

July 11, 2021
Rev. Kerry Smith

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19 How Not to Lead: Mistakes Leaders Make
Greenland Hills United Methodist Church

2 Samuel 6:1-5, 12b-19

New Revised Standard Version

David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. David and all the people with him set out and went from Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who is enthroned on the cherubim. They carried the ark of God on a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God; and Ahio went in front of the ark. David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing; and when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. David danced before the Lord with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet. As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal daughter of Saul looked out of the window, and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart. They brought in the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it; and David offered burnt offerings and offerings of well-being before the Lord. When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well-being, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts, and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people went back to their homes.

Today's sermon is a little bit different - it is a first person sermon so I will attempt to speak as one of the characters in the scripture passage. I will speak as if I were Michal, daughter of King Saul and wife of King David. Here we go!

I didn't think my life would end up like this. I am the second born daughter of King Saul, and my husband is King David. David is handsome in his own way. He took out the giant Goliath with a slingshot when he was younger, but I didn't know him then. David is everything a warrior can and should be. He is proud. He wears fancy robes and all of his armor shines on the battlefield.

For a long time, my dad and David got along. In fact, I met David when he was asked to sing in the court of my dad, King Saul. David was going to marry my older sister, but he said he wasn't worthy. My dad tried to convince him that he was. When my dad learned that I was in love with David, dad proposed our marriage. David said he was poor and couldn't afford the bride price, so my dad told him to go kill 100 of our enemies, but David killed 200 of them.

For a long time, David and my dad got along but then something in my dad changed. He wanted to kill David. There was a night when David came home and I could hear my dad's soldiers outside. They were creating a perimeter around our house. They were mocking David, making fun of him. The last time they had come home from battle, they were singing David's praises, and maybe my dad was jealous. I told my beloved to run away because I didn't know what my dad was going to do. I saved David, letting him escape down through a window and I didn't hear from him again.

Saul gave me to another man to be his wife, but I never stopped loving David. When David became King he demanded that I come back as his wife. The palace quickly became my prison. I may have once loved David, but David never reciprocated that love. He was pleased to become the king's son-in-law, but he never said he was pleased to have married me. It was a marriage of convenience for him, a marriage of political advantage. David married me to climb up the ladder of success.

As a husband David is cruel and abusive. I despise him. Everyone thinks he is the greatest guy in the world, but I know the truth. My dad and brother died and my husband was ice

cold, belittling, and taunted me by fathering child after child with other women while I remain childless. My husband is controlling and cruel.

That day when David brought the ark of the Lord into Jerusalem, I saw David through the window and I despised him in my heart. Everyone in the city was having a raucous celebration because David had conquered our foes, he united the tribes of Israel, and to unify the people he moved the capital to Jerusalem, and now he was bringing the ark of the covenant, Israel's most sacred object into the city, and David was leading the charge in the celebration dancing around the ark.

My husband is immensely powerful and popular and he pretends to be so very spiritual. Here they are, bringing the ark of God in, and David is dancing. Everyone thinks he is so filled with the Spirit, but I know better. He is a hypocrite. Everyone thinks David is blessed by God, that he is pleasing to God, but he just hurts people.

The ark is the symbolic presence of God. David is putting God at the center of the city and at the center of the people, but he knows it isn't safe. He brought the ark into the city on a cart. One of the guys, his name was Uzzah, reached out to make sure the ark didn't slip off the cart and he got zapped dead. They intended to carry the ark anyway, but David said God deserved the very best so he had the men of Israel set the ark on a new cart. I heard that after Uzzah died, David left the ark at Obededom's house because he was afraid. Three months passed and Obededom's house was blessed, so David went himself to get the ark and this time he carried the ark like God had told them to.

There is power in God's holy presence. God is holy and can't be bought off or bribed or manipulated. God isn't safe for our ways of living, especially with the way David lived. The ark of God was a symbol of God's presence coming to Moses and giving him the Ten Commandments. It reminded everyone that God delivered the people from slavery into the promised land. The ark is supposed to show us the nearness of God's presence always. I find God in the quiet, but this celebration was so loud. There was music, lyres, harps, tambourines, castanets, cymbals, and dancing.

What did I have to celebrate? I looked out my window and saw the sham that David is. Some people only saw joy, but I only saw a man I hated. Any love I had for David was long dead. My heart is broken and is filled with resentment. Was David trying to take God's power for himself? Trying to control it like he had tried to control me? We have these moments, you know? Moments that find us and call us to open, to break, to reach, to join, to let go or hold on.¹

I feel like my joy is gone, and I am only filled with anger. I wish I could have shouted from the rooftops that day. I wanted to be heard and I wanted everyone to know who David really is. I know that I am a broken person, and I don't need you to fix me, but I need you to hear me. I was mistreated by a powerful man and I am trapped.

The songs we sing about God say joy comes in the morning (Psalm 30:5). I hope I will find joy again. I am afraid to lean into joy because something might rip it away and then the disappointment and pain will come.² Still, I know joy can handle pain. I know joy doesn't come when we avert our gaze or turn a blind eye or get sheltered. Joy only comes when we let our hearts be broken by the things that break the heart of God. I want you to hear my story, because a part of it might be your story. Amen.

¹ <https://www.facebook.com/enfleshedword/>

² <https://brenebrown.com/podcast/part-3-of-6-brene-with-ashley-and-barrett-for-the-summer-sister-series-on-the-gifts-of-imperfection/>