



September 21, 2014

2 Samuel 1

“O, How the Mighty Have Fallen”

Pastor Gary Hamrick

In a Hebrew Bible, the books of **1st and 2nd Samuel** aren't separated, which is why the story of King Saul's death is uninterrupted. Right from the start we find that there is an apparent discrepancy concerning in the account, because **1 Samuel** ends with the details about Saul being wounded in battle, how he asked his armor bearer to finish him off so he wouldn't fall into the hands of the Philistines, and how he fell on his sword when the armor bearer refused to end his life. **2 Samuel** begins with the testimony of a young man, who said he came upon Saul, who was in mortally wounded, and how when Saul asked him to kill him, he did so.

So, the question is, did Saul fall on his sword or did the young man finish him off as he said? Because of the apparent contradiction, some Bible scholars say this young man was lying, and if he was lying, his plan to ingratiate himself with David backfired, because he was executed for what he said he did. It could be that the answer to the question is “Yes” to both. In the confusion, panic, and mayhem of war, it could be that when Saul was critically wounded, he fell on his sword, and his armor bearer, thinking Saul was dead, did the same thing. It's also possible that Saul didn't die immediately and this unnamed man did come along and did as Saul asked. At the very least, we know the young man was there because he had Saul's crown and royal armband, and the strongest evidence that he was telling the truth is that he didn't plead for his life when David gave the order to execute him. Pastor Gary said that it's logical that if you bragged about committing a crime just to impress someone, and that when that someone called the police who arrested you, you would quickly recant your story and say, “I was only kidding!” How much more would you confess your innocence and plead for mercy if you didn't commit the crime, and, in this case, there is no record of the young man making even the slightest plea for his life.

In this study we will learn about the reasons Saul, whom David counted among the mighty, fell and how we can avoid the same pitfalls.

David's Song Of Lament

1. When David learned of the death of Saul and his son, Jonathan, he wrote a song.
 - a. **2 Samuel 1:17-18** - *"David took up his lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, and ordered that the men of Judah be taught this lament on the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar)..."*¹

2. In the song, David cursed Mt. Gilboa, the place where Saul and Jonathan died.
 - a. **2 Samuel 1:21** - *"O mountains of Gilboa, may you have neither dew nor rain, nor fields that yield offerings of grain. For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, the shield of Saul - no longer rubbed with oil."*
 - i. To this day, the slope of Mt. Gilboa remains bald, so to speak, and in recent years the Jewish National Fund, without success, has planted thousands of trees hoping to change the extreme lack of vegetation.

3. No small controversy surrounds the interpretation of **2 Samuel 1:26**, which says: *"I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother; you were very dear to me. Your love for me was wonderful, more wonderful than that of women."*
 - a. This verse, which describes the deep grief David felt for his best friend, Jonathan, has been hijacked by many liberal theologians today, who twist its meaning to promote their homosexual agenda within the Church.
 - b. They would have you believe that David and Jonathan had a homoerotic relationship, and they do this by changing the meaning of the last part of the verse.
 - c. The Hebrew word for love in this verse is ahavah, which describes the strong love experienced between family and friends, and it's also used to describe the love of God toward man.
 - i. **Deuteronomy 10:15** - *"Yet the Lord set his affection on your forefathers and loved [ahavah] them..."*
 - ii. **Leviticus 19:18** - *"... love [ahavah] your neighbor as yourself..."*
 - d. The word ahavah is never used in the Bible to describe homosexual behavior.
 - e. Even in the story of Sodom and Gomorrah, which is clearly about homosexual behavior, the word used is yada, which means to know in an intimate way.
 - f. The word yada is never used to describe the relationship between Jonathan and David.
 - g. Furthermore, the Septuagint, written about 200BC, uses the word agape.
 - i. New Testament Greek has four words which are used to describe different kinds of love:

¹ The Book of Jashar is an unknown book of Hebrew poetry.

1. Philia – Brotherly love
 2. Storge – Family love
 3. Eros – Erotic or romantic love
 4. Agape – The highest and purest form of love from God or for God.
- h. David was simply saying that the love he had for Jonathan was the purest form of love from God that surpassed the romantic, sexual love of women.
- i. It's sad that people have sexualized everything in our culture today, but it is possible for two men, or two women, for that matter, to have a brotherhood/sisterhood, a deep bond, a genuine, and non-sexual friendship that God has knit together.

O How The Mighty Have Fallen

4. [2 Samuel 1:19](#) – *“Your glory, O Israel, lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen!”*
5. [2 Samuel 1:25a](#) – *“How the mighty have fallen in battle!”*
6. [2 Samuel 1:27a](#) – *“How the mighty have fallen!”*
7. What brings might men and women down, and what causes them to fall?
8. The one “little thing” Saul allowed became a very big thing, and it had to do with the guy who claimed to have killed him.
 - a. [2 Samuel 1:8](#) – *“[Saul] asked me, ‘Who are you?’ ‘An Amalekite,’ I answered.”*
 - b. [2 Samuel 1:13](#) – *“David said to the young man who brought him the report, ‘Where are you from?’ ‘I am the son of an alien, an Amalekite,’ he answered.”*
9. What does it matter that he was an Amalekite?
 - a. [1 Samuel 15:2-3](#) – *“This is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do no spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys.”*
 - b. [1 Samuel 15:9](#) – *“But Saul and the army spared Agag (the king of the Amalekites) and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs – everything that was good. These they were unwilling to destroy completely, but everything that was despised and weak they totally destroyed.”*

10. In sparing the best things, Saul let some of the Amalekites get away, and we know this because David was fighting with them according to [1 Samuel 27](#) and [1 Samuel 30](#).
11. The ironic thing is the very thing that Saul was supposed to destroy ended up destroying him, and that's what really fells might men and women; the thing they don't or won't destroy!
12. The Amalekite is a symbol of the flesh or what we would call our sinful nature.
13. The Bible has a lot to say about the potential for the sinful nature to ruin us if we don't deal with the battle of the flesh, and that's why, in the New Testament, the Bible repeats phrases like: dying to self; putting to death the earthly nature; and crucifying the sinful nature.
 - a. [Romans 8:13](#) - *"For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live..."*
 - b. [Galatians 2:20](#) - *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."*
 - c. [Galatians 5:24](#) - *"Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the sinful nature with its passions and desires."*
 - d. [1 Peter 2:24](#) - *"[Jesus] himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness..."*

Pastor Gary's Three-step Model

#1 - Say

14. Identify your area(s) of greatest weakness and tell your spouse, a close friend, or a confidant.
15. When you bring into the light things you struggle with in the darkness, you disarm the power of those things that control you.
16. [John 3:20-21a](#) - *"Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light..."*
17. [Ephesians 5:11](#) - *"Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them."*

18. [1 Corinthians 10:13a](#) - *"No temptation has seized you except what is common to man."*
19. [James 5:16](#) - *"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective."*
20. The word of caution we need to hear when it comes to this kind of transparency with someone else, is know the person you are confiding in, because they may judge or shame you, and you better be sure they can handle what you share and keep everything they hear confidential!
21. Lucille Ball, on the *I Love Lucy* program in the 1950s, defined gossip as "the mutual exchange of vital information," and you surely wouldn't want to tell your story to someone like Lucy!

#2 - Pray

22. Ask the Lord for strength, because he understands!
23. [Hebrews 4:15-16](#) - *"For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."*
24. [Matthew 26:41](#) - *"Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."*

#3 - Obey

25. Choose to deny self and live to please God, because obedience is a choice.
26. [Colossians 3:5](#) - *"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry."*
27. [2 Corinthians 10:5](#) - *"... we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*

28. [1 Corinthians 9:25-27](#) - *“Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air. No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize.”*

29. There is discipline in obeying the Lord and his Word, and it is our decision to choose to walk in righteousness and live to please God.

Discussion Questions

1. Review the introduction to the study guide with your group to provide the appropriate background.
2. Read [2 Samuel 1:1-16](#) to provide an overview for this study.
3. Read and discuss [2 Samuel 1:19, 25a, and 27a](#).
4. Summarize Pastor Gary’s illustration of the 2,000-year old redwood tree.
 - a. 400ft. tall - Struck by lightning 14 times - Endured 2,000 years of wind and storm damage - One day it “suddenly” died and fell to the ground - The cause of the great and ancient tree’s demise was beetles, which chewed their way through the seemingly impenetrable bark and wood fibers - the beetles killed the tree one bite at a time.
5. What are some of the names and stories of people you know who have fallen that would be considered to be among the mighty?
6. Are there any common themes involved in their fall?
7. Was there “one little thing” - in Saul’s case the Amalekites - that caused their downfall?
8. Have there been times in your life when you had a similar experience?
9. Read and discuss [Romans 8:13](#), [Galatians 2:20](#), [Galatians 5:24](#), and [1 Peter 2:24](#).
10. What are some practical ways a person can “die to self” or “crucify their sinful nature”?

11. Pastor Gary's three-step model to help us live a godly life is "Say, pray, and obey."
 - a. Say - Read and discuss the Scriptures in #17 - #20 above.
 - i. How has the Lord used the relationship(s) you've developed to help you in this area?
 - b. Pray - Read and discuss the Scriptures in #23 - #24 above.
 - i. What are some of the ways the Lord has answered prayer and helped you win the victory over sin?
 - c. Obey - Read and discuss the Scriptures in #26 - #28 above.
 - i. How have you disciplined yourself in taking "*captive every thought [and making them] obedient to Christ*"?
 - ii. How does Paul's illustration of an athlete help you understand the choices you need to make to discipline yourself?

12. Close your time in prayer by asking the Holy Spirit to help each person: remember the lessons taught by the downfall of Saul; remember that the Holy Spirit will be their source of strength and help when, not if, temptation comes their way; be intentional about memorizing Scriptures included in the message so they will be prepared with the Word of God when temptation comes; remember the three-step model of pray, say, and obey.

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).