



1 Chronicles 29:1-9  
The Story  
The Trials of a King<sup>i</sup>

Rev. Brian North  
November 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017

This morning we continue the series we've been in since early September, called "The Story." It's a chronological walk through the Bible, focusing on the main thread of Scripture...the main storyline of the Bible. We started with Creation, where we see humans created in the image of God...then we focused in on Abraham and his descendants as God forms the nation of Israel. It's not a smooth journey as they spend a few generations in Egypt, then break free from there only to wander around in the desert just short of the Promised Land where God was leading them. Eventually they move into the Promised Land. At first they are led by judges, people who were raised up for certain times in the life of Israel when leadership was needed; but otherwise they are governed by Scripture and the religious leaders. But then the people want a King to be like the other nations around them. Their first King – Saul – started out decently, but ended not so great. Then came David. We looked some at his life last week, and we'll continue it today. That catches us up to where we are today.

So, I don't know if you tend to be this way, but I know: **One thing a lot of people struggle with, off and on, is believing that "the grass is greener on the other side of the fence."** It's very tempting to look at other people's lives – their vacations, their homes, their career trajectories, their social network, their experiences, their college football allegiances, two good arms – and think, "I wish I had that." (By the way, before you have too much pity for me with my arm in a sling, I should let you know that one advantage is this makes for a great cell phone holder!)

An easy one for all of us to succumb to is to look at people who have more money than us and think, "Wow, if I had as much money as that person, my life would be so much easier, like theirs undoubtedly is." I think that's something that a lot of people struggle with. And unless you're the richest person on the planet, then you're always going to be aware of others who have more money than you do. So that means that now, even Bill Gates could potentially think the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, because he's playing second fiddle to Jeff Bezos of Amazon. In fact, Bill Gates isn't

even the richest person in his *neighborhood* because he and Jeff Bezos both live in Medina. So, the grass may quite literally look greener on the other side of the fence for him.

But the truth of the matter is, that even people who seem to have everything...even people who seem to have it all together...have struggles and trials and temptations in life. “Having it all” is clearly not the answer to life’s trials. We see that with King David. Watch this video clip to get a sense of how money and power and fame aren’t the answer to life’s trials...(Youtube Video Clip here.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h4YQbcWOiIo>

**David thought the grass was going to be greener with Bathsheba...and it only led to greater trials filled with a lot of pain and heartache.** But out of that pain and heartache, David does point us to what matters...which is why he’s known as a man after God’s own heart – no matter how much he struggled to live that out, that’s the big picture summary of him that the Bible gives us. For instance, before David is selected as King, Samuel gets word from God that the Lord has someone in mind who will be a man after his own heart. A man after God’s heart, that is. Remember, Samuel is the chief priest at the time, though he also leads Israel as the last of the Judges to lead Israel, and is also as a prophet. The importance of Samuel in the life and history of Israel almost cannot be overstated. And so with this mission to find a person after God’s own heart, David is selected as the King in waiting, and becomes King after King Saul’s death. And then in the New Testament, David is still reflected on in Acts 13:22 as a man after God’s heart. So not only is he recognized as a man after God’s own heart in being chosen as king, but a little over 1,000 years later, around 60 A.D., he is still remembered as such, as well, in spite of the trials he faced as king. And still today that is how he is remembered.

Now, it would be easy for us to be judgmental toward David and say things like, “How could such a man be a leader?” “How can he be called a man after God’s own heart?” “Why is this guy lifted up as so great?” And I’ll be the first to say: yes, his sin was huge, and the one he committed with Bathsheba is one that continues to persist in a lot of peoples lives. If you’re tuned into

the news at all in the last few weeks, you know that there have been all kinds of accusations of sexual misconduct against a number of people who are in a variety of positions of power – from movie industry people, to business executives to tv news anchors to politicians. It seems like recently there's a new accusation against somebody almost every day. But unfortunately, it's not a new problem. In fact, today's passage isn't much different, perhaps, and it's from about 1,000 B.C.

**But ultimately, David's acknowledgment of his sin is deep.** Unlike most of those accused recently, he acknowledged his sin without any excuse, without trying to shuck responsibility or accountability. Fortunately, we have what he wrote. We know it as Psalm 51, and it is his response to the pain, the suffering, the sin in his life. Here's what he wrote as a confession and acknowledgment of his wrongdoing:

**(Psalm 51:1-15 on the screen)**

Have mercy on me, O God,

according to your unfailing love;

according to your great compassion

blot out my transgressions.

<sup>2</sup>Wash away all my iniquity

and cleanse me from my sin.

<sup>3</sup>For I know my transgressions,

and my sin is always before me.

<sup>4</sup>Against you, you only, have I sinned

and done what is evil in your sight;

so you are right in your verdict

and justified when you judge.

<sup>5</sup>Surely I was sinful at birth,

sinful from the time my mother conceived me.

<sup>6</sup>Yet you desired faithfulness even in the womb;

you taught me wisdom in that secret place.

<sup>7</sup>Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean;  
wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.

<sup>8</sup>Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones you have crushed rejoice.

<sup>9</sup>Hide your face from my sins  
and blot out all my iniquity.

<sup>10</sup>Create in me a pure heart, O God,  
and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

<sup>11</sup>Do not cast me from your presence  
or take your Holy Spirit from me.

<sup>12</sup>Restore to me the joy of your salvation  
and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me.

<sup>13</sup>Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
so that sinners will turn back to you.

<sup>14</sup>Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed, O God,  
you who are God my Savior,  
and my tongue will sing of your righteousness.

<sup>15</sup>Open my lips, Lord,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.

David wrote this as his response to his own misconduct. It's a confession of his sin and a confession of a desire to get right with God, and a request for God to work through him to bring others into a right relationship with Him as well. Contrast that with most of the responses to accusations of sin of a sexual nature that we have read about in the last few weeks and months.

Other than a few exceptions where guilt is admitted, it's not even close. And even those that do admit it, don't go to the depths that David does here.

**David's admission of his sin is the response of a person after God's own heart.** That's not to excuse the sin...it's not to say that there shouldn't be consequences for David or for others that make the headlines today (or for people like us whose trials in life don't land us in the headlines)...and David did suffer consequences in his life...But Psalm 51 shows his complete brokenness over the whole situation, and his desire to turn to God in the

midst of it.

And in today's passage, we see David living out the plea he made in Psalm 51 for God's grace to give him the opportunity to help others turn to God as well, as he leads the effort to collect resources to build a temple in which God's people would gather for worship, and would be a "house of the Lord." This temple would replace the tabernacle, which was the portable tent structure that had been in use for the last 1,000 years or so as the house of the Lord and their place of worship – though undoubtedly it wasn't all original parts on it anymore! They probably had to do some tabernacle updating, upgrading, and replacing of things. So, David wanted to lead the building of the temple, a permanent structure. And while he ended up not being the one to lead the construction – his son, Solomon, who took over as king did that – David is the one who got the ball rolling and led Israel into a campaign to get all the materials that were going to be needed. It's an extension of the last parts of what we read in Psalm 51, where he wants to teach transgressors about the ways of the Lord, and declare the praises of God, and so forth. The temple is the place where that stuff all happens – at least at the level of the entire community. And his desire to do this all stems from David being a man after God's own heart. In spite of the trials...in spite of the sins...he's a man after God's own heart.

Like David, we all face trials. Not all of them are borne out of the sin in our lives. Some are just circumstantial: Struggling to pay bills; a marriage that needs attention; a difficult child to raise; trying to get dressed with one arm. And I don't know what all the trials are in your life. You do. You know the things you're struggling with now, or the things you've struggled with in the past that still have repercussions that continue to follow you. But don't think for a single second that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence, and that you're surrounded by people who don't have trials. Don't think that more wealth, more power, more stuff, more friends, more vacations, more experiences, more of anything is going to make your life trial-free. It didn't for David, and it doesn't for anyone else. No one is without trials. No one is without sin. No one is without consequences.

**But, as king David did, we can turn to God and ask for forgiveness, and**

**have hearts that are soft toward Him.** God alone is the one who can bring us out of our trials. Even the final trial that we all face, the trial of death, has been conquered by God's son, and Jesus shows us the way through that trial as well, when we put our trust and our faith in Him. In fact, because of the promises of God, and the resurrection of Jesus, we can trust that it's not greener grass "on the other side of the fence" we should concern ourselves with, but rather it's the greener grass on the other side of the grave that we should concern ourselves with, instead. After all, David writes in Psalm 23 that it's the Lord who makes him lie down in green pastures. The pastures that God leads us to are the only green ones we should be looking for. In fact, David shows us that pursuing greener pastures on the other side of the fence can get us into big trouble. And even though trials in life (and the final trial at death) will come, Jesus will lead you into green pastures, both in this life and the life to come. And so I pray that you would know this truth deeply in your life, that you'd be a person after God's own heart, no matter how flawed you may be, no matter what the trials in your life may be, and that the only greener pastures you'd be looking for in the midst of that would be the ones to which Jesus is leading you. Let's pray...Amen.

---

<sup>i</sup> Today's sermon correlates to Chapter 12 in "The Story." We took orders for copies of the book, "The Story" at church, but now you can get a copy of the book on your own online through many websites (Amazon.com, cbd.com, etc.). In fact, cbd.com (Christian Book Distributors) has them for \$5, hardback. Just search for "NIV The Story Bible" at their website.