**Week One – March 13/14 – 2 Samuel 1**

**Introduction** – We start our time together tonight with a question. **What have the levels of adversity looked like in your school year – has your life looked like smooth sailing, a hurricane, or somewhere in between?** Writer Dale Ralph Davis made the subtitle of his 2 Samuel commentary “Out of Every Adversity” and with that line Davis is actually quoting King David. “His statement in 2 Samuel 4:9 comes during his early reign in Hebron, but he uses the *very same words* at the end of his reign (I Kings 1:29).” (Davis p 9). With his own words, David bookends his reign as days of adversity, but bigger than that he highlights the God who consistently cares for him, delivers him, and brings him OUT OF that adversity. **As you think back on I Samuel, what are some examples of moments of adversity that we have seen David face? What are some of the places in which God clearly delivered David out of that adversity?**

For those who have been walking with us through 1 Samuel, an introduction of 2 Samuel may not seem needed because it is simply a continuation of what we have been reading. In fact, in the Hebrew Scriptures, 1 and 2 Samuel were originally together as one complete book. (See note #1 in end notes) The best preview for 2 Samuel 1 is a review of the end of 1 Samuel.

**1 Samuel 30 and 31 - Timeline and detail review**

**Let’s turn to 1 Samuel 30, which is the last time we saw David. As we look over that chapter, can I have a couple volunteers refresh us on what David and his men went through here?** (*Return home to Ziklag to find town burned and families and possessions taken; his own men consider stoning David; David and his men rout the Amalekites and receive back families and possessions*)

**Let’s continue in 1 Samuel 31, which is the last time we see Saul. As we look over that chapter, can I have a couple volunteers refresh us on what has happened?** (*Philistines defeat Israel; Saul’s sons – including Jonathan – are killed; Saul and his armor bearer commit suicide)* With that refresher in mind, let’s turn to…

**2 Samuel 1:1-16**

In considering all that David and his men had gone through, the emotional toll of their families in peril and having to go into battle is one thing, but in their return to Ziklag they had to rebuild their burnt-out city and secure shelter once again for their families. Practically speaking, that is the process that most likely has all their attention as we begin the first verses of today’s chapter.

**Read 2 Samuel 1:1-12. What are the immediate clues to David that this unknown messenger does not bring good news?** (*torn clothes and dust on the head are a sign of mourning*) As readers of the end of 1 Samuel, we have the advantage of knowing things that David does not yet know as 2 Samuel 1 begins. David knows neither that Israel is routed in battle by the Philistines, nor that Saul and Jonathan are dead. And obviously he does not know how they died. Keep in mind also (from I Samuel 29) that David was on the verge of marching into this battle beside the Philistines.

**As David asks about how the man knows about the deaths of Saul and Jonathan, how does this man’s story differ from the account we know in I Samuel 31?** (*this man’s account has no mention of the armor bearer, but biggest issue is precisely how Saul died*)

Remember in 1 Samuel 30 David’s men considered stoning him because while following him they saw their families taken and all they had pillaged by the Amalekites. The valor with which David led them against the Amalekites and his wisdom and generosity after the battle apparently had ceased any thoughts of mutiny. **What sign do we have in these verses that David won back their allegiance and desire to follow him?** (*They corporately respond to his mourning by joining him in the same way.*) Verse 12 lists the four focal points of their mourning. **What are those four? Considering all that David has been through, which of the four is most expected and which is the most surprising as a point of mourning?**

**Read 2 Samuel 1:12-16.** After the initial outpouring of mourning, David returns to question the messenger further. Here we learn that the man is an Amalekite. **What is the irony of this?** (*First, because of their continuous ruthless barbarism, Saul had been commanded to wipe them out, but never followed through to obey. Second, David had just returned from he and his men being a victim of Amalekite barbarism and then carrying out the command that Saul had not.*)

David brings fierce judgment against the Amalekite. **Considering David’s final question in v.14, what’s the reasoning for the punishment to come?** (*raising his hand against the Lord’s anointed*) David had one rule that continually kept him from lashing back against Saul’s unjust attacks and murderous intent – “Don’t touch the Lord’s anointed.” (See note #2 in end notes)

From our earlier comparison of 1 Samuel 31 to 2 Samuel 1, it seems clear that the Amalekite is lying that he “assisted” Saul with his death. **If it is not killing the Lord’s anointed, what is the Amalekite’s sin? What would motivate the Amalekite to lie like this?** **When have you sought to stretch the truth or manipulate a situation for your own benefit?**

**Read 2 Samuel 1:17-27.** David had a hit song written about him (See end note #3) but here he launches a hit song of his own. Verse 18 tells us that people were made to learn it and it was in the Book of Jashar (See end note #4).

v. 19 – If anyone says, “Hey, my version of v.19 is different than yours!” see end note #5.

v. 22 – **Sauls’ shield and Jonathan’s bow are symbolic of their defense of Israel and their valor in battle, but why might Jonathan’s bow be a particularly meaningful choice in David’s wording?** (*See 1 Samuel 18:4 as well as 1 Samuel 20:18-23 and 20:35-42; Jonathan gave his bow to David and also used his bow to warn David of Saul’s anger.)*

“Oh how the mighty have fallen” is often spoken when someone in a position of power or fame faces a sudden decline or demise (the phrase is used in v.19, 25, and 27.) Since first spoken by David, these are a reminder of how fleeting power and position can be, but also how God’s sovereignty and power outlasts even the greatest earthly leaders. **Look back through the chapter one more time and share any examples or reminders of God’s sovereignty that you observe there.**

**Conclusion –** The author of our central commentary, Dale Ralph Davis, observes the following about chapter 1, “So on the first page of another biblical book we run straight into the God who exposes us, who delights in truth in the inward parts (Psalm 51:6), who sets our secret sins in the light of his presence (Psalm 90:8).” (Davis p. 15) Read each of these two verses (found below in end note #6) – **what do we learn in these verses about God’s nature and character? How does this apply to what we have just read through all of 2 Samuel 1?**

**End Notes**

Note #1 - It was not until those Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Koine Greek in the Septuagint (during the 3rd and 2nd centuries, B.C.) that the book of Samuel was divided into two books.

Note #2 - I Sam 24:5-7 and I Sam 26:10-11 are central passage examples of Saul living by the charge of “Don’t touch the Lord’s anointed.”

Note #3 - As they danced, they sang: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.” I Samuel 18:7 (The song is also referenced in 1 Samuel 21:11 and 1 Samuel 29:5)

Note #4 - The Book of Jashar likely no longer exists; at least it is yet to be discovered. It is also mentioned in Joshua 10:13

Note #5 – For example, with 1:19 CSB starts with “The splendor of Israel” but NIV starts with “A gazelle.” In Hebrew imagery, a gazelle can often signify a great leader worthy of respect.

Note #6 -

Psalm 51:6 “Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;
    you taught me wisdom in that secret place.”

Psalm 90:8 “You have set our iniquities before you,
    our secret sins in the light of your presence.”