



This Sunday at Magdalen Road church we continued our series in Chronicles. A key question at the heart of this morning's section is the foundational difference between King David and King Saul. Kings were to lead the people of God in the ways of God (Deut 17) and what we see here is that David makes a false start that is very Saul-like and yet despite his error is not rejected by God but continues to be blessed.

A key theme in Chronicles is the chronicler deliberately re-telling the history of God's people with hope, and teaching them how to be faithful to their God for the future - learning the lessons of the past. This means there will be a focus through the book on God's king (representing how God relates to us) but also the temple (how we relate to God).

We started at the end of chapter 10 v13 to 14 and noted the conclusion of Saul's reign he was unfaithful to God not listening to the right voices and actively listening to the wrong voice. In chapter 11 however we see David as the opposite - in v2 we see that God had spoken to him and in v3 it's been promised through Samuel. David was their de-facto leader anyway and so the choice of the people, but more importantly he was the choice of the Lord. He is painted as the true king who deals with God's enemies and delivers on God's promises.

From that point David begins to build. He builds the city (v8 to 9) but then more than that through the next few chapters he builds the nation as he establishes an army and leaders throughout the kingdom. At this point in chapter 13 his next 'building project' is to strengthen the worship life of the people of God and so he wants to get the Ark of the Covenant back in its rightful place at the heart of the people. The problem now though is that God has not been enquired of as they undertake this project. If you flick ahead to chapter 15 (v13-15) we see this stated clearly with a particular emphasis that they seek to do it in a non-prescribed way. When dealing with a perfectly pure and holy God we can't just wing it and make it up as we go along, but rather must listen to his word.

At this point we might be getting worried because David has not enquired of God and so seems to be a bit like Saul. And however what we see happening is that David experiences something of God's grace and mercy. Despite his false start he receives blessing.

Chapter 14 outlines this blessing: there is friendship with and blessing from the King of Tyre as he provides the raw materials for David to build a palace for himself (a similar idea later for Solomon building the Temple). It's clear that David knew God is blessing him for the sake of his people and his covenant rather than anything for David. He's also blessed him with a big family (there may just be a slight nod to David's future downfall with Bathsheba - note the outworking of polygamy in the narrative of the OT scriptures (as a perversion of Gen 2) is never portrayed in a positive light - the authors are showing us this is not God's good design). God also blesses David on the battlefield against the Philistines twice (again note he enquires of the Lord both times). We clearly see God's provision, protection and presence as he blesses them.

We noted that a number of the commentators draw a helpful comparison for us as David, even though he didn't enquire in chapter 13, has been seeking first God's kingdom and so receives God's blessing. We looked at Matthew 6v25 to 33 and reflected upon David's heart which was fundamentally for the Lord. There is something profoundly human as we seek to do things in our own strength and not listen to God or enquire of him (— almost perhaps making our own plans and then praying he might bless them). But our calling is to look to him as his children - seeking the face of our Father in heaven. But also remembering the one who perfectly sought God's kingdom and righteousness and having the assurance that we are found in him and so are blessed in him - even when we're prone to wander.

Here are few questions to start your group off...

- Give a brief recap of what Chronicles is about. Why is the author seeking to portray history through a hopeful light? What do you remember from last week?
- At the end of chapter 10 how are Saul's failures portrayed? Why does it matter so much that the king is listening to God's word? Compare Saul with the pattern in Deuteronomy 17
- Through this big section where do we see David's failure and where do we see God's blessing? (Perhaps just focus in on chapter 14 for the blessings) Where do these blessings apply to us?
- (From David's sin in ch 13, would we say that 'having good intentions' is enough? Why or why not?)
- Read the final section of Matthew 6 - What does it mean to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness? What does that look like for us? Where do we fail to do that? How can we better do that and help each other to do that?