

24. Psalm 101

5/31/2020

This psalm is titled "A Psalm of David." When David became king, first in Hebron and then at Jerusalem, he inherited a divided land and a discouraged people whose spiritual life was at a low point. Another psalmist Asaph described the political situation in Psalm 78:56–72 and named David as God's answer to Israel's problems.

David was anointed king 3 times. Samuel anointed David in his youth, really as a prophecy of his calling and destiny in 1 Samuel 16. After Saul's death, he was anointed king over the tribe of Judah at Hebron in 2 Samuel 2. 7 years later he was anointed king over all the tribes of Israel in 2 Samuel 5. Before he took the throne over all Israel, he had a lot of time to think about what kind of king he should be.

A. DEVOTION TO GOD

Psalm 101:1-2 A Psalm of David. I will sing of mercy and justice; To You, O Lord, I will sing praises. 2 I will behave wisely in a perfect way. Oh, when will You come to me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.

David sang this song exalting the mercy and justice of God. The two go together. Mercy can only be properly understood in light of justice. When justice pronounces its righteous penalty, mercy may grant relief.

David's longing for the Lord was connected to his desire to live a wise and holy life in a perfect way. He determined that his reign would be marked by integrity and godliness. As David came into a position of greater power, it was all the more important that he focus on personal godliness and behave wisely in a perfect way. Listen, power often exposes the flaws of character, if it does not actually help create them.

The king of Israel was God's representative on earth and was expected to rule the way God commanded. The emphasis here is on the "heart" because the heart of leadership is the leader's devotion to the Lord. This devotion results in a life lived blamelessly to the glory of the Lord. David was determined to be that kind of leader, and he opened the psalm with "I will" and repeated this promise 8 more times. He made it clear that there must be no separation between the leader's personal life and his or her official life. David wanted his reign to be characterized by mercy and justice because this is the way God rules the world.

Isaiah 16:5 In mercy the throne will be established; And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, Judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness."

"Perfect" does not mean "sinless," for David was a sinner like the rest of us. However, unlike David, we have not seen the account of our sins written down for all the world to read. "Perfect" is another word for integrity, cultivating wholeness of heart and singleness of mind, instead of a double heart and a double mind. Believers today should have integrity whether we are leaders or not.

Philippians 2:15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world

Faith is living without scheming, and the way of faith is "perfect way". David vowed to live a godly life in his "house" which is his palace and to have an administration characterized by mercy, justice, and integrity.

Everything rises and falls with leadership. Once David was established on the throne in Jerusalem, he had a consuming desire to bring the ark of God back to the sanctuary so that God's throne might be near his throne. His question in verse 2, "When will You come to me?" reflects this desire.

The ark had been in the house of Abinadab for many years as we learned in 1 Samuel 6–7 and then in the house of Obed-Edom after David's aborted attempt to relocate it in 2 Samuel 6. This psalm of dedication was probably written early in his reign in Jerusalem. We could accurately call this psalm "Leadership 101" because in it David spells out the essentials for successful leadership in the work of God.

V2 is a great deal in the way in which a man walks into his house. It will not do to be a righteous Christian but a devil at home. He might be wonderfully gracious and holy at a prayer meeting, but he is dreadfully horrible to his wife and children at home. This should never be. Every genuine believer should say, and mean it, "I will walk within my house with a perfect heart." It is in the home that we get the truest proof of godliness. The true proof of a godly man can be measured when the door is closed and no one is watching.

"What sort of a man is he?" asked one to George Whitefield, the English Anglican preacher and evangelist who was one of the founders of the Methodists and the evangelical movement in the 18th century. Whitefield answered, "I cannot say, for I never lived with him." That is the way to test a man, to live with him.

B. DISCERNMENT

Psalm 101:3-5 I will set nothing wicked before my eyes; I hate the work of those who fall away; It shall not cling to me. 4 A perverse heart shall depart from me; I will not know wickedness. 5 Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him I will destroy; The one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, Him I will not endure.

This section parallels Psalm 15, where David described the ideal worshipper whom God welcomes to His dwelling. David did not want anyone in his official family who was not walking with the Lord. "I will set nothing wicked before my eyes" means more than noticing vile things and avoiding the lust of the eyes. It also means setting worthless goals and seeking to reach them.

David knew that one measure of his righteous life was what he chose to set before his eyes. There are many wicked things to set the eyes upon, and the lust of the eyes is a significant aspect of the lure of this world.

1 John 2:16 For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world.

When Christians hear the word "lust", we tend to think that it means sexual lust. Not all the time.

The current world is very visual, isn't it? Everything we encounter is to attract our attention with highly tailored graphic design. If what they want is not available in reality, it is not difficult to make up something out of nothing with Photoshop application or other graphic rendering computer applications, including 3D modeling applications in the video. You are only limited by imagination. I am sure that you've seen Star Wars movies or one of those comic superhero movies.

Just like a very attractive bait on a fish hook would entice unsuspecting fishes visually, there are many things we come across that lure us to fall for whatever the world wants us to go for.

David moved from the heart of the leader to the leader's eyes and what he saw. The heart and the eyes work together because what the heart loves, the eyes will seek and find.

Job 31:1 "I have made a covenant with my eyes; Why then should I look upon a young woman?"

The perverseness of verse 4 is more deliberate: a twisted mind and will which hate the plain truth and the straight path.

Leaders must set the best goals, guided by God's will because outlook determines the outcome. The spiritual leader not only sets the best goals but he or she also uses the best methods for achieving those goals. "Perverse heart" people are apostates, people who have abandoned God's way for their own way and the world's way. David had his eyes on the faithful, not the faithless.

A "perverse heart" is a twisted heart, one that does not conform to God's will, and a twisted heart produces a deceitful tongue. The word translated "proud" in v5 means "wide, expanded" and describes people who are inflated with their own importance. It is important that leaders cultivate humility and lead by being servants, not dictators.

Get this, guys: Discernment is not only knowing the difference between right and wrong but also it is knowing the difference between right and almost right.

C. DECISION

Psalm 101:6-8 My eyes shall be on the faithful of the land, That they may dwell with me; He who walks in a perfect way, He shall serve me. 7 He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence. 8 Early I will destroy all the wicked of the land, That I may cut off all the evildoers from the city of the Lord.

We have moved from the leader's heart to the leader's eyes, and now we look at the leader's will. The repeated "I will" statements in this psalm give evidence of David's determination to serve God and God's people successfully and be a man of decision.

He would not make excuses and he would not delay making decisions. But some of those decisions would be difficult to make and perhaps more difficult to implement. He wanted his leaders who were not defiled by sin, whose walk was blameless, and who would treat people with fairness. He knew that no king could build a lasting government on lies. I wish that the current politicians in our country would heed this psalm into their hearts and do what is right in the sight of the Lord.

Deception is the devil's tool, and satan goes to work whenever a lie moves in. Eastern kings often administered justice in the mornings at the city gate, so David promised to hear these cases patiently, consider them carefully, and render judgment wisely. He vowed to the Lord that he would punish offenders according to God's law, silencing the liars, and expelling the evildoers. Jerusalem was known as "the city of God," "the city of the great King," and the city God loved the most, and David did not want to blemish that reputation.

Was David successful in maintaining the high standard of this declaration? No, not completely; but what leader besides Jesus Christ has ever maintained an unblemished record? David failed in his own family. His sin with Bathsheba set a bad example for his sons and daughters, and David failed to discipline Amnon and Absalom for

their sins. He had problems with his generals Joab and Abishai, and his trusted counselor Ahithophel who betrayed him. But David reigned for 40 years, during which time he expanded the borders of the kingdom, defeated Israel's enemies, gathered the wealth used to build the temple, wrote the psalms, established the dynasty that eventually brought Jesus Christ into the world, and kept the people's hearts to the one true God, not the worthless idols from their neighboring kingdoms. Like us, he had his weaknesses and failings, but overall, he sought to honor the Lord and be a good leader.

Jerusalem is known as "the city of David" and Jesus as "the Son of David." Could any compliment be higher than that?

D. BEING A GOOD LEADER

Before we finish, I need to talk about being a good leader. Some of you might say, "Ah, preacher, this doesn't apply to me. You see, I am retired. I don't lead people anymore." If you have a family, you are a leader.

1 Thessalonians 2:1-6 For you yourselves know, brethren, that our coming to you was not in vain. 2 But even after we had suffered before and were spitefully treated at Philippi, as you know, we were bold in our God to speak to you the gospel of God in much conflict. 3 For our exhortation did not come from error or uncleanness, nor was it in deceit. 4 But as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God who tests our hearts. 5 For neither at any time did we use flattering words, as you know, nor a cloak for covetousness—God is witness. 6 Nor did we seek glory from men, either from you or from others, when we might have made demands as apostles of Christ.

I got on Google and typed in "Being a leader" and got 1,080,000,000 results within 0.62 seconds. There are many voices that would tell us how to be a leader. You can go to seminars, classes, read blogs and books. Many people forget the fundamental thing of leadership – you are leading people, not robots. The actual people who have emotions and the need for guidance. I find good lessons of true leadership from the finest Book mankind ever have – the Bible.

Jesus and the apostles lead others with their lives – sensitivity, affection, and affirmation:

1) Sensitive Leaders

Good leaders are sensitive to the needs of others. If God has placed you in a leadership responsibility, I urge you to cultivate a spirit of gentleness. It is, after all, one of the aspects of the fruit of the Spirit. Your tenderness will work wonders in the lives under your care.

2) Affectionate Leaders

Good leaders have affection for people. To keep this simple and easy to remember, I want to suggest that affection for people can be demonstrated in two ways: small yet frequent acts of kindness and stated and written words of appreciation. Those you lead should have a few notes of appreciation and encouragement from you by now. They should be growing accustomed to your expressions of affection that include small yet frequent acts of kindness. No one is so important that he or she is above kindness. That aspect of leadership takes courage and a spirit confident in God's grace.

3) Affirming Leaders

Good leaders are enthusiastically affirming. Good leadership balances the tender nurturing of a mother with the loving affirmation of a father. Encouragement is like an oasis in the desert. It brings needed refreshment to weary individuals whose souls are parched from time spent in the desert of self-doubt.