

2 Samuel 6 — The Ark Comes To Jerusalem

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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.” There are many ways you can join us in our mission to reach people from Jesus. One of the easiest is to invite friends to church or to events happening at church.

A good example is what happens in the young adult Bible study that Jeremy, our worship leader, has with the post-college students. That Bible study usually happens in Spencer. Those who attend come from places like Lynn Grove, Wahapeton, and even as far away as Jackson. The young adults invite friends from work, which is a great way for young adults to meet other young adults and open the Bible together. So a special shout out to the young adults as they invite friends to the weekly Bible study.

This morning, we are back in 2 Samuel. We are in 2 Samuel 6. Two weeks ago, when we were in 2 Samuel 5, that chapter was about David’s rise to greatness. After years of running for his life, David finally became king over all of Israel. He conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital city. The people of the nation loved him. He had international recognition from world leaders. He defeated the Philistines, and for the first time since they defeated Saul in the battle of Mount Gilboa years before, the Philistines were pushed out of the land.

Things were going well, very well. In 2 Samuel 6, with good intentions in his heart, David desires to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem to restore God back to the center of the nation’s life. Those were great desires. In this chapter, David will learn that even though he was an amazing leader and God’s

anointed king, he is no different from any other man. He needed to approach God with humility, reverence, and obedience, just like any other man, or it would spell disaster.

This chapter covers two attempts by David to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem. David's first attempt ended in disaster because of his disobedience. His second attempt was a success because of obedience. The big idea of the chapter is that it is obedience to the word of God that leads to blessing from God. We will divide our study under David's failed and successful attempt to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

Disobedience to God's Word brings disaster.

David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. 2 Samuel 6:1-2 (ESV)

Two weeks ago, when David defeated the Philistines, he drove them out of the land all the way from Geba to Gezer. I didn't have a chance to find a map of that area for you, but it is a massive piece of land, about 20 miles wide by 6 miles high on a map. This restored a healthy corridor between the northern and southern kingdoms and in enabled David to undertake moving the ark to Jerusalem, which is what we are studying this morning. Before this, the Philistines had partial control of this area, so the ark could not be moved. Now, that problem was taken away.

David understood that what he was proposing to do was big. He gathered 30,000 chosen men of Israel. This sounds like preparations for a serious battle. Chosen men usually refer to troops. On two previous occasions, Saul took 3,000

chosen men from all of Israel into battle. David now gathers ten times that number for moving the ark to Jerusalem. The number of people David gathered to move the ark makes this event grander than David's taking of Jerusalem. It may have been the most significant event since David was anointed king and an even more spectacular celebration than when David was anointed king.

The action begins at a place called Baale-Judah. That means the Lords of Judah. It is an old name. Elsewhere the location is called Kiriath-Jearim, which means the city of the forests. Why did the author use an ancient forgotten name of the city instead of the modern name for the city? I think it was to emphasize this location's obscurity. This place was a remote, forgotten place in Israel, despite the remarkable treasure of the Ark of the Covenant, which was located there. Baale-Judah was about 9 miles west of Jerusalem, roughly halfway between Geba and Gezer. This is where the Ark of the Covenant was left 70 years before following its time in the possession of the Philistines. You may remember what happened. The Philistines captured the ark in battle and brought it to their cities as a war trophy. God wasn't happy about that, so he inflicted them with tumors and mice. They were sent it back to Israel on a cart. When the cart with the ark arrived in Beth-Shemesh, 70 men from that town decided to open the ark and look inside. Maybe they were car mechanics and couldn't resist looking under the hood. That was a bad idea. They were all immediately struck dead by God. At that time, the ark was taken by the men of Kiriath-Jearim and brought to the house of Abinidab on the hill. There it was left. No mention has

been made of the ark since then. For the last 70 years, during Saul's reign, it was forgotten about by the people.

David's purpose was to bring the ark to Jerusalem and restore God's presence to the center of the nation's life.

Notice what the ark is called. It is not just the ark. It is the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. The ark was not God, but God chose for his presence to dwell between the two cherubim on the ark. It was far more than an old box. It was where the holiness and power of God's presence dwelled.

Let me describe the ark. It was a gold-plated wooden box, approximately 3 feet 9 inches long by 2 feet 3 inches wide and high. It was made in the days of Moses according to God's instructions. It had gold rings on the side of it through which gold-plated wooden poles were placed in order to carry it. The top of the ark was a pure gold cover with solid gold cherubs hammered into it on each end. Cherubs are angels. Inside the ark were the stone tablets on which God engraved the words of the Ten Commandments. There was also a jar of manna in the ark, along with Aaron's rod that budded.

David was trying to bring about a spiritual revival in the nation. The book of 1 Chronicles describes what happens in 2 Samuel 6 in great detail. I will quote from 1 Chronicles a few times this morning to give us more of the back story of this chapter.

Then let us bring again the ark of our God to us, for we did not seek it in the days of Saul." 1 Chronicles 13:3 (ESV)

David was not just interested in building a capital city, uniting a nation, and securing the nation's borders. He knew that the nation's future depended on the people's relationship with God. Saul neglected God and the ark. It didn't end well for him or the country. David did not want that. He knew his leadership responsibility wasn't just to lead the nation practically, but he also needed to lead the nation back to God spiritually.

In a similar way, our leadership responsibility is not just to secure ourselves financially, but we need to lead ourselves and those we are over into a right relationship with God. That is the only way we can have any lasting success.

When it comes to self-leadership, that means we make it a priority to be at church where we can hear the word of God and where our children can learn the Bible. It means that as fathers, we make it a priority for our family to be in church and for us to pray with our children before they go to bed. We make it a priority to read the Bible to our children. We make it a priority to pray with our wife and for our wife. Just as David knew it was his job to prioritize God in the nation's life, we need to prioritize God in our life and the life of our families.

While David has a good heart leading the right way for the right reasons, he is about to learn a painful lesson. David had not taken time to read his Bible or to check with God about what he was about to do. To understand what happens next, we need some background. David knew the ark of God was not to be trifled with. When the Philistines stole it, God create havoc among them with tumors and mice. 70 years before, when the ark returned from the Philistines and arrived

at Beth-Shemesh, and 70 men took off the cover and looked in it, God struck them dead. Any involvement with the ark is not a casual thing. It should be a careful thing.

God gave Moses clear instructions about the way the ark was to be moved. First, it was to be covered so people couldn't see it.

...Aaron and his sons shall go in and take down the veil of the screen and cover the ark of the testimony with it. Then they shall put on it a covering of goatskin and spread on top of that a cloth all of blue,... Numbers 4:5–6 (ESV)

It was also only to be carried by Levitical priests by golden poles that were put into the rings on the side.

You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark to carry the ark by them. Exodus 25:13–14 (ESV)

They were also not to touch the ark or any of the holy things associated with the ark.

And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, as the camp sets out, after that the sons of Kohath shall come to carry these, but they must not touch the holy things, lest they die... Numbers 4:15 (ESV)

They were also not to look into the ark to see the contents.

but they shall not go in to look on the holy things even for a moment, lest they die. Numbers 4:20 (ESV)

These were clear instructions and some clear consequences if they were not followed. David had good intentions to bring the ark to Jerusalem, but he missed the details about the way God said to move it.

And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and 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, with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark. 2 Samuel 6:3–4 (ESV)

Why did they miss this? We know that for the last 70 years, the people neglected the ark, and the nation neglected the worship of God. The people of God were far from God; even David, did not know his Bible well enough to avoid this error. When it came to how to move the ark, I think David probably asked Abinidab's sons how he should move it. The sons of Abinidab remembered it came to them 70 years before on a cart from the Philistines, so that is how they suggested David move it.

David, and the sons of Abinidab, drew their ideas on the best way to move the ark from the people from their gut instincts within them and from the world around them, not from the Bible. As a result, this entire thing, even though David had good intentions, is about to end in disaster. David was following the world around him instead of the Bible in front of him.

Not much has changed. Isn't that the way so many churches are today? The beliefs of many churches come from the world around them and the gut instincts within them instead of the Bible in front of them. People worship God the way they think is right, not the way God says is right.

Let me give you some examples. Many churches and denominations are comfortable affirming women as lead pastors, even though the Bible doesn't approve of that.

I do not permit a woman to teach or to exercise authority over a man; rather, she is to remain quiet. For Adam was formed first, then Eve; 1 Timothy 2:12–13 (ESV)

Notice the reason Paul gave for this goes back to creation, the forming of Adam and Eve. This is a timeless principle, not a temporary principle. It is not a sin issue. It is a creation issue. Many churches choose ignore this verse and

others like it. They choose to follow our current culture and their gut instincts and affirm women as the lead pastors in churches rather than obey the Word of God.

Others affirm homosexuals and lesbians as church leaders. They look around them at the news and know this is a time for people to come out of the closet, for people to embrace and celebrate any sexual desires they feel. In many churches, homosexuality, lesbianism, and those struggling with transgender desires are told those are lifestyles to be celebrated and embraced in the church. They get that from our culture and their gut. What happens if we put our finger in the text?

For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error. Romans 1:26–27 (ESV)

The Bible clearly says lesbianism and homosexuality are not a lifestyle to be celebrated but a sin of which we are to repent. It is a sin God allows people to be trapped by after they consistently rebel against him.

The lifestyle of all Christians is one of repentance from sin. That is repentance from sexual sin, repentance from the sin of greed, selfishness, and pride. We are not to celebrate sin, but all Christians are to repent of sin. That is what we do. We repent of our sins and turn to Jesus for the forgiveness of our sins.

David, at this point, was listening to the culture around him about how to move the ark, not listening to the Word of God. From the outside, the scene looked good. It had all the appearances of a careful, respectful, and dignified procession. 30,000 chosen men of Israel cheered for the ark as it left for

Jerusalem. While everyone was happy, one person was not happy. It was the one person who mattered. It was God.

The next verse shows us the well-intended enthusiasm and excitement that day.

And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. 2 Samuel 6:5 (ESV)

From the outside, all looked good. The people were celebrating. They were singing. There were all kinds of instruments involved. All of the celebration was about to come to a screeching halt.

And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. 2 Samuel 6:6 (ESV)

They came to the threshing floor of Nacon, and it must have been spring. There were potholes in the road. The oxen stumbled in the pothole. The cart jerked. A wheel on the cart drops into the hole. The ark tipped. Uzzah, was in the cart holding the reins. He saw the ark tipping. With split-second timing, he reached to steady the ark and keep it from falling. It was all well-intended and good but...

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. 2 Samuel 6:7 (ESV)

Uzzah was struck dead. The celebration went to complete silence. 911 was called. There was Uzzah's lifeless body beside the ark. He was pronounced dead, struck dead by God. He was just trying to help. He didn't want the ark to fall.

Those who knew their history immediately remembered the men from Beth-Shemesh who, 70 years before, tried looking inside the ark and were struck dead too. The instructions God gave for handling the ark were ignored. Uzzah sinned in a big way, and he didn't even realize it. It cost him his life.

What a great reminder that there are consequences for our sins, even if we do not realize we are engaged in sin. Whenever we sin, we will suffer. That is just the way it works. This is one of the reasons I beg you to have a regular time in your Bible, maybe a chapter a day. Keep reading it. Like an IV drip, keep the word of God flowing through your veins. The more we know what sin looks like, the better we can avoid it. If we are ignorant of the Bible, and we engage in sin, just like Uzzah did, we will still suffer for sin. This is why it is so important to regularly read the Bible and let the Bible fine-tune us to better see sin and sense sin so we can avoid sin.

If we have regular time in God's word, when we come across different situations in our culture, even if we cannot quote a chapter or verse, we can better sense sin so we can avoid sin. If all we have is our fallen gut instincts to tell us right and wrong, we can easily fool ourselves, just like Uzzah, David, and many others did that fateful day.

Let me give you an example of how the Bible gives us a better sense of sin and helps us fine-tune our understanding of sin. Yesterday, before preparing for the message, I was catching up on my Bible reading. I read the story of the Good Samaritan in the Gospels. In the story, Jesus tells a man one of the greatest commandments in the Bible is to love your neighbor, but the man wants

to know who is the neighbor he is to love. Jesus tells him the story of a man that was mugged, beaten up and left on the side of the road. Many people walked passed him, ignoring him, but a Samaritan stopped to help him. He even spent money to keep him at an inn until he recovered. Samaritans and Jews were enemies, hated enemies. The story's point is that our neighbor is anyone we are in a position to help, even if they are different from us, or would normally be considered an enemy to us.

That is not what we hear in the world around us. In our world, we are to love our neighbors, but only the nice ones that are just like us. Jesus reframes that. God wants us to love our neighbors, especially the ones who are completely unlike us, the ones who are hard to love. Do you see why it is so important to let the Bible teach us the truth rather than just following the culture around us or our gut instincts within us?

The other reaction some of us will have is to see God as unjust and unnecessarily harsh in this case. How could God strike Uzzah dead when he had good intentions? Actually, God was gracious. The ark wasn't covered. The ark was not transported with poles by priests but on a cart. The special levitical priests to transport the ark were not the ones carrying the ark. It was on strike four when God carried out the death penalty, just like he promised. God was super gracious up to that point.

Sometimes we suffer for our sin and it feels like God was harsh. Many times we can look back and see many little steps away from God where we did

not suffer before we went far enough away from God that God did allow us to suffer. At times like this, we need to be thankful for God's grace.

And David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. 2 Samuel 6:8 (ESV)

David was not angry at God. He was angry at what God did. David was trying to do the right thing and bring the ark to Jerusalem. At this point, he had no idea why God struck Uzzah dead.

A thought came to mind as I was writing in my office. It seems that when a new era of redemptive history begins, and God's people are excited for God, some people take God casually. It is at those times when we see God breaking out against those who refused to treat him as holy. For instance, when the Tabernacle was first set up by Moses and Aaron's sons were offering sacrifices, we read of Nadab and Abihu offered unauthorized fire. They didn't obey what God said about how to be worshipped. Fire came from the Lord and destroyed them. God's people learned to fear God and take him seriously. In the same way, when the early church started, Ananias and Sapphira were not being honest with their generosity. They were lying to look more generous than they were, and God struck them dead. People learned not just to love the Lord but also to fear the Lord and reverence Him. I think we have the same thing going on here. David was excited about the ark and bringing it to Jerusalem, but people were not taking God and the ark as seriously as they should. Now they feared God, and didn't just celebrate God.

And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?" 2 Samuel 6:9 (ESV)

David was not just aware of God's grace to him but of God's greatness compared to him. As I was thinking about this, I thought there is a good lesson for us. So often in the modern church, Jesus is pictured as our friend. We talk about the love of Jesus for us. We talk about God's greatness and all we have in Christ. These are good things, but we often forget that we are worshipping a holy and great God, a God who rightfully punishes sin, a God who has the right to take life because he is the one who created life. We do not worship God casually. We worship him seriously.

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. 2 Samuel 6:10 (ESV)

David abandoned the project to bring the ark to Jerusalem. He didn't see how he could have the ark in town. God would be striking people dead. The crowd went back home. David did not know what to do. God hadn't acted in the way David expected.

And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household. 2 Samuel 6:11 (ESV)

For three months, everything was on hold. David had to re-evaluate.

Obedience to God's Word brings blessing.

David left the ark at the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. I suspect nobody wanted the ark at their house after God struck Uzzah dead. I don't know why his house was chosen. Maybe everyone in the area drew straws, and Obed-Edom drew the short one. When he brought the ark to his house, he probably thought it would bring disaster. Just the opposite happened. It brought blessing. The Bible doesn't tell us how Obed-Edom was blessed. There is a passage in Chronicles

that talks about Obed-Edom and the large family God gave him. We don't know what blessing it was that came to his house, but we do know his house was blessed because of the presence of the ark at his house.

Here is the first lesson David learned after he saw what happened in Obed-Edom's home. *God didn't reveal himself to destroy us but to give us joy and life.* God's desire is not to strike people dead as he did to Uzzah. It is to give joy and life to people as he did to Obed-Edom. This is what David wanted for the people of Israel. This is why David wanted to bring the ark to Jerusalem, to give joy and spiritual life to the nation of Israel.

Today, for us, God's presence does not dwell among us in a gold-plated wooden box. God has come to us in a much fuller way in the presence of Jesus Christ, God in the flesh. Yes, one day, Jesus will return, and he will judge the nations. Judging the nations is not the primary reason Jesus came. Jesus came to die on the cross and rise from the grave to give us life and joy from our relationship with him. Look what Jesus said about why he came in the Gospel of John.

[...I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. John 10:10 \(ESV\)](#)

The first thing David learned is that God's heart is to bless his people, not destroy his people. Also, during those three months, David and those with him got into their Bibles to figure out why God turned their good plans into disaster. David learned that God's blessings come to those who obey God's Word. If David would obey God's Word, he would be blessed by God and could bring the ark to Jerusalem.

1 Chronicles 15 is a parallel account of this chapter in 2 Samuel. 1

Chronicles tells us that as David prepared to move the ark again, this time, he was especially careful to obey what God's word said about moving the ark.

Then David said that no one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, for the LORD had chosen them to carry the ark of the LORD and to minister to him forever. 1 Chronicles 15:2 (ESV)

He missed that one before. Got it right this time.

And the Levites carried the ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded according to the word of the LORD. 1 Chronicles 15:15 (ESV)

We tried a cart last time. That was a disaster. We will obey God's word and use the golden poles, just like God said.

Because you did not carry it the first time, the LORD our God broke out against us, because we did not seek him according to the rule." 1 Chronicles 15:13 (ESV)

David now realized the disaster of his first attempt to move the ark was not God's fault, it was his fault. He hadn't read and obeyed God's Word.

...So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. 2 Samuel 6:12b (ESV)

Just like before, there was a large crowd. There was enthusiasm. There was a celebration. This is good. This time it was a celebration that included trembling. It was a celebration that recognized the goodness of God's presence but also the holiness of God and the sinfulness of God's people.

And when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. 2 Samuel 6:13 (ESV)

There was an ox sacrificed and a fattened animal sacrificed. The sacrificial laws in Leviticus tell us what these sacrifices were about. Leviticus 1:4 talks about the ox being sacrificed to make atonement for sin. David remembered

what happened to Uzzah. His question earlier was, “How can the ark come to dwell among us?” The answer was only by atonement, by sacrifice for our sins. To make any progress, they needed to stop and offer a sacrifice for their sin.

David understood that God wanted to bless his people with his presence, just like he did Obed-Edom, but the only way that blessing could come was by God’s people carefully obeying God’s word. Also, the only way that blessing could come would be by atonement for our sins.

Nothing has changed. For us, the only way to experience the blessing of God is for us to obey the Word of God. We need to take God seriously on that. We must also have our sins atoned for to be in a relationship with God. The good news is that we do not have to sacrifice an animal every six steps for our sin. We have Jesus, God’s son, who died for all our sins at one time. When we trust in Jesus to forgive our sins, he comes and dwells in our hearts and our life.

[And David danced before the LORD with all his might... 2 Samuel 6:14a \(ESV\)](#)

David was dancing with joy before the Lord. Here is where it gets interesting.

[...And David was wearing a linen ephod. 2 Samuel 6:14b \(ESV\)](#)

This is a little elusive. Some people read this and think of nightgown and that David was clothed immodestly. That wasn’t the idea. David as king, would normally wear his royal robes. He wasn’t wearing them. The linen ephod was the simple clothing of a priest. In 1 Samuel, when Samuel was a boy, he wore a linen ephod when he served as a priest-in-training in 1 Samuel 2:18. The priests were known for wearing this common but simple dress.

...And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod. 1 Samuel 22:18 (ESV)

When the ark came to town, David did not wear his royal robes and distract from the greatness of the ark and God's presence. He wore the clothing of a common priest because David didn't see himself as anyone special before the Lord. He was just another person desperately in need of God's grace.

The parallel account in 1 Chronicles emphasizes that he was dressed just like the other priests and worship leaders.

David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, as also were all the Levites who were carrying the ark, and the singers and Chenaniah the leader of the music of the singers. And David wore a linen ephod. 1 Chronicles 15:27 (ESV)

That day, before God, David said he wasn't anybody special. He was just another worshipper of God desperately in need of God's grace and trying to obey God's word. He didn't want to distract from God.

This applies to all of us. Each of us, when we come to God, we come in desperate need of grace. If we are worth millions or work a minimum-wage summer job, we are all in desperate need of God's grace. None of us are better than others. If we have wealth, power, or notoriety, that doesn't make us any better or less needy than others.

So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn. 2 Samuel 6:15 (ESV)

I know some people do not like loud worship music. David apparently did. People were shouting. The parallel account in Chronicles has more details about the worship music that day.

David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites to appoint their brothers as the singers who should play loudly on musical instruments, on harps and lyres and cymbals, to raise sounds of joy. 1 Chronicles 15:16 (ESV)

They played loudly. God did not like the volume down on the sound system. He wanted to rock the house. Harps and lyres are just ancient versions of guitars. Cymbals were part of the drum set. This is like a modern worship band at full volume.

Everybody was thrilled as the ark came to town. Thousands are singing. David was dancing for joy but one person was not happy.

As 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. 2 Samuel 6:16 (ESV)

Notice that Michal was not called David's wife. She was called the daughter of Saul. That gives us a picture of her heart. She was daddy's girl, and she was just like her godless father. That isn't a great compliment. She thought like her father.

She was David's first wife. She was in love with David. She helped David escape from her father, but while David was on the run, she was given to another man named Paltiel. David recently received her back. When she looked out the window, she was not excited to see the ark. All she could see was her husband dressed in common clothes, not acting like a king. It was embarrassing. Where were his royal robes? Where was all the honor due to David? She despised him in her heart. Her nose was out of joint. This will not end well.

And 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. And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts and 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. 2 Samuel 6:17–19 (ESV)

David had a tent pitched for the ark in Jerusalem. The original tent for the ark was probably destroyed years before at Shiloh by the Philistines. No doubt, at this point, since David was super attentive to biblical detail, he build a new tent for the ark that would follow all the biblical details of the old tent for the ark.

When the ark was put in the tent, David offered burnt offerings to atone for sin plus peace offerings. Peace offerings are also called fellowship offerings. This is a meal eaten before the Lord where most of the sacrificed animal was eaten by the people. This was a massive church meal. David then prayed over the people and gave everyone a sack lunch for the trip home of meat, raisin cakes, and bread. This was the end of a great day.

As the events of the day came to an end, David faithfully followed God's Word to bring the ark to Jerusalem. The people celebrated. They were blessed by David and by God. Things looked good until David went home.

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!" 2 Samuel 6:20 (ESV)

Michal was hot. She didn't even wait until David came in the door. She came out the front door, and in front of everyone else, she threw David under the bus. She did this in public, not in private, which was a very bad choice. Guys, how do you like it when your wife throws you under the bus in public? Most guys see red. That is not respect. That puts marriage on ice in a hurry.

She accused David of uncovering himself in front of the eyes of his female servants. Let's be clear. That didn't happen. Many people read this and assume she was right and that David was dancing half-naked in front of the ark. We just

read what happened. That wasn't what happened. He was not wearing his royal robes. He wore a linen ephod, like every other priest moving the ark, so he blended in. God was to be the center of attention that day. David wasn't to be the center of attention. Her accusations were not true.

She wanted David to dress as a king and be the center of attention because that way, her ego as his wife would be bigger. Michal was what we call a high-maintenance woman who loved high society and the role she now played as the king's first wife. She really wasn't interested in the ark. She was interested in the status she gets as the king's first wife.

David was excited for God and comfortable being humble before God. Michal was more concerned about the way David looked and dressed.

An interesting thought came to mind. I think David and Michal were unequally yoked. David was interested in God, the ark, obedience to God's Word, humility before God, and forgiveness of sin. Michal was not part of the crowd welcoming the ark. She was more upset about David not wearing his royal robes and his humility than she was about the ark and the presence of God coming to town. She was described as the daughter of Saul, a man who abandoned God, not the wife of David, the man who sought God. When David first married her, and she helped him escape from their home, there is a curious comment about her dressing up a household idol as a body decoy and putting it in their bed to make it look like David. What was she doing with an idol in her house? Godly women do not have idols in their homes.

David and Michal were not on the same spiritual page, and it led to serious friction in their marriage. Folks, it doesn't matter how beautiful a woman is or how much money a guy has, or how charming a person is; if they don't love Jesus, and you marry them, you will have a deep conflict with them. If a Christian and a non-Christian marry, no matter how much you are attracted to one another person, realize you are building your relationship with two different sets of blueprints. One of you values Jesus, the other doesn't care about Jesus. That will lead to serious conflict. Look what the Bible says.

Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? 2 Corinthians 6:14 (ESV)

If you are an unmarried young man or woman, and you are feeling lonely and desperate, please don't compromise in this area. It will not end well.

Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised. Proverbs 31:30 (ESV)

More important than anything is you have a spouse that can pray with you and walk with you in Christ. Without that common connection in Christ, not only will you have friction but you are robbing yourself of the marital joy God intended for you.

And David said 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. 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." 2 Samuel 6:21–22 (ESV)

Michal viewed David's conduct as inappropriate before his subjects. David viewed his conduct as being no more than another humble worshipper in need of God's grace.

David claims he would make himself more contemptible than this. The Septuagint, which is a common Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament used at the time of Christ, uses a Greek word in this passage that emphasizes contemptible. The ESV follows that translation. The Hebrew, which is even older, uses a word that says David will make himself smaller than this. I think the Hebrew is a better translation. The problem Michal was upset about is that her husband was acting like a common person, not a king. David told her, I will make myself even less than this before the Lord. I am just another man desperately in need of God's grace, and no matter who I am in this world, that is the only way I can stand before God.

And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death. 2 Samuel 6:23 (ESV)

Why did she remain childless? In part, this was God's judgment on Saul's kingdom and the end of his family line. We don't know what happened in the relationship between David and Michal, but I don't think they enjoyed spending time together since their hearts were different about what is important in this life.

In this chapter, the key phrase that keeps occurring is "before the Lord" This phrase occurs six times. The point is that when the ark came into Jerusalem, it was God, not David, who was the king of Jerusalem. David's job was to be just a humble servant of God, who is the true king of Israel and the true king of our lives. Nothing has changed. No matter how great we are in this world, before God, our privilege is to be a humble servant of God, our great king. To the degree that we see ourselves with our status, wealth, or ego before God, we have become more like Michal, than like David.

Applications

1. Obedience to the Word of God leads to blessing from God.
2. When we sin, we will suffer.
3. Suffering comes from sin, even when don't realize our sin. This is why it is wise for us to constantly read, obey, and grow in God's word.
4. Do not be unequally yoked.



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