

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
[Adapted from Bethel Bible-  
Presbyterian Church, 10 Downing St.  
Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW BIBLE STUDY CLASS**

**2 SAMUEL 23**

**LESSON 13B**

**INTRODUCTION**

Chapter 23 records David's gratitude to God for the courageous and mighty men who faithfully served him. This psalm is commonly referred to as "David's Last Words". It reminds us of Jacob's farewell words to his sons who gathered around him at his deathbed (Genesis 49). Moses did likewise when he spoke to the children of Israel in Deuteronomy 33. And in the New Testament, we think of Paul who gave a passionate farewell message to the elders of the church at Ephesus (Acts 20:17-38).

David summarised his entire life ministry before the LORD. He acknowledged that it was the LORD who made an everlasting covenant with him even though he did not deserve it. The sensitivity to the presence and existence of God in our lives when we reached the end of life's journey will be a sobering and humbling experience for every Christian.

Truth be told, it is never by our own wisdom, health and strength that we attain life's pleasures, blessings and achievements. If we have received any blessings at all or been a blessing to others, it is only possible by the grace and mercies of God.

It is right and good to have this humbling attitude about ourselves, and it is important to acknowledge others who have helped us. This acknowledgment by David is a lesson for us. This is precisely what Paul meant when he wrote that we should esteem others better than ourselves. The world does not understand this concept of putting others first and ourselves second. This is Christian living. David's acknowledgment of his men who helped him is now recorded in God's holy and perfect Word.

**COMMENTARY**

**David's Last Words—23:1-7**

2 Samuel 23:1 states, "*Now these be the last words of David. David the son of Jesse said, and the man who was raised up on high, the anointed of the God of Jacob, and the sweet psalmist of Israel, said,*" David spoke as a prophet of the LORD. The above introductory verse by the inspired writer painted the whole life of David in four parts. David had a humble and lowly beginning. He was a poor shepherd boy minding his father's sheep when he was called by the LORD. He was a humble obedient child of God who had already experienced the nearness and sufficiency of God in his life. He testified before king Saul that the LORD had helped him defeat bears and lions when he was tending to his father's sheep.

Humble beginnings do not mean not walking with God. In fact the opposite is often true. When we do not have much material possessions, our walk with God is one of complete trust and dependence on Him for our daily needs. Once wealth and money pour

in, the trust in material things take over. Our trust in the LORD diminish until we face trials that reduce us to naught and we turn back to Him again.

David was exalted to sovereign power and glory as king, a man who was anointed by God. David was acknowledged as the anointed of "God of Jacob". That David was chosen by God to lead Israel is not disputed. This is significant as David did not anoint himself to become king of Israel. When man takes matters into his own hands and usurp positions of power and authority such as that of a king, he cannot be said to have been anointed by God. David did not lift a finger against his predecessor, king Saul. David's record was without blemish. No one could charge him for making himself king. He waited patiently for God's timing. He understood that God's timing is always the best. Throughout his entire life as a fugitive, he submitted to God's will no matter how difficult it was for him, his family and men. He made sure that his men did not "touch the LORD's anointed", king Saul.

Why was David known as the anointed of the God of Jacob instead of Israel? Perhaps the reason was that before David's time, the nation was a mess as Saul was a derelict king. He cared more for the promotion of his own name than of God's name. The nation of Israel that David inherited was more like that of Jacob (the old name for the unregenerate Jacob) rather than a united nation. It was divided into the camps of Saul (11 tribes) and the camps of David (one tribe—the tribe of Judah). Perhaps that was why the phrase God of Jacob was used instead of the God of Israel. David united Israel into one complete whole

giving it a new capital city, Jerusalem. David's reign was the greatest in Israel's history.

David was known as the beloved psalmist of Israel. He wrote the most number of psalms in the Book of Psalms. It is said that he wrote more than half of the 150 psalms.

The psalms reveal a man who communed with God on all issues. The LORD was David's confidant, helper and comforter. There was no issue or topic that David did not bring before God. He poured out his soul to God after he committed adultery with Bathsheba and was rebuked and exposed by God. He prayed imprecatory psalms after he suffered unjustly in the hands of his many enemies. From the psalms, we see a man with a tender and compassionate heart. He was a man of praise, filled with much thanksgiving to his God. David revealed his soul in his psalms.

David made his specific claim that the Spirit of the LORD spoke by him. David claimed that his words were God's revelation of His will to the nation of Israel. The king who ruled in the fear of God must be just and upright. His rule would bring peace and prosperity to the world. 2 Samuel 23:3 is for all who rule, "*The God of Israel said, the Rock of Israel spake to me, He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*" This is applicable to all men including fathers, elders and pastors who have subordinates under them. Those who rule must rule justly knowing that they will have to stand before God on judgment day. No one can escape the one living and true God.

David admitted that while his rule was not as desirable as could be, nevertheless God had made an everlasting covenant with him. This

acknowledgment points to a man who was humble and who realized that it was by grace rather than reward that enabled him to receive this blessing from the LORD.

David knew that when the covenant was fulfilled, peace and security would prevail; and that was his desire. Godless men, who were like thorns, would be thrust away and burned. But the man who would uproot these godless and wicked men would need to be well-armed and protected for the task. His reference to the man intimated the Lord Jesus Christ, the greater Son of David is envisaged, who would ultimately be the King of kings and LORD of lords and rule the millennium kingdom as the upholder of justice and righteousness (23:2-7).

#### **David Honours His Mighty Men— 23:8-39**

David proceeded to list the men who were loyal, brave and mighty and who helped him to rule (23:8-39). The corresponding passage in 1 Chronicles 11:10-47 gives more insight into the text. David listed two groups of three men (23:8-12, 13-17); and mentioned the exploits of Abishai, the brother of Joab, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada; and the last group of 32.

Josheb-Basshebeth, the Tachmonite, single handedly killed 800 enemy soldiers at one time (23:8). Eleazar fought a great battle. When other Israelites were retreating, Eleazar stood up and held his ground until he defeated the Philistines. The other Israelites then returned to collect the booty (23:9, 10). Shammah, the son of Agee the Hararite, also stood alone while all the other Israelites fled from the Philistines. Shammah defeated the Philistines (23:11, 12). In all these, it

was the LORD who gave them the victories (23:10b, 12b). This is not to negate the valour and skill of these military men. The LORD used these men to fulfill His purpose for the nation of Israel. God raised these brave men to be loyal and to serve and help His anointed king and chosen nation Israel.

The names of the next group of three men were not mentioned. David cited an incident where he had expressed that he longed to drink of the water from the well of Bethlehem. This incident could have taken place during his fugitive days when Saul was pursuing him. David was hiding in the cave of Adullam, which was in the hills west of Bethlehem. Some Philistines had already occupied the valley of Rephaim, which was southwest of Jerusalem, and since it was harvest time, they were there because they wanted to steal food from the fields. The Philistines were also garrisoned in Bethlehem. It was very dangerous and life-threatening for the three men to attempt to draw water from the well in Bethlehem.

However, they ventured despite the odds. They went and returned with the water for David. When they brought the water to David, he refused to drink but instead poured it out unto the LORD (23:16). David gave his reason. The men had risked with their "blood" to get the drink for him. Therefore he could not drink it. People might criticize David for wasting the water by pouring it into the ground. But David explained why he could not bear to drink the water, which was gotten at such high risk. He did not feel worthy to drink it. Being a man who feared and loved the LORD, he consecrated it to the LORD (23:17). Pouring the water back to the ground is his way of offering the water to the LORD.

After this, David mentioned two other key names: Abishai, the brother of Joab, and Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kahzeel. Abishai single-handedly slew 300 enemy soldiers with his spear (23:28-29). Benaiah, on the other hand, struck down two "lionlike" or very powerful Moabites. He killed a lion which was trapped in a pit during snowing winter time. He once met an Egyptian who was armed with a spear and he only with a staff. He wrested the spear from the Egyptian and slew the enemy with his own spear (23:20-22).

David then listed 32 men who were loyal, fought the enemies and protected the nation. Conspicuously missing is the name of Joab. David did not mention him. It could be because Joab was in a class of his own being the commander in chief of the army or most probably he had dropped out of favour with David.

blessed because of God's grace and mercy. Though he gave God all the glory in his life's work and ministry, he did acknowledge all the key men who helped him.

David was surrounded by many capable men who were loyal and faithful to him and who were willing to risk their lives for him. God cares for us and He wants us to have the best in everything. If we love Him and do everything that is according to His will and purpose, He will provide no lack of resources and people. Pastors, elders and deacons should take comfort that if they do the work of God, He will send the Joshebs, Eleazars, and Shammahs; and Abishais, Benaiahs and a host of many others to help in the growth and building of the church "unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ"! Let us live in harmony and unity, in love and care for one another for the glory of God. AMEN

### ***PRACTICAL VALUE***

David's humble beginning is a source of encouragement to us all. It is not the humble beginning that brings a person down but his wayward walk. David was a man after God's own heart. He began life as a shepherd boy. He was very faithful to God and walked closely with Him. In God's time, He anointed David and thrust him into the limelight of political intrigues and kingship. God had big plans for David - from a shepherd boy to the anointed of the God of Jacob and the psalmist of Israel.

All these blessings did not go to David's head. He acknowledged that they were possible only by God's grace. God had set a standard that David knew he did not meet. He was

**DAILY READINGS AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**2 SAMUEL 23**

**LESSON 13B**

**DAILY READINGS:**

**MONDAY:** 2 Samuel 22:1-51; James 4:10; 1 Peter 5:5-6.

**TUESDAY:** 2 Samuel 23:1-7; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; Romans 15:4.

**WEDNESDAY:** 2 Samuel 23:8-39; Romans 16:1-24.

**THURSDAY:** 2 Samuel 24:1-17; Proverbs 6:16-17; 11:2; 1 Corinthians 10:11-13.

**FRIDAY:** 2 Samuel 24:18-25; Ephesians 5:1-11.

**ANALYSIS**

TEXT	TOPIC SENTENCE
2 Samuel 23:1-39	
a. 23:1-7	
b. 23:8-12	
c. 23:13-17	

d. 23:18-23	
e. 23:24-39	

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. Which is more difficult . . . to start life or ministry with little OR to carry on a person's successful ministry?

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2. Was David's life truly blessed despite all the sufferings he had to endure under the hands of Saul and later his own son Absalom? How do you define a blessed life? Is your life a blessed one?

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**3. Which psalm of David do you like best and why? What do the imprecatory psalms reveal about David? As a Christian, can you identify with the imprecatory psalms?**

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**4. Do you see your life's achievements as due to God's grace or your own personal hard work? Give reason for your answer.**

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**5. What can you say about David's mind and heart as he approached the end of his life (23:1-7)?**

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**6. What kind of followers did David have? What sort of followers are we to our Lord?**

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