

**Ps 48; 2 Sam 5:1-5, 9-10;
2 Cor 12:2-10; Mk 6:1-13
7th Sun after Pentecost**

The poet writes: “You are as young as your faith,
as old as your doubt.” Samuel Ullman

Today, we ponder the character of a nation on one hand – and the character of God’s ever-expanding kingdom on the other hand. Last week, we witnessed the death of King Saul and his son, Jonathan. Saul had been chosen, anointed and crowned, but he did not succeed in pulling the twelve tribes together into a cohesive nation – the nation of Israel. Saul faltered in his love and obedience to God. In later years, he was plagued by fears and anxieties – called an evil spirit in those times. And it was the music and poetry of David that soothed Saul’s tortured mind and soul – at least for a while.

As we saw Saul decline, we have seen David – now King David – grow in his leadership and in the favor and devotion of the people. He kept his residence in the wilderness south of his home, Bethlehem. The Scripture says all the tribes – meaning the leaders of the tribes – came to him

at Hebron (Gaza Strip), where he and his army of mighty men were camped. The people are ready to pull together. They are ready to follow David – not just as a military commander, but as the ruler of the nation of Israel. They declare again the prophecy that God chooses David to be the shepherd of His people.

Here we discover the connection between the invisible kingdom of Almighty God and the earthly realm of a human king. We learn from the failures of King Saul and the successes of King David. The former lived by great pride and stubbornness. The latter, the man who learned to shepherd before he learned to rule, lives in submission to God. David makes a covenant with the tribal leaders to be their king. This is your messianic image. So it is that the Lord Jesus covenants with the human tribes. He is our Shepherd. We are His people when we seek Him.

The Apostle Paul states clearly the kingdom principle at work: Thus says the Lord, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness.” (2 Cor 12:9)

We realize from so many stories in the Bible, it is when the man or woman – the tribe or nation – bows down and acknowledges God’s sovereign power that wonders happen. God deeply desires to pour out His grace and mercy – and His favor upon all his children.

I invite you to consider what may be in the hearts of the leaders we see on the international scene: How does Kim Jong Un relate to the Creator of the universe? How does Vladimir Putin consider the will of God in matters of state? In our country, the majority of people seek a leader who acknowledges the Judeo-Christian God. All world leaders must deal with the Almighty. Animist, atheist, Buddhist, Catholic...all will one day understand that the finger of God moves history.

We learn this from Scripture. It seems to me if we read these histories and wisdom and gospels – then we should also bring them into our own lives. Let God be God. It is our weakness that shows forth God’s power. Just about the time we think the world cannot be saved, or that the

mistakes of humanity can undo the goodness of God, we see a fresh example of God's power.

King Asa of Judah was a God-worshiping man in the midst of a decadent and pagan society. He based his government upon the Torah – and was advised by the Prophet Azariah. Events and politics led to the invasion of Judah by the Ethiopian general Zerah. Zerah's army was one million men. Asa cried out to God, "Lord, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O Lord our God, for we rest on You, and in Your Name we go against this multitude. O Lord, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You." (2 Chron 14:9-11)

Scripture reveals that God struck the Ethiopian army, and they fled. This story of the great battle says that "they were broken before the Lord and His army." (v 13)

Azariah reminded the king that if he would seek God, God would be found. "If you forsake Him, said the prophet, He will forsake you." (2 Chron 15:2)

At the end of WW II (1945), the Soviets blocked off the demarcation line between the Eastern and Western sectors of Germany. What had been the Nazi stronghold was partitioned among the allies (USA, France, Britain and the USSR). Likewise, Berlin, the capital, was partitioned.

“The future of Germany and Berlin was a major sticking point in postwar treaty talks. Tensions grew when the United States, Britain, and France moved in 1948 to unite their occupation zones into a single autonomous entity—the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany). In response, the USSR launched a land blockade of West Berlin in an effort to force the West to abandon the city. However, a massive airlift by Britain and the United States kept West Berlin supplied with food and fuel, and in May 1949 the Soviets ended the defeated blockade.”

(www.history.com accessed 07-03-18)

Over the next years, the barbed wire line was replaced with a concrete wall by the East German authorities. This barrier became the symbol of communist oppression all over the world. My friends who visited West Berlin in the day always

brought back some small fragments of the wall and shared them with us as prayer prompts.

The history of attempted escape from the Eastern sector is grim. Many attempted to cross. Many were shot.

“In 1989, East Germany’s communist regime was overwhelmed by the democratization sweeping across Eastern Europe. On the evening of November 9, 1989, East Germany opened all the check-points to the West, and thousands flooded through the Berlin Wall. Faced with growing demonstrations, East German border guards opened the borders. Jubilant Berliners climbed on top of the Berlin Wall, painted graffiti on it, and removed fragments as souvenirs. The next day, East German troops began dismantling the wall. In 1990, East and West Germany were formally reunited.” (*ibid*)

What do you say caused the fall of the Berlin wall? I say it was the people who prayed – perhaps that was you, if you know the history first-hand. God heard our prayers and acted.

Another prophet spoke to another king, later in history, “Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit, says the Lord of hosts.” (Zech 6:4) Amen.