

2. God's will, God's way

10/31/2019

We all have seen a bumper sticker that says, "God is my copilot." It means God is flying with us. It sounds very nice. Since God is on the same flight with us, nothing should go wrong. However, in case something happens, "Voila!" God is right there to rescue us from any possible disaster. A great theology? Oh, yes, it is as good as a two weeks old bag of shrimp left outside during Sahuarita summertime. That theology stinks, it belongs to a trash can. What it means that God is there for emergencies only in our lives, nothing else.

Actually, we don't belong in the cockpit at all. We are not flight attendants, nor are we ticket agents. We should be luggage in the luggage compartment and God is the pilot and He flies the plane wherever, whenever, and however He desires.

We find David who just has learned the death of former Israel king Saul and his son Jonathan, waiting upon God instead of assuming God's will for him. David kept the right priority and mindset.

A. THE NEW KING WAITING UPON THE KING OF KINGS

2 Samuel 2:1-4a It happened after this that David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I go up to any of the cities of Judah?" And the Lord said to him, "Go up." David said, "Where shall I go up?" And He said, "To Hebron." So David went up there, and his two wives also, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. And David brought up the men who were with him, every man with his household. So they dwelt in the cities of Hebron. Then the men of Judah came, and there they anointed David king over the house of Judah.

What kind of interpretation are you getting from this paragraph?

"After this" refers to the time after the deaths of Saul and Jonathan and the period of mourning for them. Now that Saul is out of the picture, David wants to know what to do. He is in the Philistine country. Saul is dead, and David is to be the next king. What should his next move be? He waited until he received his instructions from the Lord. David had learned from the experience that he must wait on the Lord for direction.

This was the key to success in David's life. With rare exceptions, he constantly inquired of the Lord. David wanted more than God's blessing on his plans, he wanted to be right in the middle of God's plan.

God told him to go up to Hebron. Hebron is located in the south of the land, not too far from the Philistine border. God is telling him to move cautiously. He is not to go up and simply take over Israel, but to move up into the land to make himself available to the Lord.

David doesn't rush in blindly and seize the throne. Instead, he carefully sought the Lord. David knew the promise was from God, so he knew God could fulfill it without any manipulation from David.

David also knew that it was better to let God lift him through others instead of striving to advance himself. We should strive to advance God's Kingdom and leave the advancement of ourselves in His hands.

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

This anointing couldn't come when David still lived among the Philistines virtually as a Philistine. He had to get things right in his own walk before this fresh anointing.

God's anointing already came to him through Prophet Samuel in 1 Samuel 16. This people's anointing is nothing more than their acknowledgment of what God has done in David's life.

David went up to Hebron with his two wives. Does God approve of a man having two wives? No. The Lord spoke to them through Moses:

Deuteronomy 17:17 Neither shall he multiply wives for himself, lest his heart turn away; nor shall he greatly multiply silver and gold for himself.

During that period, it was common for the rulers by marrying several women, as political alliances.

This matter caused David a great deal of trouble. To make the matter worse, later he will have more wives and concubines. David was an idiot for this. Having two women under one roof together is just asking for a ton of troubles, not to mention the mothers-in-law.

God wants to do His will in our lives in His way and in His time. If we need something from God, let's be patient and wait on Him. God will meet us wherever we are to lift us to where He wants us to be.

Often we're better at handling affliction than we are at handling promotions. As Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish essayist and historian, said, "But for one man who can stand prosperity, there are a hundred that will stand adversity." But David was a man faced with success. His predecessor was dead, by his own hand. If there was ever a chance for a person to take life by his own two fists and demand a following, it was now. But he didn't.

In those days the Lord spoke audibly to His servants. Today He speaks from His Word. You might be in a situation where you are wondering, "God has opened the door, and I'm about to walk through it. But is that what I should do?" Our tendency is to race in when there is some benefit that will come our way. Sometimes it's best to begin very quietly, to pace our first steps with great care.

B. A COMMENDATION TO THE MEN OF JABESH GILEAD

2 Samuel 2:4b-7 And they told David, saying, "The men of Jabesh Gilead were the ones who buried Saul." So David sent messengers to the men of Jabesh Gilead, and said to them, "You are blessed of the Lord, for you have shown this kindness to your lord, to Saul, and have buried him. And now may the Lord show kindness and truth to you. I also will repay you this kindness, because you have done this thing. Now therefore, let your hands be strengthened, and be valiant; for your master Saul is dead, and also the house of Judah has anointed me king over them."

What do you see here?

After Saul became a king, the town of Jabesh Gilead was invaded by the Ammonites in 1 Sam chapter 11. Saul rounded up his troop and rescued the town. The people of Jabesh Gilead were so grateful to Saul and never forgot it. When the Philistine hung

the bodies of Saul and Jonathan on the wall without their heads, these people came and took the bodies and properly buried them.

David does a very wise thing. David shows appropriate gratitude to the men of Jabesh Gilead who risked their lives to honor the memory of Saul and Jonathan. Then he asked for their support and devotion to him as their king, as they had given it to Saul. Notice that he is moving in a diplomatic and commendable manner at this time.

David was, in fact, already indicating to Israelites outside Judah that he was the true successor to Saul, and had authority over all Israel.

The late General Norman Schwarzkopf said this: "I admire men of character and I judge character not by how men deal with their superiors, but mostly how they deal with their subordinates. And that, to me, is where you find out what the character of a man is."

C. THE PUPPET KING ISHBOSHETH AND ABNER

2 Samuel 2:8-11 But Abner the son of Ner, commander of Saul's army, took Ishbosheth the son of Saul and brought him over to Mahanaim; and he made him king over Gilead, over the Ashurites, over Jezreel, over Ephraim, over Benjamin, and over all Israel. Ishbosheth, Saul's son, was forty years old when he began to reign over Israel, and he reigned two years. Only the house of Judah followed David. And the time that David was king in Hebron over the house of Judah was seven years and six months.

What is your interpretation of this?

Abner the son of Ner, first cousin of Saul, commander of Saul's army made Ishbosheth king, probably so he could be the real power behind the throne of this puppet king.

Here was the establishment of a rival kingdom. This is the beginning of the division of the kingdom which will come after the reign of Solomon when Jeroboam leads a rebellion. This is the first fracture.

These two years show remarkable patience, longsuffering, and trust in God on David's part. Ishbosheth was not the Lord's anointed like Saul. David seemed to have every right to crush this man who stood in the way of his throne. Yet out of trust in the Lord and respect for Saul's memory, David waited.

Sometimes we think God must work on our schedules. But God will not be bound by time or by our schedules. God will work when He chooses and with whom He chooses. Therefore, there will be times when our circumstances don't make sense, even then, we need to trust Him.

When the time was just right, God sent His Son. And when the time is just right, the Son will return again to this earth. He will come when the time is just right.

D. THE BLOODBATH AT THE FIELD OF SHARP SWORDS

2 Samuel 2:12-17 Now Abner the son of Ner, and the servants of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, went out from Mahanaim to Gibeon. And Joab the son of Zeruiah, and the servants of David, went out and met them by the pool of Gibeon. So they sat down, one on one side of the pool and the other on the other side of the pool. Then Abner said to Joab, "Let the young men now arise and compete before us." And Joab said, "Let them arise." So they arose and

went over by number, twelve from Benjamin, followers of Ishbosheth the son of Saul, and twelve from the servants of David. And each one grasped his opponent by the head and thrust his sword in his opponent's side; so they fell down together. Therefore that place was called the Field of Sharp Swords, which is in Gibeon. So there was a very fierce battle that day, and Abner and the men of Israel were beaten before the servants of David.

Abner and Joab were tough and mean killing machines, completely devoted to their causes, but not necessarily to their masters, because they had their own agenda in their hearts.

The contest Abner proposed was anything but a friendly game. It was a fight to the death to determine a victor. Yet, the result was 360 casualties on Abner's side and 20 on Joab's side.

E. THE DEATH OF YOUNG OVERZEALOT AND CEASEFIRE

2 Samuel 2:18-32 Now the three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab and Abishai and Asahel. And Asahel was as fleet of foot as a wild gazelle. So Asahel pursued Abner, and in going he did not turn to the right hand or to the left from following Abner. Then Abner looked behind him and said, "Are you Asahel?" He answered, "I am." And Abner said to him, "Turn aside to your right hand or to your left, and lay hold on one of the young men and take his armor for yourself." But Asahel would not turn aside from following him. So Abner said again to Asahel, "Turn aside from following me. Why should I strike you to the ground? How then could I face your brother Joab?" However, he refused to turn aside. Therefore Abner struck him in the stomach with the blunt end of the spear, so that the spear came out of his back; and he fell down there and died on the spot. So it was that as many as came to the place where Asahel fell down and died, stood still. Joab and Abishai also pursued Abner. And the sun was going down when they came to the hill of Ammah, which is before Giah by the road to the Wilderness of Gibeon. Now the children of Benjamin gathered together behind Abner and became a unit, and took their stand on top of a hill. Then Abner called to Joab and said, "Shall the sword devour forever? Do you not know that it will be bitter in the latter end? How long will it be then until you tell the people to return from pursuing their brethren?" And Joab said, "As God lives, unless you had spoken, surely then by morning all the people would have given up pursuing their brethren." So Joab blew a trumpet; and all the people stood still and did not pursue Israel anymore, nor did they fight anymore. Then Abner and his men went on all that night through the plain, crossed over the Jordan, and went through all Bithron; and they came to Mahanaim. So Joab returned from pursuing Abner. And when he had gathered all the people together, there were missing of David's servants nineteen men and Asahel. But the servants of David had struck down, of Benjamin and Abner's men, three hundred and sixty men who died. Then they took up Asahel and buried him in his father's tomb, which was in Bethlehem. And Joab and his men went all night, and they came to Hebron at daybreak.

It seems that Asahel pursued Abner in part for the glory of killing the commander of Ishbosheth's army and taking his armor as a trophy.

Joab, Abishai, and Asahel were brothers, all sons of David's sister Zeruiah. Abner killed young overzealous Asahel. It means that in Joab's heart there will be bitterness, hatred, and the desire to revenge. His revenge will come later, as we will see in chapter 3.

G. APPLICATIONS

1) God wants to do His will in our lives in His way and in His time.

If you need something from God, be patient and wait on Him. God will meet you wherever you are to lift you to where He wants you to be.

2) We should strive to advance God's Kingdom and leave the advancement of self in His hands.

Proverb 16:9 A man's heart plans his way, But the Lord directs his steps.

3) We should want more than God's blessing on our plans. We should want to be right in the middle of God's plan.