

David weeps over Saul and Jonathan 2 Samuel 1 v1, 17-27

Last week you were thinking about the young David and his encounter with the Philistine Warrior Goliath. Today the story moves on. The wars have continued King Saul and his armies and David with his army have fought, battles have been won and lost and in the end Saul and his army are defeated and he and his three sons have all died as a result.

While this was going on the boy David who slayed Goliath, has grown, from the youth brought into the palace to play soothing

music to calm the and restore King Saul, into a great leader, successful in battle and popular with the people. As a result, Saul's acceptance of David and friendliness towards him changed.

As David's leadership qualities became evident, Saul became jealous of him which prompted him to make several attempts on David's life, but David eluded these.

Jonathan was Saul's the eldest son he too was a soldier and became a very close friend of David. There was a deep bond between them which caused them to make a covenant together.

As a result, he warned David about the plots to kill him and encouraged him in times of danger. Later he interceded with his father on David's behalf in order to try and reconcile the two of them.

Saul had many weaknesses which eventually affected his capability to rule with fairness and wisdom. His rebellious nature and inability to adapt to the need to share power and popularity fuelled by jealousy together with the bitter rivalry between him and David lead him to use his power for dishonourable ends and allowed the religious life of the community to deteriorate. His

final battle at Mount Gilboa saw his sons killed (including Jonathan) and he too lost his life.

The tidings of the death of Saul and Jonathan were brought to David at Ziklag, by an Amalekite messenger.

This morning's Old Testament reading contains the lament which David wrote following the news.

It is one of the earliest recorded poems, written in about 1010 BCE

It is a celebration of friendship and acknowledgement of Saul's place of honour as an anointed King.

This is not a Psalm or worship song; it is not written to be sung in the context of an act of worship for there is no mention of God or God's care for the dead or of the relationship of Saul and Jonathan to God. This is an expression of grief at the very personal loss of a dear friend and the sorrow at the loss of a national leader.

In death David respects Saul as his sovereign, and the anointed of the Lord; and therefore, though he had done him a great deal of wrong, David does not wreak his revenge upon his memory commends him as a leader whose death is to be mourned.

David celebrates the things which were praiseworthy in him focusing on the proud beginnings of his reign rather than the ineffectiveness of its close however he does not commend him for that which he was not, so says nothing about his piety or fidelity.

There is an acknowledgement that both Jonathan and his father were great warriors bold and brave

David laments over the loss of his particular friend but even as he does so he shows concern for the public welfare for this is also a national loss.

Three times in the poem we read the words “How are the mighty fallen”

But are these words in praise of all that Saul did in his heyday or are they words of judgement for the way he conducted the latter part of his life?

David expresses especial sorrow to think that it would be announced in the cities of the Philistines, and that they would gloat over Israel’s loss.

Despite the words of David's Eulogy, in reality, Saul and Jonathan were divided in much of their lives by their differing relationships towards David but they died together and David's Lament honours them both.

Because of their friendship David treated Jonathan 's disabled son Mephibosheth with kindness, and honoured God's anointed King Saul and his son Jonathan by bringing their bones to be buried in the country of Benjamin in Saul's father's tomb.

This Lament reminds us that loss and grief are apart of life and the cost of loving.

We all at some time in our lives experience tragic circumstances which cause grief and pain

Grief over loss might not necessarily be the loss of a person, there are many forms of loss

Loss of property or status

loss of job or mobility

Loss of wellbeing or health

The list goes on for there are many things we grieve for and many things which make us feel dejected and distraught

And then the storm clouds roll in and we feel abandoned by friends or relatives and yes even by God, the temptation is to withdraw into ourselves and bottle it up inside.

How often have you heard people say don't cry dry your eyes here's a tissue, come on have a cup of tea?

As caring human beings, we have this desire to DO something to make things right. But grief needs to find expression we need to pour out our feelings. But above all we need to grieve in our own way and at our own pace.

Sometimes need to just be,

alone or with someone to just sit with us in silence or listen attentively without interruption.

Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus he understands our grief.

God is still God even in our worst moments when we feel he is far away and no one not even God cares.

On the cross Jesus felt abandoned he used Psalm 22 in his agony to express that loss and grief

Sometimes we just simply can't find the words to utter what we need to say. God knows our hearts, our thoughts and what we are going through.

When all I can say is "God I hurt"

God replies "I know"

