



## “Dynasty – David Danced”

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost  
Saturday and Sunday, July 14–15, 2018

All Services

The Reverend John H. Brock  
Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church  
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19; Mark 6:14-29

Grace to you and peace, from God who is, who was, and who is to come. Amen.

If you are above the age of, say, ten, and have lived in the United States for at least the past twenty-five years, when you heard the phrase “Ark of the Covenant,” this is what you probably picture: Indiana Jones & Sallah, at the bottom of the Well of Souls, surrounded by snakes, with the ark.

Unlike some other movies claiming to be Biblically accurate (*DaVinci Code*), the movie *Raiders of the Lost Ark* actually got things relatively correct: The ark really *did* exist. It did contain items that were thought to be fairly powerful in and of themselves, specifically: the stone tablets with the commandments; Aaron's staff (Aaron is Moses' brother, who stood with him as he went toe-to-toe against the pharaoh); and a jar of manna, the food that appeared on the ground every morning the people were in the wilderness. And, number three, the Israelites did eventually lose the ark in battle.

We have to jump back to Exodus 25 to get a description of the ark itself:

<sup>10</sup> They shall make an ark of acacia wood; it shall be two and a half cubits long, a cubit and a half wide, and a cubit and a half high. <sup>11</sup> You shall overlay it with pure gold, inside and outside you shall overlay it, and you shall make a molding of gold upon it all around. <sup>12</sup> You shall cast four rings of gold for it and put them on its four feet, two rings on the one side of it, and two rings on the other side. <sup>13</sup> You shall make poles of acacia wood and overlay them with gold. <sup>14</sup> And you shall put the poles into the rings on the sides of the ark, by which to carry the ark. <sup>15</sup> The poles shall remain in the rings of the ark; they shall not be taken from it. <sup>16</sup> You shall put into the ark the covenant that I shall give you. (Exod. 25:10-16 NRSV)

Chapter 25 goes on to describe the angels that are to be on the top of the ark, how they are covered in gold leaf, and that the ark is to sit on a table when it is not being carried, the table is to also be covered in gold leaf.

The ark traveled with the people all during their journeys throughout the wilderness, after they escaped from Egypt, and as they reentered the promised land, without any problem. They carried it with them, because they believed that the ark contained the power of YHWH, The Lord God Almighty. And things went pretty well with the ark, until one particular battle the people of Israel had with the Philistines. They were defeated,

and thought,

*Let's bring in the heavy guns,*  
meaning the Ark. But they neglected to ask God's opinion, and it turns out God really wasn't in favor of this idea. The Israelites were, **again**, soundly defeated in battle, even with the ark. The ark was captured and carried away by the Philistines as booty.

However, things did **not** go well for the Philistines who had the ark. Wherever the ark resided, life was lousy for them: disease, death, and panic resulted. They kind of played Hot Potato with the ark:

*I don't want it, **You** take it. I don't want it . . .*  
After consulting with their own religious leaders, the five kings of the Philistines states decide to pack up the ark and send it back to Israel. Which is how it eventually ends up in the hands of a guy named Abinadab. (1 Sam. 7:1 NRS)

When David becomes king, he recognizes that the ark is at the very least *visual* symbol for the people, and he wants to bring the ark to the capital, Jerusalem, to inspire the people, **and** to give that visual cue that he, David, has the blessing of LGA.

And that's the *really* condensed version that leads us into our reading for today. Let me point out a couple of other things that you probably didn't catch.

David is SO excited about bringing the ark to Jerusalem, to the capital, that first, he puts together this huge show of force. He gets *thirty thousand* men from all of Israel to march with the ark during this roughly twenty-five-mile journey. There is singing, and dancing, and music, and sacrifices all along the way.

And David is **in** the moment. He's dressed appropriately in an *ephod*, which is a ceremonial robe, brightly colored, elaborately decorated. David is wearing one, and dancing joyfully "before the Lord."

Right after we learn about David dancing, we're told that one of David's wives, a woman named Michal, who happened to be a daughter of Saul, saw David dancing (V16).

Let me connect the dots for you: Saul was the king. He screwed up: God told him to do one thing, he did something that *he* thought was better. God said,

*Are you kidding me? No, what you did was not better. You're outta the gene pool.*

So, God sends the prophet Samuel to go find and anoint David as the new king. The drawback to that plan is, of course, that Saul is **still** king. So, this "new king" business really rather extremely annoys Saul.

Saul doesn't know at first, though, that it's *David* who is the new anointed king. David is able to wiggle his way into Saul's good graces. You remember that story of David and Goliath? That happens *before* Saul knew David was the newly anointed king. Because of that, and other things, Saul comes to really like David, and among other things, allows David to marry one of his daughters – a woman Michal. At first things goes okay, but life get dicey when Saul learns that it is *David* who is the newly anointed king. David

goes on the run. Saul kidnaps his daughter Michal and marries her off to another guy (which puts a bit of a strain on her marriage). Saul eventually dies in battle, David claims the throne, and brings Michal back into his household. This is what leads up to her seeing David dancing enthusiastically before the ark, but her heart toward David has changed, to the point when she sees him, as we heard in verse 16 “*she despised him in her heart.*” (Do you remember what Pastor Horner said last week, talking about soap operas? They’ve been going on for Thousands of years, without television, and they haven’t even really begun to scratch the surface of what they can do.)

But the good news is, at the end of our lesson, the ark is now safely in Jerusalem, the people are rejoicing, and life is good. At least, until the next week’s lesson.

What gets you excited about faith? What gets you dancing before the Lord? Does *anything* about faith get you that excited? I’m sure there are a lot of things that get you excited, exuberant, happy. Is it ice cream? Maybe a cold drink on a hot day? Does a good movie make you happy? Or is it that person you *Really* like to be around, spouse, child, co-worker, significant other? Maybe it’s politics that gets you excited in a Good way. Or going to a concert.

What gets you excited about your Faith? What is it that gets you excited, happy, exuberant, is it maybe really good worship? Perhaps it’s helping out with the tutoring. Or singing in choir or with the band. Perhaps it’s going on the Maine Mission trip every year. Or maybe it’s like this week here at Trinity, assisting with VBS, or how we have helped the VBS program sponsored by On Eagle’s Wings up in the Northwest Territories for years now, both with sending folks there, and the music that our band records for them to use.

What gets you excited about your faith? What gets you dancing before God? See, that’s one of the things that I think we can take away from this lesson: God comes to us in shapes, and forms, and programs, and experiences. If you are dancing before God, if you’re expressing your faith, and somebody criticizes you, then I think that, like Michal, it’s their problem, not yours.

Dance before God. Whatever your dance is, **Do it.** If it is in service of God, if it is an outflow of your faith, don’t worry about what others might say. Grab your ephod, and dance like David.

Amen.

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