

5. Doing a right thing in a wrong way

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Some people try to justify their wrong actions or methods for the end results they think good. Many husbands and even wives put their careers before their own families and tell others they are working that hard to provide things for the family. There have been many organizations, individuals and even churches that have used that as their philosophy of life. That kind of thought and mentality might suit or justify wrong ways for the sake of convenience or luxury to us, but God is not happy with that at all.

Tonight we are going to find out about a man of God who wanted to do a right thing so bad that he did it in a wrong way. But when he realized that he was doing it in a wrong way, he immediately corrected himself to do it in a right way. I hope and pray that we may be as sensitive as David to the Spirit of God to response in a right way.

A. ONE OF THE GREATEST DAYS OF DAVID'S LIFE

Suppose you wanted to choose the greatest day in the life of David. What day would you choose? Would it be the day that Samuel poured the anointing oil on him as a young shepherd boy? How about the day that he killed the giant Goliath? You might think it was the day that he was made king of all Israel and the crown was placed upon his head. Or perhaps you might choose the day his son Solomon was anointed king. No doubt all of these were great days in the life of a great man.

However, I believe there are two events that stand out above all others in the life of David: the day that David brought the ark of God to Jerusalem and the day David purposed in his heart to build God a house. These are probably the two greatest days in David's life.

All the words ever spoken about David, they can be summed up in one simple yet profound statement: "David loved God."

We may marvel at his leadership abilities. We may delight in his poetic artistry. We may admire his military strength. But David's love for God was his quintessential attribute and the highlight of his dramatic life. That is why he was known as "the man after God's own heart".

Worship meant little to Saul, who had no heart for God. David, however, resolved to set the worship of God as the cornerstone of his government – foreshadowing the government of the messianic kingdom.

B. THE FIRST TASK AS THE KING OF ISRAEL

His first task as a king was to bring the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. Long ago, it had resided in the tabernacle at Shiloh with Eli the high priest. Since that time, the ark had been captured by the Philistines, returned to Beth-shemesh, and eventually deposited at the house of Abinadab at Baale Judah. There it remained for more than sixty years, untouched and forgotten, it was "out of sight, out of mind".

In the process of transporting the ark, however, David learned a vital lesson about how to worship a holy and awesome God. As heartfelt as it may be, love alone without the knowledge of the Word is not enough. The apostle John instructs in 1 John 5:3.

1 John 5:3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

To really love God is to obey Him – not just in the principles of His Word, but in the detailed and specific precepts as well.

C. WHAT IS THE ARK?

It was made out of acacia wood and gold. The word 'Ark' means "box" or "chest." The wood was completely covered with gold. Its pure gold lid – the "Mercy Seat" – was the base for two cherubs of hammered gold, with wings outstretched and touching over the cover.

Gold represents His deity and wood speaks of His humanity. It was not two Boxes. It was one box. It was a wooden box. It was a gold box. It was both. As such, it was a marvelous example of the hypostatical union of Jesus Christ. He is the Godman, or as one of the oldest creeds says: "He is very man of very man, and He is very God of very God."

The ark of God was 3 feet 9 inches long, 2 feet 3 inches wide and 2 feet 3 inches high. In it were the tablets of the law that Moses brought down from Mount Sinai, a jar of manna, and the Aaron's rod that miraculously budded as a confirmation of his leadership.

More than an ornate box, the ark represented God's covenant with Israel. It was God's point of contact with sinful humanity. Kept behind the veil of the Holy of Holies, it was visited only once per year by the high priest, who sprinkled blood on the Mercy Seat and atoned for his sins and the sins of the nation. God Himself would meet the priest there, appearing in a cloud over the Mercy Seat. The ark was the symbolic embodiment of the power and presence of God.

Because the ark was holy, God didn't want it hauled around like any old piece of furniture. It had to be handled with reverence and fear. Gold rings were fixed at the corners of both long sides of the ark, and gold-plated poles were slipped through the rings so the ark could be carried without being touched. Only Levites could transport the ark.

D. THE FAILED FIRST ATTEMPT

2 Samuel 6:1-5 Again David gathered all the choice 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, whose name is called by the Name, the Lord of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim. So they set 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, drove the new cart. And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the Lord on all kinds of instruments of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

Bringing the ark to Jerusalem was an important step towards providing a central place of worship for all of Israel. In his zeal, however, David neglected to follow God's instructions on how to transport the ark.

The ark was delivered by the Philistines on the cart that was pulled by a cow in 1 Sam 6:10-11. They didn't know the law of God that tells them how to transport it. But David should have known it better.

Like David's ignorance, there are many people who ignore the voice of God which is the Bible, to believe God in their own ways. They often come up with some flimsy excuses why they wouldn't go to church or why they wouldn't accept the Lord Jesus as their Savior and Lord. I think I've heard just about all the excuses of why they don't follow God in His way. However, they don't want to admit they are in wrong.

We can imagine what these men thought. "Look, we have a new cart for the ark of God. God will be very pleased at our fancy new cart with antilock-disc brakes, independent off-road suspensions, KC lights with a roll bar." They thought that a new technology or luxury could cover over their ignorant disobedience.

It is not important to God what kind of car we drive, but the conversation and things we do in the car are. It is not important to God what kind of fancy house we live in, but what kind of family life we have in that house.

By reading all the musical instruments involved in this procession, we can tell David want this transporting to be successful and glorious.

We are often tempted to judge a worship experience by how it makes us feel. But when we realize that worship is about pleasing God, we are driven to His Word so we can know how He wants to be worshiped. It's hard to grab hold of in our consumer-oriented culture, but it isn't all about what pleases us. It's all about what pleases God.

2 Samuel 6:6-11 And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God. And David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day. David was afraid of the Lord that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" So David would not move the ark of the Lord with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. 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.

Instead of being carried with poles on the shoulders of Levites, the ark bumped around on a cart. And, though Uzzah had noble intentions, he touched the ark, thus desecrating its holiness. Clearly, David had overlooked the precepts of God's law and that cost Uzzah's life.

Going by emotion only in worship without the following the Word can bring disasters to our spiritual walk.

Regarding the transporting of the ark Numbers 4:15 says this:

Numbers 4:15 And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering the sanctuary and all the furnishings of the sanctuary, when the camp is set to go, then the sons of Kohath shall come to carry them; but they shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die. These are the things in the tabernacle of meeting which the sons of Kohath are to carry.

What was the error of Uzzah? It was more than just a reflex action or instinct. God struck Uzzah because his action was based upon several critical errors in thinking.

- He was thinking that it didn't matter who and how transported the ark
- He was thinking that he knew all about the ark because it was in his father's house for so long.
- He was thinking that God couldn't take care of the ark of Himself.
- He saw no difference between the ark and any other valuable furniture.

We often get angry with God in a wrong reason like David. He should have been angry with himself for not seeking God's direction like he used to do before the battles. But he did what Philistine non-believers had done.

David's anger was based on confusion. He couldn't understand why his good intentions weren't enough. God is concerned with both our intentions and our actions.

Not knowing the Word of God can bring wrong kind of fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord that we find in Psalm 110:10 brings about the healthy relationship with Him that comes from respect and reverence. The wrong fear of the Lord makes us to stay away from God and to think that God wants to punish us for no reason like a sadistic psycho maniac.

E. THE SUCCESSFUL SECOND ATTEMPT

2 Samuel 6:12-15 Now it was told King David, saying, "The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness. And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep. Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet.

What happened to make David try again? A parallel passage, 1 Chronicles 15:11-15, gives us some behind-the-scenes information. Following Uzzah's tragic death, David did his homework and, with the help of the Levites and priests, discovered the proper way to transport the ark. In David's words to the Levites, notice his honest assessment of his sin against God. Unlike Saul, he had a deep yearning to do God's will, even the specific details.

David not only admitted his wrong, the next time around he made it right.

Some might think that following every detail of God's law would make you unbending, stern, and joyless. But this wasn't the case with David. When the ark finally reached Jerusalem, David celebrated in a way that was anything but rigid.

When the worship was in the proper order, it was still filled with gladness and joy. It is a mistake to feel that "real" worship must be subdued or solemn or only in a minor key.

It is a mistake to think that David was not modest. 1 Chronicles 15:27 indicates that David set aside his royal robes and was dressed just like all the other priests and Levites in this procession.

F. SHARING THE JOY OF THE LORD

2 Samuel 6:16-19 Now as the ark of the Lord came into the City of David, Michal, Saul's daughter, looked through a window and saw King David leaping

and whirling before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart. So they brought the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. And when David had finished offering burnt offerings and peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts. Then he distributed among all the people, among the whole multitude of Israel, both the women and the men, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins. So all the people departed, everyone to his house.

Those burnt offerings speak of the person of Christ. The peace offerings speak of the peace that He made by the blood of His cross and of the relationship – the wonderful relationship – which was between God and David.

Now in obedience to God, David was free. And whenever you're truly free, someone in the bondage of disobedience will envy your freedom and will try to steal your joy. David's cold shoulder came from his own wife Michal.

To those who are not in the Lord Jesus, what we do is nothing more than foolish things.

1 Cor 1:18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

G. MICHAL'S LOVE THAT TURNED TO HATE

2 Samuel 6:20-23 Then David returned to bless his household. And Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David, and said, "How glorious was the king of Israel today, uncovering himself today in the eyes of the maids of his servants, as one of the base fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" So David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me instead of your father and all his house, to appoint me ruler over the people of the Lord, over Israel. Therefore I will play music before the Lord. And I will be even more undignified than this, and will be humble in my own sight. But as for the maidservants of whom you have spoken, by them I will be held in honor." Therefore Michal the daughter of Saul had no children to the day of her death.

David didn't let Michal's sarcastic criticism ruin his day. Caring more about God's opinion than hers, he defended his right to celebrate before his Lord. He simply explained the truth: "I did it for God, not for you."

As a consequence of her hatred toward David, Michal bore no children her whole life. To a Jewish woman, the greatest curse was a barren womb.

H. APPLICATIONS

1) We need to believe and worship our God in His way, not our own ways.

If we try to substitute His way with ours, it is like telling Him, "What you say is not good enough for me, so I am gonna do it in my own way, God?" God doesn't allow that.

A simple obedience to God goes long way than anything we can come up with.

John 14:15 If you love Me, keep My commandments.

2) When we disobey God, we may think we're free, but we're really in bondage by our own flesh and its sinful desires.

But when we obey, we're free to enjoy a relationship with our Creator, free to fully express who He created us to be, and free to dance before Him in pure worship, not loaded by the baggage of guilt and shame.

3) When it comes to obeying God, it often requires following the details like the poles and rings that might snag us.

Either we don't want to go to the trouble of getting the poles, or we don't want to carry them on our shoulders. So we grab a cart, rewrite the rules, and do it our own way. When we disobey God's precepts, He may not strike us dead, as He did Uzzah, but His grief runs just as deep and His holiness is just as desecrated. In God's eyes, our disobedience is like witchcraft.

1Sam 15:23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft.