

The Best Days of Our Lives

by Sandeep Poonen

David's best days were not defined by his accomplishments, but by his heart, which was after God's heart, and he learned to serve God in the midst of menial tasks and in the presence of others.

Duration: 31:00

Scripture: 1 Samuel 17:32, Psalm 23:1

Topics: "Faith And Courage", "Knowing God"

Description

This sermon delves into the life of David, highlighting how his best days were not as king of Israel but in his early years of faithfulness and courage. It emphasizes the importance of seeking God's heart, being faithful in the small things, and leaving a trail of goodness and loving kindness. The message encourages individuals to reset their focus on knowing God deeply and to be like David, ready to face the 'Goliaths' in their lives with unwavering faith.

Transcript

I want to share from the life of David. We heard about the Lord is my shepherd. If you were to think about the life of David, all of us know the life of David.

If you were to ask yourself, what was David's best days, I'll give you a quick summary of David's life. He was maybe 17 or 18 when he defeated Goliath, he was 30 when he became king, he was 50 when he committed adultery with Bathsheba, he was 70 when he died. He was king for 40 years.

And I was thinking about David's best days, as he thought back, I was thinking of him dying, 70-year-old man on his deathbed, and looking back at his life and saying, these were my best days. He's sitting as a king of Israel. But he committed adultery, his eldest son had killed another son, his eldest son had committed incest with his daughter, one of his sons had rebelled against him.

It had been quite a messy kingship. And I wondered if he looked at those years as being king of Israel, and thought, these are my best days. I don't think so.

At least as I look at scripture, as I look at David's life, I don't think of his being the king of Israel as being his best years. And I think we can think the same way. We can think that once I conquer all my enemies, once I'm hit that magic number of retirement, once I finish this milestone, whether it's finishing college, getting married, having children, becoming a grandparent, children going to college, there's always that

milestone.

Then I'm king of Israel, king of all the domain I have. It's just me and my wife, all the kids have been raised, and out of the home, and I'm done. Oh Lord, these are my best years.

Before then it was just a drag. We can learn from the life of David. What are his best years? And I believe his best years were, we find in the beginning of it, in 1 Samuel 16-17, whenever he was first anointed king, he was first anointed by Samuel to be king, and he fought Goliath.

And I want to just point out something in 1 Samuel 17. 1 Samuel 17 is the story where David defeats Goliath. It's one of the most famous stories in the Bible.

David defeats Goliath. But I want you to just think about the situation. I want you to imagine yourself, us, being Israel, for example.

Imagine the country of America being Israel. Just think about that. And think of all the people who had fought wars.

If you actually go to 1 Samuel 14, you'll see that Jonathan, Saul's son, was a very courageous man. It was him and just his armor bearer, and he was like, I see a bunch of Philistines over there. If they tell me to stay where I am, I'm going to stay, but if they tell me to come to be with you, if they engage in war, I'm coming and I'm going to beat them.

And he goes out with him and his armor bearer and defeats all of them and kills a bunch of them. So we're not talking about a bunch of cowards in Israel. We had some mighty men of warriors who had been battle tested.

Yet in this scene in 1 Samuel 17, when they're facing Goliath, everybody, everybody, including Jonathan, says, I don't want to fight against him. And then you look at David's response in 1 Samuel 17, verse 32, just amazing verses of a 17-year-old boy. I can imagine Saul sitting there having won victories.

I can imagine Jonathan sitting there, his son sitting there, shaking in fear. All these mighty men who had been fighting warriors, you read them that this is not the first time they've engaged the Philistines, but they're all there shaking. Here's this young 17-year-old boy standing up and saying in verse 32, telling the king, David said to Saul, let no man's heart fail on account of this guy, Goliath.

Your servant, me, me, 17-year-old boy, I don't know what you guys are doing, 40-year-olds or 50-year-olds, but me, 17-year-old, will go and fight with this Philistine. And Saul says, look, you're not able to find this Philistine, verse 33, you're just a boy. And Goliath has been a warrior from his youth.

But here's David's response, your servant, here's my credentials, King Saul, and here's what gives me strength. When your servant, me, when I was out there tending my father's sheep, when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb from the flock, I went out after him and smote him, attacked him, and it rescued him from his mouth. Where was the lamb? Close to the lion's mouth, if not in the lion's mouth.

I go to see a lion in a zoo and I'm scared. And when he rose up against me, okay, so the lion now says, all right, game on, I'm going to come at you. When he rose up against him, here's what this young, probably less than 17-year-old boy did.

He grabbed him by the beard and struck him and killed him. Your servant has killed both lion and bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, since he has taunted the armies of the living God. This is a courage that all these other men didn't have.

David, where your courage comes from is when I am out taking care of sheep, nobody saw me. I could have gone home and told my dad, dad, guess what, I almost got attacked by a lion, but be happy, I escaped. Sheep unfortunately died.

They had to take three sheep. I was able to pull two sheep out and take them back home. But his dad would have been happy, okay, boy, you didn't die.

But this was the attitude of David, with nothing to lose, with nothing to gain by saying he lost his sheep. When he saw his father's sheep, not even his own sheep, when he saw his father's sheep being attacked by a lion and a bear, a picture of the enemy, he said, God, I'm going to fight against this. These were David's best days.

I can imagine David as a young boy, 13, 14 year old boy, youngest in the family, being asked to do the menial job. Everybody else, you got to do all fun things together, but David, you go out there by yourself and you take care of my sheep. And David did it.

You think he wasn't tempted to complain, but you know what he packed with him? His harp. Not his bad mood. What's in your backpack? As you start the menial day and when you've been given the worst job to do, when all your brothers get more significance and you're stuck taking care of sheep, what's in your bag when you pack? Resentment? Bitterness? Lord, why did you bypass them? I'm the youngest.

Why didn't you give me all these skills? Why didn't you give me all this or that? He packed with him his harp and he wrote songs to the Lord. As far as I understand, the Psalms, a lot of the Psalms that we read about David were written before he became king. When he was running away from Saul, when he was running away from the Philistines, or when he was out tending sheep, he was sitting there and he was writing songs to God.

Not resenting God, but writing songs to God. So don't wait till you're retired to write songs to God. It's too late then.

The time has passed. Now, when you're being pushed aside, when you're being set aside and you've been given the menial jobs and nobody's watching your life, everybody just says, go feed the sheep. We'll take care of the more important tasks.

Here's David packing his harp and saying, the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want. I will bless the Lord continually.

His praise shall forever be on my mouth. How blessed is he whose sins are forgiven, whose sins are covered. To thee I lift up my soul, O my God, in thee will I trust.

And on and on. I'm just flipping through the Psalms and reading things here. The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear? One thing I have asked of the Lord and this I seek, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

These are the things that David was singing out in the pasture, ignored, rejected by men with the sheep. And he wasn't just writing Psalms, he wasn't just writing songs. When the enemy came against him, when the lion came against the sheep, he caught the lion by the beard and smote him.

Nobody saw it, nobody can prove it, except David said it and that's how we know it. Otherwise it would have never been written, but it was true. And that was the courage that God was looking for and God looked over all of Israel and many other battles.

God said, Jonathan can take care of that, these other men can take care of that, Saul, you can go and kill the Amalekites, you can do all those things. But when it comes to the Goliath, we're going to need a special man, a man after my own heart. And I see that David was being prepared for the big reveal.

David was going to be revealed to all of Israel and he was going to have to be revealed in a big way. And he had to conquer the giant that nobody else, including all the warriors couldn't kill, including Jonathan and Saul and all these tough guys. And God was preparing David in secret.

No big sermons preached, no big songs played for all of Israel to sing, that comes later. Just all of those songs, where was it prepared? In secret, taking care of sheep, fighting the lion and the bear. That's the life we have to covet.

That's the messy world many of us may be living in, where we've got children, we're trying to raise them and we've got work and we've got tough deadlines and all of those things. Lord, one thing I seek, to dwell in your house all the days of my life and to sing songs about you. I brought my harp with me today, Lord.

It's a good day. I'm all alone. None of my brothers want to come with me again today.

My dad is sending me out again to be by myself. But I've got my harp and I've got you. And God was looking all over all of Israel and he says, I'm looking for a man who's after my own heart.

He's after my heart. He's not after my things. He's not after my stuff.

He's not after my approval that now you can preach and now you can travel all over the world. He's after my heart. I'm looking all over because there's going to come a Goliath that's going to attack the people of God.

Some big trials that may shake us as a church, that may shake different people, may shake your family's life. And God's looking for the Goliath and he's going to respect the man just because he's the head of the home. He's going to look for the man or the woman or the child who's after God's own heart.

He bypassed Jesse, the father. He bypassed all the other brothers, at least six of them, and went to the youngest boy. And when the Goliaths come in your family trials, when the Goliaths come to NCCF, when the Goliaths come to our society, God is looking for Davids.

And where that David is formed and who's going to muster up the courage to have a David, just your normal taking care of sheep, just your normal gift that you have, maybe to play a harp, whatever it is God's given you, in your normal day of life, when sin comes against you, will you say, I'll attack it? I'm not attacking a Goliath, it's just a lion. Nobody's seeing it. The lion of pride, the lion of anger, the bear of sexual lust, unforgiveness, they're all coming at you.

Nobody's watching you. Nobody's watching me. Nobody's watching you.

You're all alone. One little sharp word you said there, a little evil thought and judgmental attitude you're having there, nobody's watching you. God's saying, here are the bears and the lions coming against these little sheep God's given you.

You know what the little sheep are that God's given you? This little sheep of joy in the Holy Spirit. He wants to bear the fruit. It's a little seed.

Think of it like a little lamb. He says, I'll give you this lamb. It'll grow.

You have to mature it. It's not going to be a big grown sheep, a mature sheep. It's a little lamb called joy.

It's like a little baby called love. Don't despise it. And now you've got the lions coming to attack it.

The lions of grumbling and murmuring. And there are only a few Davids who are saying, God, you didn't give me a lot of talents, but you gave me joy. I asked you to fill me with the Holy Spirit.

And you gave me seven little babies, a litter of the Holy Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, at least nine of them. He gives you the Holy Spirit. It's just very small.

Little lambs. And God says, where are the lions? Where's the David? The lion comes against it. The lion, roaring lion, the devil.

If the world system influenced by the devil comes at it, I'm going to protect these little sheep. Nobody's watching. Then there'll come a day when there's a big Goliath and all of the church will be looking for, Lord, speak to us.

This is really shaking us. And one little boy or one little sister, whoever the David is, who's been faithful and secret will say, I'll take it. I'll take it.

I know exactly what the Lord is wanting us to do. They don't need to come into the pulpit to share this. They don't need to write some big email.

It'll be a word that will be spoken that all these mighty men, elders of the church, whatever, will sit and listen and say, we don't have the strength for this, but this little boy does. King Saul had not been following God, half-hearted elders. If we're like that, a young little David will come along and all we'll say is like Saul says to David, if you want to take my armor with you, it's the best I can give you.

I'm not going to come with you. You can take my armor. You go with my armor.

I'm not even going to come and stand next to you. What a pitiful leader Saul had become. David tied on and said, it doesn't fit me.

I'm just going to go on my own. I didn't take your armor with me when I fought the lion and the bear. I don't need your armor.

The Lord, verse 37, the Lord who delivered me will deliver me from this Philistine. He was so clear who was with him. And he goes in and the Philistine comes to him and says, come in.

I'm going to give you your body to the birds of the air. And 17 verse 47, David says, all this assembly may know that the Lord does not deliver by the sword or by the spear. The sword or the spear is so many weapons of warfare that we use today.

And we can think of it in the church as being great messages, great sermons, great books, great ministry. Those are the sword and the spear. And all of Christendom is all amazed by this new book that's written out, this new movie that's come out, or this new song.

It's such an amazing song and it's getting all the awards. All the assembly will know when Goliath's come in our lives. You're not going to win by sword and spear.

You're going to win. It's going to be won by those whose heart was after God's heart. What is eternal life? To know God.

What should I do if you gave me \$20? Say thank you. I don't want \$20, but you gave me \$20. Or maybe I needed \$20.

And you gave me \$20. I say thank you. But I'd give you \$20, at least me.

Some of you may give \$20 and it won't be a huge gift. But what if I gave you, what if somebody gave me \$20 trillion? What's my response? And so when we see in John 3, verse 16, I have to ask myself, why did you give me \$20 trillion? Because of something really valuable that I knew you needed. And so when Jesus says, I love the world so much, that I gave \$20 trillion, I'm much more than that.

My only son. Why God did you give me your only son? You gave me breath. Okay, thank you.

You gave me food to eat. You gave me shade. Gave me a place to live.

Thank you. These are nice things. But why go to the extent of giving your own son? Why go that far? Because I want you to know me.

That's what eternal life is. So thank God for the cars. Thank God for the houses.

Thank God for the shade. Thank God for the food. We don't deserve any of those, but he gives it to us.

And he gave all of those things to us. But then we've got to put in a completely different category. God gave me a son.

Why all that? Why the most precious person in your life? Why go that far? Because that's the only way you would get to know me. And that's the big reward. And he's looking out of all of America, the U.S., the world, everywhere.

He's looking. Running to and fro, as it says. Knowing for those whose heart is completely his.

Completely his. And he looked at all of Israel and he saw only one boy, 17-year-old David. He said, that's the man.

That's the boy. And all of Israel. I don't care about his age.

I'm going to train him. I'm going to train him by getting run around for his life for the next 13 years. Snowball boys.

But I see his heart. His heart is completely towards me. And he brings his harp faithfully every day.

When he's been given the worst of all jobs in his family, he brings his harp. And he plays songs. And he says, your loving kindness is better than life.

What amazing words, if you consider the context. And you look at Psalm 23, as we heard earlier today. The Lord is my shepherd.

Where did he learn that the Lord was his shepherd? When he himself was his shepherd. How did David learn to grab a hold of the bear? He was an under-shepherd under his shepherd. He looked at his shepherd and he saw how his shepherd acted towards him.

And he says, I'm to him a shepherd. That's the way I'll act towards my sheep. And so he says, Lord, you are my shepherd.

I'm learning everything from you. Exactly how you live, I'm going to live. I'm going to walk in the same manner as you lived.

Because I abide in your love. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

And just a couple of thoughts, quick thoughts, and we can meditate on it for years and still not get all the truth of it. The Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

What happens when you take a sheep to green pastures? What do sheep do when you take them to green pastures? They eat. What does God make the sheep do? Lie down. Don't eat.

Lie down. I want you to be with me. This is not time to eat.

Eating is coming later. Green pastures is not for eating. Green pastures for the Christian is for being with God.

Makes me lie down in green pastures. What do you do in quiet waters? Drink? Nope. Walk beside it.

Your food and your drink is coming later. You know where it comes, right? In the presence of my enemies. That's the feast.

And too many of us see the pastures of God saying, God, thank you for bringing me to pastures. Easy life. Let me eat the grass.

God says, I wanted you. I gave my son for you. I wanted you, but you got caught up with the pastures.

And you saw water and you'd be like, there we go. Like a sheep. Let's go drink the water.

I just want you to walk beside me. We wanted to walk by the water. I wanted to take a stroll with you.

I wanted to just relax. Like a weaned child against its mother's breast. The Lord is my shepherd.

These are the lessons David learned. He leads me in the paths of righteousness. I got disciplined by the raw rawness of the earth.

Food time. Mealtime? Mealtime? When I see my enemies. When the trials are coming against me, that's mealtime.

That's my time to eat food. For me to feast on the Lord. In the presence of my enemies.

And everywhere I go, you know what's going to follow me? You know what's going to be the trail that I leave behind me? Surely goodness. That last verse in Psalm 23. Goodness and loving kindness will follow me.

That's what follows me. Who was in the room? I smell goodness and loving kindness. I know who must have been here.

And in the path left behind us, we leave loving kindness. Goodness. Wherever we go.

We leave a fragrance of Christ wherever we go. Just goodness. Not greatness.

Goodness. There's a book written many years ago. How to go from good to great.

It's completely the mindset of the world. How to go from good to great. I'd like to go from being great to just being good.

You know what's the compliment God gives to us when we go to heaven? Well done, great and mighty servant. No, well done, good and faithful. I have to go from seeking to be great in God's kingdom, world, whatever.

Just be good. Leave goodness behind you. He thought about everything that somebody else didn't think about.

He'll do the little stuff. He'll take care of the sheep. All the other brothers will take care of the big stuff.

But he'll take care of the little things. And he'll just leave goodness behind him. He won't ask for any, hey, do you know I've been doing this for the last two years? Nobody's noticed me.

And in his conversations and in his attitude to the other brothers and sisters in the church, he'll have goodness flowing out of him. And loving kindness. We learn this from our Master Shepherds.

These are the things that David learned at the feet of the Good Shepherd. In secret. And that's what made him ready to face Goliath.

I just wonder when he was 70 years old if he sat back and reminisced and missed those days. I would have if I were him. I'd have looked at all my children fighting with one another.

I'd have looked at all the evil that had happened in my children. I'd have looked at the own evil that I did. I committed adultery and then killed a woman's husband.

And on and on. Look back with so much regret and say, man, where did I lose it, Lord? Where did I lose my way? When I was a 17-year-old boy and he'd listen to these psalms that all of Israel was singing, he said, I believe David came back. I believe I've spoken about it from here and spoke it too.

But I just think back on it and say, what would have been different if he had kept that heart of a 17-year-old? I was 17 years old when I was first baptized in the Holy Spirit. I was 17 years old when I first remember having a heart like David. But I too have wandered many times, especially in my 20s.

And I look at you guys who are in your 20s and your 30s and I'm so excited for you guys. I want you to miss what I, I want you guys to miss the turn I took. I was on the narrow road and I took an exit.

Because I wanted a slightly broader way. I didn't go on the broadest way. I wanted a slightly broader way where it was Jesus and me.

Space for two. Not to be like going through the eye of a needle. I was still too much of a camel, kind of squeezing.

And I look at us, you guys, young people, and I say, Lord, I hope that you will keep them like you kept David. In the fires of affliction. But at a young age, help them to always realize that it is the heart of only God that matters.

And for those of us who are older, like me, who have squandered things in the past, there's still a message of hope. We can return. And because Jesus says he remembers our sins no more, we have a greater hope than what David ever could have.

So we don't need to condemn ourselves. It says our sins we will remember no more. But we must come back.

And we must reset our compass to the true north. Not activity. Not Bible study.

Knowing God. We must reset our compass to saying, Lord, I want to know you. And be very, very excited.

If your lot in life right now is very pathetic, like David's, taking care of sheep and fighting lions and bears in secret. And even your spouse doesn't seem to be capable of helping you, doesn't have the faith, or doesn't seem to be getting his act together or her act together. Be excited.

Look at yourself and say, God, I can be like you or David. I want to pack my harp with me. I want to sing songs for you.

And I want to fight those lions and bears that come against me. Nobody needs to see me, but you do. Then he'll prepare us.

He'll prepare us to be an army of Davids who, even if you're dispersed to different parts of the world, you'll be ready. You'll be able to see the Goliath coming and you wouldn't be shaking at all. All the world around you will be shaking.

You'll be like, who is this uncircumcised Philistine to stand against the armies of the living God? God wants that kind of faith to be birthed in all of us. God is not a respecter of marriage unions or hereditary. The faith of the father does not pass down to the son.

The faith of the wife doesn't pass on to the husband. None of that. Each of us must individually say, Lord, I want to be like David.

I want to embrace this ordinary life that you're giving me and be faithful and be good. A trail of goodness and loving kindness follow us. Let's bow our heads and let us spend a few minutes in prayer.

Thank God for what we've heard. We heard from Bobby in the very beginning, Lord Jesus, I want you to see this. I want this to be a sweet smelling offering for you.

That is what we're after. That's what he's looking for. We can only find the delights of his word till all on the altar we lay.

And we lay everything on the altar and say, Lord Jesus, I want to know you. You said, seek my face. My heart said, thy face I will seek.

Thy countenance. Thy countenance I will seek. I will notice the moment your eyes start to say, I'm a little disappointed.

I will look at that and say, okay, God, I'm going to turn away from this. I will seek your face. I will learn how to read your face.

It's much more than knowing your word, Lord. I want to sense your Holy Spirit through your word. At the moment, my conscience will be so sensitive.

And when I see, I sense the slightest frown in your face. I will say, Lord, I want to turn. You said, seek my face.

My heart said to you, thy face I will seek. This is the heart of David.

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