

How The Mighty Have Fallen

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Date: 20 March 2022

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good evening. We are continuing in our series of the life of David, looking this evening at the first chapter of 2 Samuel. Now last week, Corey preached on 1 Samuel 28 where Saul sought out a medium, you know, looking for answers which really was the height, the pinnacle of his disobedience against the Lord.

And he was told there that God would give Israel into the hand of the Philistine so that he, his sons, and the armies of Israel would perish. And that is also what happened. Now David was not there at the battle between the Philistines and Israel, partly because, you know, Saul was trying to kill him so he was keeping away, but also because David had fought a great battle against the Amalekites after they had kidnapped the women and the sons and the daughters of David and his men.

Now as a quick note in our Bibles, you know, the battle between Israel and the Philistines took place at the end of 1 Samuel and now we're in 2 Samuel. Now originally this is actually just one book. You look in your Bibles you see 1, 2 and you may think they're separate, but in reality they're part of one and the same story. So just keep that in mind as you are reading the book that there's no disjointment but it's one complete story. Now in the first 16 verses that we just read, you know, we see the news being delivered, being delivered to David of the battle that went so terribly, the news of the defeat, the defeat of Israel, the death of Saul and the death of Jonathan. Now we're going to be focusing on verses 17 through 27 which is this lament that David has created to be sung by Israel. Now lament, you know, it's not really a word that we use but a lament is it's a deep expression of grief, of sorrow and of suffering. Now before we, you know, look at the text and before we start looking into it, let's go ahead and pray and ask for God to help us.

Father God, your servants are listening. We pray that you may speak this evening in your word, by your spirit and we pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen.

Ask goes the king, so goes the people. That's a saying that some of you may be familiar with that you may have might have heard before. It implies that the way that the king goes, so goes the people that he is in charge of, that he is to serve. You see this principle especially in first kings, we see one king after another and we see when there are good kings on the throne, the people follow and good things happen to the country, they prosper and things go well. But then we see in the, when they have the bad kings, the people follow the bad example of the king and they suffer as a consequence or led into disaster.

[3 : 39] See in this chapter we see the tragedy that Israel experienced because of Saul, because of its king, because of his sin. We see Saul and Jonathan in the army of Israel being destroyed. See having the right king or the right representative is crucial. It's a matter of life and of death. And at the heart of David's song of lament that we see here in this chapter, we see this phrase repeated three times. How would the mighty have fallen? You know how the mighty have fallen? That is the center of this lament and pulling from this we see three points that we're gonna look at this evening. We see first the death of the mighty, the death of the mighty, the next the strength of the mighty, the strength of the mighty and finally we're gonna look at the responses to the mighty. So starting then with the death of the mighty. We see here first a reaction and then we see a curse. So let's look at verse 19 through 20. If you have your Bible still open or your phones out, look at verses 19 through 20. Your glory, oh Israel, is slain on your high places.

How the mighty have fallen? Tell it not in gath. Publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. So we see here is the reaction. Israel has experienced this great defeat and we see in this two verses that the lament is directed to Israel. Oh Israel, what is the extent of this defeat? The glory that we see of Israel has been slain. We will come back to that later to think more about what that means. But we see this phrase again, how the mighty have fallen. See the warriors of Israel have been slain. But more than that we see Saul. We see Jonathan, they're lying there on the battlefield. And then verse 20 shows us this reaction. This reaction to the defeat of Israel that the story of this battle should not be told. It should not be told in gath. It should not be published in Ashkelon. So we see two very common literary techniques here. The first is this that we see parallelism. You see the parallel here very common throughout the Psalms. We basically have two lines that are saying pretty much the same thing. You know tell it not in gath. Publish it not in the streets of

Ashkelon. Both mean the same thing. David do not want this news of this battle being told. The news of his fellow countrymen of Jonathan and David of being dead. And the second technique we see is that he mentions these two cities.

You know he mentions the two of them really to refer to the whole Philistine nation. You know we use similar things. You think of speaking of things from the east to the west. Incompensates the whole thing. So David is using the same thing here as you first of these two cities. He's speaking of the nation as a whole. He doesn't want any city, any town, any village speaking about this battle of the news of what has happened there. Because he could not bear it. He could not bear the Philistines rejoicing over this. And we see yet another parallel. Do we not? You know less the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, less the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. See here he may have in mind first Samuel 18. You know right after he had he had defeated Goliath and he comes back into the city.

And people are rejoicing. They're out dancing and celebrating the great victory that Israel has won. But that is not the image that David wants. Take place in in the Philistine country. Because of this great battle that has taken place.

[8 : 12] As they celebrate the death of Saul and the defeat of Israel. But even more than rejoicing they'll be speaking ill of Israel. But even more than that they will be speaking ill of Israel's God. They will speak ill of the Lord. You see in that time the pagan nations believed that when their country defeated another nation that it was actually a battle between gods. So their God is the one that defeated the opposite nations gods. So in the Philistine view they thought that their God Dagon had defeated the Lord. Which of course is ridiculous because he's the maker of heaven and earth. David knows that could not be the case but he could not bear their rejoicing. Now in verse 21 we see the curse.

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. So David then turns from addressing Israel to address the Mount of Gilboa. Which is where the battle took place. He calls for there to be no dew or rain that no fruit would come of it. He says nor fields of offerings. See in the culture and in the context of agriculture the idea is for there to be no fruit. To be no growth. To be no harvest. And the word offerings you know highlights the connection made to the Philistine God Dagon. David does not want there to be anything that can be offered up. That can be sacrificed to the pagan God during this celebration of Israel's defeat. And the second half we see provides the reason for the cursing. You know for there the shield of the mighty was defiled. The shield of Saul. Now you see the roundabout way of speaking of

Saul's death. He does not outright speak of the death of Saul. The defilement of his body as it lays there on the ground slain. But he speaks of the defilement of his shield. So not only the shield but the body was defiled. And when David goes on to say that Saul's shield was not anointed with oil. It reminds us of Saul being the anointed one. We saw that just a few verses prior as he as he has the Amalekite killed because he had slain the anointed one or so he said. In 1st Samuel twice was David given the opportunity to kill Saul but he would not because Saul was the anointed one. But now Saul's body had been slain on the field of battle whereas he should have been anointed with oil. He had been covered with blood and with dirt instead. So with the Lord anointed being defiled Israel is likewise defiled as his soldiers lie dead and the enemy is victorious. Now throughout this series the foil or the contrast that we see between David and Saul which was highlighted by Corey last week. He even showed how the author 1st Samuel goes to show us a type of Christ in

David. How we look at David when we see Christ in him and in Saul we have a type of antichrist of someone who is the direct opposite of that. But in this lament you know interestingly David gives us a glimpse of Christ in Saul. Do you see the analogy of the anointed one of God who lies defiled not anointed with oil.

You know when Jesus was at Bethany at the house of Simon the leper we have Mary the sister of Lazarus the sister of Martha who comes up and she breaks an alabaster flask full of ointment and she takes it and she pours it over the head of Jesus. Now the significance of anointing someone's head with oil you know is throughout the Old Testament. That's how kings are anointed and we see that even in that Christ's kingship is implied. But Jesus would not receive another anointment. For his enemies would come. They would take him and they would crucify him defiling his body. Now Saul is a he's a poor king. He's a poor representative and he suffered and he was defiled because of it. And his people they suffered the consequences of this his body and the bodies of many other Israelites men were laying slain on the hills of Gilboa with the enemies rejoicing. But the day would come when the Messiah would die similarly. You know he was to be slain. He was to be defiled on top of a hill. But unlike Saul this representative Jesus Christ does not remain slain on a hill but his body is risen victoriously as he has conquered both his enemies death and Satan. You know he is the one who suffered not for his own sins but for the sense of others for the sense of his people. And we as long as we as we as we rest upon him as we believe in him and rest upon him alone for salvation we share with Christ. We share with Christ in his resurrection in his exaltation in his victory because he is our representative and through him we have life and life everlasting.

[15 : 00] He saw again is a poor Messiah figure as the dead bodies of Mount Gilboa is evidence of. However neither David nor any of the Old Testament kings that come after him bring the hope and the certainty of salvation that we that we need. Now may you ask yourself this evening you know who is your representative you know who is the one on whom you have placed your hope. Who is the one that you are holding on to. You know is it a political leader is he or she the one that's gonna bring what you need. Is it your boss is it your parent is it your partner or is it yourself. Now you know you may not end up dead in a field but death is what awaits for each one of us and there's only one sure firm and true foundation. It is Jesus Christ the Son of God who who rose victoriously and a seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty and he can be your representative he can be your hope he can be your sure guarantee if only you come to him. So the death of the mighty and then second we see the strength of the mighty now please look at verses 22 and 23 as we see from the blood of the slain from the fat of the mighty the bow of Jonathan turned not back in the sword of Saul return not empty 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. See in verse 22 and the second half of 23 we see the strength of the mighty in battle. See Jonathan and Saul they they fought with great bravery with great courage and their weapons you know the bow representing

Jonathan and the sword representing Saul they did not turn back they did not return empty but they continued to go forth they continued to battle the enemy they were swifter than eagles they moved with meaning meaning they moved with great speed they're stronger than lions you know emphasizing the strength in their fighting and in the first half of verse 23 we see the the strength of their character beloved and lovely is what David calls them you know for Jonathan this makes sense and we'll talk more about this in a little bit but for Saul you know the man who who tried to kill him twice he you know it to me doesn't seem exactly what I would call a lovely person but it is true that Saul during the beginning of his kingship could be called those things that he was beloved and lovely because through his strength he had subdued the enemies he was honored and he was respected by the people but then David says also that they were they were not divided even though Jonathan had renounced his right for the kingship and Saul had you know sought to kill David the one whom

Jonathan loved Saul and Jonathan they remained together in life and in death on that battlefield even while loving David we see Jonathan remaining faithful to his father even unto death on Mount Gilboa and there we see the strength of the mighty now third we're gonna look at the response to the mighty because in this little event we see both the response to Saul and a response to Jonathan so in verse 24 and 25 the beginning of it we see the response to Saul says you daughters of Israel weep over Saul who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet who put ornaments of gold on your apparel how the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle see David now addresses the daughters of Israel and here focuses on Saul you call them to respond to this tragedy by weeping and mourning for Saul see in quite in contrast to the Philistine women who are rejoicing and celebrating the death of Saul David is calling for them to weep see Saul he's the one who clothed them he provided for them despite his many many faults Saul in his time had brought some stability he had brought prosperity because think about what comes before Saul you know the book of judges where the tribes of Israel are divided and they're being conquered by

Mesopotamians Moabites Canaanites Midianites of course the Philistines yet in the time of Saul we see all 12 tribes come together under one king and he defeated all you know several of Israel's enemies you we read that when Saul took over the kingship of Israel he fought against all his enemies on every side you know against Moab the Ammonites eat them the kings of Zobah and the kings of Philistines wherever he turned he routed them and he did valiantly and he struck down the Amalekites and delivered Israel out of the hands of those who plundered them here is someone who has delivered Israel from their enemies and brought for the first time in a long time prosperity and the next look at the response to Jonathan verse 25 and 26 Jonathan lies slain on your high places 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 see right at the end of verse 25 we see yet another parallel did you notice it connects with the first verse of the lament you know which said your glory oh Israel is slain on the high places and here it says

Jonathan lies slain on your high places see David is here clarifying that the glory of Israel whereas we can also put it the jewel or the splendor of Israel is Jonathan so this lament in this way both begins and it ends with Jonathan see the death of Jonathan is the greatest loss in the battle with the Philistines but why well as we continue we see how the lament shifts so it is now addressing Jonathan David you know had in the beginning of this lament he praised Saul and he praised Jonathan in third person he then called for the daughters of Israel to weep over Saul but now he's addressing Jonathan directly he says I am distressed for you he calls Jonathan his brother the one who's been very pleasant to him whose love was extraordinary whose love surpasses the love of women now before I explain what this means I'll first say what it does not mean see there are those who read into this passage the idea of homosexuality but that is not what is going on in this passage and I think if we had if we had read through first Samuel thus far we understand what is going on here because who is David and who is Jonathan well from the perspective of Jonathan at least in view of the world well David should be the enemy see Saul is the king and

[23 : 58] David is the threat to Saul's kingship see David has been anointed and as long as David lives Saul's kingship is in danger more than that however Jonathan's kingship is in danger see Jonathan is the heir he is to become king so as long as David lives David is a threat to his father and to his own kingship but we've already seen in first Samuel Jonathan's reaction to Saul's desire to kill David see Jonathan tried to persuade his father of David's goodness he warned David of his father's desire to kill him and even greater than all these Jonathan made a covenant with David you know he made this promise in first Samuel 18 that says that Jonathan loved David as his own soul and Jonathan took off his royal robe he took off his armor and he gave it to David and this is quite the symbolic act as the things that that represent royalty are given to David and then just two chapters later which Derek preached on last month Jonathan renews his covenant with David promising to warn him but also saying these remarkable words you know if I am still alive show me the steadfast love of the

Lord that I may not die and do not cut off your steadfast love from my house forever and then a few chapters later as Saul is pursuing David Jonathan says to David do not fear for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you you shall be king over Israel and I shall be next to you Saul my father also knows this see Jonathan knows that even though he is he is the son of the king he is the son of Saul that he is not the heir he's not the real heir for the kingship belongs not to Saul but to David he knows the Lord is not with his father but with David and I could give countless examples of where power has been fought and has been killed over but unlike those Jonathan freely gives it to David so in David here in his in this lament says that Jonathan's love with extraordinary he is talking about Jonathan's actions of giving up the throne and everything for the sake of David you know he says that Jonathan's love surpasses even the love of women what is meant by that well at the heart of love especially marital love is fight is fidelity is faithfulness and who has been more faithful to David than Jonathan you hear is a quote from Matthew Henry that that highlights

Jonathan's fidelity see he had a reason to say that Jonathan's love to him was wonderful surely never was the like for a man to love one whom he knew was to take the crown over his head and to be so faithful to his rival and this far surpassed the highest degree of conjugal affection and constancy see it's it's it's it's the love we see there and now this is not the only time that we see marital language used without referring to sexual acts I mean think of the relationship between God and his people of course in the New Testament we have Christ and his bride but even in the Old Testament when Israel turns from the Lord and worships the baals the foreign gods you know God says that they have committed immorality that they have been immoral to him see God made a covenant with his people and promised to be faithful and yet his people has been unfaithful but here you see Jonathan has promised to be faithful to his covenant to David and he has and that is a tremendous friend so we've seen the death of the mighty the strength of the mighty and the response to the mighty and then with the final refrain we see the lament ending how the mighty have fallen the weapons of war have perished it is over see the bow of Jonathan and the sword of Saul they probably lie there on Mount Gilboa useless you're wasting away and this is the lament that David wants for all of his people to know than to sing and even though Saul and Jonathan are the heart of this this is a lament for the whole nation as many husbands fathers brothers and sons had perished on Mount Gilboa but what does David's call to remember Mount Gilboa mean for us today and I think for us it means to remember an entirely different mount a different hill the hill of Golgotha the place of the skull where

Christ was crucified the hill on which the mighty indeed the mightiest had fallen the glory of Israel the splendor its jewel slain on that high place indeed the glory of not just Israel but the whole world but because the story of Golgotha does not end on Golgotha but indeed continues with the empty tomb and with the ascension and will come to its final fulfillment at the return of Christ the lament here is turned on its head because of Gilboa Israel is told not to tell of this in gas or ash cologne but because of Golgotha we are told to share the great news not only in Jerusalem Judea or Samaria but across the whole world because of Gilboa David does not want the Philistines the uncircumcised to rejoice but because of Golgotha Christ wants the whole earth Jews and

Gentiles to rejoice of the salvation that we have in his life and in his death because it is in these things that we've been given all things of how we've been given a new heart that we've been given the Holy Spirit we've been given justification that we can stand and God can say of us that we are righteous of how he can say that we are his sons and we are his daughters and that we've been given life eternal life to live forever in heaven and at the heart and the greatest of all these things is Christ himself that he is the one the mighty is one that has been given to us see the mighty is one has fallen but he has conquered and he has risen so here are the good news now we're gonna end taking from a song called see what a morning written by Townsend and Getty which ends honor and blessing glory and praise to the King crowned with power and authority and we are raised with him death is dead love has won Christ has conquered and we shall reign with him for he lives Christ is risen from the dead let us pray

[32 : 58] Father God may we indeed have in our mind the hill of Golgotha the place and the time that changed all things for Lord if we set our hope on Saul on David on anything on this earth it would all be futile we would still be without hope without any sure foundation without any life but Father we thank you that because of your love that we have Christ that because of your love we have the Holy Spirit that because of you that we have you and we have you for all eternity and Father we pray all these things in the name of Jesus Amen