



Series Title: “The Monarchy is a Mixed Bag”

5 July 2015: 6th Sunday after Pentecost

FUMC—Arlington, TX 76011

“Covenant and Leadership”—Preaching Text: 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10

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“Leadership is communicating to people their worth and potential so clearly that they come to see it in themselves” (Stephen Covey, *The 8th habit*).

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“During the last week of July, we host Vacation Bible School for 200+ children. As an obviously large enterprise, we will need lots of helping hands to make it a success. This opportunity is a wonderful and unique way to help our children grow in their faith and to learn about God. If you would like to help as a volunteer in this ministry, please contact Blair Bowden or Elizabeth Givens in the church office.”

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Hear our day’s lesson, 2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10:

1 Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron, and said, “Look, we are your bone and flesh. 2 For some time, while Saul was king over us, it was you who led out Israel and brought it in. The Lord said to you: It is you who shall be shepherd of my people Israel, you who shall be ruler over Israel.”

3 So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron; and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the Lord, and they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 At Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months; and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years

9 David occupied the stronghold, and named it the city of David. David built the city all around from the Millo inward. 10 And David became greater and greater, for the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him (2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10).

David, if you have been following the playbook, has been anointed king three times. First by Samuel, secretly, and at God’s bidding in Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:1 ff.). The people likewise anointed David king—in Judah a second time. David served there as a king for seven and a half years (2 Samuel 2:1-4). Although Judah was only one tribe, it was a beginning; yet also a time of trouble. The eleven other tribes sought out David after the death of Ishbaal one of Saul’s last sons. He waged a kind of civil war with David—for a time. During this period of political uncertainty David grew stronger and stronger, and the house of Saul grew continuously less robust. Ultimately, two officers assassinated Saul’s son last Ishbosheth. This cleared the path to the throne for David as the assassins assumed David would reward their treachery. Instead David commanded their execution (2 Samuel 4:1-12). Thus the tribes of Israel turned to David for leadership. So they took the

humbling trip to Hebron and began negotiations. Our lesson relates what they said to David at his third anointing—and his response.

David ruled for forty years altogether, seven and one half in Hebron and thirty-three in Jerusalem. In verses 6-8, David captures Jerusalem, which previously had remained a Jebusite city. Like Washington, D.C., Jerusalem was located outside the tribal territories and the choice of Jerusalem as capital did not favor any tribe.

David was a hymn writer, warrior, king, and Torah scholar. David also embodies the skill to beat vast odds. Malcolm Gladwell describes David in his book *David and Goliath*'s subtitle: "Underdogs, Misfits, and the Art of Battling Giants." David is the archetypal leader who brings out the best in people. With respect to leadership on this 4th of July weekend we would do well to briefly outline four decisive traits that made David Israel's greatest leader—over a span of more than 4000 years.

The **first** leadership trait David possessed was optimism. As we read Psalms, we see one poem after another that reminds us that although David had his share of life's troubles—often brought on himself—he even so trusted God. Thus David preserved an outlook of hope in God. This attitude was always in play in his life and in Israel. If you aspire to leadership—great or modest—optimism is a trait that followers need in a leader. If you supply optimism of leadership you will likely be effective.

A **second** characteristic David possessed was a "never give up" attitude of a leader. As any who seeks to be a leader knows, often things seem to go against us. Leaders know that failure is part of success—although a painful part. My mentor, Tom Butts, relates a story that illumines the "never give up" attitude. A fine leader of the 20th Century was the resolute, and some say stubborn, Winston Churchill. Perhaps the most notable of all Churchillian traits was his refusal to give up during the most adverse situations. In June 1965, only a few months before his death, he gave the commencement address at a university in England. He was so ill attendants had to help

him to the podium. Once there he stood in silence for a long time. Then the voice that had once called Britain back from despair's edge sounded for a last time in public. Churchill said, "Never give up! Never give up! Never give up!" and sat down. After a long hush, the audience then rose to its feet and offered a lengthy applause. Perhaps Churchill and King David were cut from the same cloth.

The **third** leadership trait David embraced was humility. Certainly, sometimes we see it and sometimes we don't. Yet anyone who could write hymns/psalms/prayers/ spiritual songs like David did, certainly experienced humbleness in his relationship to God. David began his life as a shepherd and this needless to say was not a royal occupation. Yet God chose David. Why?—perhaps because David never forgot his humble origins. David never became a proud or conceited king. Humility empowered a kindness for others, as well as the knack to show appreciation. Humility helps leaders earn people's devotion. We cannot capture people's hearts without genuine care about their well-being and welfare.

Last, David was courageous. We read about this courage in every chapter of David's life. The story of David and Goliath and this battle of champions is a singular marker of David's courage—even at a very tender age. He fought, as he reminds Saul, lions and bears and so the lad is not afraid of some "uncircumcised Philistine." Courage is a fundamental to leadership.

A petite sentence "I am with you" is at core of the biblical message. Moses by contrast to David, conjured five excuses in Exodus 3-4 about why Moses should not be the Exodus leader. But God said, "I will be with you" (Exodus 3:12). The end of our lesson for us today reads: "the Lord, the God of hosts, was with him."

David and all of us later royal and priestly-types are never alone. However sinful and lacking in assurance we might be, God is not ashamed to linger with David, Bathsheba, or us. There is an embedded word of forgiveness in this simple sentence: "I am with you." As Christians we are all leaders. May we cultivate those traits that David had as a leader—optimism,



“a never give up attitude,” humility, and courage—so that we cultivate a capacity to trust God, carry out our vocation, and face all life’s challenges. “I am with you” was enough for David. They are also enough for us.

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This year our Senior High Youth join Cypress UMC, Wesley Memorial UMC in Huntsville, Farmersville UMC, and First UMC Grand Prairie to work in Gainesville. Projects include building porches, wheel chair ramps, replacing siding on houses and painting houses. We will be leaving on Sunday afternoon at 3 and returning on Saturday afternoon.

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