

2nd Samuel Ch 6

Things are going well for David, he's officially been anointed as King over all of Israel, the 7yr civil war of sorts is over, the nation is united (at least in the technical sense), the yoke of the Philistines have been broken, and God has been going before him showing him what to do and when to do it. David is at a high time in life, and in ch 6 we'll see that now that David has established the fact that Jerusalem is to be the capital city, he decides it's time to bring the ark back into the heartbeat of the people and place it once again in the center of the nation, the nations capital. Now for whatever reason throughout the entire reign of Saul we don't really hear of the ark of the covenant, Saul apparently didn't have much interest in it and since he didn't really commune intimately with the Lord that would make sense. Because the ark was that which represented the presence of the Lord, and if I didn't really have a relationship with the Lord, why would I really concern myself with His presence or wanting to be near Him? But David was a lover of God, his heart went after the Lord, He pursued the presence of God, and so really the 1st official act that he does as the King of Israel after the nation is in order and the enemy is dealt with is seek to re-establish the ark in it's proper place.

He wanted the ark right there in the capital city, he desired to be near and around, and in the presence of God, and he wanted to give God His proper place in the heart of the nation once again. But we'll run into problems in this chapter as well seeing that consistent theme that seems to be woven throughout the scriptures, that being that the end never justifies the means. And I guess that theme has such a prominent place in the Word of God because we as a people will do anything to rationalize and justify our sin. We just can't stand the thought of being completely wrong and simply having to confess that we've sinned and have no redemptive quality about our lives or actions at all. But over and over we see situations in the bible and people seeking to bring about a noble end in a sinful way. And I just can't stress enough the fact that it goes against the very essence of all that God is to somehow seek to justify sin or evil that good may come. And in this case we're not even talking about some gross, or heinous act of murder, or something of that effect such as we seen last time, we're talking about a simple neglect of the instructions as found in God's Word. Disobedience even with the best of intentions is still disobedience. And God will deal with our disobedience, He's given us His direction for our lives in His Word, and there's just no excuse for not seeking that direction for a given situation. And that's the lesson we'll see in this chapter, God deals with disobedience, and blesses obedience.

Vs1-2

Now if you'll look in your margin you'll find there that Baale Judah is another name for Kirjath Jearim. And this is where the ark has been for some 70 or so years basically in a fella by the name of Abinadab's garage with a tarp thrown over it. Now you recall that the ark was that piece of furniture that was found in the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle that was basically a box approximately 2'x 3', made of Achaia wood, overlaid with pure gold, and on top of the box was the lid which was made of pure gold and fashioned on this lid was 2 cherubim with outstretched wings over the lid, the lid was called the Mercy Seat.

And it's in the Holy of Holies that the High Priest would go once a year on the Day of Atonement and sprinkle blood over the Mercy Seat and the glory of God would be there and God would meet with the people over the Mercy Seat. And so regarding the OT the ark represented the presence of God, typically speaking it's one of the most profound pictures of Jesus Christ in the OT.

Even as Jesus when He walked this earth was fully God, and fully man in 1 being, this ark being both wood and gold, representing both humanity and deity, yet only one box. And of course Jesus Christ is our Mercy Seat, it is in Him that God will meet with us, it's in Him that our sin is atoned for and there's so much we could talk about regarding the ark and what it represents and speaks of to us. But suffice it to say for now that David desired the presence of God to be in the heart of the nation there in Jerusalem.

Well the question comes up, what's the ark doing there in Kirjath Jearim? I'm sure you remember back in 1st Samuel Ch 4 when the Israelites were once again fighting with the Philistines and their clock was being cleaned. And so someone had the bright idea, "Let's take the ark with us into the battle, then we can't lose!" As if the ark was some sort of lucky charm, and they placed their trust in the ark of God rather than the God of the ark, they were sort of "Boxing God in" thinking they couldn't lose with that thing in their midst. And so Eli the priest let them take it and of course hearing that they had the ark scared the daylights out of the Philistines and they came to the conclusion that they were going to have to fight harder than they ever had or they were going to die. And as you know Israel was beaten badly and 30,000 foot soldiers fell and the Philistines captured the ark. To make a long story short, God began to plague the Philistines and so eventually they said, "This ark isn't worth having around send it back to Israel." And so they loaded it up on a new cart, attached a couple of cows to the cart and they went straight for the borders of Israel with no one to guide them. Well the people of Beth Shemesh were out harvesting their wheat and they looked up and lo and behold here comes the ark on this cart with these 2 cows just pulling the thing along. So after sacrificing the cows, all these people gather around the ark, and probably under the guise of wanting to make sure everything was in tact they take the Mercy Seat off to uncover the Law and 50,070 men were struck down by the Lord and they died. The point there being that the Law kills, we're always to have Mercy covering the Law, to remove mercy is to invite death; we're to abide under the covering of Christ. But understandably so this radically shook up the people of Beth Shemesh and so they called some guys from Kirjath Jearim and so they came and took the ark and brought it into the house of Abinadab and there it's sat ever since. I mean, 30,000 people died in a war having trusted the ark, it plagued the Philistines immensely, when it came back to Israel over 50,000 people were killed who tampered with it, people were afraid, not knowing what to think or do with it.

But David says, “Hey, this thing represents God’s presence, it doesn’t need to be in some guys garage with a tarp over it, it needs to be properly placed in the heart of the nation.” (Even as God desires the central position of our lives and hearts. But so often we have Him in some little side cavity with a tarp thrown over Him.) And so even as 30,000 men were killed by the Philistines in the war that took place in which the ark was a part of and ultimately captured, even so he takes 30,000 men to bring the thing back.

Vs3-5

So you get the picture we have a massive parade going here, and it includes cutting edge technology, accompanied by the latest hits, this is a big deal. “We’re going to see God’s presence ushered back into the heart of the land and the hearts of the people, and if we’re going to see that we’ve got to promote this thing big.” And so the 1st thing we need is lots of people, 30,000 choice soldiers, of course this adds to the gravity and the grandeur of the whole thing, plus it adds a sense of safety. “We don’t the ark recaptured in a terrorist attack or something.” “And we need the guys that are most familiar with the thing in charge of the procession.”

And so there they are Uzzah and Ahio, the ark’s been in their house for at least 70yrs and so by the time they were even born there it was ark out in the garage, “Hey dad what’s that thing?” “It’s the ark of the covenant.” “What’s it doing here?” “Some men dropped it off here and there it’s sat ever since.” So these boys have grown up around the thing, “Lets put them out in front.” Of course we need the best musicians in all the land, guitars, drums, tambourines, the works. But most importantly the latest technology on display, “A new cart.” Not an old cart, not for the ark, we need the latest greatest, nothing has ever been on it, it hasn’t ran through pastures and picked up manure, or been worn out, it’s got to be new. We don’t need the Pinto of carts; we need the Ferrari of new carts, the Cadillac, or the Mercedes. And so here we go, we’ve got the music playing, the soldiers marching, the ark proceeding, and it gets better, we’ve got Uzzah, and Ahio out in front, why is that better? Because “Uzzah” means “Strength” and “Ahio” means “Brotherly”, or “Friendly.” So the cherry on top of it all; “Strength” and “Friendliness” out there going before it all.

This is a lot like a modern day church service, how often we’d love to have things *this* ideal. Or maybe like a conference or something, we sit around and we think, “We really want the presence of God ushered in, and the people renewed.” “So lets have an event that gathers masses of people (Promise Keepers or something), we want a cutting edge praise and worship team, and the latest technology.” “A new cart”; composed of boards and big wheels. “That’s what we need, gather the board around, we need some ‘big wheels’ at this event.” And we do all these things, and we have strong and confident people out there with Mr. And Mrs. Friendly passing out the bulletins and promoting the thing, I mean, I can understand this mentality. We want a strong leadership and a strong and healthy fellowship with an inviting and friendly atmosphere and congregation, nothing-wrong with that; it’s a good thing.

But in all this fanfare and elaborate display of procession on thing is missing, did you catch it? Things have been going so good for David, he's just rolling with it, and in this case we never read where he sought the Lord, inquired of the Lord as to what direction He'd have to be taken in this event. David is thinking naturally, using common sense, and again there's nothing-wrong with big events, the latest technology, and having a great time in the Lord, being that's the way the Lord leads you. But are those things necessary to usher in the presence of the Lord? No. As a matter of fact this seems to take on the flavor (in this case) of the worlds approach. You see the last time the ark was transported any real distance it was from the land of the Philistines back to Israel, and how was it that they delivered the ark? On a cart with 2 cows pulling it, David no doubt aware of that story seeks to transport it back to Jerusalem the same way. The problem is that the world may do things because they're in the world, it's like when Christians are shocked because someone they know has done something ungodly, but they're not even believers. What do you want them to do? They *are* ungodly, so they're not going to obey the scriptures, but as for *His people* God has given *them* instructions that they *are* to obey. And God has given specific instructions in His Word as for how His presence is to be ushered in, how the ark was to be transported, how Jesus Christ is to be propelled and proclaimed and how He's brought into the heart of the matter and into a circumstance or scenario, or a service. And huge hype, elaborate procession, and fanfare are not on the list of necessary criteria. Now we need to understand that what David is doing here is not a bad thing, he's wanting to bring the ark from someone's garage into the nations capital. "One nation under God" but he's going about it in a wrong way, and what we'll see here is that good intentions by themselves isn't enough. It's like being sincere in what we believe.

Sincerity never saved anyone, and likewise good intentions can't rationalize or justify disobedience, we need good intentions, but they need to be cradled in obedience, let's see what happens here.

Vs 6-7

Can I say the music just stopped, everyone is rushing around Uzzah, take his pulse, is he breathing? He's dead, here they were going along, they came to this threshing floor and the oxen stumbled, oh no! The ark, it's sliding, it might fall and all this is happening in a matter of seconds and so Uzzah reaches out his hands to steady the ark and God kills him immediately. And so this big event comes crashing to an end. Touching the ark was strictly forbidden, even to gaze upon it was restricted but God was being merciful, but God's Word was clear that who ever touched this holy relic would surely die. When God was speaking to Moses as to the transporting of the articles of the tabernacle He said very clearly, "*They shall not touch any holy thing, lest they die.*" Num 4:15 But to be honest with you touching the ark here was in no way the only thing that they did wrong, there were several violations here as to the transporting of the ark. As a matter of fact the book of Ex gives clear instructions on how the ark was to be transported and a cart was never part of the deal, it was to be carried on the shoulders of men supported by the poles overlaid with gold that went through the hoops that were fashioned on it, and not just any men, but Levites (priests). And not just any Levite, but the specific family that had been consecrated to that work, the sons of Kohath.

And so in vs 7 when it speaks of the “Error of Uzzah” we’re speaking of more than just a reflex action. He made the mistake in a moment’s time to disregard the clear instruction of the Word of God to do what seemed right to him in the moment. Even our split second decisions matter to God, and so though his actions was wrong, it was based in the err of how he thought, his perspective. He erred thinking God needed help to get Him out of this pinch, he erred thinking it didn’t matter who transported the ark, or how the ark was transported, and what if it fell? Was the ground there less holy than his hand, had the ground sinned against God, or rebelled in anyway? Uzzah had, he probably felt somewhat responsible since it had been at his house for so long, but that was irrelevant, just because it sat under his roof, that didn’t make him an authority on the handling of it.

And notice where all this took place, “Nachon’s threshing floor”, what was a threshing floor, it was that place that the stalks of wheat would be thrashed and the wheat would be separated from the chaff. And it was at the threshing floor that God would separate the wheat from the chaff, that which was legit, vs the hype and the fanfare. The lesson here is obvious, God’s work has to be done God’s way, if it’s to have God’s blessing. We can never presume upon the Lord even with the best of intentions, we’re never an exception to the black and white realities of His Word.

Vs8-9

David couldn’t understand, he was doing things with such noble intentions and yet the Lord broke out against them, and David feared the Lord. And this my friends was the beginning of David’s wisdom in this situation, we do well to fear the Lord. The bible says, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.*” Prov 9:10. And again, “*The fear of the LORD is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death.*” Prov 14:27. And finally “*The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.*” Prov 15:33 You know people do a lot of stupid things because they don’t fear the Lord, but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, it causes you to search a matter out so that you might accomplish it in a manner that is pleasing to God and befitting to His Word. And that’s exactly what happened for David, he feared the Lord, and it spawned on this question, “How can the ark of the Lord come to me?”

Obviously not like I was doing it before, so David puts a halt to this thing until he can find out, because so far all that the ark has done in Israel recent history is seemingly bring death and destruction, so maybe this thing’s turned sour.

Vs10

Wouldn't you've liked to have had this phone line tapped? "Obed, this is David." "David, you're my king, thanks for calling?" "Well, I was needing a place to store the ark for a few months and I was wondering if you could help me out?" "Sure, you're my king, what's going on, I thought you were taking it to Jerusalem?" "Yeah, yeah we were but on the way God struck somebody dead for touching it and we're pretty much afraid to have it around so we were wondering if we could keep it at your house for a couple of months?" So Obed-Edom sort of swallowed hard, said "Ok" and he takes the thing in and just begins to watch his kids, and his farm, and all and he's wondering when the curse is coming, I mean this thing is dangerous to have around, but notice vs 11.

Vs 11-12

Now I personally don't think this was a situation whereby David was selfishly seeking the blessing, I think David was just elated to hear that the Ark wasn't somehow hexed and that God was blessing the individual who welcomed His presence into His life, David realizes God isn't mad at him and says, "Let's go get it and give it a proper home." Now what we don't see in this account that the parallel passage in 1st Chronicles reveals to us is that during this interim period, David searched out the matter, found out how God desired the situation to go through the study of His Word and implemented that process here. We so often seek to solicit God's presence through the hype and big fanfare, with the latest technology, and the big fanfare, but the fact is God's presence shows up, being bore in the lives of a consecrated people who are living in obedience to His Word. The gospel is carried to people upon your shoulders, how can the ark of the Lord come to you, how can the presence of the Lord be ushered into this place, not by new carts, and strength and friendliness, but by diligently seeking His face through the study of His word and living in willing obedience to His Word. You see Uzzah was struck dead for doing what he thought in the moment was the right thing, "*There is a way that seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.*" Prov 14:12 But Peter tells us, "*His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.*" 2 Peter 1:3 Or to understand these things another way, ignorance or disobedience to God's Word invites death, but careful study and obedience brings life.

Vs13-19

So this 2nd attempt went much better, the Lord honored it, and it was a celebration. Now notice that they were both big productions, and again 1st Chron 15 elaborates more on this, but David realized the sin wasn't in the production of it. And sometimes believers get confused on this issue, there are those who think that any huge production with the hype and fanfare has to be of the Lord, but that's not necessarily true, other's believe that if it's anything other than a small solemn and sober environment then it's not of God, God forbids any show of emotion or temptation to smile. But that's not true either; the problem wasn't in the size of the production it was in the fact that they didn't seek the Lord or obey His Word. Notice the 2nd time the carts gone; Uzzah is certainly gone, as is Ahio, now the priests are bearing the ark, and things are being done right.

And this is always the way the Lord would have things to be done, the size of the production is a peripheral matter, what we need to know is that God's presence isn't ushered in on the slick new cart, with strength and friendliness leading the way. God brings His glory and His presence in on the shoulders of a consecrated, and obedient, people of praise.

And notice this time David wasn't wearing his kingly robes, waving and behaving as if he were royalty as the procession went by and the ark was passing through. No, this time he's cast off his kingly robes, put on the priestly garment, the linen ephod, and has become a worshipper. He's not set apart from the people, he's on equal par, they're all one in this thing, and David is dancing and worshipping with the rest of them. Don't think that David wasn't dancing alone performing for the people, this was a procession where by the nation was celebrating and David was among the priest, dancing and worshipping with the rest of them with all of his heart. And So there are those who make a big deal of emotions, and then there are others who think the zenith of spirituality is to be like a spiritual Dr. Spock completely detached of all emotion. And either extreme is equally out of line, God has made us with emotions and it's ok to express them, but what we need to see here is that what David did was acceptable in that it was fitting to the context of the scenario. This was a parade, with a marching band, it was a festival and celebration, David was doing nothing out of context, nor did it draw undue attention to himself; it was just a big celebration. He wasn't doing laps in the sanctuary, or standing up and falling down, or being disorderly to the environment. Now if this was the Day of Atonement it would've been out of place, but it was appropriate to the context of the celebration that was going on.

And so David is topped out, it's a Mt top experience, everyone is blessed, they had a big BBQ, and David thinks, "Hey, I don't want to leave my family out of this, I'm going to go and just bless them."

Vs20

It's like in walks giggles the happy elf! Right off the Mt into the valley, David *walks* in prepared to *bless*, and she's *waiting* there prepared to *blast*. She was looking down upon David from the window of her superiority and despised him, and when she says he was uncovered, don't think he was out there in his fruit of the looms like some have projected. He was wearing the priestly garment, her point is that he took off his royal robes and became "a commoner" he went "down to their level" and it shamed her, she liked the accolades of man and was insulted to be considered anything but royalty.

Vs21-23

Notice what David said, "I wasn't trying to impress you anyway, it was before the Lord." And this should be the foundation of all worship, it's before the Lord, so often we judge a worship time by how we feel, or what we get out of it. "I was so moved, the Lord was really there." Worship isn't for you, it's not for me, it's not about how I feel or what I get out of it, it's before the Lord that we worship, it's about blessing Him. But I also should say that this isn't justification for an "anything goes" type attitude as it regards to worship.

If you have a thing for air horns and you just love blast them off, it reminds you of the trumpet blasts of the OT, they just shout out praise to God. And so you bring one to church and just when you feel the Spirit really moving you, you blast the sucker off. And so the ushers come and say, "Hey, we're going to need to confiscate that air horn." And you say, "It's before the Lord that I blast this thing." Or, "That I play track star running around the sanctuary." Well again the problem is that that wouldn't be appropriate to the context of the worship setting. It draws unnecessary attention to you, taking it off of Jesus Christ

And finally we see that this critical spirit, refusing to worship made for a barren and unfruitful life for Michal. And the same is true for you and me, even as unforgiveness binds you and imprisons you, so bitterness, and criticism, refusing to worship the Lord, makes for a barren and unfruitful life in the Lord. So live your life in consecrated obedience to the Lord and to His Word, and don't be a barren blasting critic, be a blessed and fruitful worshiper.