

2 Samuel 1 — Does Crime Pay?

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Good morning CrossWinds! My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. At CrossWinds, we are about “Reaching People With Jesus.” That means we are committed to sharing the good news of Jesus with those who don’t know what God has done for them. There are many ways we carry out that mission inside and outside of this building. One of the ways some of us carry out the mission is by helping with Atlas ministries. Atlas is a ministry in our community that helps people at the bottom of the ladder. Most of them don’t have a job. They don’t have a place to live. They struggle with additions, and of course, they desperately need to hear the life-changing good news of Jesus. When people at CrossWinds help at Atlas, that is one of the ways we reach our community with Jesus.

This morning, we start a new series in the book of 2 Samuel. We finished 1 Samuel before Christmas. It will be good to get to 2 Samuel.

Introduction

Before we start, we often hear the phrase, “Crime doesn’t pay.” Is that true? Crime must pay, or nobody would do it. If crime didn’t pay, then why do we have a lock on our houses, a lock on our cars, Face ID on our smartphones, and multiple layers of security at our local bank? The truth is that many times the crime does pay. That is why we have the scam phone calls from Nigeria at the dinner hour. Ripping people off is a profitable line of work. A more accurate statement would be that the crime doesn’t pay all the time. Many times it does.

This morning, in 2 Samuel 1, we will answer the question, is there a time when we know for sure that crime will never pay? Let's find out the answer.

Background

Before we get into 2 Samuel 1, since we last finished 1 Samuel in November, let me take a moment to catch us up on the story. It is important to know that 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel were originally one book in Hebrew. It was about a thousand years after Samuel was written, when it was translated into Greek, that it was divided into two books because of its size. The important part to know is 1 and 2 Samuel are one continual story. The break between them is purely artificial. This morning, that will be an important piece of background information.

1 Samuel was the story of God giving his people a king. The people wanted a king like the nations around them. They wanted a good-looking king, a visually impressive king, so God gave them Saul. Saul was the tallest and the best-looking guy in Israel. While he looked good, his heart was not wholly devoted to the Lord. Even though he did many good things, early in his reign, he revealed his heart through his unwillingness to obey God's Word. The turning point was when God commanded him to destroy the Amalekites, but he failed to follow through. As a result, God rejected him as king, and God chose a new king for his people, a king after his own heart. His name was David. The second half of 1 Samuel was awkward stage. Saul was rejected as king by God, but he was still ruling the nation. David was anointed as king by God, yet he began in obscurity. The second half of 1 Samuel is the story of God gradually shifting power from Saul to David. Saul diminished in prominence as David rose in

popularity. At first, Saul loved David. He even set him as the head of his bodyguard. David became so successful that Saul was filled with jealousy, even to the point of wanting to take David's life. The second part of 1 Samuel is story after story of David narrowly escaping from Saul's many attempts to kill him. While Saul constantly tried to kill David, David refused to lift his hand against Saul and do anything against the Lord's anointed.

Finally, in desperation for rest from Saul's daily attempts on his life, David defected to the enemy — the Philistines. Among the Philistines, David found rest. He also found they were thrilled to have him and his military skills. As 1 Samuel finished, the Philistines planned to have David help them in battle against King Saul. David was about to be forced to fight against his people. That wasn't his plan. Thankfully, at the last minute, the Philistine commanders decided they didn't trust David and sent David and his men home. The trip home was 100 miles south to Ziklag. When the Philistines went to battle with King Saul in the north of the country, David was in the south of the country at Ziklag.

At the battle, the Philistines defeated King Saul and the Israelites. They killed King Saul and three of his four sons on the battlefield. While that was taking place, when David and his men returned to their homes 100 miles to the south in Ziklag, they found their homes destroyed and the women and children taken by Amalekite raiders. They hunted them down, killed most of them, and rescued their families.

So 1 Samuel ends with Saul and three of his sons dying in battle with the Philistines. At the same time David is in battle against the Amalekites 100 miles

to the south. He was victorious and decimated the Amalekites and saved everyone. 2 Samuel picks up with David in the south of the country, waiting to hear news of what happened in Saul's battle with the Philistines in the north.

News From the Battle

After the death of Saul, when David had returned from striking down the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag. 2 Samuel 1:1 (ESV)

Two days passed after David's return to Ziklag. It was a three-day trip between Gilboa and Ziklag. It is time for news from the battle to arrive.

And on the third day, behold, a man came from Saul's camp, with his clothes torn and dirt on his head. And when he came to David, he fell to the ground and paid homage. 2 Samuel 1:2 (ESV)

Who was man? His clothes were torn up. He was filthy. This doesn't look good.

Remember what we already know about the battle on Mount Gilboa and how Saul died. In 1 Samuel 31, Saul's three sons were killed on that mountain, defending their father to the death. Saul was badly wounded by archers. He looked like a porcupine with all the arrows stuck in him. He was not yet dead, but he was close to death. He asked his armor-bearer, his personal bodyguard, to kill him. The armor bearer refused to kill him because even if the king was about to die, nobody had the right to take the life of the king. So Saul fell on his sword and took his own life. After that, his armor bearer also fell on his sword and died. That is what the narrator in 1 Samuel 31 told us about how Saul and his sons died.

That is important to remember as we begin 2 Samuel.

David said to him, "Where do you come from?" And he said to him, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel." 2 Samuel 1:3 (ESV)

The good news is this guy wasn't a Philistine. At least he came from the camp of the Israelite's, but he didn't look good.

We don't see this in English, but it is in Hebrew. There is a play on words. When this man says, "I have escaped from the camp of Israel," In Hebrew, the word escaped is the same word used to describe David's narrow escapes from Saul's attempts on his life in 1 Samuel. This man was subtly trying to ingratiate himself with David. Just as you escaped from Saul's camp, I also escaped from Saul's camp.

And David said to him, "How did it go? Tell me." And he answered, "The people fled from the battle, and also many of the people have fallen and are dead, and Saul and his son Jonathan are also dead." 2 Samuel 1:4 (ESV)

David's second question was predictable. What happened in the war? It did not go well. There were plenty of body bags. Many are dead. Most significant of all, Saul and Jonathan are dead. So far, all this is true. For David, this would be heartbreaking news. He knew this day would come. He knew God would one day remove Saul as the king and it would probably be in battle. David talked about this in 1 Samuel.

And David said, "As the LORD lives, the LORD will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish." 1 Samuel 26:10 (ESV)

David was not a man who heard the news and accepted the news. He was a man who heard the news and then asked questions about the news because he wasn't sure he trusted what he heard. He wanted to make sure this man was telling the truth.

Then David said to the young man who told him, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?" And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul leaning on his

spear, and behold, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. 2 Samuel 1:5-6 (ESV)

This guy claims to be an eyewitness to what happened. Mount Gilboa was the place of Saul's death, but something sounds a little off with the story. He said, "By chance, he happened to be on Mount Gilboa." It was by chance that he was on that mountain? He was wandering around, and he happened to wander right in the middle of a war. He wandered onto the losing side as they were getting pounded and experiencing defeat.

I don't know about you, but if I were in Ukraine, I would not just happen to wander onto the battlefield. I would not wander into a location when the Russians were shooting.

It is reasonable to believe Saul was leaning on his spear. We know from 1 Samuel 31 that Saul was badly wounded by the archers and was clinging to life. We also know the chariot and horsemen were closing in on Saul.

And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' 2 Samuel 1:7-8 (ESV)

The story now takes an unexpected turn. In 1 Samuel 31, Saul was badly wounded. He asked his armor-bearer to kill him. The armor-bearer refused, so Saul committed suicide. The Amalekite doesn't talk about any of that. He decides to make up a new version of Saul's death, making himself the hero of the story.

Imagine David's shock when he heard this man was an Amalekite. David just finished striking down the Amalekites. They were the ones who destroyed his home in Ziklag. They were the ones who took all the women and children. At this moment, the absolute worst ethnicity for this person to be was an Amalekite.

In the Bible, the Amalekites have a long and hostile relationship with the Israelites. The Amalekites were descendants of Esau and the Edomites. They were known for their trickery and deception. That is exactly what this man plans to do with David.

And he said to me, 'Stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' 2 Samuel 1:9 (ESV)

This Amalekite is lying, but like all good lies, it has to be close enough to the truth to make it believable.

So I stood beside him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord." 2 Samuel 1:10 (ESV)

This Amalekite claims he is the one who finished Saul off. He claims he did it because Saul was going to die anyway. He just hastened his death. At this point, there are many questions we need to answer. First of all, how did Saul die? Did he die by suicide, as it says in 1 Samuel 31, or did he die by Amalekite-assisted suicide, as this man claims in 2 Samuel 1?

Some liberal commentators see these different accounts of Saul's death in 1 Samuel 31 and 2 Samuel 1 as evidence of the Bible contradicting itself. Is that true? Absolutely not. Here are the reasons.

1. Remember, 1 and 2 Samuel were originally the same book. They were only divided into two books about a thousand years after the book was written when the book was translated into Greek. 1 Samuel 31 and 2 Samuel 1 were originally side by side in the manuscript. The author of the book is not dumb. He was aware these are two contradictory accounts of Saul's death right next to one another. He wrote it this way for a reason. Let me show you.

2. If you have to choose which account you will trust, it is not hard to decide. Will you trust what the author of the books of Samuel tells us actually happened, which is recorded in 1 Samuel 31, or will you trust the version of a lying Amalekite whose ancestors are known as the enemies of God? It shouldn't be hard to decide.
3. The Amalekites account has all the hallmarks of a lie. It is missing the details. He just happened to be wandering around a mountain in the middle of a war. How did you get there? Why were you in such a high-risk place? When you don't have those details, it is probably because someone is not telling the truth.
4. The Amalekite told us Saul was wounded but alone on the mountain. We know the truth is that Saul's sons defended him to their death. We also know Saul's personal bodyguard, his armor-bearer, would not have left his side in battle. Saul, the king, standing alone on the battlefield when he had an entire army committed to defending his life doesn't make sense.
5. In 2 Samuel 4:10, David will tell us this Amalekite was looking for a reward. He was twisting the story of Saul's death to make himself the hero of the story in hopes of getting a reward for bumping Saul off.

...when one told me, 'Behold, Saul is dead,' and thought he was bringing good news, I seized him and killed him at Ziklag, which was the reward I gave him for his news. 2 Samuel 4:10 (ESV)

Let me tell you what I think happened. 1 Samuel 31 told us that after the battle, it wasn't until the next day that the Philistines had a chance to strip the dead. That is when the Philistines found Saul and his sons dead on the mountain. This Amalekite walked through the battlefield after the battle was over

before the Philistines came the next day to strip the dead. This Amalekite was pickup up loot from the dead bodies. When he ran across a deceased Saul, he saw the opportunity for profit. He took Saul's crown and armband, then brought them a hundred miles to Ziklag to give to David. He concocted a tale to make himself the hero who killed Saul, hoping it would bring him reward and notoriety.

All of us should feel a little anger toward this lying Amalekite who was trying to get ahead in life by bending the truth to make himself look good. The problem is that we must stop and ask ourselves, are we that different? Don't we try to get ahead by bending the truth in our favor? Don't we try to get ahead by betraying a friend or throwing their reputation under the bus? It is so easy to think that a little dishonesty will work in our favor. It is easy to think that a little bending of the truth will help us, just like the Amalekite did.

Now we have to ask ourselves, does crime pay? Crime pays most of the time, but crime never pays when one decisive favor is considered. That is the character of a godly and righteous king. Under a corrupt leader, crime will pay, but if you have a righteous and godly leader, crime will never pay. Saul was a corrupt leader. Crime paid under him. David was unlike Saul, and this young Amalekite was about to find out.

Crime doesn't pay.

Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and so did all the men who were with him. And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. 2 Samuel 1:11–12 (ESV)

This was not what the young Amalekite expected. He expected David and his men to break into a party. Remember that Saul chased David around the

countryside for years, attempting to take David's life. Saul's relentless pursuit of David was so constant and so stressful that David deserted to the Philistine enemy for rest. Why didn't David and his men cheer for Saul's death? I am sure if the roles were reversed, Saul would have celebrated if David was dead.

David knew that one day God would judge Saul for his sin. He knew that Saul would likely die in battle, but that did not diminish the tragedy. Saul was still the king. Jonathan was the prince. Their death, and the death of many in Israel, was a tragedy to be mourned, not a victory to be celebrated. No matter how much death is deserved, it is never something to celebrate.

For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live." Ezekiel 18:32 (ESV)

God doesn't take pleasure in anyone's death. He takes pleasure in their repentance. The same should be true of us.

Saul may have relentlessly tried to kill David, but David never tried to kill Saul. God gave David numerous opportunities that seemed like a perfect opportunity to take Saul's life, such as the time David and his men caught Saul going to the bathroom in the same cave where they were hiding. Saul was a man who was literally caught with his pants down. David refused to do any evil to Saul, even though Saul was constantly trying to kill him. Saul hated David, but David refused to return the favor and hate Saul.

Why were David and Saul so different? Saul's attempted murders of David came from the evil that filled Saul's heart. His actions were a reflection of the state of his soul. David's refusal to hate Saul and avenge the wrong done to him came from the righteousness in David's life. If David decided to go for revenge

and kill Saul, who was so committed to killing him, he would have become just like Saul, a man filled with hatred and evil in his heart.

Righteous people do not celebrate the death of their enemies. They feel terrible about the death of their enemies. Righteous people celebrate when their enemies repent of their sins and turn to God before they die.

After the grieving and mourning of David and his men, which lasted until evening, David had a chance to process this Amalekite's news. He had a few more questions.

And David said to the young man who told him, "Where do you come from?" And he answered, "I am the son of a sojourner, an Amalekite." 2 Samuel 1:13 (ESV)

In our English translations, this looks like the same question David asked him earlier. It is not. It is different in Hebrew. In this question, the *you* is emphatic. David wants to know more about this man's personal history. Where do *you* come from? With one little word, this Amalekite gave away an important piece of information that reveals the evil in his heart. He claimed to be the son of an Amalekite sojourner. The key term is *sojourner*.

That means he grew up in Israel or at least spent plenty of time in Israel. His parents were Amalekites, but he was familiar with Israel and with the customs and laws of the nation. As a resident alien, he was expected to abide by those laws. In the Old Testament, sojourners were given legal rights. In exchange for those rights, they were expected to obey the laws of the land in Israel. This makes sense. If we have a foreigner in our country, they are expected to abide by the laws of our country. They need to stop at red lights. They need to pay their taxes. Having grown up in Israel, this guy knew the laws of Israel, and he broke a

big one, which was respect for the king that God put in power. Since God put the king in office, only God could remove him from office. This is why David refused to kill Saul. As a sojourner, he knew killing the king, even if Saul was hated, wounded, and dying, was a capital offense.

David said to him, “How is it you were not afraid to put out your hand to destroy the LORD’s anointed?” 2 Samuel 1:14 (ESV)

How dare you kill the king! Yes, he was wounded. Yes, he didn’t have long to live. Yes, he had become an evil king, but you had no right to take his life.

Then David called one of the young men and said, “Go, execute him.” And he struck him down so that he died. And David said to him, “Your blood be on your head, for your own mouth has testified against you, saying, ‘I have killed the Lord’s anointed.’” 2 Samuel 1:15–16 (ESV)

This brings up a number of important lessons for us.

1. When there is someone in leadership, if we don’t agree with them, and even if they are corrupt, it is not our job to take their life. We need to respect the office, even if we struggle to respect the man in the office.
2. This also brings up the topic of Euthanasia. That is the topic of mercy killing. If someone has terminal cancer, and that person wants to die, should we help them take their life? The answer in this passage is a resounding “No.” Saul was going to die. It was only a matter of time. According to the Amalekite’s story, he just helped him die. David thought the Amalekite’s claim that he assisted Saul in suicide was tantamount to murder. We want to be very careful not to get involved in physician-assisted suicide. Taking someone’s life prematurely is murder. God is the one who determines the day of our birth and the day of our death. If someone is dying, is it ok to give them medication

to diminish their suffering? Of course, it is. We can diminish suffering, but we cannot take life.

3. It is not our job to get revenge. Think of all the hurt Saul caused David. Think of the multiple times Saul tried to kill David. If you were with us when we studied 1 Samuel, we walked through the details of one assassination attempt after another on David's life. As a righteous king, David refused to do evil against Saul, even though Saul had done so much evil to him. The evil Saul was doing to David came out of the sinfulness of his heart. David's refusal to do evil toward Saul came out of the righteousness of his heart. David left revenge in God's hands. God took care of the problem of Saul by Saul killing himself. The theme of those who are righteous refusing to do evil and take revenge is not just a theme in this story, but it is found all over the Bible.

“Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” Romans 12:19 (ESV)

God will take care of it. He is watching. We don't plan evil and take revenge. That is God's job.

“But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.” Luke 6:27–28 (ESV)

Our job is to love our enemies, to pray for our enemies, and to do good for our enemies.

... he who is glad at calamity will not go unpunished. Proverbs 17:5 (ESV)

Whenever we hear of disaster that strikes those who are opposed to us, we cannot celebrate. We do not want anyone to suffer. If we celebrate the suffering of others, God promises to punish people with that kind of heart. We are to grieve when we see anyone suffering, not celebrate it.

I think of the images we saw in the Muslim world when the twin towers collapsed, and thousands of people died. At that time, we saw pictures on the news of radical Muslims dancing in the streets as they celebrated the death of so many Americans. That is evil. God will punish that.

4. The brokenness of David when he heard of Saul and Jonathan's death revealed that he was not harboring dark thoughts against them. How we react when we hear news of our enemy's suffering reveals the true state of our hearts. If we hate our enemy, the first thing we will do is celebrate when tragedy strikes in their life. Celebrating when our enemy suffers reveals the darkness in our hearts.

The Amalekite thought David would be a king and could profit from bending the truth and lying to the king. The problem is David was not like other kings who were looking to climb the ladder. He was a righteous king, and in front of him, crime would never pay.

If that was true of righteous King David, it is even more true for righteous king Jesus. David's righteousness will ultimately fail, but Jesus' righteousness never has and never will. While today David is not our king, Jesus is our king. He is in charge of the universe. Everyone will one day give an account of their lives before righteous king Jesus. At that time, everyone will realize that crime might pay in this life, but crime never pays when we stand before righteous king Jesus. Let us learn from this lesson from the Amalekite. If we take God's kingdom seriously, we must take righteousness seriously. Since Jesus is king, do not imagine that wrongdoing, bending the truth, or getting even with our enemies will

ever bring benefit it only brings judgment. Whatever gain we may hope for when we do wrong is short-sighted. Before Jesus, the righteous king of this world, crime never pays.

What about the times when we have lived as if crime did pay? What about the times when we made sinful choices, not good ones?

There is much more to be said about Jesus our king. He also forgives those who repent of their sin. He restores this who turn to him for help. He has mercy on those who seek it. He heals those who cry out to him when they are broken. But he does not reward evil. He does not reward lying, twisting the truth, and revenge against our enemy. As this delusional Amalekite found out.

David's lament for Saul and Jonathan

The last part of this chapter is David's lament for Saul and Jonathan. If you wondered if David's sorrow for Saul and Jonathan's death was genuine, this lament should put that question to rest. This is written in Hebrew poetry. It is a song. David was a musician. He wrote about half of the Psalms. This was a song he wrote about the death of Saul and Jonathan.

And David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and Jonathan his son, and he said it should be taught to the people of Judah; behold, it is written in the Book of Jashar. He said: 2 Samuel 1:17–18 (ESV)

Notice what he did with this song. He commanded that it be taught to the people of nation. This song became a national anthem everyone sang. David wanted to be sure nobody forgot about Saul and Jonathan and how much good they had done for the nation.

It also tells us it was written in the Book of Jashar. In Hebrew, that means the book of the upright. This book is lost. It was never intended to be part of our

Bible. It was probably a collection of songs and poetry from different righteous leaders in Israel's history.

**“Your glory, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How the mighty have fallen!
2 Samuel 1:19 (ESV)**

David considers the death of Saul and Jonathan a national tragedy. Yes, Saul finished poorly, but not everything in Saul's life was terrible. In fact, there was a lot of good God did for his people through Saul's life.

In this song, David gives us instructions on how we are to handle the death of a loved one or the fall of a Christian leader in a sexual scandal or ethical collapse. Here is what David models for us. When a Christian leader crashes and burns, in a terrible end, like Ravi Zacharias, we should not focus on giving a balanced biography of their life. We are to remember the good that was lost. While Saul ended poorly, his death was still a great loss for the nation because of all the good he did for the nation.

Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. “You mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew or rain upon you, nor fields of offerings! For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. 2 Samuel 1:20–21 (ESV)

David remembers the people of Israel celebrating Goliath's defeat. Now he pictures the Philistines in the streets celebrating Saul's defeat. He couldn't bear the thought of them celebrating the death of such a great man. He references two cities, Gath and Ashkelon. Why did he reference these Philistine cities? Gath and Ashkelon were cities on opposite ends of Philistine territory. By referencing these cities, it was a way of referencing all of Philistine territory. In our day, it

would be similar to referencing the entire country by saying “from New York to Los Angeles.”

David also turned his attention to Mount Gilboa, where Saul and Jonathan died. He wished there would be no more dew or rain on the mountain so it would turn into a permanent place of desolation, a permanent memorial to the death of two great men, Saul and Jonathan.

“From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. 2 Samuel 1:22 (ESV)

Most of 1 Samuel focused on Saul’s jealousy of David. We forget all the good Saul and Jonathan did for the nation. Before Saul was king, during the time of the judges, Israel was in disarray. They were constantly vandalized by the surrounding nations. With Saul, God put a stop to that. In 1 Samuel 11, Saul’s first military victory was to save the nation from a terrible man named Nahash the Ammonite. He defeated every city east of the Jordan river and gouged out the right eye of everyone in the cities he conquered. Saul destroyed this terror of the ancient world and saved the nation. His son Jonathan was also an amazing warrior. He and his armor-bearer climbed the cliffs of Michmash, and the two of them executed a surprise attack against the Philistine army camped on top. Their daring surprise attack sent the entire Philistine army running for their life. Saul and Jonathan were both mighty warriors God used to save the nation. David didn’t want anyone to forget all the good God did through their life.

“Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely! In life and in death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles; they were stronger than lions. 2 Samuel 1:23 (ESV)

If you were with us in our study of 1 Samuel, you know that is not the entire picture. Twice Saul tried to kill his son Jonathan. In spite of that, Jonathan was astonishingly faithful to his father. He was forgiving of his father. He was devoted to his father. While Jonathan refused to support his father in his attempts to kill David, he stayed loyal to his father and even defended his father to death on Mount Gilboa.

“You daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. 2 Samuel 1:24 (ESV)

While Saul ended poorly, his reign brought prosperity to Israel. As we learned earlier, before Saul, in the time of the judges, people were scraping to survive. His reign brought financial prosperity. David did not want people to forget this.

Now, in the last part of this song, David turns his thoughts to Jonathan.

“How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle! “Jonathan lies slain on your high places. 2 Samuel 1:25 (ESV)

Without saying a negative word about Saul, David turns his thoughts to Jonathan. He was just as valiant and gifted a warrior as his father. When Jonathan realized it was God’s will for David to be the next king, not himself, he wasn’t filled with jealousy. He simply got behind God’s plan and was willing to be less so David could become more. As we learned in 1 Samuel, it was after David’s victory over Goliath that Jonathan and David became best friends.

As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. 1 Samuel 18:1 (ESV)

Now we read a verse that many modern liberal commentators completely misunderstand.

I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; very pleasant have you been to me; your love to me was extraordinary, surpassing the love of women. 2 Samuel 1:26 (ESV)

David said he was especially heartbroken by Jonathan's death. His love for David was extraordinary, even surpassing the love of a woman.

This is where some liberal people out there tell us Jonathan and David had a homosexual relationship and that Jonathan was a better lover in bed than a woman. Folks, that is complete lunacy. That is woke crazy people misrepresenting the Bible and trying to make the Bible support their homosexual agenda. Let me show you why.

1. The words "pleasant" and "love" in Hebrew are used to describe close friendship. They are NOT the Hebrew words used to describe a sexual relationship.
2. David described Jonathan's loyal love for him as greater than a wife's loyal love for her husband. This describes loyal love in a relationship. It is not talking about erotic sexual love in a relationship. The best way to think about this is what happens when guys come home from work and they share with their wives about people at work that are making their lives miserable. Men, how does your wife react? She goes into mama bear mode. She is very protective of you. She is very loyal to you in those moments. That is the kind of loyal protective love Jonathan had for his friend David. In 1 Samuel, Jonathan almost lost his life in front of his father when he stood up for David.
3. It would make no sense to see homosexuality celebrated by Israel's righteous king while it is also described as a sin deserving the death penalty under God's law.

If a man lies with a male as with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them. Leviticus 20:13 (ESV)

The New Testament also sees homosexuality as serious sin.

Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,... 1 Corinthians 6:9 (ESV)

It is clear that this is not talking about a homosexual relationship. It is talking about a close friendship between two men that were extremely loyal to one another. This is the kind of relationship that happens between men when they are in the army together fighting on the front lines, and one man is willing to risk his life or even lose his life to save his close friend. That is the kind of relationship that is described.

“How the mighty have fallen, and the weapons of war perished!” 2 Samuel 1:27 (ESV)

Conclusion

What are some of the things we need to learn from this chapter?

1. Crime never pays when a righteous king is in charge. The Amalekite thought he could bend the truth and that David would celebrate Saul and Jonathan's death. Boy, he was wrong. Righteous kings and people do not celebrate the death of anyone. They celebrate repentance.
2. When someone dies and they ended life poorly, their death is not the time to give a balanced biography. It is the time to remember the good that was lost in their life.
3. It is not our job to get revenge. Just as David left vengeance in the hands of God, we are to leave revenge on our enemies in God's hands. Our job is to

go out of our way to love our enemies. If we choose to do evil to our enemies, we become evil like our enemies. God is large and in charge. That is why we leave revenge in God's hands.



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