



“Dynasty – Shepherd and King”

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost
Saturday & Sunday, July 7 and 8, 2018

All Services

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Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church
Camp Hill, Pennsylvania

2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10; Psalm 48:1-14; Mark 6:1-13

Grace and peace be to you from our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
Amen.

I grew up in 1980's and it was a time of great popularity of drama shows. Not only the beginning of some of the big dramas that became too popular, like *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, but also continuing popularity of soap operas. And so, I would get home at 3:30 in the afternoon and I have to admit, I would turn on ABC and watch *General Hospital*, because I just had to see whether or not things were going to work out between Luke and Laura. And there was also *All My Children*, and I was thinking to myself why were these shows so popular? Certainly, one of the reasons probably has to do with their intricate story lines and how many of the characters were enmeshed in each other's story lines. The characters were characters, I mean they were characters, they were odd people in many cases doing all sort of strange things. And you could always count on the soap opera stars to find true love. . . several times. . . and with many different people, and they always looked great., even if they were in the hospital they looked super. And some of them they could die and then they would come back to life just like Jesus. You know they would be in some storm and everybody would think they drowned themselves and then five months later they would show up again. And then there were the cliff hangers . . . "Will Amanda find true love? Will Marcus reveal his terrible secret? Will Blake disown his family? Will we find out who shot JR?" I always loved the facial expressions, they were so, so dramatic. When something terrible happened, you know, it was fun.

And I think maybe it's the same reason watching these shows, maybe it's the same reason that we like watching royal families. Just a few months ago we had the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. We like watching these Royal Dynasties, this intersection of personalities and history, tradition and even a little bit of scandal.

In the Bible is no different. We are going to be over the next seven weeks studying the great dynasty of the Bible, the dynasty of King David. David, son of Jesse, of the tribe of Benjamin. He represents the most important biblical dynasty that we have. He was chosen by God and was affirmed by the people, the twelve tribes of Israel. And that was a difficult task because each tribe was its own nation if you will, with its own land and own set of elders and leaders. But David understood, he was going to truly unify the nation, he was going to unify all those disparate tribes and sometimes conflicting tribes. It was important to do so because that was the only way the nation as a whole

was going to be strong again its enemies. In the end he built an empire that stretched from Egypt all the way to the edge of Mesopotamia during a forty-year reign right around 1000 BC. That's twenty-five hundred years ago.

David knew that a united Israel was the only way for it to become great. He made the capital in Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem at that time was run not by Jews or Israelites, but by the Jebusites. But he understood that this city that was right in the middle of Israel needed to be taken so that it could become the capital. It was the last city state in the way of a unified Israel.

Now his choice of Jerusalem is kind of interesting because if you were going to pick a capital, there are usually two things you want to make sure that it has. You want it to be close to water like a sea or a lake or a river because you are going to have to feed everybody and secondly, you want it near a trade route, a known trade route. Well Jerusalem sits up in the mountains. It's not near any water and in fact it's also not even on a major trade route. So, the choice is kind of interesting. But here's what Jerusalem had that was so important. Jerusalem didn't belong to those northern tribes and it didn't belong to the southern tribes. In other words, it was almost like an independent city and so by choosing that for the capital he wasn't going to upset any of the tribes in the north or any of the tribes in the south. And so, Jerusalem becomes known as the city of, not Israel, the City of David because it was his choice.

Now, Americans some 2,200 years later would do much of the same thing when we chose our capital as being Washington DC. It sat in between the northern states and the southern states. They took a little piece of Maryland and a little piece of Virginia and made an independent District of Columbia that wasn't associated with any of those states. And quite frankly it's on trade routes and on the water, so at least we got that with our capital.

David was the youngest of at least eight sons of Jesse of Bethlehem. The Lord instructed the Prophet Samuel to go to Jesse and to his family and to anoint the future king of Israel. And he went through all of the sons beginning with the oldest. But he had a profound sense it was none of those who was to be the future king. Until then after going through all of the sons, he said there has to be somebody else and his father let him know that David the shepherd was out in the fields. And as soon as he saw him he knew this is the future king. He served faithfully King Saul, he trusted God, and defeated the Philistine warrior Goliath. And in his future military exploits he became known as the great military leader and the people's choice to be king. When both Saul and David would go into villages the people would sing out, "*Saul has slain thousands, David has ten thousands.*" In time David became king and he was taken from the pasture to lead the people Israel as their king.

Now if you think about it not many shepherds become kings, but there are a lot of similarities between shepherds and kings. Shepherds and kings have to be providers, they need to know how to guide people or sheep, they need to understand the terrain, what are the obstacles that they have to go around, they need to be protectors, they have to if they are going to be leaders, they have to be fearless and understand God's role in their life.

Now David had many, many talents. He had to have to be able to rise so quickly through the ranks to be come king. Of course, we know that he was a shepherd, but he's also a renaissance man before there was the renaissance. He was a musician, a poet, a warrior, a political strategist, an administrator, a fund raiser, a builder. But it is as king as we remember him the most. And he was so good as a king that it became the standard for not only all of the later kings of Israel, but also of kings through the centuries. And he is also a symbol for the Messiah to come.

A large part of the Old Testament is either written about him or was written by him. Seventy five of the hundred and fifty Psalms that we have have been attributed to King David and he has been called by commentators the most complex and many sided human character in scripture. Because David was kind of complex, he experienced amazing success, but also terrible failures. He experienced defeat and victory, he had a family that was corky and crazy and not too helpful to his reign. But he improved his nation and he was able to see the saving acts of God repeatedly in his own life. David represents the good and the bad and the ugly of humanity like us. And we're going to see that through the next seven weeks. Yet for all of his faults, David remained faithful to God and to the promises that God had made to him. And as a figure he is both heroic as well as tragic, he is as I have said many times, a phrase that is Martin Luther's, *simil iustus et peccator*, he saint and sinner, he is everything that a saint is being touched and made holy by God and yet he continues with all of the human frailties that are around him. In other words, David is a lot like us. He experienced God's grace in powerful ways and that grace was sufficient for him. The Lord was with him and gave him strength even through the trials and difficulty that he experienced both as a person and as king. This shepherd king was chosen by God. Isn't it wonderful that God choses frail human beings to do his mission and ministry in the world? God choses us, he moves us from being ordinary shepherds to royalty in his family. He invites us to be a part of his holy family carrying out his name and becoming a part of a dynasty of faithful believers.

May you be strong in the Lord like David chosen to defeat giants and may we all enlarge that kingdom of God. Amen.

In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

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