



"God's Chosen?"

*...with friends like you, who
needs enemies?*

by Pastor Tim Dodson
at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
on Wednesday Feb 15th, 2017

As the pages of 2nd Samuel open before us, they do so with a bittersweet nature. For David was now free, and could finally stop running. Or at least he could stop running from *others* because David would still do a lot of running from himself in his lifetime! It seems that 'justice had been served,' and David would soon be crowned king over Israel.

David had been running for a long time: persecuted, threatened, marginalized, and demeaned. Who would have blamed him if he had expressed some literal joy along with his great relief? After all, he had been upright and faithful. He had been a friend even when dumped on and attacked without cause. He was consistently a man of great character and consistency, despite his confrontational environment. And yet despite being severely maligned without guilt, there was no joy that day in David or in Israel as a whole. David mourned both Jonathan *and* Saul, and still remembered them in the best of contexts and through the lens of better days.

Perhaps it was this kind of trait and such a heart as this that separated David from the pack. After all, we still read of David even yet today, hundreds of years later, despite recorded failures and having committed gross sins. David was the kind of man that was incredibly loyal and loving, even despite the shortcomings of others...even having been on the receiving side of the actual *opposite* behavior from others!

This approach of David is incredibly rare today! For we live in a "me" centered culture that has the inexplicable ability to throw people under the bus when it serves our immediate interests and erase people from our lives if they no longer perceived as beneficial to my personal interests and no longer deemed expedient to my future plans. We tend to use these 'so-called-friends' and then throw them away like kleenex's. And what is incredibly sad and even deeply disturbing, is how much it happens within the realm of the church!

How much we still have to learn concerning what 'God love' really looks like and acts like. How much we have to learn from David and others like him as to what it means to be other centered and to love others as we are loved by God! Because few behaviors compare to this

failure within the Christian realm, ...few actions speak louder as to our worldliness, our flesh control, and according to scripture, our manifest proof of the lack of true salvation. 1 John 4:20 tells us "... *he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?*" That verse goes on to call us 'liars' when we say we are Christians who love God but treat fellow believers in such a marginalized manner. Generally we are quick to cop the plea..."I still love you!", despite some serious actions that say otherwise. Frankly, it is just more of our modern day "mind-over-matter" theology.

The traits of God and how he deals with us is ours to emulate as redeemed children of the light. God is *faithful*. He is loyal and consistent. He, according to Proverbs 18:24, "sticks closer than a brother." That same passage calls upon us to be the friend that we desire to be to others. He is merciful. He is other-centered. He seeks our well-being, and desires our advancement and blessing. He promised to "never leave us...He will never forsake us.." (Heb 13:5) And yet the Christian world wholly dismisses these traits with one another, and thereby can only be deemed as 'not-yet-redeemed.' We cannot act like the world...and further ***stand by*** those sinful actions, and still be accepted as Christians. (2 John 1:9)

Few of us have been so treated as Saul treated David. And yet David still...and throughout the whole of the venture, stood by Him and sought such a peace that if that peace only benefited Saul, it would have been OK with David. You see, David understood something that is critical...mandatory even, for us to live in harmony as children of God: "*It's not about me.*" Luke 6:31 calls us to "*Do to others as you would have them do to you.*" We as Christians must learn to love better. We must stop seeking after my own benefit, comfort and gain, and learn to be loyal, faithful, and loving. For this issue is a terrible stain upon the kingdom of God!

David...in his interaction with God and with the people of Israel, expressed in both cases an intimacy that clearly found favor in the eyes of God. He sought God out in the first verses of chapter 2, asking God *specifically* where he was to go now that Saul had died. God communicated His will to David, as He will certainly do for us also if we are truly seeking that will and have not come to the table with preconceptions and parameters to His answer and directions. We can so often ask God His will..."*which way Lord?*" but in our hearts hold to "*as long as it is to the right and not the left!*" God always held a certain clear wrath for those who misrepresented Him and said He said something that He didn't. So we should be careful in this matter!

David...once he found himself back in Hebron, back in Judah, he was quickly anointed king by the people there. But not everyone saw him as God's choice. Rebellion and selfishness lay in the hearts of men...especially those who reject the voice of God as to direction and plan. David was gentle and loving to the men of Jabesh-Gilead. He expressed his sympathy and sorrow, but also a call for them to essentially "man-up" and do the right thing. But all of his council went 'less

than heeded.' For in fact, the men of Jabesh-Gilead rejected David altogether and set up their own king. Thus the nation was now split...just as modern nations as well as churches do today!

In such situations, someone is not hearing from God. We can both claim to have His ear and stand in His plan, but *someone* is in error! For God is not confused! He has a specific will and is not hampered by men or the plans of men! Paul went off on this issue in the first chapter of 1st Corinthians, literally asking the facetious question "*...is Christ divided?*" We can so often reject the sovereignty of God and the anointing of His will and chosen leaders, and feel we must come to God's rescue and intervene on His behalf! Because after all, this or that thing can't *possibly* be God's plan and will, so we better get in there and throw some rotten tomatoes and picket the courthouse!

But Daniel 4:35 tells us that "*All the people of the earth are nothing compared to him. He does as he pleases among the angels of heaven and among the people of the earth. No one can stop him or say to him, 'What do you mean by doing these things?'*" Do you understand that God can simply drop you and I where we stand? Job 12:10 says "*...the life of every living thing is in his hand, and the breath of every human being.*" He is not hampered by anything, but in reality is all powerful and all knowing. If he wants a leader gone...or *you* gone, He will just 'open His hand' and you are gone. Why then would we not just love each other and leave the rest to God?

This chapter is a sad testimony of what happens with men when they begin to take matters into their own hands and attempt to usurp the sovereignty of God. Invariably, when we move in that direction, we always ended up fighting. How embarrassing. How "un-Christlike." And to make matters worse, we want to claim...like children on the playground..."well HE started it!" But please note what happened when these boys from two different sides, threw down with each other: *they ALL died!* How stupid!

There was no winner in this, as there is never any winner when 2 people or 2 people groups who both claim that "God is no our side" go to battle with each other, even if it is just on facebook! I cannot tell you how ashamed I am at times when people who claim Christ can go at another in the most ungodly way! In the end, it seems they both can end up dead....at least in reputation and credibility!

Everybody lost something in this exchange and nobody won. Perhaps if it wasn't for the scriptural account and a diligent historian, we may not have ever heard about this stupid exchange between two groups who both believed they were God's special chosen. But today we cannot be so naive to think we can escape unnoticed! How many people are out there today who claim that "if THAT is representative of Christianity, then *no thanks!*" For it seems everyone has a cell phone camera and a blog sight, and suddenly our private wars are very much public. Paul warned us in 2 Timothy 2:14 "*Remind them of these things, and charge them before God not to quarrel about words, which does no good, but only ruins the hearers.*"

Jesus said that a house divided cannot stand...and yet Christians are so often divided over issues that are not central to salvation and the gospel. The Body of Christ should not be divided against itself, yet the fact is so many of those who call themselves Christians have in fact forgotten who is the enemy and has turned inward to argue over trivial matters and non-critical doctrine. The old saying goes: " *In Essentials Unity, In Non-Essentials Liberty, In All Things Charity.* " This means that above all things should be love. We all have differences...yet these differences should not make us divided; they should make us complete.

This issue today is quite easily ignored, because it seems we all are often guilty. We have minimized the crucial aspect of growing in the faith, that calls upon us to be more and more like Jesus! 1 Peter 4:17 says "*For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God...*" And the fact is that as Christians we truly need to get our own house in order before we can honestly expect others to hear our words and desire our lifestyle!

God desires us to live in brotherhood. That doesn't mean that there will not be differences or disagreements! But we are called to firstly surrender the control of our lives to a sovereign God who is not hampered by the will and acts of men, nor is he in need of our help! Secondly, we are called to be *different* than the world, and the truth is, so often we are not. We are either not real Christians or we are in sin when we behave in such a way toward one another!

How is your heart towards others around you? Do you know how blessed you are to have brothers and sisters around you who care about you and fellowship with you? Do you REALLY love them? Because if you do not, you will in the end eventually throw them aside to satisfy some desire or want, or to win your point but lose the faith in its pursuit! This is the devil's game, and it is nowhere the character of God. He said "I will never leave you or forsake you." **That** is a friend, as well as a role model, as well as a 'shot across the bow!' Let us not be so tolerant with our ungodly behaviors. When we do, we tarnish the kingdom and do injustice to the cross of Christ.