

Devotions for August 1 – August 7, 2011

Monday, August 1, 2011: *The Man* Daily reading: 1 Samuel 17:34-35

Celebrity status and the dreams of a nation; David's captivating story is the stuff legends are made of. It begins with the boy thrust into mainstream politics as God's chosen one to succeed Saul on the throne of Israel. This shepherd boy is chosen by God to shepherd God's people. He is also an accomplished musician who entertains King Saul as part of his court. David's incredible songbook is found in Psalms. As a shepherd, he learns fighting skills defending the flocks from predatory wild animals, including lions and bears. David is destined for greatness. Do you feel chosen? Ask God to help you figure out what you're chosen to do on God's behalf.

Tuesday, August 2, 2011: *Greatness* Daily reading: 1 Samuel 17:48-51

In the Valley of Elah, where Saul's army battles the Philistines, David uses his slingshot to kill the warrior Goliath. The shepherd boy saves the nation! He's decorated and given command of Saul's armies, proving himself a great leader. He befriends Saul's son, Jonathon. This friendship saves David from a raging Saul, who grows jealous of David. When Saul and Jonathan are killed in battle, David is anointed king of Judah, and Saul's other son becomes king of Israel. Competition ensues, Saul's son is eventually murdered, and David becomes king of both Israel and Judah. He defeats the enemies of Israel and Judah, bringing peace and prosperity to his nation. David is the fulfillment of a dream! How do you measure greatness? Ask God to help you see greatness in things that are both big and small.

Wednesday, August 3, 2011: *Promise* Daily reading: 2 Samuel 6:1-5

King David intends to live as large as his accomplishments and blessings. He plans to build a temple in the capital, Jerusalem, to house the Ark of the Covenant, signifying the permanent and lasting presence of God with God's people. But God doesn't allow it to happen, and instead gives David something David can't build on his own: a promise that God will establish the House of David forever! Not only that, but the promise culminates in the Messiah! Three months later, David brings the Ark to Jerusalem, where it is placed in a new tabernacle. Where do you need to trust the promises of God? Ask God to help you trust in God's promises every day.

Thursday, August 4, 2011: *Bathsheba* Daily reading: 2 Samuel 1:1-5

David becomes the stuff of tabloid news with one word: Bathsheba. David commits adultery with her, gets her pregnant, and then plots to kill her husband by sending him to the front lines of the war. Bathsheba's husband is killed, and she marries David. But God is not pleased! David pays a heavy price for his sin, but amazingly remains as one favored by the Lord. Good guy gone bad, yet restored to remain in God's favor. David's success, like that of many famous people, is measured too heavily by material gains, and corruption sets in. This is the darkest episode in David's life. Look at Psalm 51. David repents, and God forgives him. Has there ever been a time in your life when you were corrupted by a false measurement of success? Ask God to help you focus on true success for you.

Friday, August 5, 2011: *Glory Days* Daily reading: Isaiah 55:1-5

Isaiah recalls the glory days of David, hundreds of years earlier when things are good and God's presence is abundantly clear. These are important memories for people exiled in Babylon! They are cut off from their homes, religion, and history, and they wonder if God has forgotten them. Where is the promise God made to David? Is this the everlasting Kingdom God promised? Here Isaiah speaks a word of truth and promise to a people far from home. God is faithful. You only have to look back to look forward. God is not far off, nor will God leave you in exile. A banquet is prepared for you. God has done it, just as it was promised! As David is imperfect, yet blessed by God, the people of Israel are blessed even in their imperfect situation. God's promise calls out faith, and God's history gives hope. David is a symbol of the promise, fulfilled in Jesus Christ, yesterday and today. In our lives, it's sometimes helpful to look back in order to look forward. Ask God to remind you of God's faithfulness in your past to help you step into the future with confidence.

Saturday, August 6, 2011: *Perfection?* Daily reading: 1 Samuel 16:6-13

Themes of faithfulness and relationship in covenant community populate David's story. In light of current political scandals, are we assuming that our religious or public officials should be held to a higher standard? Do we assume that if we're religious, we're perfect? Do we expect perfection from leaders who profess a relationship with God? But David's power is not in perfection. He is flawed, and would be crucified like Arnold Schwarzenegger if he were king today. Yet the God story isn't about perfection, but promise. God's promise restores and gives hope for the best and worst of people. And this promise is not only those inside a specific geography or population. Are you trying to be perfect? Are you trying to be religious? Ask God to help you stop trying to be perfect and religious.

Sunday, August 7, 2011: *Fulfillment* Daily reading: Luke 4:16-21

The promise of God comes to us, just as it does to David. Jesus is the flesh and bone fulfillment of the promise and the personification of God choosing us. God has established the house of David forever, in Jesus, received by faith. God is faithful. God has fulfilled God's promise. God comes for us and to us today, making extraordinary things happen with ordinary people like you and me, and David! Now we, the chosen-by-faith community, extend the promise to the world by bearing witness to the promise of God in Christ Jesus in our everyday lives. It's not about perfection; it's about promise. Do you understand how the story of God spans all of human history, into eternity? Ask God to help you grasp the incredible power in God's story, and help you find your place in that story.