

WD June 7, 2021
Pastor Matthew Woods

“What David Got Right”

The Battle With Erosion

Our house is seated on a piece of property that is one long incline from one end to the other. It may drop as much as 35 feet from one end to the other, maybe more. Of course, the biggest problem we struggle with is erosion. When it rains, we get not only the water off of our property but also from everything else off of our neighbor's yards too.

We've managed a lot of water flow by placing ditches with rocks in the strategic places to control the flow. But it's like a whack-a-mole game. Sometimes silt and dirt get into the ditches and fill them up. Once in a while the rocks have to be pulled out and the ditch dredged out again. And after a while new places get washed out and erosion continues. So new ditches are planned and, in the works, to move the water constructively. And little by little we are getting ahead of it all. When one lives on a hill as we do, it just goes with the territory. My neighbor must think I'm crazy when I have stood outside under an umbrella studying the flow of it all. If I am going to get this right, I must know how the water behaves so that I can act constructively. The most important thing in this circumstance is to have a plan before I go digging ditches and hauling rocks. If I get it wrong the erosion will continue. However, wherever the rock is carefully placed the water flows without causing any erosion.

David's Life was Built on the Rock of Israel

David's life was a life that was built on the Rock, the God of Israel. However, at times David would become impulsive, rash, and arrogant causing serious erosion to his character. But no matter how much his life would erode David always came back to His Lord and trusted in God to save him.

When one encounters young David in the scriptures one may think immediately of the day that he fell the Philistine Giant with a slingshot. David was a simple shepherd back then. He was the youngest of his family and was often relegated to the dirty jobs that no one else in the family wanted to do. Young David, shepherd David, was a man who loved in the Lord and trusted in the Lord with his life, even before a giant enemy like Goliath.

David Fought Erosion of His Character

Later in life David was really not so hot. Bringing down the giant was what he was remembered for before he was king. While David was king, he became most famous for bringing down Bathsheba in an act of adultery. We remember 2 Samuel 11. David should have been leading his men in battle instead of looking for trouble at the palace. He spies a neighbor lady taking her bath and looks too long at Bathsheba. His lust turns into adultery. His adultery turns into lies and deception. His lies and deception turn into murdering Bathsheba's husband, a loyal soldier on the front lines. The sin of covetousness eroded into all the other sins. And more and more of David's godly character as a shepherd washed away. Eventually a prophet straightens him out and he finally repents but the damage to David's Kingdom has been done. Yet, David returns to the Lord and trusts in God to save him.

As a consequence of his sin with Bathsheba David's life and his kingdom find no peace. Within the family a son becomes like his father in his lust for his half-sister. David's son Amnon raped his half-sister, Tamar. Another son does as his father and becomes a man of action where he sees injustice. Absalom killed Amnon for his crimes against Tamar and then led a coup against his father, David whom he blamed for allowing it to happen. David was responsible. He was a lousy father, and a lousy husband, if we are honest. David had seven wives but in truth was close to none of them.

And let us not forget David's occasional arrogance. He called for a census of his kingdom in 2 Samuel 24 which God rebukes him for. It was done in arrogance, pride over his kingdom not because the Lord commanded him to do it. David messed up a lot of things frankly. And when he did it wounded his marriages, his children, his kingdom, and especially God's people who to this day have a record of David's sins. Can you

imagine generations from now having a record of your scandals, your sins, your biggest screw ups? Thankfully, in God's forgiveness he keeps no record of wrongs.

David Remained a Man After God's Own Heart

There is one thing David maintained throughout his life in spite of his sinfulness. He remained a man after God's own heart. What does this actually mean? Most people do not fully understand what this means. For that we turn to Matthew 5:7. "Blessed are the merciful for they will be shown mercy." He trusted in God to be merciful, and to save David. Even in his worst sin David turned to the Lord and understood that God is gracious.

In 1 Samuel 24 David is being pursued by King Saul who has become jealously obsessed with killing David. David hides in a cave only to have Saul walk right into that same cave to relieve himself. As Saul was on the pot, David has opportunity to enact justice on Saul but chooses grace instead. David cuts off a piece of the King's distinct robe. He would later show Saul what he had done demonstrating the mercy to Saul. God delivered Saul to David and gave him the option to execute Saul. But David refused "lay a hand on the Lord's anointed." He even felt bad for cutting off a piece of Saul's robe. The point is simple; when David had the chance to kill Saul, David chose mercy instead. He chose to love his enemy by exercising grace "for the Lord's anointed". In 1 Samuel 26 David spared Saul a second time. When Acts 13:22 talks of David as a man after God's own heart I believe the scriptures are referring to the fact that David sincerely appreciated the mercy of God that had given him so much. David understood that His Lord had given him everything from shepherd to King. And David understood that he as should exercise the same mercy to his Israelite brother, Saul.

It was to the mercy of God that David turned when he sinned with Bathsheba in Psalm 51 and in Psalm 32 where David proclaims:

Blessed is the one
whose transgressions are forgiven,
whose sins are covered.
² Blessed is the one
whose sin the Lord does not count against them
and in whose spirit is no deceit....
⁵ Then I acknowledged my sin to you
and did not cover up my iniquity.
I said, "I will confess
my transgressions to the Lord."
And you forgave
the guilt of my sin.

We're Not So Different

These same verses apply to us. God has been merciful to us. And it is by grace we do as the Lord has done for us—forgiving as the Lord has forgiven us. Loving one another as the Lord has loved us. David did that too. It was in mercy and in devotion to covenant with Jonathan that led David to welcome Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son and only remaining heir to Saul's family, back to the king's table.

And it is in mercy and grace to all of us that we hear in 2 Samuel 7 God's promise to David that one of his descendants would sit on David's throne forever. Of course, that promise is fulfilled in Jesus who came to the world and while we were yet sinners died for our sins and then welcomed us to His King's Table as family.

What David got right his whole life was trusting in the God of Israel. David was a sinner and the first to rely on the Lord for everything. David was the first to repent when he was called out for his sin with Bathsheba. David was not a great family man. He failed at a lot but did not fall so far that His faith was lost. The bottom line is when sin eroded parts of David's life sin never took what was built on the rock. He remained a man after God's own heart. And by the grace of God, we too will remain on that same rock, King Jesus. By grace we too will remain a follower of Jesus, people after God's own heart.

Lord make us gracious like you. Make us forgiving like you. Make us people who appreciate and love you as you love us. And help us to love others like you love us. Make us people after your own heart.

And now the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face to shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look on you with His favor and give you His peace in Jesus. Amen.

Pastor Matthew Woods

John 3:30