

2 Samuel 1 New International Version (NIV)

David Hears of Saul's Death

1 After the death of Saul, David returned from striking down the Amalekites and stayed in Ziklag two days. **2** On the third day a man arrived from Saul's camp with his clothes torn and dust on his head. When he came to David, he fell to the ground to pay him honor.

3 "Where have you come from?" David asked him.

He answered, "I have escaped from the Israelite camp."

4 "What happened?" David asked. "Tell me."

"The men fled from the battle," he replied. "Many of them fell and died. And Saul and his son Jonathan are dead."

5 Then David said to the young man who brought him the report, "How do you know that Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?"

6 "I happened to be on Mount Gilboa," the young man said, "and there was Saul, leaning on his spear, with the chariots and their drivers in hot pursuit. **7** When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, 'What can I do?'

8 "He asked me, 'Who are you?'

"'An Amalekite,' I answered.

9 "Then he said to me, 'Stand here by me and kill me! I'm in the throes of death, but I'm still alive.'

10 "So I stood beside him and killed him, because I knew that after he had fallen he could not survive. And I took the crown that was on his head and the band on his arm and have brought them here to my lord."

11 Then David and all the men with him took hold of their clothes and tore them. **12** They mourned and wept and fasted till evening for Saul and his son Jonathan, and for the army of the LORD and for the nation of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.

13 David said to the young man who brought him the report, "Where are you from?"

"I am the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite," he answered.

14 David asked him, "Why weren't you afraid to lift your hand to destroy the LORD's anointed?"

15 Then David called one of his men and said, "Go, strike him down!" So he struck him down, and he died. **16** For David had said to him, "Your blood be on your own head. Your own mouth testified against you when you said, 'I killed the LORD's anointed.'"

David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan

17 David took up this lament concerning Saul and his son Jonathan, **18** and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament of the bow (it is written in the Book of Jashar):

19 "A gazelle^[a] lies slain on your heights, Israel.

How the mighty have fallen!

20 "Tell it not in Gath,

proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon,

lest the daughters of the Philistines be glad,
 lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice.

²¹ “Mountains of Gilboa,
 may you have neither dew nor rain,
 may no showers fall on your terraced fields.^[b]

For there the shield of the mighty was despised,
 the shield of Saul—no longer rubbed with oil.

²² “From the blood of the slain,
 from the flesh of the mighty,
 the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
 the sword of Saul did not return unsatisfied.

²³ Saul and Jonathan—
 in life they were loved and admired,
 and in death they were not parted.

They were swifter than eagles,
 they were stronger than lions.

²⁴ “Daughters of Israel,
 weep for Saul,
 who clothed you in scarlet and finery,
 who adorned your garments with ornaments of gold.

²⁵ “How the mighty have fallen in battle!
 Jonathan lies slain on your heights.

²⁶ I grieve for you, Jonathan my brother;
 you were very dear to me.

Your love for me was wonderful,
 more wonderful than that of women.

²⁷ “How the mighty have fallen!
 The weapons of war have perished!”

John 14:1-7 New International Version (NIV)

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

14 “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. ² My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. ⁴ You know the way to the place where I am going.” ⁵ Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

We're starting a **new series** this morning.

We'll be looking at the **2nd Book of Samuel**.

We **finished the 1st Book of Samuel** last November.

It would be good to have your **Bible open at 2 Samuel chapter 1** - and then we'll look at our NT reading from **John 14**.

First - let me **pray** for God's understanding of His Word.

Let's pray...

Context/Recap of 1 Samuel

Before we look at **this morning's passage**

Let's do a **quick recap** on what happened in the **1st book of Samuel**

[PowerPoint 1-Rise of Kingship]

- *A woman called **Hannah** (husband **Elkanah**) **couldn't have children**, so she **prayed to God, for a son**, whom she promised she would dedicate to the **Lord's service***
- *The **Lord answered** her prayers and **Samuel was born***
- ***Samuel** became a great **prophet** of Israel*
- *The **Israelites' arch enemy**, at the time, was the neighbouring **Philistines**, whom the Israelites were in constant battle with*
- *With **Samuel getting old** and his sons being **corrupt**; the **people of Israel** **asked for a king**, "like the other nations"*
- *Despite **Samuel's disappointment**; **God granted their request** and let them have a king, like the other nations; even though that meant rejecting God as their king!*

- **Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, was anointed king. Saul was very handsome and head and shoulders taller than everyone else**
- **However, God does not look at outward appearances but at the heart (1 Sam 16:7)**
- **Saul often did his own thing, rather than obeying God, so God decided to reject Saul as king, and earmarked David as the next king**
- **David was described as "a man after God's own heart" (1 Sam 13:14)**
- **David, a shepherd boy, from the tribe of Judah, came to prominence when he defeated the giant Philistine warrior, Goliath, with a simple sling-shot**
- **In this contest with Goliath, David showed his trust in God as he says to Goliath ⁴⁵ ... "You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. ⁴⁶ This day the LORD will deliver you into my hands, and I'll strike you down and cut off your head"**
- **David was promoted to work in Saul's palace - and soothed Saul with his harp playing**
- **But Saul became increasingly jealous and paranoid about David**
- **Meanwhile David and Saul's son, Jonathan, became close friends**
- **This only heightened Saul's jealousy of David and he tried to kill David several times**
- **Most of the rest of 1 Samuel, is spent with Saul pursuing David and David refusing to take the matter into his own hands and kill God's anointed King; but instead trusting that God will uninstall Saul at the appropriate time**

- *That time came (1 Samuel 31) when Saul was in battle with the Philistines, and when the battle became hopeless, Saul took his own life.*
- *And we finish the book of 1 Samuel with Saul and his son Jonathan, dead.*

To quote Anglican Bishop and theologian - N.T. Wright

[PowerPoint 2-quote]

Death is a monster, death is horrible

Intro

I'll never forget the day - 9th May 1994

I arrived at work at IBM in Sydney - to a note on my desk....

My mum had phoned from Ireland and left a message that my Dad had an aneurysm of the aorta - and it had burst

In God's providence - the girl who answered my phone and took the message - was an ex-nurse

And she was explained what an aneurysm was and how serious it was

When I phoned my Mum back - the prognosis was not good

My Aunt told me to come straight away

I booked a flight to Ireland - but not until the next day

Dad died overnight - I never got to say goodbye.

I was devastated!

Death is a monster!

(pause)

Death Announced (2 Samuel 1:1-16)

- Which bring us to our passage from 2 Samuel chapter 1
- We pick up the story in verses 1 to 16

- Death is announced

[PowerPoint 3-Death announced]

- David has returned to **Ziklag (Philistine territory)** having **struck down the Amalekites** (arch enemies of the Israelites and Philistines)
- After **3 days** - a man from the **Amalekites arrives** with some news
- It's **Ironic** that it should be an **Amalekite**
 - In **1 Sam 15** - **God told Saul** to completely **wipe out the Amalekites** - arch enemy from Exodus times - and **Saul had failed to obey God** - that was **Saul's downfall**
 - And it's also **ironic** - that **David's has just returned from fighting the Amalekites**
- The **Amalekite man's appearance of torn clothes and dust on his head** - indicates he is in a state of **mourning** - he brings news of a **death**
- **King Saul and his son Jonathan are dead (v4)**
- This is **devastating news**
- The Amalekite tells David that he has was on **Mount Gilboa** and came across **King Saul** at the **point of death** in the **battle** with the **Philistines**
- The Amalekite said that **King Saul asked that he kill him** - before the Philistines could finish Saul off
- So, the **Amalekite alleges** that he **killed King Saul** and then **took his crown and arm band** and **brought them to David**
- The only problem with the **Amalekite's story** is that it is **different** to the account of Saul's death in **1 Samuel 31** - where it says:

³ The fighting grew fierce around Saul, and when the archers overtook him, they wounded him critically.

⁴ Saul said to his armor-bearer, "Draw your sword and run me through, or these uncircumcised fellows will come and run me through and abuse me."

But his armor-bearer was terrified and would not do it; so Saul took his own sword and fell on it.

- The **writer of 2 Samuel** doesn't tell us **which story is correct** - he leaves it **up to us** to work it out
 - But it's safe to **assume** that the **Amalekites story** has **some truth** - yes, **Saul is dead** - because he has Saul's **crown** and **armband**
 - And it's safe to **assume** he is **lying about who killed Saul** - and he has **embellished the story so it looks like he is the one who killed Saul** - because he **knows** that **David is Saul's enemy** - and he **thinks David will be pleased** that his **enemy** has been **killed** - and the **Amalekite** thinks he'll get a **reward for finishing off Saul** once and for all
 - But the **Amalekite** has made a **grave miscalculation**
 - See v14 - David asks "**Why weren't you afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?**"
 - You see **as far as David is concerned, Saul was anointed by God** as King - and it's **up to God** to **decide when Saul is unanointed** - and when he **dies**.
 - Back in **1 - Samuel** David had **spared Saul's life twice** (1 Sam 24 in a cave when Saul went into a cave to relieve himself, and 1 Sam 26 when David snuck **into Saul's camp**)
 - As David said in 1 Sam 26:9-10
- ⁹ ... "**Don't destroy [Saul]! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?** ¹⁰ **As surely as the LORD lives,**" he said, "the LORD

himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.

- So, if David is not **game** enough to kill **God's anointed**, even though he had **plenty of reasons** to - then certainly this **Amalekite** shouldn't kill **God's anointed**
- So, David has the **Amalekite** killed for striking down Saul, **God's anointed** one
- Application - It's a reminder to us that ultimately - **DEATH** is the punishment for Sin - as Romans 6:23 says - **The wages of sin is death!**
- Application - telling **lies** and being **deceitful** ALWAYS has **consequences** - and in **this case** the **consequences** are **fatal**
- In our NT passage **John 14:6** (which we'll look at more detail in a minute) - Jesus says **I am the way, THE TRUTH and the life**
- What **Jesus** is claiming is - He is the **Origin of All Truth** - He never lies - He always tells the **truth** - everything He says and teaches is **TRUTH**
- Jesus says in **John 8:32** - **the truth will set you free**. In our story - telling the **truth** would have kept the **Amalekite** from dying
- And as **Jesus** said to Pilate - in **John 18:37** - "**You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.**"

Application - another **simple application** here is - to always tell the **truth**

Application - It's also worth **reflecting** - that the **Jews** and **Romans** of **Jesus'** time didn't ask the question David asked the **Amalekite**?

Why weren't the Jews and Romans afraid to lift their hand to destroy the Lord's anointed, Jesus? Didn't they think there would be consequences? Like what happened to Jerusalem in AD70?

But before we get too self-righteous about how good we are compared to the Jews and Romans in Jesus' time

Our sin killed Jesus too!

He had to die because we're all sinful - aren't we? (Romans 3:23)

(pause)

So that's **death announced**

Now grief expressed - that's **verses 17 to 27**

Grief Expressed (2 Samuel 1:11, 17-27)

[PowerPoint 4-Grief Expressed]

- David and his men expressed their **grief** at the news of **Saul and Jonathan's death**
- Grief is: **intense sorrow – especially by someone's death**
- They express their grief- **physically** - v11 - they **tore their clothes - mourned and wept and fasted** till evening for Saul - and Jonathan - and for the army of the Lord and for the nation of Israel
- **Physical** **grief** is an **outward sign of what's going on inside.**
- **Even though** David and his men have been living in **exile** - in **Philistine territory** - they are **still** **Israelites** and **genuinely** full of **grieve** for their nation's loss

- As well as physically expressing his grief - David writes a lament that **expresses the emotions he feels**
- A lament is: a **passionate expression of grief or sorrow**
- It's a bit like a **eulogy at a funeral**
- David wants the people of **Judah to learn and remember this lament** - as a **memorial [reminder] of such a tragic event**
- In this lament David:
 - David describes Saul - in v19 - depending on the translation - as either a **Gazelle** - or the **beauty of Israel** or the **glory of Israel**.
The point is **Israel has lost its treasured king** - how the **mighty have fallen!**
 - V20 - David expresses a **desire** that this tragic **event** not be told in the Philistine towns of **Gath** and **Ashkelon** - so that the **Philistine daughters** can't gloat over Israel's downfall
 - V21 - He also **expresses his desire** that **Mount Gilboa** - the place of **Saul and Jonathan's death** - not receive any **dew** or **rain** - and lay **barren**. Apparently, that **area** is still **barren to this day**. It's like a **memorial to death of Saul and Jonathan**.
 - V22 - David describes **Jonathan** and **Saul** as being so **brave** in battle - they were **both fearless**
 - V23 - He says - **Saul and Jonathan** - in **life** they were **loved** and **admired** and in **death** they were **together**
 - Somehow **Jonathan** managed to **navigate** his **friendship** with **David** (whom Saul hated) and still **maintain his love for his father** - that wouldn't have been easy for Jonathan.

- V23 - **Saul and Jonathan seemed to everyone watching - as faster than eagles and stronger than lions**
- David continues his lament:
- V24 - The daughters of Israel are not to forget that their king - provided well for them - they had the finest clothes and jewelry - under Saul, the nation was prosperous
- Then David turns his lament to his best friend Jonathan
- See v26 - David's grief for Jonathan is intense - the love Jonathan had for David -David says - is more wonderful than the love of women
- How can David say that?
- Because David had been the centre of attention from a youth and he was used to women showing him attention - but to have the son of the King (Jonathan) befriend him was something very special
- Jonathan's sister Michal loved David the warrior - but wasn't so keen on David the dancing harpist (2 Sam 6:20)
- And Saul loved David the harpist - but couldn't accept David's success as a warrior.
- Whereas Jonathan loved and accepted David - the whole person.
- Jonathan was heir to the throne but he let go of those rights - in favour of protecting and encouraging David over the years, and allowed his own interests to be disregarded so David would prosper.
- His love was a pure love - a other-person centred love
- Some people try to suggest a homosexual relationship here - this is so wrong

- The **Hebrew** word used for **love** here is **ahava** - which is used to describe the **love** that **God** has **for** his **people!** There's **no** **sexual meaning** in this word!

Notice too - in David's lament - there's no hint of gloating - he **forgives Saul** - he has **respect** for him as **God's anointed** and his **grief** and **kind words** are **GENUINE**.

David's **forgiveness** of Saul - is like **Jesus** on the cross - "**forgive them father - for they do not know what they are doing**" (Luke 23:34)

Application - that's the way we are to **forgive** - with no gloating when someone who has hurt us - encounters a problem or two

Application - This **lament** can **help us** as we **express our grief**

- **Grief is a deep and powerful emotion**
- **Grief is the price we pay for loving someone and engaging in a relationship with them**
- **God understands our grief** - Ps 34:18
- **God is a God of all comfort** (2 Cor 1)
- **Grief needs to be expressed and not bottled up.**
- **There's no time limit on grief** - it's different for each person
- **No one should tell us when we've done enough grieving**
- **This lament shows too that it's helpful when expressing grief over the death of a loved one - to recall their gifts and achievements and to share fond memories - this may help to come to terms with their death.**

Another Application - Even though the lament doesn't focus on Saul's faults (as often eulogies don't) **Saul is a fallible king - the only infallible king is Jesus**

Grief Answered (John 14:1-7)

So, we've seen death announced and grief expressed

I think we'd all agree - there is a place for grief - it needs to be expressed

[PowerPoint 5-Grief Answered]

But - is there an answer to grief?

Well - that brings us to our NT passage - from John 14 - verses 1 to 7 [Turn there]

The context is that Jesus is saying goodbye to His disciples before He goes to His death and he tells them not to be troubled by His impending death.

He promises He is going ahead (to Heaven) to prepare a place for them and He promises to come back one day too.

Obviously, the disciples are troubled by this - they don't want Jesus to go.

And Thomas is unsure of the way to get to the place Jesus is going.

Jesus famously says in verse 6: "I AM the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father, except through me."

Jesus is saying - He is the way to get to Heaven - by believing in Him - in His death for the forgiveness of sins and in His resurrection for eternal life.

How can Jesus say to the disciples "do not let your hearts be troubled"? (cf. John 11:25-26)

Because His death is not the end - it was followed by His resurrection.

Because of His resurrection - our death and the death of all believers is not the end - we have eternity in Heaven to look forward to.

In one of our **on-line Bible Studies** this week.

Zelka shared with us the **last words her Mum** said to her before she **died**. Her mum said: "*I'm very sick and I'm going to die. Don't worry because I'm going to Heaven*"

What beautiful words to hear!

What **Zelka's mum knew** - is that **death** is not the **monster** it is painted out to be.

Yes, of course, we **grieve** our **loved ones** when they die.

But Jesus is the **WAY** to **Heaven**.

[PowerPoint 6-Eternal Life]

Jesus is the **WAY** to life - **eternal life** (1 John 2:25)

Jesus is the **answer** to our **grief**.

Let's pray...