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connecting a personal and small group study with Sunday's sermon



part two of a five part sermon series

Psalm 59

"Fortress"

July 29, 2007

personal and small group study

storyline *Author: Kevin Baker, small group pastor*

Before the nation ever had a king, they were led by prophets, religious leaders and judges sent directly from God. As a result, they were known as a theocracy, "ruled by God." However, the people clamored for a king to rule them as all the other nations around them had. Despite the prophet, Samuel's, warnings against placing a king over the nation, God gives the people what they want and Israel's government transitions from a theocracy to a monarchy.

The first king of Israel, Saul, was a rather striking figure being both tall and handsome. He accepts the throne in humility and trepidation and the beginning of his reign is marked by leadership and bravery. But when he impulsively disobeys God and his faith becomes acts of religious ritual as opposed to an obedience of the heart, God determines to remove him from the throne and withhold his sons from inheriting the crown. God chooses a young, obscure, unassuming shepherd boy to rule over the kingdom, David. He goes from an unknown keeper of sheep to one of the most famous warriors in human history.

Perhaps the best known story of young David is his encounter with Israel's nemesis, Goliath. At the time of the battle, Saul was still king and Israel was at war with the Philistines. Goliath, a Philistine, had Saul's men backed down and he threatened to kill them day after day. No Israelite soldier had the courage to face Goliath and the security of the entire country was in jeopardy. David, too young and small to be in the army, takes to the battlefield to face the giant Goliath. With an unshakable faith in God, David slays Goliath and becomes an instant hero throughout his homeland.

As King Saul and his men returned home from the conquest they are greeted by the women from all the towns of Israel. As the people are celebrating the triumph, they sing both the praises of King Saul and David, the formerly nameless sheep herder. It's a great party until Saul picks up on the lyrics of the newly created victory songs. David's popularity skyrocketed. His approval poll numbers suddenly surpassed those of Saul.

As we pick up the story from this point, pay close attention to the different relationships involved. The story is rife with intense emotions and themes of injustice, jealousy, loyalty, rage, hatred, trust, and faithfulness. You may never find yourself in such extreme circumstances, however, you can learn from the examples of the different individuals involved. As you work through the study examine your heart and, in comparison, question yourself how you respond when you are the recipient of injustice or find yourself harboring feelings of jealousy towards another.

digdeep

Read 1 Samuel 18

What moved Saul from respect and admiration for David to jealousy and murderous rage?

Jealousy may not seem like a major sin, yet it is the very first step towards a heart of hatred. Is there anyone in your life right now that you are harboring jealousy towards? What is at the root of those feelings? What are the manifestations?

How does Jonathan respond to David? What motivates Jonathan to treat David the way he does?

Has there ever been a time when you were passed over for a position that you really wanted or felt entitled to? How did you react? How did you feel towards the person who got what was “yours”? How did you treat them to their face? Behind their back?

Read 1 Samuel 19.1-17 and Psalm 59

Samuel 19 provides the backdrop for Psalm 59. This song looks back to a time when David was fleeing from a jealous and paranoid Saul.

It would seem prudent for David to watch for his would be murderers. Where does David place his focus? (Psalm 59.9)

David writes as one waiting to be rescued. What does he do while he waits? (Psalm 59.16)

Do you most identify with Saul, Jonathan or David in your life right now and why?

What did David’s story teach you about a current situation that you are facing? How will you respond?

Prayer

Is there an injustice or circumstance of jealousy that has taken root in your heart? Confess it to God right now. Move your focus from the situation to who God is. Pray the following... God, I'm watching and waiting for you. You, God, are my strength and my fortress. You will go before me. I will sing of your strength. You, God, are my refuge. You shower me with unfailing love. I will sing your praises, God.

notes

coreverse

You have heard it said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I (Jesus) tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...

Matthew 5.43-44

