the people) *⁹ And David lived in the stronghold and called it the city of David. And David built the city all around from the Millo inward.”*

Do you know what a Millo is? It is actually a rock-like support terrace that is meant to give protection from an invader. You can actually see remnants of a Millo still in Jerusalem and even in some other towns around that area. But you can, if you get online, see pictures of what they look like. But they were—again—they were men; maybe that is what the Jebusites felt, that their protection was something that they could have confidence in— who knows— because of this rock-like support structure. Maybe they thought, Well, nobody's getting in here. And of course, it didn't help.

Verse 10 tells us why: *“And David became greater and greater, (Why? The last part of this verse is vitally important for you and me to check out and see) for the LORD, the God of hosts, was with him.”* Don't gloss over that statement quickly in any way, because this statement is such a key to understanding David's greatness.

We think about David as a great king in a lot of respects and in a lot of ways and for a lot of reasons. We can say he was a man after God's heart and da-da-da, and so forth and so on. But like we've already mentioned, and as we've already seen in our study, David made plenty of mistakes.

There were lots of reasons why God could have backed out on the bargain, as it relates to David and his kingship, and so forth, but He didn't. That is what made David great. It says here in fact, he became greater and greater, but the reason is given. It doesn't say because he was wise. It doesn't say because he made good choices. It doesn't say because he was good looking, or because he even had a

heart after God. It says it was because the Lord was with him. God was with him.

That is one of the reasons in Scripture why we are told not to fear. Over and over you can find it in the Scriptures. God will say, don't be afraid, for I am with you. He said that to Moses. He said that to Joshua. (Deuteronomy 31) He's— on and on— don't be afraid. Jesus said it too. Don't be afraid. I'm with you. (Luke 12:7)

When God is with us, when we are and— when I say with us, theologically speaking God is always with us because He's everywhere present— but that is not what we are referring to. We are not making a theological statement about the omnipresence of God. We are making a theological statement about someone who is in relationship with God and who is abiding in that relationship with God, you understand?

It's not enough to go to church. It's not enough to read your Bible. It's not enough even to pray once in a while. Do you know you can do those things and actually be very distant from the Lord? It's very possible.

A married couple can talk, and they can live in the same house and be very distant one from another. It's very possible. Some of you have experienced it, whether it was family members or your own situation. You know yourself. Very, very possible for that to happen.

Same thing is true for a Christian. You can be in church. You can talk to God, but not be close to Him. There's a phraseology that Jesus employs related to this idea of being close to Him that is recorded for us in the Book of John in the 15th chapter. I'm going to put this up on the screen for you because it's so important. This is the New Testament version of what we just read. Jesus said,

John 15:4-5 (ESV)

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.”

“Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. (And then he goes on to say) I am the vine; (and) you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me (and this is probably

the most important statement that is given in this whole section) *you can do nothing.*”

That lays it out, doesn't it? Jesus has a way of doing that, if you notice that from time to time. He has a way of making absolute statements. We talked about one on Sunday morning, where He said basically— or was I doing that with the girls last night?— I can't remember. Anyway, I teach too many times per week. But I was talking about the fact that Jesus makes that strong statement. I think I said it on Sunday. There is no other way to heaven except Me. *“I am the way, and the truth, and the life”* and there is no way to get *“to the Father except... (by) me.”* (John 14:6) That's an absolute statement.

Well, here's another absolute statement. *“...apart from me you can do nothing.”* Absolutely nothing. But notice again, the key of that particular passage: *“Abide in me.”* See, that's the difference between David and some of the other kings, and frankly, people and Christians for that matter.

Sometimes our relationship with God is distant, right? I mean, sometimes we are very distant with God. It's like, He's out there somewhere, and we pray, but we're not really sure our voice is getting through. And people doubt that all the time. I know that because they mentioned it to me, and not just a few people, too. It's a very common thing where people wonder, is God hearing my prayers? Is God watching my life? Is He paying attention? So there's a distance there, and those kinds of statements betray that kind of distance.

Jesus said, *“Abide in me, and I in you.”* The words of relationship in the New Testament are very graphic. Have you ever noticed that? When I say the words of relationship, I'm talking about the words that speak of how Jesus would have us to embrace Him. Some of them are even a little bit weird to our modern ears.

For example, do you remember in John, chapter... I believe it's John, chapter 6 where Jesus says, *“...unless you eat... (my) flesh and drink... (my) blood, you have no life in you.”* (John 6:53) Obviously not telling us to be cannibals, but He is using language that symbolizes an intimacy of consumption, whereby we receive Christ in a very intimate, very graphic sort of picture way that implies that this is not just an impersonal relationship. You know what I mean?

Just like with food, you can be really impersonal with food. I have made a determination in my life to be very impersonal with food that I can't pronounce. And so if I can't say it, I won't eat it. That's just a rule of thumb. And some people call it boring. I call it safety. And plus if it's wiggling, I won't do that

either. I've just chosen to be impersonal related to some of those kinds of things, because eating is a very intimate thing. Have you noticed that?

Have you noticed, it is a very intimate thing to put something in your mouth and then gulp it down, because it then becomes part of you. Your body assimilates it. It takes the nutrients in it, sends it out to your physical body to use as fuel, and so forth. Very intimate, it is very intimate, putting something inside of your body.

Listen, when Jesus said, unless you eat my flesh and drink my blood, He was talking about, unless this relationship goes beyond the superficial. And takes on the more graphically intimate and personal, then there really isn't going to be any life in you.

Then He says in the passage we just read, "*Abide in me, and I in you.*" And then you will have fruitfulness and life. But apart from that abiding presence of God in our lives, He says, essentially, "*...you can do nothing.*" Those are interesting statements, aren't they?

David was the kind of man who abided in the Lord. And he, not perfectly—again, lots of mistakes in his life— but he kept abiding. Do you understand that abiding in Christ isn't about being perfect or being mistake-free? Abiding in Christ is a relational intimacy that opens one's heart to the Lord in all respects.

God, I want You in my life. I want You in my marriage. I want You in my parenting. I want You in my business. I want You. I want You. I want You. When we start to do that, He will respond to that invitation to consume these areas of our lives with His lordship. When I talk about inviting Him into these areas, I don't know if that frightens any of you at all.

If it doesn't, it probably should, because it can be a frightening idea. The fact of the matter is, there are areas where we struggle inviting Him in. There are areas— and we've talked about this before— where we just refuse to let Him into this area of my life or that area of my life or something like that. But we ought to be doing that in an increasing way.

Lord, I want to let You in there and even admit to Him, Lord, there's this room in my life... And it says this on the door, and it's whatever it is for you. Could be your marriage, could be your finances. It could be your thoughts, could be your physical condition. It could be any number of things. Your fantasies, for that matter. You need to be aware about those places where you have struggled to embrace His intimacy and lordship, and you need to just come right out and

tell Him, Lord, I really want to have You in my life, but there's these areas of my life that I struggle letting You in.

And sometimes I'm not sure if I even want to. And that's just the honest truth, but I know that I need to in order to be whole. I need to let down my guard. I need to swallow my pride and die to self, and I need to let You in, because I want to abide in You. And I want You to abide in me. And I want You to be with me in my life.

I don't want to get to a place in my life where something happens that's otherwise devastating. And I realize I've been living my life on the cusp of a relationship with God, but I've never really pressed in, and I've been kidding myself. And I was able to kid myself because I was living a fairly easy-going life.

Then suddenly something happens that's terrible. I realize I haven't been nearly as close to the Lord as I would have thought. I realize actually there's more distance there than I wanted to admit. And I have not been abiding in the Lord.

You might say, well, pastor Paul, how would you even know? How would you know if you've been abiding in the Lord when something like that happens? I'll tell you how. The Bible says— and this is a wonderful promise— but it says He will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is stayed upon the Lord. (Isaiah 26:3)

When people talk to me about the level of stress and anxiety in their lives, what they're doing is, they're betraying the distance. The truth about the distance of where they are relationally with God, you see. And it's just one of those things. We are told in the Scripture, aren't we, that if we wait upon the Lord and really wait upon the Lord, He will renew our strength.

We'll mount up, right? Isn't that the promise in God's Word? We'll mount up with wings like eagles; we'll walk and not be weary; we'll, and on and on. or *"run and not be weary,... walk and not faint."* (Isaiah 40:31) It goes on to give these wonderful promises about what happens when we wait upon the Lord, when we abide in Christ, when there is a level of closeness and intimacy that we can draw our strength from.

We all have to be asking ourselves the question: Is God with me in the way that I really want Him to be? And am I with God in the way that I should be? Am I abiding in Him and so forth? And believe me, I'll just tell you right now, there shouldn't be any of us who are satisfied with our current situation. If you are, it

may just be a self-deception going on. I don't think there's any of us who ought to pat ourselves on the back and say, yeah, I think I'm exactly where I need to be. I think we probably all have areas of our life where we just need to grow in that area.

Verse 11, God's blessing of David just goes on. It says: “*And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, also carpenters and masons who built David a house.*”¹² *And David knew (by all of that) that the Lord had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.*” I love the end. I love the end of that verse.

I just love it. I'll tell you why. It's very humbling. Did you hear what it said? God “*exalted his kingdom.*” For whose sake? For the sake of Israel, for the sake of His people Israel, and David knew it. David knew that he had been exalted for Israel, not for David. And frankly, David didn't— David's one of these crazy guys— he didn't need it anyway. He knew that God had exalted him king over Israel, but he didn't need to be king over Israel.

Remember Saul? He needed to be king over Israel, and that is what drove him crazy. And when he realized that God had raised up someone to take his place, it drove him insane with jealousy. David, I think he would have been absolutely happy sticking around with the sheep out in the field somewhere, just worshiping the Lord. I think he would have been fine. God called him to that position as king. And it was one of those things that he didn't really need. But God did it for Israel. God did it to bless Israel.

Verse 13 tells us, and this is one of those not so great examples, “*And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem, after he came from Hebron, and more sons and daughters were born to David.*” We talked about this last week at some length. I won't belabor it tonight. If you weren't here or didn't hear what we did last week, you can check it out on our website. We talked about the whole polygamy thing and the slippery slope that it creates.

Verse 14 says: “*And these are the names of those who were born to him in Jerusalem: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon,*”¹⁵ *Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia,*¹⁶ *Elishama, Eliada, and Eliphelet.*¹⁷ *When the Philistines... (pick any of those names you like, by the way, for your next baby. Just any one of them, they all work) When the Philistines heard that David had been anointed king over Israel, all the Philistines went up to search for David. But David heard of it and went down to the stronghold.*¹⁸ *Now the Philistines had come and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim.*¹⁹ *And David inquired of the LORD, ‘Shall I go up*

against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?’ And the Lord said to David, ‘Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand.’”

This is another one of those great examples of David inquiring of the Lord. He's not going to make a move without talking to God. I'm not going to assume here. Do you want me to go up against the Philistines? Yes, go up.

“²⁰ And David came to Baal-perazim, and David defeated them there. And he said, ‘The Lord has broken through my enemies before me like a breaking flood.’ Therefore, the name of that place is called Baal-perazim (and that basically means the Lord who bursts through). ²¹ And the Philistines left their idols there, and David and his men carried them away.” But it was never very long between battles with the Philistines. In fact, in this case, it's not even 1 verse.

Verse 22 says, *“And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. ²³ And when David inquired of the LORD, he said, ‘You shall not go up; (but) go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees. ²⁴ And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself, for then the LORD has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.”*

This is really an incredible battle plan and I want you to see how this works. Because what David is being told here to do is, God says, in this case, don't make a frontal attack. Sneak around to the back, and then when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the trees— and He would identify that so that David would understand that was the sound of marching that was coming from heaven, not from earth. When you hear that, rouse yourselves, in other words, come out of your place of hiding, and go. You'll see how this thing works out.

“²⁵ And David did as the LORD commanded him, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer.” Basically, what is happening is that the Philistines come out against Israel, but they don't see Israel. They come out, they take up their battle positions, and Israel then goes around to the back, hides themselves behind them. The Philistines are sitting there waiting for Israel, but they hear marching.

Now, the Philistines heard it too. They hear marching, and they're thinking, the Israelites! So they get afraid, and they turn, and they run. There's Israel behind them. Boom! They got them caught. The Lord is in front, the Israeli army is behind, and God does a great work there.

2 Samuel, Chapter 6: *“David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. ² And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah.”* Or if your Bible may actually say, *“Baalah of Judah.”* It was basically the same name as the town of Kiriath-Jearim, which is where Moses brought the nation of Israel right at the cusp of the Promised Land, where he sent out the spies from that area originally. So that's essentially just the same area.

But it tells us there in the last of verse 2, why David came with all these people, these chosen men to bring from there *“the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim.”* All right, stop there for a minute. We need a little reminder of Judges.

You guys remember during the Book of Judges, the nation of Israel goes to war against the Philistines. It is during the high priesthood of Eli and his sons, Hophni and Phinehas. They came out against the Philistines, and they decided that they needed a lucky charm because they weren't doing well in their battle against the Philistines. They had been beaten back. They said, we need to bring the ark. Let's bring the ark.

So they grabbed Hophni and Phinehas, the sons of Eli, and they brought the ark out to the battle, you remember? And they brought it out as their lucky charm. Their rabbit's foot. And they said, yeah, we're going to beat him now because we have the Ark of the Covenant. Our God is with us.

Well, God wasn't about to let them use Him that way. Not only did they suffer a tremendous defeat at the hand of the Philistines, but the Philistines, remember, took the Ark of the Covenant back to their land. After God struck several of their cities with various plagues, and so forth, they sent the ark back to Israel. Do you remember that?

And you'll remember they put it on a cart (1 Samuel 6:7-21) Then they put a couple of cows that had never pulled a cart before and hooked them up to this cart, and they just let them loose. And it was a true miracle, because you'll remember that these cows had just calved. And these cows, contrary to nature, walked away from their calves, straight to Israel. That was a sign to the Philistine rulers that this was in fact God's doing.

So the ark came back to Israel, but it never really had a resting place. Right? I want you just to know what is in David's heart, because it doesn't really tell us here. But what is in David's heart is, he wants to bring the Ark of the Covenant back into the center of their national worship experience.

Remember, the Ark of the Covenant is the symbol of God's presence among His people. And so David is a worshiper at heart. He's not just the king, he's a worship leader. I mean, Wow! What a worship leader! and he loves to worship God, and he wants other people to worship God. He wants to bring this beautiful, powerful symbol of the presence of Almighty God back into the center of Israel's worship experience.

So he's excited, and he says, This has to be big. He gets thirty-thousand chosen men and we're going to go and we're going to bring the ark back, and we're going to celebrate, and it's going to be wonderful. And David was a man who had a heart that loved to celebrate the things of the Lord. He has a great desire to do this.

By the way, it's been some 70 years since the Ark has really been back at the center of Israel's worship experience. But now his throne is established in Jerusalem, and he wants to bring the ark to Jerusalem as well. So it says in verse 3, and this is important that you pay attention, it says, *“And they carried the ark of God on a new cart.”*

Oh, I wonder where they got that idea. Huh, new cart, huh? That's really great. I'm glad they didn't use an old cart. Might have some old manure or straw in there, so let's at least give God a new cart, right? I mean, it is the Ark of the Covenant after all. Let's put it on a new cart. I think they got the idea from the Philistines.

Right, that's exactly what the Philistines did. They put it on a new cart, and they thought, Well, we'll do things like the Philistines. They brought it up, and it came where it was supposed to, so we're going to put it on a new cart. There you go.

They *“brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, (so these guys are kind of in charge, right?)⁴ with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark.⁵ And David and all the house of Israel (look at this) were celebrating before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.”* Can you just picture this in your mind's eye or even hear it in your mind's ear?

There is this celebration of all these instruments, and people are celebrating, and it is this joyous experience. The ark in this beautiful golden ark with these beautiful carved angels on top is making its way along with this procession, and

these guys are driving it along, and people are celebrating, and all this stuff is going on, and it's just wonderful. It's glorious.

It says that: *“And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out (as one of the sons of Abinadab, put out) his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, (and then we're told why) for the oxen stumbled. ⁷ And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God.”* Stop there for a minute, please. Interesting lesson.

The Bible says the Old Testament is full of all kinds of lessons. Here's a lesson for them, too. It is possible to do the right thing the wrong way, and we're going to talk about that here a little bit. Doesn't sound like Uzzah should have been killed though, because he was just trying to steady the ark. The oxen stumbled, and so he reached out to touch the ark, to hold it, to keep it from falling off the cart.

And he died. He died right there. Can you imagine? I mean, that would kind of rain on your parade. With all of the joyous celebrating that's going on, and the music, you have to know, it would probably come to a pretty quick stop, right? When some guy drops dead right next to the cart, and everybody comes around the guy, What happened? Did he..., what happened here? I watched, he reached out, and he touched the ark, and he died. God struck him dead.

And the question that very naturally arises in our hearts and minds as we read this story is, Why did God strike this man dead? And I suppose it is a legitimate question, but just asking the question reveals how little we know about the holiness of God and how much we think about ourselves or how much we think of ourselves.

We think it is no big deal to touch the Ark of the Covenant, which is the national symbol of God's presence. We think it is no big deal. And we think, Well, he's trying to do a good thing. You can actually do wrong while trying to do a good thing. You can do what you think is the right thing, but you can do it the wrong way, and there can be consequences because of it.

The fact of the matter is, God had gone to great pains over the years through Moses to tell the Israelites that they weren't even to come near the Ark of the Covenant. When they were moving through the wilderness, whenever they picked up and moved, the Levites would cover the Ark of the Covenant first. They would cover it so nobody could even see it. Then the prescribed way of transporting the Ark of the Covenant was with the poles that were in the loops.

The priests who were set apart by God were to take up the Ark of the Covenant, and they were to carry it on their shoulders.

And that is the way. But the rest of the people couldn't be within a hundred feet of the thing. In fact, even farther, and God said to them, they are not even to come near the Ark of the Covenant because I am a holy God. Don't— and he warned them over and over and over and over again.

Listen, people. Make no mistake about this. Uzzah died because David did not consult the Word of God. Simple as that. This is ultimately David's fault. The Word of God was there to consult, and he did not do it. He presumptuously came after this thing to bring it into Jerusalem, and God struck this man dead because the people of Israel were not maintaining a proper position to the holiness of God.

It's funny. Some of you might even be thinking this in your mind right now. You might be thinking, Boy, I tell you, I am glad that I don't live in Old Testament times when they used to touch golden boxes and drop dead. Let me tell you, I'm glad I didn't have to live in a time when the high priest had to wear little bells on the bottom of my garment that tinkle as I'm moving around in there so that they know I'm still moving and kicking, and I haven't touched something wrong or done something wrong. I'm glad I'm not living in that kind of a day and age.

People, can I just express to you in very clear terms, the Lord God of the universe is no less holy than He has ever been. He is no less untouchable than He has ever been. The New Testament says, *“It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”* (Hebrews 10:31) That's in the New Testament.

The fact that you and I have the blood of Jesus Christ that covers our sin is something we far too often take for granted when we are talking about God's holiness, or when we are ignoring His holiness. We forget that the Old Testament is put in place to remind you and me that the standard of God's righteousness is ultimately unreachable.

One of the things I was doing with the girls that I've been meeting with on Tuesday night at the group home— these teenage girls— is, I've been— and these kids are unbelievers— is, we've been going through some aspects of the Old Testament for me to convey to them that you can't be good enough.

You can't be a good enough person. I use New Testament and Old Testament passages to bring them— here's the thing, I have to bring them— to a place of

despair. In order to really embrace the Gospel, which is the good news, you have to come to the place of embracing the bad news. And that is a place of despair.

In fact, after a couple of meetings with these girls, one of them basically, essentially said to me after I got done talking about this— she didn't use these words, these are my words— but she said, basically, Well, I think it's hopeless. It's hopeless. Our goose is cooked. There's nothing we can do.

Do you understand that? That's what reading the Old Testament should do. Do you understand what understanding the holiness of God— that's what you should come to. You should come to the conclusion, it's hopeless. There's no way I can know God. There's no way I can approach God. There's no way I can ever be right with God. There is no way.

Then you get to the New Testament, and then you start dealing with the Gospel. The Good News: For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only son that whoever would put their faith in him and receive him as Savior will not be lost, but will be taken from their lost position, and they will be made whole. They will be made alive, and they will be forgiven of all their sins, and whatever stood against them will be blotted out. (John 3:16)

Do you understand how you can't really appreciate that until you have understood how lost you are? You can accept it, but you may not appreciate it. There are a lot of things, as parents— we know it when we're raising kids— we give them— our kids— things. They don't appreciate it. They will come to appreciate it when they later on have to afford it themselves. When they have to buy those things on their own. When they're little children and stuff like that, they don't understand that stuff. And even when they get a little bit older, they still don't really fully understand or comprehend the importance or the appreciation behind those things.

How can we appreciate what we have received in Jesus? The fact that I can now come into His presence anytime I want. I can unload on Him. I can pray to Him. I can speak to Him, and I can know that I'm accepted through the blood of Jesus. I don't have to worry about it. I don't have to wonder. Gee, I wonder if it's going to be okay. I wonder if God is going to accept me. There's no question about it.

The Bible says we can now come with confidence before the throne of grace. (Hebrews 4:16) Enter with confidence. What is your confidence in, people? It's in the blood of Jesus Christ shed for you. That is my confidence. I come to Him.

Boy, if I had to put confidence in myself, if I had to come to Him with my own confidence, I would come cowering, if I would even come at all, right? But I come confidently because of what Jesus did on the cross. Oh, that's glorious.

But, do I appreciate that freedom to come to Him at any time? Do I appreciate the fact that I can come to Him freely? Well, probably not, until I've understood how despicable I really am. And how unapproachable God really is. And that is one of the reasons why we read passages like this, and we go, Why did God kill Uzzah? That just seems wrong. Is God cruel? He sounds like a real meanie. We just don't understand God's holiness.

We haven't touched the fire, and praise God, we never will to the point of being consumed, but we have not tasted even a little of our lost condition, that I am hopeless apart from Jesus Christ. When we do, we start realizing things like, Wait a minute, Uzzah made a presumption, didn't he, when he reached out to steady the ark?

Let's just talk about it for a minute. Let's say the ark would have fallen off the cart, Okay? Just for example. It would have hit the ground. You know what? That would have been better. It would have been better for the ark to touch the ground than touch Uzzah. because the ground hadn't sinned. Uzzah had. The ground wasn't unholy. Uzzah was, because he was a sinner. But see, he didn't take that into consideration. We don't take that into consideration when we read the story. We think, Uzzah, poor Uzzah, the guy died. You bet he died!

When you come to terms with the holiness of God, and the lost condition of man apart from Jesus Christ, and the mercy of God, you start thinking things like this: I'm not just surprised that Uzzah died. I'm shocked they didn't all die. All 30,000 of them. See, that's the thing that we just don't get. God should have struck them all dead. None of them should have looked that close at the ark. They shouldn't have been in that close proximity. He was being merciful.

By the way, I fully expect to see a guy like Uzzah probably in heaven. This wasn't an issue of salvation. This was just a stupid mistake. But the point is, Uzzah died to awaken all the rest of them about the holiness of God. And they should have walked away from that situation going, Wow, Uzzah died. We should have all died.

They should have, instead of saying, God's a meanie, they should have said, boy, isn't God merciful? We all should have died that day. All of us should have dropped dead. Who was it who lifted up the ark and put it on this new cart?

Who was it that was walking or dancing right beside the cart or within 25, 50 feet of it?

They all should have died! Do you understand? It is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God. And you can't play patty-cake with Him and expect to survive the experience. You know? We have to get right thinking about this. When we do, we are going to start having a whole new attitude about how much we appreciate what Jesus did for us on the cross. And the way He opened for us on the cross, the freedom to come into God's presence with but a prayer.

Lord, I put my faith in you. I believe that You died for me. I accept what You have accomplished for me. I accept the payment that You paid for my sin. And I embrace what You did for me. Suddenly I'm robed in the righteousness of Christ Himself. And when God looks at me, He sees His son. Now I have this absolute freedom to come into the presence of God whenever I need to, and I need to all the time. But, total freedom, never have to worry, never have to be concerned. Oh, what a wonderful thing that is.

Look how David responded in verse 8: *"And David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah... (and the fact they called the place Perez-uzzah, breaking out against Uzzah. That's what they called it. Says it is still called that) "...to this day. ⁹ And David was afraid of the LORD."*

Isn't that interesting? So David goes through two emotions here in the span of I don't know how many days. Starts off, he's angry. Why is he angry? Because he orchestrated this whole thing himself and he didn't, God really rained on his parade, didn't he? It's like, God, we were celebrating your presence, and then Uzzah died.

But then he comes to terms with the holiness of God, and it says, then he's afraid. He's afraid of the Lord that day. And look what he said. *"How can the ark of the LORD come to me?"* Do you, could you, do you get the impression between his being angry and his being afraid, David did a little bit of research.

Do you get the impression that David went to God's Word and started looking into these things, and he started reading about this, and he started reading about how God told through Moses, Don't even come near the ark, lest you die. Don't touch it, don't even look at it. And then David goes, "How in the world can we bring this thing?"

He has a completely different attitude. He was angry before, but now he has understanding. And he has godly fear. And so it says, *"¹⁰ So David was not*

willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.” Can you imagine how that conversation went?

Hey, Obed, I was wondering if we could keep the Ark at your house for a while. Yeah, sure. No problem, David. Is there a problem? Well, guy died, and he touched it. Okay. You might think that's a liability. ¹¹ *And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months (look at this), and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household.*” Doesn't tell us how. We don't know. He won the lottery maybe. We're not sure.

But look what it says in verse 12. *“And it was told King David, ‘The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.’”* Do you understand why these verses are in there?

Because David is being shown here in no uncertain terms, Uzzah fell dead for very specific reasons. Look what happens when you have an attitude of respect, and you decide to put the Ark over here at the home of this Obed- edom guy. And he honors it, and he respects it. Blessings begin to flow into his house.

God is showing David in no uncertain terms, Buddy, this was your fault, not mine. Obed-edom's family is not dying. In fact, they are being blessed. Okay, I might be dumb, but I think I'm starting to catch on. I think there are things here I need to be thinking about. It's time to go back to the Word of God. It's time to look these things up.

We're in the middle of verse 12. *“So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. (And then, or excuse me) ¹³ And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal.”*

Guess what? We're doing it now the way we were supposed to. He has the Ark of the Covenant on the shoulders of the Levitical priests. He is carrying it the way God's Word said, and after 6 steps, they make a sacrifice. Now it's hard to know whether— it almost makes it sound like they took 6 steps, did a sacrifice, took 6 steps, did a sacrifice. I kind of doubt it. They probably did it after the first 6 steps, but you can believe whatever you want. I think it would take them too long to get where they needed to go.

It tells us here in verse 14, *“And David danced before the LORD with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod.”* A linen ephod was the clothing of the priest. David wasn't a priest. He was of the tribe of Judah. Remember the

priests are from the tribe of Levi. That's why we call them the Levitical priests. David was not a Levite, but he wanted to be. I think he would have given anything to be a priest. I don't think he even wanted to really be a king. He would have been happy being just a worshipper. But, he put on this linen ephod, and it says, he danced before the Lord.

Verse 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) of the horn. ¹⁶As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart.”*

We are going to talk about this for just a minute in the time that we have left, this whole thing, because David's dance has been the topic of many discussions throughout the years, as you could probably imagine. About the appropriateness of dancing as a legitimate form of worship. Let's talk about that in a bit.

But it says: *“¹⁷ They brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD. ¹⁸And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts ¹⁹and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house.*

“²⁰ And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, ‘How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants’ female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!’”

By the way, don't think David was jumping around in his whitey tighties. We already were told what David had on; he had the ephod. The ephod was not something a vulgar person wore. Listen, Michal had a problem because David had taken off his royal robes, and he had put on the garment of a priest, and he was dancing before the Lord. She didn't even have a problem, frankly, with him dancing.

She had a problem with him not looking kingly, because it reflected on her as his wife. It made him look like just a commoner. And if he's a commoner, then she's a commoner. And she didn't like that idea.

But David responds to this whole thing, and he says to Michal, “*‘It was before the Lord who chose me above your father and above all his house. to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD— and I will celebrate before the LORD. (In fact, he says) ²² I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor.’ ²³ And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.*”

Let me explain a little bit. Let's talk just a little bit about this whole idea of dancing and its appropriateness as a form of worship. One of the things that we have to remember about David's dance that day is, it was appropriate for the context of where they were. Don't even begin to get the idea that David is dancing all alone. If that's what's in your mind's eye, then you need to bring some more people into the equation. David is not dancing alone. It's telling us about David because he is the star of the show in this particular case.

But the people are dancing. The people are celebrating all together. Everybody is rejoicing before the Lord, and David's dance was appropriate to the context of the situation. Listen, people, if this had been the day of atonement or the day of Passover, David's dance would not have been appropriate to the context. Do you understand?

It was appropriate because everybody was celebrating. That's what made it appropriate. People will ask all the time, is dancing before the Lord an appropriate form of expressing worship? Sure. Yeah, no problem. But what you have to do as a worshiper is understand the appropriateness of the context.

I was listening to another Calvary Chapel pastor talk about how he had a woman come up to him before one of the services. And she asked him, Is it okay if I sit in the front row, and then sometime during the worship as the Spirit leads, if I just get up and just dance across the front? And he explained to her that he felt that would be very distracting, because she would be the only person dancing, that it just wouldn't be appropriate within the context.

Her response to him was that he was operating in the spirit of Michal, David's wife, because he was despised. He was despising her dance. And she explained to him, she said, years ago, I had a prophetic word spoken over me, and I was told that I had the gift of dance, and wherever I danced, the Spirit of God would be unleashed in that place.

He said, well, that's interesting. I have a little bit of a problem with that because there's nothing in the Bible that says anything about a spirit or a gift of dance,

and that the dance of doing somebody with the gift of dance unleashing the Spirit of God. We believe God's Spirit is with us because of His promise. But her response to him essentially was that he was operating in the same spirit of David's wife in the despising of the idea of dance. His response to her was actually, No, there's nothing wrong with dancing if it's done in the right context. And really what you're doing is, you're coming in here, and you're despising the way we worship, because we don't do it the way you think we should.

You see, that's the interesting thing. People read this passage in 2 Samuel, and they think it is all about dancing. It is not all about dancing. It is about the heart and the heart attitude when it comes to these things. It's not about whether you dance or whether you don't dance. I go to a church because they dance. I go to this church because they don't dance. And we can despise each other.

Guess what? We're both making the error of Michal by despising the other. That is the point of the passage. Now I agree completely with what the pastor said. I think if you have a church where nobody is dancing, and somebody gets up and starts dancing, I think that's going to be distracting.

And I think what's going to happen, ultimately, is people are going to be looking at the dancer rather than focusing on the Lord. I just think that is the way it is going to go, right? Now, you have a whole room full of people who are dancing. I suppose nobody would probably take notice of you. In fact, they might take notice of you if you weren't dancing, you know?

So within the context of that situation, it may be in fact more appropriate when—that's the interesting thing, that often people just don't think about in terms of worship. We had a gal a number of years ago who showed up in the back of the room. It was like an Easter celebration, and she pulled a tambourine out of her purse and started going at it in the back row. And the worship team got thrown off, and all the people in the area were like, What in the world?

We had to ask her not to use her tambourine. She had never been to the church before, didn't come up and ask, Hey, do you guys let people pull tambourines out and use them during worship? In that case, we would have been able to explain the situation a little bit, but there was never even a question asked. There was an assumption made.

Here's the assumption: If you're spiritual, you'll let me do this. If you're spiritual, you'll let me do whatever I want to do. If I want to dance across the front, if I want to pull out a tambourine. Hey, maybe I'll bring my trombone and

sit in the back row and just give it some loud blast, and we'll call it the shofar. And if you're spiritual, you'll let me do that sort of thing.

Fact of the matter is, those people are missing the whole point of the error that Michal stumbled over in this situation. Her heart wasn't right before God. That was the issue: she despised, because it didn't look the way she thought. David didn't look like she thought he should look. You look like one of those vulgar men. There was nothing vulgar about it. It just wasn't the way she thought it should be.

So this is really an important thing for us to think through and to understand a little bit about. We're all different, aren't we, about worship? Have you ever noticed that? Honestly. I have to be honest with you.

When it comes to worship, I worship God much more easily in an understated kind of worship experience. Probably one of the most worshipful things for me is to be in a very quiet room with very quiet music, very worshipful, and very vertically-directed. Some songs go this way (Pastor Paul points horizontally), but I'm talking, songs that are going this way (Pastor Paul points vertically). We're talking to the Lord, and that is just more worshipful for me.

I don't see any problem with praise and buoyancy and thanksgiving because it is very Biblical. We are told to enter His gates with thanksgiving and His courts with praise. (Psalm 100:4) And I love that. But I'll tell you something. I really can get excited about getting quiet before the Lord when things just... I— and I'm one of those people who is just extremely distractible. It's one of the reasons we turn down the lights during worship here. It is not because we are trying to create this atmosphere. That is not what it's about.

It is about limiting distractions. Because people are coming and going, moving around, some are coming in late, and you know who you are. And sometimes, if the lights are all up, and people are moving around, and kids are fiddling with mom and dad or whatever, people are just sitting there, they're looking at other people, they're watching other people. But we just noticed when the lights are down, people tend to have a greater sense of just focusing in on the Lord.

That's what it's about. It is just limiting distractions. But we are all different. Some of you are, if you're not shouting at the top of your lungs, it isn't worship. Some of you cannot sit down during worship. You just can't do it. If you do, it's not worship. I've had people come up and tell me that. And they'll even say to me, Pastor, how come you sit down during worship? It's a better posture for me.

Not only that, I'm saving my back for standing up here for 45 minutes later on. I can worship better in that posture.

Now, if you worship better in a standup posture, then stand up. You know what I mean? I'll never forget. I had some guys say to me one time: I noticed some of your people, they sat down when worship began. What's the problem? That question implies that there was a problem, that it was unspiritual. It was not an act of worship to sit during that musical time.

Who told them that? Where did they get that information? I'll tell you where. Experience. People worship the way they worship, and then we get prideful about it, and we decide that the way we worship is the way to worship. In fact, the way we worship is worship, and it has no bearing on the truth at all. I've said to you guys over and over again, worship is from the heart.

It has nothing to do with form. In fact, it doesn't even require music. Or a worship team, or anything like that. It happens within each individual heart. In fact, you know what? On any given Sunday morning or Wednesday night, there are a lot of people standing in this auditorium who are not worshipping God.

They may be singing the lyrics of the songs, but they are not worshipping God, because worship happens in the heart. It doesn't happen...it's not what comes out of your mouth. It's what's going on in here. That's what we can't afford to forget. If we do, we're going to start despising people who don't do it just like we do it, and we're going to get prideful. And when we get prideful, we lose touch with God's presence, because God is not about your and my pride in what we do.