2 Samuel Lesson 6 (2022)

DAVID BROUGHT THE ARK OF THE LORD TO JERUSALEM

(David’s Dance Before the Lord)

2 Samuel 6:1-23

Key Verse 6:14-15

“Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.”

Over the last two years, under the COVID-19 pandemic, we could not come together to celebrate any kind of event freely. I wish we may taste some sort of exciting celebration and rejuvenate our mind and spirit. This morning, we are going to study about the king of Israel David’s extraordinary public celebration.

David became king over Israel. He defeated long time enemy the Philistines. Jerusalem became the City of David, the capital of Israel kingdom. Hiram, king of Tyre, built a palace for him. The kings of nations recognized David more than ever. Through all these events, David realized that the Lord had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel. (5:12)

1. David feared the Lord (6:1-10)

What did David focus his attention on at his time of success? Let us read 6:1 and 2. “David again brought together all the able young men of Israel—thirty thousand. He and all his men went to Baalah in Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the Name, the name of the Lord Almighty, who is enthroned between the cherubim on the ark.” In this description, David recognized the ark as the footstool of God’s earthly throne. He desired that the Lord Almighty would rule over his life and the people of Israel. He wanted to restore the ark to the center of the nation and close to him. David was a theocratic king, who put God in his kingdom to be governed.

Where was the ark of God? We may remember that the ark had been captured by the Philistines during the time of Eli the priest. The people were dismayed due to the loss of the ark to the enemy. However, the hand of the Lord was so great that the Philistines had to return it to the Israel territory in fear of destruction. They put the ark on a new cart, carried by two cows with a guilt offering. The ark came back to Israel. At that time, some of the residents of Beth Shemesh where the ark was located were struck by God; seventy people died because they looked into the ark out of curiosity. They cried out, “Who can stand in the presence of the Lord, this holy God? To whom will the ark go up from here?” As the people of Beth Shemesh requested, the men of Kiriath Jearim took up the ark and brought it to Aminadab’s house, which was guarded by Eleazar his son. The ark was at Kiriath Jearim a long time, for twenty years. (1 Sam 7:1) Baalah in Judah was the same name with Kiriath Jearim.

David was so eager to bring the ark of the Lord into Jerusalem and prepared for the big celebration. Thirty thousand men and David came to Baalah together with various music teams. They set the ark of God on a new cart. Sons of Abinadab Uzzah and Ahio were guiding the new cart. David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals. The parade had national attention joined with dignitaries. The broadcasting stations all came to announce the moment of the most exciting procession. With music and singing, they were heading to Jerusalem. “---We’re marching to Zion. Beautiful, beautiful Zion. We’re marching upward to Zion, The beautiful city of God!”

Look at verse 6, “When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled.” Continue to read verse 7. “The Lord’s anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God.” David was the anointed king and wanted to bring the ark of the Lord to Jerusalem for the sake of his people Israel. Then, why did this devastating incident happen? The Bible said that the Lord’s anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act. Uzzah had good intentions and as a natural response, tried to stabilize the ark, but God was angry at his actions, saying that he had no reverence toward God. The ark should not be touched. The death of Uzzah was a demonstration of God’s holiness. God cannot be mocked by any man. David was angry because the Lord’s wrath had broken out against Uzzah and called the place Perez Uzzah.

Let us read verse 9 and 10, “David was afraid of the Lord that day and said, ‘How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?’ He was not willing to take the ark of the Lord to be with him in the City of David. Instead, he took it to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.” Before this event, David naturally thought that the ark of the Lord should come to him. He had always asked God and God answered him and gave him great successes. David might have considered God as someone who should be by his side at all times. On the contrary, a man died while the ark of the Lord came to the City of David. David learned God could be against him at any time and could even hit him with big blows. He came to know that his passion and zeal alone were not enough to serve God. Through this, David studied the Scriptures that God commanded through Moses and prepared himself and the people with him to know how to handle the ark of God.

David learned that he did not move the ark of the Lord in the way prescribed by the Scripture (1Ch 15:2). The ark should not be carried by the cart, but carried by the Levite, by the Kohathites on their shoulders. This incident was God’s reminder to David and the people of Israel to act according to God’s command. David loved God and wanted to please God the best he could. God was teaching him the importance of listening to God’s Word.

Deuteronomy 7:9 says, “Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.” God is faithful, keeping his covenant of love to the thousand generations. God gave the people of Israel his words to follow. God keeps his covenant of love to those who keep his commandments. That is why anyone who loves God must obey God’s Words. When David began his life as the king of Israel, God helped him to follow Him and act in fear and reverence.

I believe many of us love God like David and want to bring the ark of the Lord close to us so that our journey with God would be solid and sure. What is the main theme of the Bible? The Bible is God’s love story. I realize that it is how God has loved man. However, it is not onesided love, but a mutual love relationship. As we read from Deuteronomy, God is the faithful God and keeps his covenant of love to a thousand generations to those who love Him and obey his commandments. In fact, we can find so many accounts of how people responded to the love of God. Their lives are exemplary to many readers. They confessed that God’s love endures forever and never changes despite the hardships and challenges they faced.

How did God love the world? God demonstrated his love through Jesus. God has completed the work of salvation in his Son Jesus Christ when Jesus died as the ultimate sacrifice for man’s sins. The way to God through Jesus has been opened and told to the world. Thomas one of the Twelve said to Jesus, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know the Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” (Jn 14:5-7). When anyone lives with the gospel of Jesus, they come to know God and can walk with Him securely and steadily until they reach the gate of heaven.

As we are reminded of God’s serious business to save the fallen human race, by sending his one and only Son, how can we ignore what God did and think of different gospels. There are many voices out there, but they are not necessarily leading us on the right path. Do you believe in God’s love through Jesus Christ no matter what happens today? How passionate are you to welcome God into your heart? When David was so eager to take the ark of God into his nation Israel, God showed the people of Israel the way. God established David as the example for our spiritual journey. Through the event of bringing the ark, God helped him to follow the way of the Lord. David came to walk with God in reverence, following the words that God has given. Through today’s passage, let us know God as God. May we also be serious Bible students and may our hearts be prepared.

II. David danced before the Lord (6:11-23)

The ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom for three months. The Lord blessed him and his entire household. Read verse 12, “Now King David was told, ‘The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and everything he has, because of the ark of God.’” When David heard it, he realized God’s anger had been subsided. So David went to bring up the ark from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with rejoicing.

At this time David was prepared to carry the ark of the Lord according to the prescribed way. 1 Chronicles 15 described in detail how the ark was brought to Jerusalem. David said, “No one but the Levites may carry the ark of God, because the Lord chose them to carry the ark of the Lord and to minister before him forever.” (1 Ch 15:2) David assembled all Israel in Jerusalem. The descendants of Aaron and the Levites were called and consecrated to carry the ark. The musicians were appointed to make joyful sound with lyres, harps and cymbals. The head Levite prepared for the singing of the choirs and the gatekeepers were assigned for the ark. All the Levites who were carrying the ark as well as the musicians wore a fine linen clothes. David also wore a robe of fine linen like the Levites and in addition wore a linen ephod.

The ephod was for the priest. Though David was not a priest, the linen ephod would signify the full dedication of his life to the Lord. When Hannah dedicated his son Samuel to the Lord, the boy Samuel ministered before the Lord, wearing a linen ephod (1 Samuel 2:18). It is interesting that God allowed him to wear the ephod. We may think David was presented as the priest and the king in the Messianic kingdom, which would come through his descendant. Look at verses 14 and 15, “Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.”

David was dancing; the people were shouting with the trumpet sound. Don’t you feel it? It was like a preview of entering the heavenly gate for the saints to live with God forever. David was dancing before the living and eternal God with all his strength. Bringing the ark of the Lord was more than becoming the king over the united kingdom of Israel. It was because to David, God was everything. What could be my greatest joy? If I become a somebody like the president of America today with dignitaries gathered and cheering in celebration, I would lose my mind because I would be so recognized among the people, expecting to live a different level of life. But David’s dancing next to the ark of the Lord was more than that. He didn’t want to exchange this moment with anything in the world. He was so devoted to the God Almighty his Lord and Savior. He had such a joy inside.

The ark was set in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for. David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord. He blessed the people in the name of the Lord Almighty and gave gifts of bread, dates, raisins to each person. All the people went to their homes with satisfaction and with an uplifted heart.

Read verse 16, “As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.” This event with Michal continued when David returned home to bless his household. Look at verse 20b. “Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, ‘How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!’”

Michal was the wife of king David. However, she was a proud woman. She was ashamed of what David did. She had no understanding of David at all. She was humanistic and had no regard for God in her heart. How did David respond to Michal? Read verse 21. “David said to Michal, ‘It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord’s people Israel—I will celebrate before the Lord.’”

David’s rejoicing, dancing and singing had a reason. He said that the Lord chose him rather than Saul or anyone from his house and appointed him ruler over the Lord’s people Israel. God could choose anyone else to be the king of Israel, but God chose him. He experienced how God transferred the kingdom from Saul to him and how he was led from being a little shepherd to the ruler of God’s people. He deeply recognized that God made him a part of history with a divine purpose. He could not stay still, but broke into joyful dancing.

Secondly, David said that he danced before the Lord. The eyes of the people didn’t bother him. He leaped freely before his God. Before he was the king, David was a child of God. He continued to elaborate in verse 22. “I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor.”

In this chapter, we learn that David leaped and danced with joy and with all his might because God made him a ruler and a king over God’s people Israel. Do you have a reason to dance before God in your journey of life? If you have, you are so blessed! I tried to think about it while I was preparing this message. As you know I am not a good dancer. I was always pretty reserved and was often afraid of expressing myself fully in front of people. Since I came to know God when I was in freshman year of college, I experienced joy as the words of God came into my heart in power. From time to time, I felt like dancing and I did. As the time went by, my joy came and went away when life seemed harsh.

However, I have found an undeniable and unbreakable reason to dance before God when I was reminded of my new identity. I learned my identity was sealed in Christ and no one can take away my status as a child of God. I can also live with that character that the identity gives. The apostle Peter says to God’s elect in his letter, “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” (1Peter 2:9-10) Christians have an identity as God’s special possession. Christians are not being ruled, but rule with Christ as a royal priesthood. They are the people who will overcome sin and fatalism by the power of the mercy of God. They will be ambassadors of the wonderful light of Jesus to the people who are under the darkness and fear. In other words, Christians are kings and priesthoods who minister the kingdom work.

The people of this world may not recognize us when we don’t live as they live, but we don’t need to worry about that. When David danced before the Lord, he recognized that his identity came from God’s sovereign choice. He made a decision to do anything for his God. He did not mind being humiliated in the eyes of man. God has chosen us and has declared that we are His. So we have a reason to dance before the Lord no matter what. It is our strength and hope and joy now and forever. May God’s grace of calling be renewed in us and we may march upward and towards the City of God. Amen.

May we sing the hymn, “We’re marching to Zion” together.