

The Bible 20/20 Week 16: "Have Mercy" (4-26-20)

Opening: 1 Chronicles 21 Story Recap - David's Census

- David's Census - decision & warning
- God is displeased and David repents
- Punishment - 3 options:
 - 3 years of famine
 - 3 months of war - with the enemy succeeding against them
 - 3 days of pestilence (some sort of plague)
- Sacrifice & Mercy
- David decrees that God's House will be built on this spot (future temple and specifically the altar)

What's my perspective? How do I read this story?

Questioning God: Too Harsh, Innocent people harmed, What was so bad about what David did?

Will I question God (a modern day idol - I'm the judge demanding an explanation from Him)

Or am I willing to learn something from David's response? Because he doesn't hold God at fault!

Today - Let's learn from David's perspective . . .

1) David knew he was wrong

- **Joab** - His friend warned him and called him out.

1 Chronicles 21:3 (ESV)

But Joab said, "May the LORD add to his people a hundred times as many as they are! Are they not, my lord the king, all of them my lord's servants? Why then should my lord require this? Why should it be a cause of guilt for Israel?"

Note: Joab says - this is unnecessary, dangerous, and affects everyone!

- **God** was displeased

1 Chronicles 21:7 (ESV)

But God was displeased with this thing, and he struck Israel.

Note: In the rest of this story & throughout David's life he seeks the Lord, but not when making this decision

- **David** fought the warning, but when he had done it he **knew it was wrong!**

1 Chronicles 21:8 (ESV)

And David said to God, "I have sinned greatly in that I have done this thing. But now, please take away the iniquity of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

(2 Samuel 24:10 adds - "And David's heart struck him after he had numbered the people")

Note: David new it was wrong, viewed his action as a "great" sin, and acknowledged he acted like a fool.

Steve Berger - "sin makes you stupid" - you begin to trust your own perspective & don't see clearly

Whether or not I like or agree with how God handled this, the reality is that David knew he was wrong!

2) David faced the consequences

David's Request: (vs 8) David owns up and asks God for help - what do I do to remove my iniquity?

God's Response: (vs 10-12) Choose your own punishment.

David's Response: Does he say - That's not fair, I don't deserve this, etc? Nope, instead he says . . .

1 Chronicles 21:13 (ESV)

"I am in great distress. Let me fall into the hand of the LORD, for his mercy is very great, but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

Note: In his distress, he takes his punishment and relies on the mercy of God.

Result: Punishment, Mercy, and Revelation

- **Punishment** (vs 14): God sends the pestilence and 70,000 men fall
- **Mercy** (vs 15): God stops the sword of the angel in the middle of the punishment, and relents
- **Revelation** (vs 16): David sees the Angel of the Lord (sword in hand) approaching, & he falls on his face

1 Chronicles 21:17 (ESV)

And David said to God, "Was it not I who gave command to number the people? It is I who have sinned and done great evil. But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand, O LORD my God, be against me and against my father's house. But do not let the plague be on your people."

Note: Our sin doesn't happen in a vacuum. It hurts others, especially those under our direct influence.

When the consequences of sin come:

Will we blame God for the fall-out?

Or will we (like David) face this fact & humble ourselves and take responsibility?

David sees more fully the weight of his sin, its effects on others, and says I'll take the hit. He is starting to sound like Jesus!

3) David receives Grace

- **The Sacrifice**

Story found in **1 Chronicles 21:18-26** (The Sacrifice at the Threshing floor of Ornan)

Angel of the Lord called for a sacrifice on this spot - Ornan's threshing floor in Jerusalem

David purchases the threshing floor and the sacrificial items needed: Ox, Wood, & Wheat

1 Chronicles 21:22 (ESV)

And David said to Ornan, "Give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it an altar to the LORD—give it to me at its full price—that the plague may be averted from the people."

Note: Ornan offers the items for free, but David won't allow it . . .

1 Chronicles 21:24 (ESV)

But King David said to Ornan, “No, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the LORD what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing.”

Notes: A Sacrifice for Sin and the Grace of God are linked throughout Scripture:

- David provides the costly sacrifice for the sin in this story.
- Jesus provides the costly sacrifice for all sin at the cross!

- **The Mercy of God**

1 Chronicles 21:26-28 (ESV)

(26) And David built there an altar to the LORD and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings and called on the LORD, and the LORD answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offering. (27) Then the LORD commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. (28) At that time, when David saw that the LORD had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, he sacrificed there.

Note: When David saw the mercy of God at the acceptance of the sacrifice, David’s response was to sacrifice more at that spot.

- **(Important)** The sacrificial work of Jesus is enough to bring about the Mercy & Grace of God in our lives.
- But there remains a sacrifice at the very place where we see God’s mercy at work for us . . .

Romans 12:1-2 (ESV)

(1) I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Our Sacrifice: We present ourselves to God, to be shaped and molded by him, to be transformed in our thinking and in our living!

- **David and the House of God**

1 Chronicles 22:1 (ESV)

Then David said, “Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel.”

Notes: From here forward David’s focus shifts . . .

- **From:** Protecting Himself, His son (the future King), and Securing & Celebrating His Legacy
- **To:** Handing off the vision to build a house for God, & a kingdom based upon faithfully following the Lord.

Conclusion: David didn’t run a perfect race, but he ran it with endurance . . .

***Picture & Story from Boston Strog (Lindsay Devers)**

There are going to be blips - failures - foolish mistakes - and sins along the way.

But our God is full of mercy, and he is with us to help us run our race well.

Let’s be “Strog” enough to present ourselves as living sacrifices - imperfections and all. His mercy is enough!

Discussion Questions:

- 1) Have you ever struggled with the modern “idol” of sitting in judgement of God? Why do you think this happens? How can we shift our perspective to be more like David’s?
- 2) In this story David resists the warning of his friend, and avoids God before pushing forward on a bad decision. Have you done that? What was the outcome? Why did you avoid guidance or resist the warning? How can we be more open to hearing warnings and corrections from those closest to us? How can we lovingly be willing to warn others close to us?
- 3) David recognizes and acknowledges his sin in several ways in the story - He recognizes he did wrong, and he owns up to the impact it had on others around him. Have you ever struggled with minimizing your sin or its consequences - why is that wrong or damaging? Why is it important to own up to the consequences of our mistakes and the effect they have on others around us? How does honestly facing the consequences of our mistakes impact our ability to receive mercy and move forward in a healthy way with God and others?
- 4) Why is God’s mercy so closely connected to sacrifice? How does the sacrifice of Jesus that brings mercy into our lives then lead to our own “living” sacrifice? If his sacrifice is enough to cover our guilt and deal with the consequence of our sin, why then should we live a sacrificial life? (read Romans 12:1-2 again for guidance)
- 5) The place of David’s failure in this story, becomes a place where God’s presence now resides. How is that true in our lives? What does that teach us about the grace of God in the midst of our mistakes in life?