

**MAY 26, 2024 FPCPH PASTOR ROXIE DAVIS SERMON: Leadership—  
A High Standard; Psalm 31: 1-5 (written when King Saul is chasing David to kill him) 2 Samuel  
7:18-22 (David's thank you prayer that God has chosen him to follow Saul. 2 Samuel 11: 1-5  
(David and Bathsheba)**

## **INTRODUCTION**

As we all know, this weekend is Memorial Weekend where we remember those who have given the ultimate sacrifice to win our freedom. It is also a time for us to recognize those of you who are still alive, but have taken on the leadership of serving in the military. Also, many of you know that we are in our Last week of this May Preaching Series, “Old Stories—New Lessons” (If you want to know what the next Preaching Series will reveal about). Now that I have made the commercial for June, let's get on with the topic at hand.

Since this Memorial Day weekend, I have chosen to preach mostly about David, and King Saul, you can add to that, the Prophet Samuel and Nathan, and the woman, Bethsheba. Both men—Saul and David—are leaders—Both men are **military** leaders, in their own right—just like many of you. **Some would look at young David and not recognize that he is a leader.**

That is true for many of us. It may not be in the big things that we are a leader—but in the small things. It may not be for long-term leadership—But in an everyday-leadership capacity that we serve,. **In my book, everyone is a leader** in some aspect of our life and with that leadership comes a **high standard of conduct**. Our leadership may be in the **family unit**, In the **organizations** of our community, our **church family, school**, or whatever circumstance where **someone has to take the lead** and one of us steps up, Many of us become “a leader” by the call of God—not just pastors or elders/deacon but also people who feel the Holy Spirit stirring within them to take a stance or do a small or big job, directed by God

Then some of us have been chosen by others to be leaders—That happens in the church, particularly in a democratic church like we Presbyterians—We elect—we choose our leaders—And we ordain and install them, as we will this morning, praying over them and asking God to direct them. How I see it, **Veterans are a special class of leadership**. And those of us who have benefited from their leadership need to be grateful for their service—not only serving their country—but **serving their God to make this world a better place and a more peaceful place. The desired and honorable end result of war is peace and justice among enemies and nations and people**. That desired peaceful goal happens most when the heart and head and the will are in the right place—**And that is a very high standard of conduct**.

## **DAVID**

That brings us to the **historic figure of David**. It is probably around 1025 BC (Before Christ) (lightyears away from Moses and the Burning Bush and the Exodus of the People of God from Egypt, which we talked about last week). **When we meet David, he is approximately the age**

**of 15,** Here's the deal. God is not pleased with King Saul, currently the reigning king.(whole other story!!) Thus, the Kingdom of Israel, will be stripped from him in the future. God instructs Prophet Samuel to anoint David, at the age of 15, as the future king of Israel. He is the youngest of Jesse's 8 sons—a mere shepherd boy—a humble man as spoken in the Psalm he wrote and we read this morning.

Actually, David's first appearance as, I would term, a military person is at the confrontation of the **Philistines and the Israelites** Israel (northern kingdom of the Jewish nation) and Judah (the southern kingdom of the Jewish nation) are well established and as typical, they have their **enemies: the main one—the Philistines** who live to the west of them—in Gaza? Sound familiar?

## **DAVID AND GOLIATH**

Probably most of you know or have heard of the duel between David and 9 foot tall Goliath, where David wins. Goliath, the leader of the Philistines, comes with all the best armor. David has only a sling and five smooth stones from the stream. We have to remember that David has fought off lions and bears for the safety of his sheep. (Is there a metaphor here about Jesus fighting off our fears—the Giants--lions and bears in our lives—As our good shepherd. Just saying—just wondering!!)

**It is quite apparent—David—called by God—Future King of the People of God**

**Is First and Foremost, a Military Man** Not only as a 15-year-old but throughout his life—until he becomes King and then, even beyond. After the defeat of Goliath and the Philistines (Footnote—Just so you know, the Israelites will have to fight the Philistines many times more—as they see it they are a threatening menace) But after the David and Goliath event And future victories where David was In military leadership, The people, particularly the women, would dance in the streets, singing loudly, **“King Saul has killed his 1000s But David has killed his 10,000s.”** Now if you don't think that would make King Saul jealous, you are mistaken.

**Once King Saul hears those words, he is bound and determined to kill David;** even though, David has been brought to the King's palace to be a leader in the military and the lead musician to calm down King Saul when an evil spirit (as they termed it) would rack his brain and confuse his judgment. As King Saul sees it, because of the people's praise of David over him, David is a threat to his kingdom and his family's royal line. **Jealousy** of someone else's power and praise is never a good thing. **Paranoia**—"Feeling the Victim"—that is, Fear that others are out to get you, does not benefit anyone. It just makes you anxious. King Saul had no idea, for awhile, that God had already called David to kingship. **Jealousy and Fear** can drive you crazy—which it did with King Saul.

## **OLD TESTAMENT: 1 SAMUEL AND 2 SAMUEL**

Much of the account of David's Life is in 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel of your Bible— It is a good read—I recommend it since I read large sections both books in preparation for this sermon.

**Suspenseful; Dynamic; A lot of Action and Much Romance.** Both **First and Second Samuel** in the Old Testament: tell of **David's Military Life**, they speak of **David's Homeless Life** when he is running away from King Saul's desire to kill him; they record **His Married Life** with many different women—(Yes, we will get to Bathsheba); and **His Grief Stricken Life**—actually crying--over the destruction and killing of friends and family, and property, even crying over the death of King Saul and son Jonathan in midst of war. **His grief gives all of us permission to cry over those whom we have lost in life and in war.**

## **HIGH STANDARD**

Since I termed the sermon title: Leadership—A High Standard. I want to share with you some leadership characteristics which I believe are demonstrated by David and may be helpful to think about when we find ourselves in a leadership position or following a leader. **David—as a leader**—Is trying to live out a very high standard of Life and Leadership—He is a man of God—Fulfilling his role as a Military Leader. He constantly consults with God before entering the battlefield: **Should I go and lead my Men (and they were all men in those days), should I lead them into battle?**

**David trusts God, in all things.** God is his rock and refuge, as is clear in **Psalm 31** which we read this morning. Verse 3: “For You (God) are my rock and my fortress; For Your name's sake, lead me and guide me.”

**As a Leader, David is humbly thankful.** Just look at the words that we read this morning in 2 Samuel 7:18. David asks God: “Who am I, Sovereign Lord, and what is my family, that you have brought me this far? There is no one like You, and there is no God but You!”

**As a Leader, David is Loyal and Keeps His Promises,** David is not only loyal to God but he is the faithful, constant friend of Jonathan, King Saul's son. David and Jonathan make a covenant with each other and David is determined to keep his promises to his good friend Jonathan. David appreciates Jonathan's friendship, and his bravery to help David in difficult times. I know several of you military people have lasting friendships with people who perhaps worked alongside you and were with you in the military.

**Military Leader David Takes Responsibility** for the actions of the men under him. Some priestly men are killed by Doeg who is under David. Wrongful deaths. David not only takes responsibility but pledges safety for the rest of the family. Sometimes, as leaders, we have to take responsibility for the actions of those under us and around us.

**David encourages strength in those around him,** pointing them to the strength of God which can sustain them through the difficult time. That happened several times with his friend Jonathan.

**David Appreciates those who keep him from doing wrong, like avenging a wrong done to him.** You can read about Abigail, the wife of Nabal. Nabal, her husband, bad mouths David and his men—David says that he and his men have been generous and kind to Nabal’s people and this is what they get—trash talk from Nabal? Abigail goes out to see David with a large offering of food and encourages him not to kill Nabal’s men. David doesn’t kill them and gives thanks to God for Abigail keeping him from wrongdoing. It seems to me that **David knows: Evil begets Evil.** . I think he also probably knows in his heart, something that we say: **“What goes around; comes around.”** In other words, what you do, especially **evil will come back to bite you.”**

**David has great respect for those whom God has anointed to be leaders.**

When David is running and hiding from King Saul, he has two good opportunities to kill Saul. He is encouraged by his men to be rid of him; they are even willing to kill King Saul for him. But David says, “He is the Anointed One; we cannot kill the King who was called by God.” We too must have **great respect** for our government and community leaders, elected; and church leaders, chosen by God and us.

**David knows how to humbly confess when he has done wrong—when sin has overtaken him.**

Like the rest of us, David is human. He does wrong just like the rest of us. As King, when David did not go to battle with his men, but instead, stayed at the palace and saw beautiful Bathsheba, bathing; He sleeps with her; and she becomes pregnant. **Trying to cover it up**, he has her husband, Uriah come home, off the battle field and spend two nights with his wife Bathsheba. It doesn’t happen—Uriah can’t do that knowing that other men are on the battlefield. So David, still intent on a cover-up, has Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, killed on the battlefield front lines. It is **Prophet Nathan** who shows David, he is the man who has committed **adultery and murder**. With a repentant and humble heart, **David does not deny the allegations. He confesses.** He mourns his wrongful behavior. He asks for God’s forgiveness—And after **feeling God’s discipline** in his life, God fully forgives David.

**David goes on to be the Greatest King of the People of God**—knowing that God is in charge and not David. Rightly so, David is in the Ancestry line of Jesus Christ, God’s Son.

## **GOD KNOWS US**

**God knows us—God knows our failings.** God also knows that we are **human**— We crumble to **temptation**. We can be very **haughty**. **But just as God saw potential in young David, God sees potential in each of us—to be leaders—in great and small ways. No question, There IS a High Standard in Leadership. But our God is able to lift us higher, as long as we trust the power, the presence and the purposes of God. (Put our faith in God.)**