



**Series:** 2 Samuel

**Date:** April 30, 2023

**Speaker:** Dr. Rashard Barnes, Pastor of Campuses

**Text:** 2 Samuel 1

**Title:** How Do You Want to Be Remembered?

## INTRODUCTION

Good morning, Mercy Fam! For those of you who are new, we as a church have been in 1 Samuel. And today, I have the pleasure of leading us through 2 Samuel, which is a continuation of 1 Samuel.

To get us caught up, last week, in 1 Samuel 28, after being dead, Samuel came back to us as a ghost. As a ghost, he told Saul in 1 Samuel 28:19, the Israelites were going to be

defeated by the Philistines, Saul was going to die, and his sons were going to die.

This came to pass in 1 Samuel 31, where the Israelites were defeated. Saul's sons died first, and then he died by falling on his own sword. So, we arrive here in 2 Samuel 1, with David learning of the news of the death of Saul and Jonathan. But before we dive in, let me pray. PRAY

Before we get to our passage, I want to ask you a question, how do you want to be remembered? You see, each one of us will one day depart from this world, but the impact we make will have a lasting impact for good or bad. But for many of us, we live our lives in neutral, but in reality, there is no such thing as neutral living.

In Dr. King's Letters from a Birmingham Jail, he speaks on neutral living and says, "Actually, time is neutral. It can be used either destructively or constructively. I am coming to feel that the people of ill will have used time much more effectively than the people of goodwill. We will have to repent in this generation not merely for the scathing words and actions of the bad people but for the appalling silence of the good people."

So family, I am going to ask this question again, how do you want to be remembered? What would you want



someone to say at your funeral? Today, we are encountering a funeral-like moment with David as he mourns the loss of Saul and Jonathan. My hope for today is as we look at their lives, we will consider the five realities we want to be remembered for. So, let us open our hearts and minds to this critical question – How do you want to be remembered? Verse 1

### **BODY**

1 After the death of Saul, David returned from defeating the Amalekites and stayed at Ziklag two days. 2 On the third day a man with torn clothes and dust on his head came from Saul's camp. When he came to David, he fell to the ground and paid homage.

Right now, David is clueless as to what happened to Saul and Jonathan because he just got from battle. As he was recovering from battle, a disheveled man came in a posture of mourning towards him and then paid homage. This response puts David on edge, and he begins to ask this man a series of questions—verse 3. David asked him, “Where have you come from?” He replied to him, “I’ve escaped from the Israelite camp.”

He told David he was in the same battle with Saul and Jonathan. The dots are connecting for David. In a spirit of anticipation, David asked his second question, and the

man answered verse 4. “What was the outcome? Tell me,” David asked him. “The troops fled from the battle,” he answered. “Many of the troops have fallen and are dead. Also, Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.”

So, man tells him the Israelites lost in battle and many are dead, including Saul and his son Jonathan. Perplexed by this news and in denial of losing his best friend. David asked his third question, verse 5. David asked the young man who had brought him the report, “How do you know Saul and his son Jonathan are dead?” The man answered. 6 “I happened to be on Mount Gilboa,” he replied, “and there was Saul, leaning on his spear. At that very moment the chariots and the cavalry were closing in on him. 7 When he turned around and saw me, he called out to me, so I answered: I’m at your service. 8 He asked me, ‘Who are you?’ I told him: I’m an Amalekite. 9 Then he begged me, ‘Stand over me and kill me, for I’m mortally wounded, but my life still lingers.’ 10 So I stood over him and killed him because I knew that after he had fallen, he couldn’t survive. I took the crown that was on his head and the armband that was on his arm, and I’ve brought them here to my lord.”



As we learned, this man is lying about killing Saul because Saul fell on his sword. But with an unexpected response, ***David does not rejoice in this news but mourns.***

Verse 11 11 Then David took hold of his clothes and tore them, and all the men with him did the same. 12 They mourned, wept, and fasted until the evening for those who died by the sword—for Saul, his son Jonathan, the Lord’s people, and the house of Israel. 13 David inquired of the young man who had brought him the report, “Where are you from?” “I’m the son of a resident alien,” he said. “I’m an Amalekite.” 14 David questioned him, “How is it that you were not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord’s anointed?” 15 Then David summoned one of his servants and said, “Come here and kill him!” The servant struck him, and he died. David then responded in anger by taking this guy out. Okay, cray, right? We will get back this execution, but I want to camp out here for a bit on verses 11-12. (Read Again)

It would have been easier for the narrator to structure the story to have verse 13 follow verse 10. The man kills Saul, so he gets killed. ***But these verses tell us that although we need to deal with the consequences of the tragedy, it can't wait because grief can't wait.***

As the Amalekite awaits his impending execution, he watches David wailing. David is mourning the condition of Israel's unbelief, their apostasy, hardened hearts, and their defeat. But he is also mourning the loss of a friend and his King. ***His grief overwhelmed him, and everything piled up. So, what was his response? Cry.***

We can identify with this right; as we experience one painful moment, another keeps piling up. And I know someone you may feel like you can't take another hit. But can I encourage you with something? When tragic things happen in our lives, we can't just move past the emotions in front of us – ***we have to grieve.***

Some of you are feeling the weight of life right now, the loss of a loved one, the loss of a relationship, or betrayal; you are experiencing confusion and hardship. I want to encourage you that the scriptures call us to mourn. Do you know that it's okay to be broken and a puddle? You don't have to have it together.

***But here is a promise: the excruciating pain of your grief will improve, but first, you must face it.*** And you can face it because you have the Lord with you. **Psalm 34:18 - The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.**



But my concern for many of us in the room, you have not grieved the losses in your life, and it's consuming you. **How do I know? Because I've been there.** At age 12, my uncle died tragically next to me, and I stuffed it in for years. So, I busied myself with school and relationships, trying to numb myself from the pain, but all that running made me exhausted, and I needed to give myself over to my grief. So, I eventually did.

So how about you? So, I know there are some of you in the same boat; you avoid all pain at all costs, so you busy yourself, you give yourself to work, you give yourself to kids, you give your escapes, *but you have not given yourself time to grieve.*

*To do that well, you need spiritual counsel from the church and Christian professional counseling.* So, I want to encourage some of you to go to counseling. I know that you are against it, I was too, but counseling has been one of the means of grace God has used in my life to face my trauma and to face my grief. But let's return back to the text. Let's look back at verse 13. **13 David inquired of the young man who had brought him the report, "Where are you from?" "I'm the son of a resident alien," he said. "I'm an Amalekite."**

So, this guy was a resident alien of Israel, meaning he was subjected to the laws of Israel – don't touch the Lord's anointed. But then, he caught himself in his own.

deception. To cover his tracks, he rephrased that he was an Amalekite – Amalekites and Israelites do not get along.

So, what we can gather here is that this man misread David. He assumes David will be excited that he killed Saul, but he thought wrong. Verse 14 **14 David questioned him, "How is it that you were not afraid to lift your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed?"**

This is the third time we see this phrase in Samuel. David twice had the opportunity to take out Saul but didn't because of reverence toward God. To David, the Lord's anointed has the status of Dogma. He might have had **Exodus 22:28 in his head, which says, "You must not blaspheme God or curse a leader among your people."** Or **1 Chronicles 16:22, which says, "Do not touch my anointed ones or harm my prophets."**

The motive of this man was he wanted a reward for killing Saul. But as we know, this man did not kill Saul because Saul fell on his own sword. But it didn't matter; his deceit got him killed. Verse 15 **15 Then David summoned one of**



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his servants and said, “Come here and kill him!” The servant struck him, and he died. 16 For David had said to the Amalekite, “Your blood is on your own head because your own mouth testified against you by saying, ‘I killed the Lord’s anointed.’”

Then David moves into a time eulogy-lament, and he tells his men to write this down in Israel's historical books so that it can be remembered throughout generations. 17 David sang the following lament for Saul and his son Jonathan, 18 and he ordered that the Judahites be taught The Song of the Bow. It is written in the Book of Jashar:

So, what is a lament? ***A lament is a profound and thoughtful expression of a public and personal grief.*** A lament differs from the informal, spontaneous, immediate outbursts of grief, as we see in verses 1:11–12. A lament is no less sorrowful or sincere, ***but it is a vehicle for the mind as well as for the emotions.***

Many of us don't lament, which leads us to aimless living. But if we are going to be intentional about how we live and how we want to be remembered, we need to lament. So, what I want to do is I want to examine David's lament over Saul and Jonathan. ***From that, we will examine five realities of how we want to be remembered.*** Verse 19

19 The splendor of Israel lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen! 20 Do not tell it in Gath, don't announce it in the marketplaces of Ashkelon, or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice, and the daughters of the uncircumcised will celebrate. 21 Mountains of Gilboa, let no dew or rain be on you, or fields of offerings, for there the shield of the mighty was defiled— the shield of Saul, no longer anointed with oil.

Two things to see here; first, David does not want the Philistines to gloat about Saul and Jonathan's defeat that's why in verse 20, Do not tell in Gath and Ashkelon, these major cities in Philistine. But he also wanted Israel to mourn the failure of Saul and Jonathan's defeat which is why in Verse 21, David wished for a lack of blessing on Gilboa because that was where Saul and Jonathan were slain, the mighty in verse 19.

What we can grapple with here from the text is that ***our failures are often visible to those around us – friends and foes will process our failures.*** Saul's defeat served and serves as a warning for us. As David laments, what we need to know is: We will be remembered for how we respond to our failures.



In this life, we are going to make mistakes. But will we allow our failures to be our teachers? We learned from Saul he did not learn from his failures, but David did. Our failures do not define us and reveal something that is they teach us lessons about God and ourselves.

***But sometimes, your failures can be a rubric for others to learn.*** If you are seasoned in life, you know this truth well. That's why we need you older saints. We need your failures to teach us. As a multigenerational church, we need you.

But for all of us, I have two questions for us to consider as we process through failure: **How is God using failure to show you areas in your life that need growth and refinement? How can you seek forgiveness from those who may have been affected by your failure while also extending grace and forgiveness to yourself?** But we have to keep moving forward, verse 22. **22 Jonathan's bow never retreated, Saul's sword never returned unstained, from the blood of the slain, from the flesh of the mighty. 23 Saul and Jonathan loved and delightful, they were not parted in life or in death. They were swifter than eagles, stronger than lions.**

Here, David is reflecting on Jonathan's bow and the sword of Saul and how they won many battles. Although

Jonathan and Saul were not always victorious, David chose to focus on their victories, the battles they engaged in, and the battles they won: **We will be remembered for our fight** – The battles we engaged in, the focus of our lives, and the fight we gave ourselves to.

What battles do you want to be known for? We are in a politically charged climate, and some are playing with fire with the type of battles we are fighting. Will you be known as someone who brings about the kingdom or someone who pushes a political agenda? There are other fights in our lives, such as caring for the poor, the unborn, the needy, the broken, the fatherless, and the disadvantaged. So, my questions are: **Where is God calling you to fight? Are you engaged in battles today that you will be proud of tomorrow?**

But we have to keep moving to our next point, verse 24. **24 Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with luxurious things, who decked your garments with gold ornaments.** Although Saul's leadership brought some pain to Israel, it also brought them prosperity. Saul was known for his good looks, but David chose to remember the abundance that Saul brought to Israel. Israel was served by his leadership. What we can gather here: **We will be remembered by those we serve.**



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You will not be remembered for your looks, financial portfolio, or the number of likes you got on that social media but for how you served others based on your love for Christ. Jesus tells us in John 13:34-35, “I give you a new command: Love one another. Just as I have loved you, you are also to love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Because Jesus poured his life out for us, we can then pour our lives out for others. But my fear here is that many of us are only living for ourselves. So, I want to ask some questions: Who will benefit from your life? Will anyone remember how you served them? How you loved them? How you cared for them?

Let’s move on to our next point. Verse 25 25 How the mighty have fallen in the thick of battle! Jonathan lies slain on your heights. 26 I grieve for you, Jonathan, my brother. You were such a friend to me. Your love for me was more wondrous than the love of women. I want to speak gently here, and this text is not endorsing homosexual activity but rather the intimate relationship between David and Jonathan. What this text is getting is our friendships which is my next point: We will be remembered for the friendships we cultivate.

In our society, we do not have a real category for the relationship between David and Jonathan. We think all forms of intimacy are sexual. But there is a difference between sexual intimacy and relational/emotional intimacy. Sexual intimacy combines the physical act of sex with emotional closeness and trust. Relational intimacy is a space where a person can be vulnerable with others. Of course, there are approximate boundaries we should not cross, but the *point to grab here is that the only way for us to cultivate deep friendships is we need intimacy in our relationships.*

I remember the first time a college friend, who was a Christian, told me he “loved me.” I was taken off guard. I was not used to another man telling me that he loved me. But now, I freely tell other men I love them. You see, the scriptures call us to spiritual intimacy among believers.

So many of us are lonely because we do not know how to *be intimate, share failures, or share needs and concerns.* Some of you are longing for relationships, but you are holding back. You have to open yourself up to others and open yourself up to the possibility of getting hurt because that is what genuine relationships are all about.





But my biggest fear for many of us in this room is that we will never cultivate this community because we fear being known. So, give yourself to no one. And when you give yourself to no one, who will remember the legacy you left behind in the name of Jesus? You see, **legacy is about more than what but who**. Who are the people you will leave behind to leave the legacy of Christ?

As a first step for many of us, we need to join a community group to begin the process of being known. Then some of you who are in a community group, your next step is to open yourself up to others in your group.

So, some questions for us to consider: **Are you allowing fear to keep you from engaging a brother or sister in Christ? What needs to change in your life to become more intimate in your relationships?**

But we gotta keep moving forward the last thing: **We will be remembered for our true glory. Verse 27 How the mighty have fallen and the weapons of war have perished!** Three times in the passage, David says, ***“How the mighty have fallen.”***

If you look back at verse 19 before David sings how the mighty have fallen the first time, David sings, **The splendor**

**(Glory) of Israel lies slain on your heights.** He is talking about Saul and Jonathan being Israel's glory. How is the good news that they are Israel's glory? How is that good news for you?

In Samuel 15:29, Samuel describes God's glory like this, **“And also the Glory of Israel will not lie or have regret, for he is not a man, that he should have regret.”** (ESV) God did not regret the decision he made about Saul because he was going to get glory anyway. Who is the real glory of Israel, Saul or Jonathan? ***The real glory of Israel is God.***

***So, who is your glory? Is your real glory God?*** Why am I mentioning this? As we are talking, some of you are thinking about how you want to be remembered. You are excited about this! #achievers. Then some of you are hating this message because you don't want to be thinking about this stuff; you are having a slight panic attack.

***But here is the reality for all of eternity your glory will be the Lord's glory.*** In eternity, you are going to open your mouth and sing and not be singing about what you did. But you are going to be singing about the Lord and his glory. You will live without regret because you will be before the Lord.





I want to say this because some of us take this message and focus on our performance and do not spend enough time thinking about God. How beautiful he is, how lovely he is, and how much he cares for you. At the end of the day, ***our glory will not be our lives but our God!*** We can live in light of God's glory because, ***on a Sunny Sunday, the Lord Jesus got up out of the tomb for us.*** He lived and died for sinners, resurrected us to live for him, and through him, unto him. We won't get all this stuff right, but it isn't good news that in this present life, we can rejoice in the Glory of the Lord for now and forever more.

### **CONCLUSION**

As we close, I want to share with you a personal story. I lost my father back in 2018. It was a hard time and my family. But I was encouraged by what people said at his funeral. If anyone knew my father, he was not perfect, but he was a godly man. But the stories moved me shared about how my dad demonstrated how he wanted to be remembered.

My dad, the son of a sharecropper, 1 of 13, grew up in poverty, became a believer later in life, and wanted to change the narrative for himself and our family. People shared how he took them in when they had nowhere to go. Remind, my family did not have much. My parents did foster care, and my foster siblings, who traveled across the

country, got on stage to share that he was the only Father they knew. My cousins, whose parents often abandoned them, shared how he was more than an uncle to them but a dad. My childhood friends got on stage sharing how my dad opened his home when they were homeless and helpless. Then my two former pastor's one black and one white, both got on stage surveying the room, they realized the type of life my dad lived in the room was a mosaic of people. It was the most diverse funeral that we all have ever attended, black, white, Latino, Asian, young, old, rich, and poor. From dope boys to C-suite executives. Then at the conclusion of the funeral, my former Pastor asked everyone to stand up if my dad had impacted them with the hope of the Gospel, and the whole room stood. Fam, my daddy did not leave me with an inheritance, but he did leave me with a legacy. As mentioned before, he was not perfect, and you don't have to be perfect in this life; you just have to be willing to give your life away for others.

***How do you want to be remembered?***