

Greatness – 1 Chronicles 11

I. INTRODUCTION – Read 1 Samuel 16:4-13

A. *Fame & the Atheist*

1. Some years ago, a well-known atheist author toured Europe giving speeches at several large auditoriums.
2. He was given honors at colleges & by royalty.
2. With him on this tour was his wife & young daughter.
3. The little girl was impressed her father was so famous.
4. When they returned home, she said, “Daddy, I guess pretty soon you’ll know everybody but God.”

B. *Disney*

1. A reporter once asked Walt Disney how it felt to be a celebrity.
2. He replied, “It’s great when it gets me tickets to a football game. –
3. But it’s never helped “make a good picture,” my golf game, or impressed my wife & child. ¹
4. “It doesn’t even help keep the fleas off our dogs, & if being a celebrity won’t give me an advantage over a couple of fleas, then I guess there can’t be that much to it after all.”

C. *American Idol Winners*

1. In the 1960’s, artist Andy Warhol was fascinated by his *own* rise to fame & realized the role modern media played in making people into celebrities.
2. He studied *how* the media *manufactures* fame.
3. In 1968 he gave the now famous quote – “In the future, everyone will be famous for 15 minutes.”
4. That future is now. How *fleeting* fame has turned out to be.
5. Consider the phenomenon of *American Idol*.
 - a. This year’s winner is David Cook. The runner up is David Archuleta.
 - b. Who was last season’s winner? Runner up?

Season/ Year	Winner	Runner-up
SEASON 6 - 2007	Jordin Sparks	Blake Lewis
SEASON 5 - 2006	Taylor Hicks	Katharine McPhee
SEASON 4 - 2005	Carrie Underwood	Bo Bice
SEASON 3 - 2004	Fantasia Barrino	Diana DeGarmo
SEASON 2 - 2003	Ruben Studdard	Clay Aiken
SEASON 1 - 2002	Kelly Clarkson	Justin Guarini

D. *Greatness*

1. The world sees *greatness* in terms of *fame* -
2. Arising from being *entertaining*, or *rich*, or *powerful*.
3. But that kind of greatness *doesn’t last*.
4. And according to those who’ve attained it, it doesn’t *satisfy*.
5. Today, we’re going to take a look at what the *Bible* means by greatness.
6. We see it in the life of David.

II. TEXT

A. *Set Up*

1. In ch. 10 we read of the death of Saul, 1st king of Israel.

¹ His exact words were slightly different from this.

2. They were at war with their nemesis the Philistines.
 - a. The battle went badly & Saul's sons were slain.
 - b. Fearing he'd fall into enemy hands to be humiliated & tortured, Saul took his own life.
3. Since there was no one left in Saul's family capable of ruling, the throne was left without a successor.
4. But for years some had looked to David, the champion of Israel & one of Saul's premier generals as the one who *ought* to be king, even before Saul's end.
5. The great prophet Samuel had already endorsed & anointed David for the throne.
6. Saul's repeated refusals to obey God had moved Samuel to *revoke* his rule & install David in his place. But Saul refused to turn the crown over to David.
7. Now that Saul was dead, the way to the throne was clear & David's own tribe of Judah immediately pledged their loyalty.
8. His first 7 years as king were spent in the city of Hebron in Judah.
9. The other tribes were slow to accept David as Saul's replacement.
10. They hoped some relative of Saul's would surface.
11. After 7 years, when none did, the tribes their leaders to David at Hebron, asking him to rule over them as well.

B. Vs. 1-3

¹ Then all Israel came together to David at Hebron, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. ² Also, in time past, even when Saul was king, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD your God said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over My people Israel.' " ³ Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel, according to the word of the LORD by Samuel.

1. As soon as the tribes acknowledged David King, he moved his capital north.
2. In v. 4 we read . . .

C. Vs. 4-8

⁴ And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus, where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. ⁵ But the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, "You shall not come in here!" Nevertheless David took the stronghold of Zion (that is, the City of David). ⁶ Now David said, "Whoever attacks the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain." And Joab the son of Zeruah went up first, and became chief. ⁷ Then David dwelt in the stronghold; therefore they called it the City of David. ⁸ And he built the city around it, from the Millo to the surrounding area. Joab repaired the rest of the city.

1. David knew if he was to be king over *all* the tribes, he needed to move his capital to a location more central to the nation.
2. Jerusalem was the prefect spot.
 - a. It was in a small region of unclaimed territory on the border of several tribes.
 - b. It was easily defended & lay at an important crossroads at the heart of the nation.
3. The problem is, it was inhabited by the Jebusites.
 - a. And because the city was easily defended, conquering it would prove a challenge.
 - b. David devised a brilliant plan for taking it.
 - c. As king, he needed to select some sharp guys to head the army.
 - d. He decided to make the conquest of Jerusalem a testing ground.
 - e. He lay a challenge before his army: The guy who could devise the plan for taking Jerusalem & leading the charge would be his chief general.

4. David's army laid siege to the city & one day, Joab figured out a way to sneak into it.
 - a. By diligent observation, he found a secret tunnel thru which the Jebusites were getting their water.
 - b. He broke into the tunnel & with a small group climbed into the city, then opened the gates & let the army in.
5. Once in control, David set about to repair & enlarge it as was fitting for the capital of the nation.
6. But it's what we read in v. 9 that I want to focus on today . . .

D. V. 9

⁹ So David went on and became great, and the LORD of hosts was with him.

1. David is one of those characters from history that's larger than life.
2. He's a fascinating mix of things we don't often see in one person.
3. He *begins* as an overlooked member of an ordinary family.
 - a. His father & brothers didn't have many expectations of greatness for him –
 - b. That's why he was assigned the task of *tending* the family flock of sheep –
 - c. A lonely & lowly job to be sure.
4. When the prophet Samuel visited their home, saying the next king of Israel was to come from Jesse's sons, their opinion of David was so low they didn't even bother sending for him!
5. David the shepherd was also a *musician* & composer of song whose lyrics in the Psalms *continue* to inspire composers to this day.
6. Why, he's one of the original inventors of musical worship & praise! What we did this morning has its roots in David's innovations with the priests & temple 3000 years ago!
7. Add to music his skill as an *architect & builder*.
 - a. The plans for Jerusalem were his.
 - b. The *millo* referred to in v. 8 was David's *invention* – it was a massive retaining wall type structure that allowed for more of the city to be developed.
8. Add to his skill as an architect & inventor, his incredible *military prowess*.
 - a. This is the guy who dropped Goliath & led dozens of victorious military battle & campaigns.
 - b. He was both a “lover & a fighter!”
9. What's *surprising* on top of all this is to see how David was also a brilliant *organizer & administrator*.
 - a. I've been around musicians & artists long enough to know they are *rarely* organized.
 - b. Chaos is usually more their mode. [the stage]
 - c. David was a huge contradiction in this regard.
 - 1) He arranged his kingdom into administrative districts,
 - 2) He organized the military.
 - 3) He even worked with the priest to arrange how they conducted their ministry.
10. Of course, when we think of David, we remember the main 2 stories of his life; His run in with Goliath & with Bathsheba.
 - a. The first was a stunning victory,
 - b. The second an equally stunning defeat!
11. But both stories reveal how David lived → *By extremes!*
 - a. When he was *good*, he was very, very good.
 - b. But when he was *bad*, he was *awful!*
12. There was *nothing mediocre* about David. He was either hot or cold – *rarely* could he be accused of being lukewarm.
13. As he says in the Psalms, in those times when his heart strayed from God, *he knew it!*

- a. He admitted he wasn't where he *ought* to be & that there was only one direction to go – Back to God!
- b. In Psalm 32 David describes what he felt after his sin with Bathsheba. In vs 3-5 . . .

³When I kept silent, my bones grew old Through my groaning all the day long. ⁴For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; My vitality was turned into the drought of summer. ⁵I acknowledged my sin to You, And my iniquity I have not hidden. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD," And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

14. But the greatness of David mentioned in v. 9 isn't found *in any or all* of these things.

15. The cause of His greatness is discovered right here – look at it again . . .

So David went on and became great, and the LORD of hosts was with him.

- a. It's all one thought in Hebrew.
 - b. David became great **BECAUSE** God was with him.
 - c. It wasn't David's innate talent as a musician, or warrior, or leader that made him great.
 - d. God made David great!
 - e. And He made him great for one simple reason → **God was great to David!**
 - f. He was David's greatest thing; the most important, all-consuming passion & purpose of his life.
16. Sure there were times when David lost his grip on that truth, but he always returned to it.
17. When he realized his heart had strayed & God was no longer his center, he repented quickly & radically.
- a. He even composed songs marking his repentance & taught them to others.
 - b. Imagine last Tuesday you messed up & committed some major sin.
 - c. Then Wednesday morning, after a sleepless night, you repented.
 - d. Wednesday afternoon you wrote a chorus confessing your sin & the joy of being restored to the Lord.
 - e. Then you come Thursday night to worship practice & share it with the worship team.
 - f. Then today, you stand up here & share the song & have everyone else join in.
18. That's what David did in many of the Psalms!
19. Each & every one of the Psalms is an emotion-filled expression of worship to God.
- a. Most times the emotion is joy & celebration.
 - b. Often it's a deep & reverent *awe* at the glory & holiness of God.
 - c. Occasionally the Psalms are cries of desperation or confusion.
 - d. Whatever the theme – they're laden w/emotion, the expression of a heart seeking God.
20. THIS is the root, the cause of what made David great – **His heart was given to God.**
21. David was great, *because* God was great to David. God was David's life!

E. 1 Samuel 16:13

1. Remember the last verse of our reading in 1 Samuel 16:13 –
Then Samuel took the horn of oil & anointed [David] in the midst of his brothers; & the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward.
2. At the time of this anointing to be King, David was in his mid-teens.
3. But God knew his heart; & found there what He was looking for.
4. This is why God calls David a man after his own heart.
 - a. Interesting – God called David *a man* when he was still in many ways still a child.
 - b. But God was looking past that moment to what the child would become *because* his heart *was* given to God.
5. When the oil from Samuel's flask fell on David's head, God gave to David what he'd always longed for – God's abiding presence.

6. It was *that* which made David great.

F. The Call To Greatness

1. There is in all of us a sense of *destiny*; that we're called to *greatness*.
 2. Buried deep within us is an awareness of our *significance* – that we're much more than just a cosmic accident.
 3. God created us in His image for a reason – so we could have a *real relationship* with Him.
 - a. One that was intimate & personal.
 - b. One that was marked by love & a devotion that flows both ways.
 - c. God didn't create us to be His *pets* – He made us in His image so we could be His Bride!
 - d. This is the picture constantly presented to us in Scripture of the kind of relationship God wants for us; the one Jesus came to make possible.
 4. Though the Fall *marred* the image of God in men & women, it's not been completely destroyed.
 - a. It's still there, waiting to be restored by the Spirit.
 - b. It *begins* w/being born again thru faith in Christ & grows over time as we grow in grace.
 5. This is our destiny, our greatness, our significance.
-
6. The world's concept of greatness is a tweaked counterfeit, like everything else this fallen world believes.
 - a. The world thinks fame is greatness; to see one's names in lights or on a theater marquee.
 - b. Or it equates greatness with wealth & power.
 7. But fame is fleeting & wealth, well, you can't take it with you.
 8. Study after study has proven *you can't buy happiness*.
 9. Those who accumulate power all give the same testimony – there's no satisfaction there.
 - a. Once you attain power, you end up doing everything you can to keep it.
 - b. There's no end to those who want to take it away from you to make it their own.
 - c. It's sad but true; the *most* powerful are also some of the *most* insecure & paranoid.
 10. When those who seek significance, purpose, & happiness by those things the *world counts* as greatness achieve them, they discover what they were looking for *wasn't* there =
 - a. There's no **PEACE!**
 - b. Though they've gained what the *world calls* greatness, there's still that inner sense they've *not* succeeded at what's most important, at what it was their lives were *supposed* to be about.
-
11. David's name would have been lost to history if he'd not made God his center & purpose.
 - a. After all, Israel was a relatively insignificant kingdom that had little more than a bit part in the history of the large empires around her.
 - b. David's fame may have lasted a couple generations but then like everyone else he'd have faded away.
 - c. It wasn't his musical talent or organizational skill that ensured his greatness.
 - d. It was this – He loved & served God with all his heart & might in whatever he was doing;
 - e. Whether that was tending his father's sheep as a teenager, or leading the nation as a King.
 - f. It was all the same to David – because it was all about loving & serving God.

III. CONCLUSION

A. Our Greatness

1. There's only one way to find the peace our hearts long for –
2. And that's to set our sites on the greatness we were created for → To love & serve God.
3. Greatness isn't found in fame, or accumulating wealth & power; those are just the world's counterfeits.

- a. More than that, they're harmful distractions that divert us from what's right & good.
- b. They seek to steal our hearts away from God.
4. Greatness isn't defined by a title or position.
5. It's a life lived as it was created to be – in love with God.
 - a. It matters not if that life is called to be a king or a shepherd,
 - b. A CEO of a major multinational corporation or one of its janitors,
 - c. A high-fashion model or a stay-at-home mom.
 - d. Greatness is not the position in the world we hold, it's the posture of our hearts toward God.
 - e. It's not how many love us- it's **Who we love**.

B. Two Brothers

1. Two brothers discussed their life goals after church one day.
 2. The first brother's goal was to be rich & famous.
 3. The second brother's goal was to follow Jesus to the fullest in however God led him.
 4. The first brother achieved his goal; he became quite wealthy, but his *fame* came from his brother –
 5. You see, the second brother also reach *his* goal. His name was David Livingstone, the renowned medical missionary & explorer of Africa who led thousands to faith in Christ.
 6. Livingstone's devotion to God was so single-minded, even when he became ill with malaria he refused to return to his native Scotland.
 7. He died while on his knees, praying beside his bed in the African village of Ilala in Zambia.
 8. Livingstone's *body* was buried in Westminster Abbey, one of the greatest honors that can be conferred on an Englishman.
 9. But he was so loved & honored by the Africans, they buried his *heart* under a special tree near where he died.
 10. They said while Livingstone's body belonged to England, his heart belonged to Africa.
 11. Really, his heart belonged *to God*. That's what moved him to *give himself* to Africa.
 12. What, *or who*, does your heart belong to?
-