

July 30-31, 2011

Great People in God's Story Series

Title: *King David.....witness to all nations*

Theme: *Isaiah tells us that King David was a witness to the people and a great leader of the people of Israel. Once again we hear the call to covenant community and to live as witnesses to the things of God. Centuries later, the one who is the King of Kings comes from the bloodline of this earthly king. As followers of Jesus, we can learn from the witness of the King David.*

Text: Isaiah 55:1-5

Notes on the Text: King David is the stuff legends are made of. Celebrity status and the dreams of a nation are attributed to this person whose story is both captivating and compelling.

If you've grown up in the church you probably already know a lot of the David story. It begins with David the boy, who is thrust into mainstream politics as the chosen one of God to succeed King Saul on the throne of Israel. He was the youngest of his brothers, and given work befitting the youngest of the group – tending sheep. But it would be this shepherd boy who would be chosen by God to shepherd God's people, Israel. He also was an accomplished musician (have you seen all the Psalms?) and entertained King Saul as a part of his court. But his biggest feat came at the Valley of Elah, where Saul and his army battled the Philistines, and where David used his slingshot to kill the famed warrior Goliath. The shepherd boy saves the nation – this is what a King's story is made of! He's decorated and given command of Saul's armies, proving himself a great leader and warrior. He befriends Saul's son, Jonathon, and they become like brothers. It is this brotherly love that eventually saves David from a raging Saul who grew increasingly jealous of David's popularity. When Saul and Jonathan were killed in battle, the kingship of Judah and Israel were up for grabs. David was anointed king of Judah, and Saul's other son became king of Israel. Competition ensued between the two new kings, with Saul's son eventually being murdered, leaving the door open for David to become king of both Israel and Judah. Amazing! A united kingdom! This is the dream come true! And David is the fulfillment of the dream! David continues the great saga as he proceeds to defeat all the enemies of Israel and Judah, bringing peace and prosperity to his nation. Who wouldn't vote for this guy in an election? ☺

As the story continues, this new King David intends to live as large as his accomplishments and blessings, and plans to build a temple in the capital, Jerusalem, housing the Ark of the Covenant inside, signifying the permanent and lasting presence of God with God's people. But God doesn't allow it to happen, and instead gives David something David can't build on his own – a promise that God will establish the House of David forever! Not only that, but the promise includes culminating with the Messiah! This man has it made – but all that glitters isn't gold.

David becomes the stuff of tabloid news with one word – Bathsheba. David commits adultery with her, gets her pregnant, and then plots to kill her husband by sending him to the front lines of the war, just so David can have her. Long story short, Bathsheba's husband is killed, and the two marry shortly thereafter – but God is not pleased! David pays a heavy price for his sin, but amazingly remains as one favored by the Lord. Good guy gone bad yet restored to remain in God's favor – David!

Our text today hearkens back to the glory days of David – a time hundreds of years earlier when things were good and God's presence was abundantly clear. Important memories for a people who are in Exile in Babylon! The people are cut off from their homes, their religion, their history, their everything, and they wonder if God has forgotten them. Where is the promise God made to David? Is this the everlasting kingdom God promised? Looks like Babylon to me!

Here Isaiah speaks a word of truth and promise to a people far from home. God is faithful. One only has to look back to look forward. God is not far off, nor will God leave them in exile. A banquet is prepared for you – God has done it, just as it was promised! As David was imperfect yet blessed by God, the people of Israel are blessed even in their imperfect situation. God's promise calls out faith, and God's history gives hope. David is the sign, symbol and receptor of the promise – fulfilled for God's people in Jesus Christ, yesterday and today.

Preaching Possibilities:

It will be easy to recount the story of David, for it is fairly familiar for most people, even if they aren't regular church goers. Themes of faithfulness and relationship in covenant community with God and one another populate the story, and will be easy to bring out. But I was wondering if, in the light of the current and many political scandals that come to light via various media sources on a daily basis, that we highlight the power of promise and not the power of perfection. We sometimes assume that if we're religious we're perfect, and we expect perfection from those leaders who profess a relationship with God. But David gives us a different look at things – his power was not in perfection. He was definitely flawed, and would be crucified like Arnold Schwarzenegger if he were King today. Yet the God story isn't about perfection, it's about promise. God's promise restores and gives hope for the best and worst of people. And because its promise, it is open to those who believe, not only to those who are bound by any specific geography or population. Jesus is the flesh and bone fulfillment of the promise and the personification of God choosing us. God has established the House of David forever, in Jesus, received by faith. God is faithful. God has fulfilled God's promise. We extend this hope in promise to others as we live in covenant community.

Where would you take it? ☺

