

**First Presbyterian Church**  
**2 Sam. 5:1-10, "King David at Last"**  
**by Pastor Matt Johnson, 7/7/2024**

Our nation celebrated 248 years of democracy a few days ago.

Who set off some fireworks to celebrate?

Who enjoyed the fireworks that  
someone else bought to celebrate?

My family set off our share of very small explosives  
to celebrate with our neighbors,

but I definitely enjoyed the big boomers  
that others in the area invested in.

Whether you love them or hate them or have to hide your pets from them,  
communal celebrations like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July remind us  
how we are connected as people in this country.

Turns out that over the same week there were

a lot of conversations happening about the American presidency.

I won't try to characterize the conversations too much  
except to say that a lot of people  
aren't thrilled with their options for president.

Some people are so worried about the options for president,  
that they wonder about the future of the very democracy  
we just celebrated.

And that ... well, that's a big deal. It sure feels like a big deal to me.

But I wonder: Is it a big deal to God?

I suspect that God perceives these things differently than we do.

Here's a little thought experiment:

Do you think God cared which Pharaoh was in power  
when he called Moses to set his people free?

Do you think God cared which Caesar was in power  
when he sent Jesus to open up the way of salvation?

Do you think God has cared about the form of government found  
in any part of the world where the gospel of Jesus  
has gone over the centuries?

Our national discussion about our leaders  
will only continue to generate anxiety  
in the weeks and months to come.

The hype train has just started.

I'm just raising a question: How should we, as people who trust in Jesus,  
frame ourselves with regard to that anxiety?

I would suggest that from God's perspective, from the Biblical perspective,  
nations rise and nations fall, leaders come and leaders go.

Now, don't get me wrong – some ways of being a nation  
are more in line with the values of God than others.

Some are more just and others are more unjust.

The Bible is clear that God opposes arrogant and oppressive leaders.

What matters to God is that the people who worship  
God in Spirit and Truth recognize who is truly sovereign,  
who truly is worthy of following.

Today's text is about the rise of a national leader.

David the too young, David the overlooked,  
David too small for King Saul's armor,

David who dodges spears and hides in caves  
is finally becoming King in Israel.

As good as David was, this text reminds us how fortunate we are to serve  
the Triune God who holds all things together.

Our ultimate allegiance is not to any earthly president or earthly king  
– no matter how good they may be.

And we should not fear any earthly president or earthly king  
no matter how bad they may be.

We serve Jesus, the Servant King, who lived completely contrary  
to expectations for how societal leaders should operate.

So let's talk about this Bible passage a little:

If we didn't know much else about David's life –  
then you might look at 2 Samuel 5 and think,

“Well, isn't that nice! David's made king,

the tribes of Israel all think he's great,

and they agree together that Yahweh has said,

‘You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.’

What a tidy, picture perfect, dream life David has.”

You might have friends who appear to have the perfect life,  
who are always on top of things, never a misplaced hand.

Looking around on Facebook or the refrigerator photo collection,  
looking at their home, their vacations, or the car they drive,  
everything seems to come so easily.

But real life different. It’s not tidy. It’s not perfect.

There are stories and history in people’s lives that you aren’t aware of.

David’s life was a mess, the world around him was a mess,  
and at least to start it wasn’t his fault.

But he served the God who held all things together, and he served by faith.

As Eugene Peterson says,

**“The Christian life is lived in an uncongenial context.**

**There is no Eden. Most of us think**

**if we just had the right spouse, the right kids,  
the right job, it would be a breeze.**

**But all these people keep entering in and messing things up for us.”**

Sound familiar?

David also lived in an uncongenial context  
for following the Lord by faith.

David wasn’t anointed to enter into a life of ease with a clear path forward.

But he was given an opportunity to do God’s work  
with the skills he had.

David’s first work as a secretly anointed king was to be a healing,  
comforting presence to King Saul, the king who tried to kill him  
and whom he would eventually replace.

His eventual arrival on the throne seems to have come in two stages:

He was first called by the elders of Judah to reign over Hebron  
at the age of 30. It took seven more year before  
the elders of the entire country  
called him to be King of all Israel.

The landscape of faith was very uneven and uneasy for David.  
All these people kept entering in and messing things up for him.  
But eventually God brought to pass things that were promised.

So you might say that we're fortunate to serve the One  
who holds all things together because the world is a messed-up place.

We're also fortunate to serve the One who holds all things together  
because we, like David, are messed-up people.

After finally becoming king,  
David had to determine where his throne would reside?

King Saul had ruled in Gibeah, but I think David  
had some PTSD about that palace after dodging Saul's spears.

So David turned his eyes to Jerusalem.  
Jerusalem was in a prominent location,  
but not associated with any particular power center  
within Israel because it was still occupied by the Jebusites.

The Jebusites feel they are so well protected in their Jerusalem fortress  
that (quoting from v. 6) "even the blind and the lame"  
could fight off David in his attempt to conquer it.

Because they used it first, this crude turn of phrase is repeated  
two more times as a way of referring to the Jebusites  
who were on the other end of the water shaft  
which David used to break into the city.

The narrator ends up declaring that "the blind and the lame"  
(who have become unfairly associated with the Jebusites  
because of their taunt)  
are not allowed into David's palace.

Some people try to absolve David of such a politically incorrect perspective.

I don't. The reality is that the Bible includes content like this.

The Bible has content that is sexist, racist, violent,  
and otherwise offensive in nature.

If you try to explain it all away, you won't have much of a story left.

That doesn't mean the Living God endorses these perspectives,  
but rather that *they existed and were recorded*.

David was chosen, anointed, gifted, and faithful.  
But he was also sinful and flawed.

He took this taunt from the Jebusites and apparently  
let it become a spiteful prejudice against people who  
actually were blind and lame and "dared"  
enter his palace doors.

If we simply acknowledge this,  
then we can also see what a contrast we have between  
the great King David and the lowly King Jesus.

In Matthew's gospel we read something truly remarkable about  
the attitude of Jesus toward the very same people  
whom David kept away from his palace:  
**"The blind and the lame came to [Jesus] *in the temple*,  
and he cured them."** (Mt. 21:14).

Jesus is the only truly righteous king Israel ever had,  
and the only one the world has ever seen.

In these days of political anxiety for our country,  
consider how fortunate we are to serve a king like Jesus,  
who not only holds all things together  
but also welcomes those who David shunned in his  
narrowminded humanity.

David became king – Israel finally had the leader they wanted!  
But for all his political influence, for all the psalms he wrote,  
David couldn't change the heart of Israel –  
let alone other nations.

Somehow Jesus changed the world without ever holding political office,  
and without ever needing a particular government to be in place  
(or replaced).

How? Because Jesus changes human hearts.  
That's what we're about as the church of Jesus Christ.

As I said earlier, our ultimate allegiance is not to any earthly president or earthly king – no matter how good they may be.

And we should not fear any earthly president or earthly king no matter how bad they may be.

We serve Jesus, the Servant King, who lived completely contrary to expectations for how societal leaders should operate.

Let's give thanks that we serve the King of kings and the lord of lords.