

2 Samuel Series #1

“A Solemn Reminder” — 2 Samuel 6:1-11

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *Memory*

1. How's your memory?
2. I find that my memory is very selective
 - a. I remember things I want to very easily
 - b. but things I dislike I tend to forget
3. My kids are like that too
 - a. they rarely remember to do their chores
 - b. but if I mention that we *might* take them to Magic Mountain, they will ask me every day for 3 weeks when we're going
4. As you know, I just turned 40, and I've been looking for the signs of aging
 - a. I can see them around the eyes
 - b. and around here (point to waist)
 - c. but I've also noticed that my memory isn't as sharp as it used to be
 - d. I do forget things that I shouldn't
 - e. if not for my trusty planner, I'd be a mess!
5. How's your memory?

B. *Don't Forget!*

1. Regardless of whether we have a good or bad memory, there are certain things we must not forget
2. To forget them would be disastrous
 - a. like the traffic laws
 - b. and how to drive our cars
3. We tend to remember these things because we deal with them every day
4. And it's a good thing we remember, because to forget would be dangerous
5. Well, there is one all important thing we must never forget
6. Because to do so would be the greatest peril of all
7. We'll be seeing just what that one thing is in our study today . . .

II. TEXT

A. *Vs. 1-2*

{1} Again David gathered all the choice men of Israel, thirty thousand.

{2} And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim.

1. This was only the second national gathering since David had been made

- King of all Israel
2. The first was at Hebron at David's coronation
 3. But David had now conquered the city of Jerusalem and taken it from the Jebusites
 4. He intended to make Jerusalem his capital and the center of the nation
 5. And because David desired to dwell in the presence of God, he decided he would bring the ark there
 6. During the entire reign of Saul, the religious heart of Israel had gone pretty much lacking
 7. But David desired to re-unite the people, not only around his throne, but around their worship of Jehovah
 8. So David called for the leaders of the land to meet him at Baale Judah, another name for Kirjath Jearim, where the ark had been resting for some 70 years after it had been returned to Israel by the Philistines
 9. Now, before we move on, take careful note of the way the writer describes the ark
 10. It is **“the ark of God, whose name is called by the Name, the LORD of Hosts, who dwells between the cherubim.”**
 - a. do you get any clues from this?
 - b. doesn't it seem that the author holds the ark in great reverence and respect?
 - c. indeed he does, and we'll see why in just a moment

B. Vs. 3-5

{3} So they set the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, drove the new cart.

{4} And they brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill, accompanying the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark.

{5} Then David and all the house of Israel played music before the LORD on all kinds of instruments of fir wood, on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on sistrums, and on cymbals.

1. This was a happy day for David and for Israel
2. There was nothing David wanted more in life than to be in fellowship with God
3. We read the Psalms and are struck with the intensity of his desire to dwell in God's presence
4. For David, and for all Israel, the ark represented the presence and majesty of God
5. No doubt David's heart was at the bursting point as he anticipated having the ark in Jerusalem, just a short distance from where he lived
6. Since he loved music, he had the people bring out their instruments and celebrate the whole way as they traveled

7. Kirjath Jearim was a little over 10 miles southwest of Jerusalem
 - a. the ark had been kept in the home of a priest named Abinadab
 - b. in 1 Sam. 7 we read that when it first came to his house he appointed his son Eleazar to keep the ark
 - c. but many years have passed and both Eleazar and Abinadab are likely dead
 - d. Uzzah and Ahio were probably Abinadab's grandsons
 - e. the word in the Hebrew means a descendant
8. It's a bit of a trip, so they load the ark on a new cart
9. And then Uzzah and Ahio drive, or guide, the cart
 - a. with Ahio out front
 - b. and Uzzah in back
10. Now, an astute bible reader will immediately see something wrong here
11. In Numbers 4, God had given very clear instructions to the priests about how they were to handle the holy things of the tabernacle
 - a. whenever they moved from place to place, the sons of Aaron were to go in to the holy places and cover the holy things with the curtains that formed the walls of the tabernacle
 - b. it was only *after* they were covered that they were to be moved
 - c. and only one family or clan of the priests were allowed to carry the holy things
 - d. they were called the *Kohathites*
 - e. they were *not* supposed to transport the tabernacle furniture on carts;
 - f. they were to carry them
 - g. God gave *special* instructions for the handling of the ark
 - h. it had rings on its four corners through which gold covered wooden staves were passed
 - i. and then it was to be lifted and carried on the shoulders of the Kohathites
12. God was not just being particular in this requirement
13. There was special reason for it
14. You see, all of the tabernacle was the place where the people met with God
 - a. specifically, the ark was the place where God's presence would be made visible
 - b. That is why in v. 2 we read that the ark belonged to God, who dwells between the cherubim
 - c. on top of the ark were molded to cherubs, with their wings outstretched, facing each other
 - d. it was there, between the cherubim that the glory of God would appear
 - e. therefore, the ark was the holiest and most important piece of furniture in the tabernacle - in a manner of speaking, it was God's earthly throne
15. God gave the command that the ark was to be carried on their shoulders because He wanted to give them a picture of the kind of relationship He wanted to have with them
16. He wanted to be *among* them, *with* them, *on* them
17. He wanted them to carry His name *upon* them where ever they went
18. The ark was never to be carried about on a cart or in a wagon

- a. in other words—God didn't want their *relationship* with Him to devolve into mere *religion*
- b. He didn't want it to turn into a business, a task, a duty, or a chore—in which they would look for the *easiest* way to get things done
19. No—the ark was to be carried, as a living reminder that God wants to be *among* His people, not following behind them as some kind of burdensome add-on
20. But David, along with the priests had forgotten this command
21. And so now, as they begin the trip to Jerusalem, they load up the ark on a cart
22. Of course, it was a *new* cart, because the ark deserved a new cart!
23. The priests were only thinking of the easiest way to move the ark, of getting the job done
24. They didn't take the time to search the Scriptures and the mind of God to see how the ark should be moved
25. And as a result, they did the right thing, the wrong way
26. Friends, this tale is being told in countless lives of God's people and in hundreds and hundreds of churches
27. Christianity has fallen from being a *relationship* with the living God to a dead *religious* form
28. For many, they no longer carry Christ in their hearts; they go to church to meet with Him on Sunday mornings
29. And many churches, instead of seeking God's way of ministering to people, are consulting with the *experts* on how to do ministry in the 90's
 - a. instead of the study of God's word and prayer—
 - b. they are trying all kinds of new fangled *programs* to get people to church
 - c. instead of seeking to bring people into God's presence—
 - d. they are trying to have the biggest and best church in town
30. You know what a cart is don't you?
 - a. it's nothing but boards and big wheels
 - b. we'll that's really what a lot of churches are today - boards and big wheels
30. God does not want the gathering of His people to be a professional production of slick, packaged music and speaking
31. He simply wants to find ready and open hearts who will welcome and honor Him
32. This presents the greatest challenge to us right at this time
 - a. because we are in this transition mode
 - b. and each Sunday and Thursday, we move at a frantic pace to get everything set up
 - c. quite frankly, our minds are so preoccupied with the details of the sound system and the rest that it makes it difficult to really focus on the Lord
 - d. by the way - we are putting together two teams for set up and break down so that the worship leaders and whoever is bringing the message that morning can take the time for the heart preparation necessary to

minister in a way honoring to God

- e. we need about 8 more people to help for the rest of the short time we will be here at the Radisson

C. Vs. 6-11

{6} And when they came to Nachon's threshing floor, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled.

{7} Then the anger of the LORD was aroused against Uzzah, and God struck him there for his error; and he died there by the ark of God.

1. This is a shocking turn of events
2. It seemed everything was going along nicely
3. They were making real progress toward Jerusalem, when they came to a place where grain was processed
4. The people were singing and playing their instruments
5. There was great joy and celebration
6. But the cart hit a rut and the ark was jolted and lurched toward the edge
7. Uzzah, who was behind the cart, saw it first and moved to push it back into the center of the cart
8. But by doing so, he broke a very clear command of the Lord—that NO ONE was ever to touch the ark
9. God had spoken explicitly about this; anyone who touched the ark would die!
10. Remember when the priests carried the ark, they didn't actually touch it; they held the staves that were attached by rings to it's corners
11. No one was to touch the ark, not even the high priest when he went before it on the Day of Atonement
12. It was off limits!
13. Uzzah reached forth his hands to steady the ark, but in doing so, He showed great irreverence to God
14. In fact, that is what the word "error" means in v. 7

{7} . . . God struck him there for his [irreverence]; and he died there by the ark of God.

15. All of a sudden, the music, the joy, the celebration was brought to an abrupt halt
16. The people stood around in stunned silence as they gazed on the body of Uzzah lying beside the ark
17. It seemed that God had rained on their parade
18. And no doubt, they asked themselves the very same questions we do when we read this story
 - a. Why? Why would God smite Uzzah?
 - b. after all - weren't they trying to honor God by bringing the ark to Jerusalem to be at the center of the nation once again?
 - c. wasn't Uzzah just trying to protect the ark?
19. And of course, the answers to these questions was, "Yes."

- a. but that doesn't change the fact that what Uzzah did was a clear violation of God's Word
 - b. NO ONE WAS TO TOUCH THE ARK!
 - c. and why was that?
 - d. because the ark was God's throne - and God is HOLY!
20. You see friends, though Uzzah was being *practical* in his attempt to steady the ark, he overstepped a line that must never be crossed
 21. By touching the ark, he showed a casual attitude toward God Himself
 22. Though *practical*, he was *irreverent*
 23. Now, we might ask: If God smote Uzzah because he was irreverent, then why doesn't God smite us when we are?
 24. The reason is quite simple: there'd be no one left—we'd all be lying dead in the road like Uzzah
 25. No, God only moves in judgment like this at key times
 26. And this was a *key* moment in Israel's history
 27. You see, this was a turning point for the nation, a critical time for them
 - a. for the entire reign of Saul, the nation had drifted away from God
 - b. the ark had been put into storage
 - c. and there was no real center of worship in the land
 - d. the religious expression of Israel had been put on hold
 - e. now, David wanted to return the nation to their roots
 - f. he longed to see God become the center of things once again
 - g. but after 70 years, their understanding of God had become clouded and fuzzy
 - h. even Uzzah, who had spent a lifetime near the ark had lost sight of God's nature and character
 - i. the ark had become just one more piece of furniture around the house
 28. God smote Uzzah to remind the people that above all else - He is holy and majestic and full of glory
 29. Uzzah and the people must never take a casual attitude toward Him nor take Him for granted
 30. He will not go quietly along with their merry making, riding in a cart, and bearing the touch of a man who irreverently stretches out his hand to touch His throne, whatever the reason
 31. Uzzah, David, and all Israel need a reminder of just who they are dealing with!
 32. There were other times when God moved in this way to remind people of His holiness when they had come to forget it
 - a. there was the sin of Achan who stole from the loot of Jericho and who brought defeat to God's people
 - b. there was the judgment of Korah, when the earth opened up to swallow him and his followers when they dared to rebel against God in the wilderness
 - c. there is the story of Ananias and Saphira in the book of Acts when in the early church this husband and wife thought they could live unholy lives in the midst of the people of God—but God dropped them where they stood

33. In each of these cases, the result was that the rest of the community came to realize that you cannot trifle with God
34. He is holy and righteous
35. At this moment, on the road to Jerusalem, amidst all the joy and celebration, the people needed this reminder
36. And friends, it is a reminder we need today
37. For all too often we forget that God is holy
 - a. we forget that He is righteous
 - b. we lose sight of His majestic glory
 - c. we begin to treat Him with irreverence
 - d. very simply, we take Him for granted
38. We need to be reminded that God is not some add on to our lives that ensures we'll be blessed
39. He isn't merely fire insurance
40. He doesn't orbit around us, drawing His life from us
41. It's the other way around, we orbit around Him: He is the center and we draw our lives from Him
42. Life can only be rightly lived if we understand that it is all about God
 - a. that we live and move and have our being *in* Him
 - b. that we were created to live *for* Him, *around* Him
43. The single most important truth that anyone can know is this: GOD IS HOLY!
44. Every other truth is built on this foundation
45. If we have forgotten that foundation, then all of life is on uncertain and shaky ground

{8} And David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzzah; and he called the name of the place Perez Uzzah to this day.

{9} David was afraid of the LORD that day; and he said, "How can the ark of the LORD come to me?"

{10} So David would not move the ark of the LORD with him into the City of David; but David took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite.

46. At first, David's reaction to the death of Uzzah was one of anger
 - a. how dare God break up such a great celebration?
 - b. didn't God realize they were doing all of this for Him?
47. But very quickly David realized the error of his thinking
48. Uzzah died because they were going about moving the ark all wrong
49. David realized that they were all in grave danger
50. In a moment of revelation, He saw things clearly = God Is HOLY!
51. In the retelling of this story in 1 Chronicles, we see that David learned the ark was to be carried by the Kohathites, not on a cart
52. So he found the nearest member of that clan, a man named Obed-Edom, and the ark was taken there [\[1\]](#)

{11} The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the LORD blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

III. CONCLUSION

A. *Doing It Right*

1. As soon as they did the right thing the right way, God poured out His blessing
2. You know, God *wants* to bless us
3. But He cannot bless us until we come to Him and submit to Him with a right heart
4. And a right heart *begins* with this: We must honor God as holy and give Him the reverence and respect due Him

B. *God Is Holy!*

1. This story teaches us an essential lesson; in fact, *The* essential lesson
2. GOD IS HOLY
3. Do we honor His holiness?
4. In all our worship, is it just joyous celebration and merry making—or do we also reverence Him
5. Are we doing ministry the way God has shown, or are we just doing it to get it done?
6. How much of our activities are nothing more than Uzzah reaching out to steady the ark because we have forgotten to seek God first and foremost?

[1] 1 Chronicles 13:13; 26:4