

## **Sermon 33: 2 Samuel 1: David and the Amalekite**

### **OUTLINE**

The Amalekite  
David

### **INTRODUCTION**

Two world's colliding, that is what we are seeing when we see the Amalekite and David acting towards the same event, the death of Saul. The Amalekite is a picture for us of our opportunistic selves, and David portrays a man whose heart is gripped with a fervour for the glory of God. The book of 2 Samuel continues on the heels of 1 Samuel. The judgement of God has fallen upon Saul and Israel. The Philistine army has conquered and settled in Israel, Saul has committed suicide and Israel is without a king. It is a time of national emergency. The Amalekite betrays the sinners heart we see when looters seek their fortune in another's loss; but David is man whose heart has been realigned by grace, he is thinking of the kingdom and the glory of God during such a time.

We want to compare these men to remind ourselves of what a graceless and a grace-filled life look like.

### **The Amalekite**

The scene opens up for us in Ziklag, ironically Philistine territory. It is the third day after the battle between the Philistines and Israel. David and his men have just tracked down the Amalekites who had captured David and his men's wives and children, and defeated them. David now gets his first news of the battle. The young man falls down paying homage to David, probably in light of the fact he is the next obvious king, and reports that Israel is defeated, and that Saul and Jonathan are dead. When David enquires as to how he knows we get his report, v6-10, 'And the young man who told him said, "By chance I happened to be on Mount Gilboa, and there was Saul leaning on his spear, and behold, the chariots and the horsemen were close upon him. 7 And when he looked behind him, he saw me, and called to me. And I answered, 'Here I am.' 8 And he said to me, 'Who are you?' I answered him, 'I am an Amalekite.' 9 And he said to me 'Stand beside me and kill me, for anguish has seized me, and yet my life still lingers.' 10 So I stood beside him and killed him, because I was sure that he could not live after he had fallen. And I took the crown that was on his head and the armlet that was on his arm, and I have brought them here to my lord.'"

We know from 1 Samuel that Saul killed himself and the armour bearer likewise. Here we have another account, why is this? Those who have no respect for the bible count it as an error and an example of a contradiction in scripture. But the truth is that Amalekite is lying to promote himself. Just think with me a little about the Amalekites assumptions that led him to think this would be a good lie to make.

Saul had been hunting David to kill him for years. There was a famous rivalry between them. The Amalekites assumed that David would love to hear of Saul's death, that David was lusting to be king, and that David would richly reward the one who had actually killed Saul and brought him the crown. This Amalekite assumed that David was just like himself, that David had the same priorities and values. This dictated to the Amalekites actions. He thought to appeal to David's revenge, greed and ambition, so he lied. Instead of rescuing Saul's body from dishonour, he looted the body for his own honour.

Here we meet our conflict with the world. We do not think as they do. We do not cherish and lust after what they do. The world is surprised and angry if we do not agree with them in their liberal views on sexuality and their inclusive views on religion. At least this where we should be conflicting with the world. We are to be salt and light. The adverts fired our way are aiming at our self-interest. The laws our voted in politicians are passing are made thinking that they represent the same humanistic values they have. Office parties are organised on the basis that everyone just wants to get smashed. We are in conflict with the world and these worlds collide every day. We strengthen ourselves in the gospel and wear the gospel armour for this very fight. Each day we pray the Lord's Prayer asking to be strengthened against these interactions aware of daily snares. We seek to put away the sins Christ died to save us from. We are aliens in the sense that we have heavens values not earth's.

The Amalekite not only had wrong assumptions but a selfish agenda. The Amalekite told his story in such a way as to make himself the hero of the story, all in order to secure David's favour. Surely he would be given a monetary reward, a position in David's new government, public honours for putting the enemy to death and handing over the very crown. So the Amalekite following the law of self-interest obeys, and so lies and steals. Once again the total opposite of the way of the Christian. Here is one of the primary differences between the believer and the unbeliever. The unbeliever will break God's law in service of self; the believer will deny self in order to obey God's law. When we trusted in Christ for salvation, we also committed ourselves to Him in obedience and repentance. We acknowledged that sin is denying His Lordship and salvation is a restoration to holy service. The unbeliever's agendas are the dominant ones in our culture. The legalizing of pornography, prostitution, abortion, homosexual marriage; the push for the legalizing of marijuana and Euthanasia. This is the normal way of life, this is the path of the enlightened, and a constant pressure is placed on the Christian to conform to these assumptions and values. But we cannot. This chapter amplifies the clash, what happens when these two opposing world's meet.

Sadly, there are many Christians who claim to be believers but who are functional Amalekites. Christ died to save us from sin, not only from its guilt, but from its deception, from its addiction, and we survive this world by choosing the narrow way. This will bring us into conflict, but this is the lot we are promised by Christ. Sadly, too many are at peace and not at war.

Galatians 5:16-25, 'But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do. 18 But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. 19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. 22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. 24 And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.' This of each of these fruits of the Spirit in light of their counterfeits today. What is the world's fake version of love? Love is mere emotional, love is lust, love is defined not by God is eternally love, but by my sinful desire. Joy. Joy is diversion; laughter; caustic humour; and drug induced. Peace is an emptying of the mind, a mere absence of conflict. Patience is an unprincipled tolerance, even impotence and passiveness. Kindness is warm sentiment with no truth, treating animals as more important than infants. Goodness is defined pragmatically or

emotionally, and is a relative thing based on culture but not according to God's holiness. It is seen as an innate human quality that results in self-righteous moralism that needs no Jesus dying on a cross for our sin debts. Gentleness is the new tyrant against conviction, the emasculator of men, and a war on authority given by God. Self-control is physical fitness and controlling your diet for health reasons not to imitate Christ.

## David

As soon as the Amalekite had finished delivering the news that he thought would start the festivities and honours, David a man after God's own heart begins the mourning, v12, 'And they mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son and for the people of the LORD and for the house of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword.' David is a man who is in the grip of grace, he has recently been revived in his faith and God's faithfulness to him. That impacts all of how he reacts.

Firstly, David does not gloat over Saul's death. David has not allowed hatred to fill his heart that he would be glad at the death of Saul. Contrary to the Amalekite David does not hate the one who persecutes him even though he is the innocent party. David's weeping and lament over Saul and Jonathan is like Jesus weeping over Jerusalem that was about to murder him.

Secondly, notice that David mourns not only for his personal loss but the loss to Israel and God's kingdom. He is not merely consumed with personal loss with the death of his best friend. A heart that weeps for enemies and a heart that weeps over the kingdom, this is David's heart, it runs contrary to what the Amalekite expected that David would be rejoicing in his personal gain. This is the man who said rivers of water run down from my eyes because men do not keep your law.

David then tends to the matters of justice putting his emotions aside. He deals with the Amalekite according to his confession and he is put to death for killing God's anointed. I can't help see that there is also a condemnation in assisted suicide in this verse. Euthanasia might not be killing the Lord's anointed but it is still killing. We are reminded of Christ's perfect justice on judgement day. But we are also reminded of church discipline. There may be a time that the church has to act against an action that would seem understandable and innocent to the world. But even this apparent act of mercy is dealt with as it deserves from the worldview of God on the throne.

But more than half the chapter is taken up with David's lament. There are several things we can observe in this lament. Firstly, without trying to make David a grief guru we can observe the wisdom in David writing down his grief, giving it expression in poetry. The loss of a love will leave a permanent mark. The only permanent cure for grief is glorification. However, writing with its deliberate and slow pace which forces one to think can help guard against the overreaction that can so often attend grief.

Secondly, notice v20, 'Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult.' David is not merely wanting the after party to be cancelled David is concerned about God's honour. God's name is bound up with Israel's military victories, and when the king is overcome in battle no doubt the unbelieving world would think that their god is real and stronger. David is concerned about God's reputation. Do we weep at the fall of the church's ministers, when churches capitulate and give into worldly teaching, when the world watches the prosperity teachers and thinks that is all we are about?

Thirdly, David helps Israel properly process the life of Saul. He was not a godly man, but he was God's tool for good in Israel and David teaches Israel to remember the prosperity he brought to Israel. David's overriding concern is not to justify himself over his enemies when they fall, but to recognise the good God has done through them. This is a good test to see whether you have overcome the bitterness from people hurting you in your past. Can you thank God for the good He did through them, or is all your vision coloured by your bitterness and revenge?

Fourthly, we see that David's lament was also a lament for his friend Jonathan. Now in our day and age that cannot help but sexualise every relationship, this friendship is seen to be homosexual and the real reason that Saul was angry at David and even tried to kill Jonathan. The Liberals try to revision these stories to say that underneath the narrative is a homosexual love story being hidden and disguised. The bible is very clear about homosexuality being sinful, and there is no hint of homosexuality in this text. We are witnessing a perversion of something good in that interpretation. God has made us to be men or women, any sinful desires that are contrary to what we are created for are the result of the fall and the portion of every sinner. Homosexual desires are not normative, we must realise that this generation determines truth by feeling instead of curbing feeling with truth. to feel it does not make it real, instead it confirms the narrative of the bible not the narrative of the self-determination.

The opening chapter of 2 Samuel is not profound, it is more like an everyday sort of thing, but it does remind us that we are in a war, that we are going to collide with the unbelief around us every day. It reminds us that God's grace has saved us and made new people of us who are aliens here. We must pray that God will continue to fit us to be like David not this Amalekite, that the grace He saved us by will filter into our everyday actions.