
Engage

Dear Lord, we give You thanks for all that You have done for us and all that You will be doing in our lives. Teach us to live like You do and to love like You do. Let us be conscious and intentionally choose to love rather than to tear down. In Jesus' Name, Amen.





SERMON SUMMARY

Note to Word Facilitator: The sermon notes below is a summary of the sermon. You may choose to further summarize it according to the needs and context of your CG members. The goal is not just to go through it “verbatim” but to prepare well, allowing members to recall and engage the message in the best possible way.

King David: Experiencing Blessings and Brokenness

#1: Love & War

Pastor Benny Liew

(2 Samuel 1-3)

Reading 2 Samuel 1:1-16

After the death of Saul, David returned from striking down the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days.

On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honour.

“Where have you come from?” David asked him.

He answered, “I have escaped from the Israelite camp.”

“What happened?” David asked. “Tell me.”

“The men fled from the battle,” he replied. “Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.”

Then David said to the young man who brought him the report, “How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?”

“I happened to be on Mount Gilboa,” the young man said, “and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and their drivers in hot pursuit. When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, ‘What can I do?’ “He asked me, ‘Who are you?’ ““An Amalekite,” I answered. “Then he said to me, ‘Stand here by me and kill me! I’m in the throes of death, but I’m still alive.’ “So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord.”

Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the Lord and for the nation of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. David said to the young man who brought him the report, "Where are you from?" "I am the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite," he answered.

David asked him, "Why weren't you afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?" Then David called one of his men and said, "Go, strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died.

For David had said to him, "Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the Lord's anointed.'"

Reading 2 Samuel 2:17-23

The battle that day was very fierce, and Abner and the Israelites were defeated by David's men.

The three sons of Zeruiah were there: Joab, Abishai and Asahel. Now Asahel was as fleet-footed as a wild gazelle. He chased Abner, turning neither to the right nor to the left as he pursued him.

*Abner looked behind him and asked, "Is that you, Asahel?"
"It is," he answered.*

Then Abner said to him, "Turn aside to the right or to the left; take on one of the young men and strip him of his weapons."

But Asahel would not stop chasing him.

Again Abner warned Asahel, "Stop chasing me! Why should I strike you down? How could I look your brother Joab in the face?"

But Asahel refused to give up the pursuit; so Abner thrust the butt of his spear into Asahel's stomach, and the spear came out through his back. He fell there and died on the spot. And every man stopped when he came to the place where Asahel had fallen and died.

Reading 2 Samuel 3:28-30, 38-39

Later, when David heard about this, he said, "I and my kingdom are forever innocent before the Lord concerning the blood of Abner son of Ner. May his blood fall on the head of Joab and on his whole family! May Joab's family never be without someone who has a running sore or leprosy or who leans on a crutch or who falls by the sword or who lacks food."

(Joab and his brother Abishai murdered Abner because he had killed their brother Asahel in the battle at Gibeon.)

Then the king said to his men, "Do you not realise that a commander and a great man has fallen in Israel this day? And today, though I am the anointed king, I am weak, and these sons of Zeruiah are too strong for me. May the Lord repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds!"

Introduction

1 Samuel focuses mostly on the prophet Samuel and the life of Saul, the first king of Israel. It also covers the first half of David's life right up until Saul's death on Mount Gilboa.

The central focus in 2 Samuel is about the blessings & brokenness experienced by King David. The first ten chapters cover the triumphs of David. The following ten chapters (11-20) look at the troubles of David - how he was stricken by troubles after troubles. Finally, we will see a powerful testament of God's work in his life in the final four chapters (21-24).



We begin the first 3 chapters with snippets of three tragic dramas.

BIG IDEA: Choose God's love, not war.

Chapter 1 - King David, Saul & Jonathan, The Amalekite *2 Samuel 1:1-16*

David tore his clothes and mourned upon receiving news that King Saul and Jonathan (his best friend) were killed in the battle with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa. This Amalekite who delivered the message claimed to have helped King Saul kill himself. David's response surprised the Amalekite as he was hoping to gain favour and significant reward from bringing David the "good news" that Saul, his enemy, was dead. He even presented Saul's crown and armband as proof. Instead, after lamenting, David ordered the execution of the Amalekite for claiming to have killed the Lord's anointed.

In this arc of a story, we see three deaths as a result of the conflict of David and Saul: Saul, Jonathan and the Amalekite.

1. Loving your enemies even when it hurts *1 Samuel 24:4-7; 1 Samuel 26:8-11, 23-24*

David had spent the last 15 years as a fugitive fleeing for his life from King Saul. He should be filled with anger and have every reason to seek retribution. Yet, he tore his clothes and lamented when he heard of Saul and Jonathan's death. David loved God's anointed, he loved Jonathan and had compassion for them.

There were three instances where David chose to spare Saul's life. These instances illustrated David's respect for God's anointed:

- David spares Saul's life in the cave.
- David refuses to kill Saul when he finds him sleeping.
- David expresses his trust in God to repay.

What can we learn from David's response? He did not take things into his own hands but to wholly trust God for retribution and justice. We are challenged to love and be transformed even while hurting. Love is a choice. We can choose to love one another even in relationship conflicts.

We will encounter conflicts where we are offended or hurt within the three relationship spheres of family, work and social. Sometimes, the better thing to do is to either remain silent, apologise or to openly speak.

Chapter 2 - House of Saul vs House of David *2 Samuel 2:17-23; 2 Samuel 2:4, 8-9*

Israel now had two kings. Abner, the commander of Saul's army, made Ish-Bosheth (the fourth son of Saul) king over Israel. Meanwhile, the men of Judah made David

king at Hebron. This setup the conflict between the houses of the two rival Israelite kings.

What ensued was a vicious 12 vs 12 fight between the men from the house of David under the commander Joab and those under Abner from the house of Saul. The conflict resulted in the death of Asahel. Abner killed Asahel, the brother of Joab and Abishai, with the butt of his spear in the ensuing chase. Nineteen of David's men had gone missing and 360 Benjamites with Abner were dead.

2. Nobody wins in a war or conflicts *James 3:16; Ephesians 4:31-32*

It is unfortunate that such a tragedy happened between Israelites who were friends and belonged to the same family of God.

What can we learn from this? Nobody wins in a war or conflict. The wounds may heal but the scars will remain unless we choose to confront, learn to forgive and let go of the past. We need to allow for God's healing and spiritual growth to take place.

Sometimes conflicts are unavoidable and sometimes silent wars may happen. Let us be kind and compassionate to each other just as God forgave our sins. Otherwise hatred and rage builds up, resulting in irreversible tragedy.

Chapter 3 - Rizpah (Saul's concubine) and Michal (daughter of Saul) *2 Samuel 3: 28-30, 38-39; 2 Samuel 3: 17-18, 26-28a*

King Ish-Bosheth (Saul's son) accused Abner of having an affair with Rizpah. This angered Abner and he resolved to switch sides. King David agrees to make peace with the condition that Michal be returned to him as his rightful wife. He may have wanted to restore his household but it may also be a shrewd move to solidify his claim as king over a unified Israel. Joab had such a grudge towards Abner for killing his brother Asahel that he later killed him through deceptive means. Joab called Abner back to Hebron, took him aside into an inner chamber as if to speak privately and stabbed him in the stomach.

At this point, nearly half of the main characters in the 3 chapters have perished because of conflict - Saul, Jonathan, the Amalekite, Asahel and Abner.

3. Bitterness and unforgiveness leads to more war and conflict *2 Samuel 3:38-39; Romans 12:19*

What Joab did led to his eventual death and severe consequences that affected his

family and his future generations.

Even King David could not resolve the conflict between the families of Joab and Abner. He looked to God for divine resolution and retribution. In Romans 12:19, Paul exhorts us to leave retribution to God for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

What can we learn from this? Bitterness and unforgiveness leads to more pain and hurt. It poisons relationships through a cycle of hatred that impacts those around us. One can liken unresolved hatred to drinking poison and expecting the other person to suffer. It hurts us the most and robs days, months or even years of our lives. Scars remain unless we allow God to heal.

4. Love your neighbours as yourselves [Luke 10:27](#); [Psalm 34:14](#); [Luke 23:34](#)

Jesus taught us to not seek vengeance and not to reciprocate. We are to treat others with the same care and compassion that we desire ourselves. It is an intentional choice we make to turn from evil and to seek good. God despises the excuses, justification and reasons if we don't have love in our hearts for our neighbours.

Jesus loved His Father so He obeyed Him. Jesus loved us enough that He took our place at the cross. He asked God to forgive us even as He was crucified on the cross and people were dividing His clothes by casting lots.

Conclusion

Choose God's love, not war. We are challenged to love and be transformed even while hurting. Love is a choice. We can choose to love one another even in relationship conflicts. Lashing out leads to separation, division and even death. Responding in love leads to freedom and restoration. It is God's command and an intentional choice. It is never easy but we have a God who understands and has experienced it first hand at the cross.

Let us ask God for perfect peace and surrender our hurts and pain to Him. He will restore us and break all the bondages that bind bitterness and unforgiveness to our hearts.

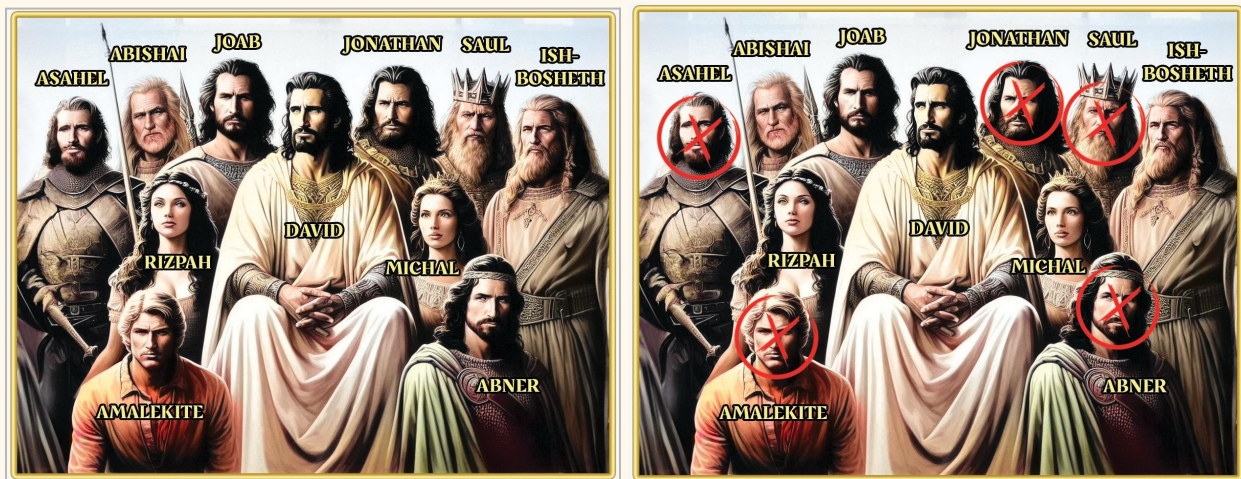
Sermon summary contributed by Darren Lim



APPLICATION

Note to Word facilitator:

As you prepare for this session, this is a great time to pray that the Holy Spirit will guide you to use the questions efficiently. You can select, modify or entirely create your own questions, according to the needs of your CG, especially if you feel that there are too many questions than required for the allocated time. The questions below are crafted with a certain flow in mind. You could use these towards the end or insert them in between your own sermon reflection and summary.



Suggested Icebreaker Activity/Questions

- Without looking at your notes or your Bible, name the main characters of the 3 dramas between 2 Samuel 1 to 3. Who were killed in these stories?
- How many Davids do you know in your life thus far? Name just one of them and one of their traits which stands out to you.

Suggested Word Introductory Questions

- This new sermon series is about “experiencing blessings and brokenness”. At which end of the spectrum are you experiencing in this season of your life? What do you hope to hear from the Holy Spirit through this sermon series?

- What are King David's characteristics that could have earned him the reputation of being "a man after God's own heart"?

Suggested Questions linked to the Sermon:

- It is easy to love people when things are going well. As Christians, we are tasked to a higher calling to love even our enemies. Why do you think God expects us to do so? In what ways can we love our enemies?
- Conflict can happen in all sorts of situations, for all sorts of reasons. Name some of these reasons. Share an incident of a conflict that you may have caused, whether intentionally or otherwise. How did you own up to the situation?
- On the other hand, you may have experienced the consequence of being in a conflict. No one wins without a cost. What did the conflict cost you? Were these costs ever reconciled?
- Is revenge ever appropriate? Have you ever sought revenge against the people who have hurt you? If yes, how did it turn out? Would you handle the situation or the people differently if you have a second chance at doing so?
- God loves us yesterday, today and forevermore. Share some ways in which you can show love, radically, to people in your sphere of family, work / studies and ministry / socially in the coming week or two?

Question Bank *(Extra questions that you can use to bring your discussion further as you see fit):*

- Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to suffer. How much pain and suffering are you willing to endure when you do not forgive the people who have hurt you? Why is forgiveness difficult in the situation that has happened to you?
 - We are taught to treat others the way we desire to be treated. But what if others desire to be treated better than how we ourselves expect to be treated? Do you draw a line on how you would appropriate an action / reaction towards those people? What is a good boundary for you?
 - Share an instance where you tried to resolve a conflict but did not see any progress. If you were involved directly, would having a mediator be helpful to resolve the conflict?
 - Do you notice that there are ongoing tensions within your CG? Perhaps with this sermon, it is a fitting time to clear the air, really. Take time to share with one another if there are any grievances. After that, pray for one another. [The Word Facilitator may opt to put members into smaller groups for this activity.]
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REFLECTION

This weekend, a new sermon series begins with the overarching theme of
Experiencing Blessings & Brokenness.

We reflect on the many blessings we have experienced through the years - writing personal reflections for *Engage* (formerly known as *Ignite*) as well as reading through each other's work. God has tremendously blessed the *Engagers* in ways, small and big, personal or corporately, in our families, CG, church, institutions or marketplace.

Yet, there are times of disjointment, a sense of brokenness when we run into issues especially on the lack of manpower. We are only a small team of writers and pastors, taking turns each week to write the summary, share our stories and huddle on Saturday nights to discuss potential application questions for the benefits of individuals, Cell Leaders or Word Facilitators that come across our page weekly.

We are thankful for each team member's commitment and sacrifice to serve faithfully on the Engage writing team. However, with increasing workload in the marketplace and demands of growing family needs, we are aware that we run the risk of burning out and having empty slots on our Engage schedule.

We need writers and/or huddlers to come alongside and serve with us.

So, if you are able to serve with our team, or if you are able to get your CG members or friends to do so, please contact one of us:

Pr Benny Liew (benny.liew@dumc.my), or

Wendy Tan (minlitt76@gmail.com), or

Darren Lim (darrenjalim@gmail.com).

Shalom & God bless.



MISSIONAL

Note to CGL: Inspire and encourage the Cell Group members to participate in the activity suggested below (from our CrossFields, Missions department) together to cultivate a culture of being a missional church.

CrossFields

**MOBILISATION FOR
SHORT-TERM MISSIONS**

 **Sri Lanka**
14 - 22 September 2024

 **Nepal**
5 - 14 October 2024

Sign up here

bit.ly/crossfields_stm

Join us on a mission trip to Sri Lanka or Nepal. Engage with local communities and share the hope of Christ.

Sign up here: bit.ly/crossfields_stm



PRAYER

Note to CGL: You (or someone you assign this portion to), may lead by praying OR reading these prayers together as a CG during worship.

East Asia

Pray for:

- God to grant courage, wisdom and perseverance for house church leaders and their families who face harassment and persecution.
- Middle schoolers who fail to pass the country's high school streaming exams and thus face tremendous pressure, will be reached with the Gospel.
- Financial and emotional support for local churches as they send cross-cultural workers to the unreached within and beyond East Asia.

CK & Penne – Missionaries in East Asia

Pray for:

- CK and team as they train cross-cultural workers from East Asia looking to use business to go into restricted access nations; and for safety and security for the candidates.
- Penne as she teaches a Bible Storying class to East Asian children and their mothers, and that her students will be passionate about sharing the Bible stories.
- Their four children, one who is working and three still in school, that they will grow in the Lord and serve Him passionately.