



Parkway Fellowship

2 Samuel: From the Height of Power, to the Depths of Dysfunction • David's Last Words •

2 Samuel 23:1-23 • 04/14/2019

Main Point

Our lives are a testimony to God's power. Through David's story, we're reminded that we are to place our trust in God and leave the results up to Him.

Introduction

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What are some famous last words that have stuck in your mind? Why do you think those statements are so unforgettable?

Why are a person's last words important? What do they communicate?

If you knew people around the world would hear or read your last words, what would you want them to be?

2 Samuel 23:1-7 is identified as David's "last words." This term does not mean they were his last spoken words in life. Rather, they are more likely either his will or his last public speech. David used his last words to testify to the greatness of God. We, too, should aim to use our words and our lives for God's glory.

Understanding

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| Have a volunteer read 2 Samuel 23:1-7.

How did David view his life and his work (v. 1)? What phrases from these verses stand out to you? What is their general theme?

Why do you think David chose these as his last words?

In verse 2, David noted God’s work through him. Describe the work God has given you that provided you with opportunities to attract others to Him.

David viewed his life in its totality as blessed and guided by God. God still guides people’s lives today. He is working in all of our lives. Identify key aspects or occasions of your life in which you recognize the guidance and blessings of God. Think about the occasions through which God has worked to bless others. Consider ways you might point other people, both believers and non-believers, to God’s work in your life.

What did David believe would be the fulfillment of his covenant with God (v. 5)?

In concluding this proclamation (vv. 5-7), David confidently pointed to promises God had given him. These promises are found in 2 Samuel 7:8-16 and relate to God’s making a house for David by establishing a permanent dynasty through him. God had made a covenant with Israel at Mount Sinai during the exodus from Egypt. David’s covenant was separate. David’s primary understanding of covenant and salvation was a continuation of his royal dynasty and deliverance from enemies. As a result of these promises, David declared that his salvation rested securely in God.

| Have a volunteer read 2 Samuel 23:8-23.

What stands out to you from the description of these men? How are these verses that describe David’s warriors related to the theme of his last words?

2 Samuel 23:8-39 seem to stand in stark contrast to David’s last words, but they continue the theme of God’s blessing that began in 2 Samuel 21. These verses give a testimony of God’s blessing on Israel’s army. Included in these verses are the names and accounts of some of David’s warriors—his most valiant soldiers. The list includes the three famous heroes who turned the tide of events in single combat and the thirty warriors who served in a special detachment.

Why did David pour out the water the men brought him (v. 16)? How might you have responded if you had been one of the men?

What place do qualities like sacrifice, loyalty, honor, and courage have in our relationship with God? Are they characteristics that define your relationship with Him?

Three of the warriors under David’s command took their leader’s wish as a challenge and made the 25-mile round-trip journey at the risk of their lives to secure water from Bethlehem. David’s response revealed the depth to which he was moved by his men’s loyalty and bravery. The water from Bethlehem’s well was a very precious gift because of the sacrifice the men made to get it. Consequently, it was a fitting sacrifice to David’s God.

What stands out to you about Benaiah? What risks did he take?

How did David reward Benaiah's risk-taking and military success?

Risk is a common theme among the actions of these men, all of whom risked their lives to protect David and the kingdom. David was loyal to God and, as a result, these men experienced blessing in battle and physical might because of their loyalty to David. When it comes to our relationship with God, risk that is obedient to Him is safer than security in our own strength.

Application

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Where in your life can you see the work of God and His faithfulness to you? Who do you need to share this with?

Where might God be calling you to obedience to Him that seems risky? How do you need to respond?

How can a life lived in obedience to God, even if viewed as risky by others, point people to the goodness and trustworthiness of God?

Pray

Encourage the group to pray for each person, asking God for the courage to take risks for His sake and for a greater awareness of our need for dependence on Him.

Commentary

| 2 Samuel 23:1-23

23:1 The heading for this chapter, These are the last words of David, is not intended chronologically; other words of David appear after this section and even in 1 Kings (1Ki 1:28-35; 2:1-9). Perhaps the section contains David's last recorded public statement or testimony to God's work through his life. Anointed (Hb mashiach) emphasizes David's dedication to God's service. God of Jacob ties David to the history of the patriarchs; God's work in David was the continuation of a work that began with Abraham (Gen 12:1-3).

23:2 David's words should be understood not as boastful, but as portraying a sense of wonder that God would use him to convey His words.

23:3 Fear of God denotes a healthy reverence for His power and majesty; the Book of Proverbs associates such an attitude with wisdom and knowledge (Pr 1:7; 9:10).

23:5 My house denotes David's family. God's everlasting covenant with David's house was ordered and secured in every detail. David was confident the Lord would bring its every aspect to fruition.

23:6-7 David's experience had taught him that the wicked had no future in God's plan. Since they were neither useful nor usable, the day of their judgment would surely come.

23:8-39 These are the names and accounts of some of David's warriors—his most valiant soldiers. God blessed David with exceptional military men. The list includes the three famous heroes who turned the tide of events in single combat and the thirty warriors who served in a special detachment. There were men from many different tribes of Israel and even a few foreigners among the men who rallied to David.

23:9 Defied is the same word used of Goliath's words against Israel (1Sam 17:10,26,36).

23:10 Eleazar displayed tenacity as he attacked the Philistines, yet the Lord brought the victory. The troops returned later to plunder the dead, a means of securing "extra payment" for their military service.

23:11 Lentils were a common food source.

23:12 The Philistines and other enemies often came up Judah's valleys to raid food supplies.

23:13 The cave of Adullam was in the Valley of Elah (1Sam 17:2) below Bethlehem. The Valley of Rephaim lay southwest of Jerusalem.

23:14 The stronghold probably designates the cave in which David was stationed. A Philistine garrison occupied Bethlehem—perhaps a move designed to draw David out of hiding.

23:15 Probably David's vocalized wish came not only from his thirst, but from his desire that his hometown would once again know the peace that allowed people to drink from the well at the city gate freely.

23:16-17 Three of the warriors under David's command took their leader's wish as a challenge and made the 25-mile round-trip journey at the risk of their lives to secure water from...Bethlehem. David's response revealed the depth to which he was moved by his men's loyalty and bravery. The water from Bethlehem's well was a very precious gift because of the sacrifice the men made to get it. Consequently, it was a fitting sacrifice to David's God.

23:18 Abishai, Joab's brother, played a leading role in David's rise to power and kingship (v. 18; 10:10; 18:2-3).

23:20 Benaiah was a well-known warrior (8:18; 20:23). Despite his position in a pit and severe weather that hampered both his dexterity and his mobility, he killed a lion.

READING ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK:

2 Samuel 24:1-25