

Life of David, Lessons from the Life of David, Final Message, 11/24/25

We've come to the final message in the life of David. No applause necessary. And interestingly, 2 Samuel doesn't end with David's death—it just stops at chapter 24. His final moments show up later in 1 Kings 2, as he speaks his last words to his son, Solomon.

Over the past twenty years as a pastor, I've had the sacred privilege of standing at many funerals—some filled with deep grief, others filled with worship and gratitude for a life well-lived. And as I prepared for this message, a question struck me: ***If I were asked to speak at King David's funeral... what would I say?*** After all, Scripture gives more space to David than to any other person besides Jesus—62 chapters, over a thousand references. He's larger than life. There's no shortage of material.

But funerals don't focus on *everything* someone did. They focus on what mattered most—what their life taught us. So today, as we close this series, I want to share four lessons from David's legacy that we can take with us while we still have the chance to live them.

Because one day, someone will stand up and speak about *your* life. What will they say? What impact will you have made? What legacy will you leave? And most importantly—when you stand before Jesus, will you hear those words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Legacy isn't what we *wish* we'll leave. It's what we're building right now. 4 Lessons.

Lesson #1 God is most interested in the heart.

We step into 1 Samuel 16 at a crossroads between two kings—the king Israel chose and the king God would choose. Saul looked like the perfect leader. He was tall, impressive, battle-ready—the kind of guy who would win every election on appearance alone. But internally—spiritually—he was empty. The very things people admired were the very things God ignored. And so God rejects Saul and sends Samuel to the house of Jesse, because one of Jesse's sons will be the next king.

The first son, Eliab, walks in—and Samuel is immediately sold. He looks like a young Tom Brady—tall, confident, quarterback jawline, most-likely-to-succeed vibes. Samuel's thinking, “This was easy. We can be home by lunch.” But God interrupts Samuel's assumptions

7 But the LORD said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him.”

The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

Seven sons pass before Samuel. Impressive résumés. Strong physiques. Great first impressions. But God says no to every one of them. Because God isn't scanning talent. He's searching character. He's looking past image and into the inner life no one else sees.

Finally, they bring in the youngest—the one Jesse didn’t even think was worth mentioning. The shepherd kid. Smells like sheep. Looks more boy-band than battle-tested. Nobody in that room thought “king.” But God did. Here’s the point: David was the most unlikely choice in the room—but he was God’s choice. Not because of his size, skill, charisma, or strength, but because of what was in his heart.

And as David’s early life unfolds we begin to see clearly the one quality of David’s life that stands out most is humility. This is what God was looking for and found in David. And this, more than any other, made him a man after God’s own heart. Because Jesus calls himself in Matthew 11 “Gentle and humble in heart.” What does humility look like? Well for starters- according to studies, here are the top five signs of a heart of humility.¹

1. Willingness to Acknowledge Mistakes 2. Openness to Feedback 3. A Deep Respect of Others 4. Gratitude 5. Readiness to Serve

And that’s what God saw in David, and that’s what God is looking for in us. God isn’t looking for perfection, he’s not looking for you to be impressive and a high achiever. He’s looking for a heart of humility! Put those **five qualities back up on the Screen**...What about you?

Each of us can grow in this character quality. I shared with you before, possibly even as part of this series, that I’m so grateful for a mentor of mine in ministry who challenged me- “Nate you have a lot of external gifts, but I’m far more concerned about your internal character. Slow down and focus there.” I took that to heart. I shut down my social media. I said no to a number of opportunities. I started to spend more time developing my private life- time in the word, meditation, prayer, journaling and less time in my public life- speaking, leading, influencing. I have a long way to go, but there’s a good chance I would have burned or crashed out of ministry if not for that season.

What about you? Are you focused more on climbing the ladder of success, growing your platform, your GPA, your athletic ability, maintaining your physique or your wrinkle free skin? Or are you more focused on the unseen areas, the most important areas that God sees- the heart?

Lesson #2 Wait on God’s timing and promises.

David was anointed king in 1 Samuel 16—but he didn’t actually sit on the throne until about twenty years later. Twenty chapters. Two decades. A lifetime of waiting. And what filled those years? Yes, there were victories—giants defeated, battles won, a growing reputation. But there were also sheep fields, exile, caves, hunger, fear, betrayal, and nights around a campfire wondering if tomorrow would be his last. David spent much of his life not in a palace, but in God’s waiting room.

¹ List accumulated from a ChatGPT search on this subject.

And in that waiting room, David faced the greatest temptation we all face: to take matters into our own hands.

In 1 Samuel 24, Saul is hunting David, and in God's strange providence, Saul walks into the very cave where David is hiding—alone, vulnerable, unguarded. David's men whisper, "This is your moment." It looks like the perfect opportunity to force the promise, end the madness, and crown himself king. But David refuses. "Who am I to lift my hand against the Lord's anointed?" (v. 6) David wasn't just trusting God's timing—he was trusting God's methods. He would rather wait on God than win the wrong way.

But David wasn't a superhero. He struggled just like we do. The Psalms are full of questions: "Where are You?" "Have You forgotten me?" "How long, O Lord?"

David felt what we feel: **waiting feels like wasting**. And yet, what made David remarkable was this—every time the waiting pressed him, he pressed into God. Because with God, waiting is never wasted. Waiting is where God is working.

In those years, God was: Humbling him, Forming his character, Training his leadership, Teaching dependence, Burning out pride, Preparing him for a crown he wasn't ready to carry. Before David wore a crown, God built a heart that could bear its weight. Waiting isn't passive. God's waiting room is God's workshop.

It was my wife's birthday this weekend, and so I was reminded of one of my favorite illustrations- baking a cake. Everyone loves the finished product, but the individual ingredients? A cup of flour—chalky. Raw eggs—gross. Salt—bitter. Baking powder—inedible. Vanilla extract—nasty by itself. Even mixed together, halfway through the baking process, it's still a soupy, lumpy mess. If you pulled it out then, you'd assume nothing good could ever come of it.

David could have looked at his life in that cave and said, "This is a mess. God must be done with me." But the cake was only half-baked. God wasn't finished.

And the same is true for you. **What's your half-baked cake?**

- A waiting season in your marriage?
- A prodigal son or daughter?
- A diagnosis?
- Loneliness?
- A prayer that seems unanswered?
- A dream that feels delayed?

Right now the ingredients may taste bitter, bland, or confusing. But just because you can't see the finished product doesn't mean God isn't at work. If you're not where you hoped to be, don't assume God has abandoned you. The cake is still in the oven. Wait—and trust that God isn't wasting your waiting. He's working in ways you cannot yet see.

#3 Deal with small compromises before they train-wreck your life.

David's legacy is filled with courage, worship, and faith—but Scripture doesn't airbrush his failures. The Bible is painfully honest: David had a shadow side. He was tempted just like we are. And one of the most sobering lessons from his life is this—great people don't usually fall all at once. They fall a little at a time. Satan doesn't need a wide open door, just a cracked window.

In 2 Samuel 11–12, David's greatest moral collapse didn't start with adultery and murder. It started with small, quiet compromises.

- When kings went to war... David stayed home.
- When he noticed Bathsheba... he chose to keep looking.
- When desire stirred... he acted on it.
- When sin was exposed... he tried to cover it.

What began as a glance ended as a grave. A private compromise became a public catastrophe.

How does that happen? *James 1:14-15 Each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed.*

Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Sin grows when it's fed. It dies when it's confronted. We fool ourselves into thinking we can manage sin—pet it, flirt with it, control it. But sin is not a toy; it's a predator. What we tolerate today will dominate us tomorrow.

It looks like:

- Lingering too long on a YouTube thumbnail... then clicking... then hiding in shame.
- A harmless text that becomes emotional intimacy... that becomes an affair.
- A small bet that becomes a gambling addiction.
- A few impulse buys that become crushing debt.
- A "white lie" that becomes a reputation of dishonesty.

Small compromises don't stay small. They grow claws and teeth. David's collapse is not in Scripture to shame us—but to warn us, and challenge us. If it could happen to a man after God's own heart, it can happen to any of us.

So here's the question: *Is there a compromise in your life right now that needs to be confronted—before it costs you more than you ever intended to pay?*

Sin always takes you:

- further than you wanted to go,
- keeps you longer than you wanted to stay,
- and costs you more than you wanted to spend.

David didn't fall because he was weak—but because he stopped being watchful. The best time to kill sin is **now**—while it's small, hidden, private, and seemingly harmless. Because what you don't deal with today may deal with you tomorrow. And this leads to our final lesson.

#4 God's grace is with the broken.

David's story isn't inspiring because he was flawless. It's inspiring because **he knew what to do when he wasn't**. He sinned—and sometimes spectacularly. Adultery. Deceit. Murder. Passivity as a father. Pride in numbering the people.

But David every time, turned to God in brokenness. And every time David turned back to God, he found the same thing waiting for him: **Grace. Mercy. Restoration**. David shows us that God isn't drawn to our strength. **He's drawn to our surrender.**

But what does true, biblical brokenness look like? Psalm 51 gives us a window—not into a performance, but into a heart that genuinely returns to God.

1. Sincere Sorrow

V.16-17 You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings.

My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

True brokenness isn't just "I got caught" or "I feel bad about the consequences." It's a heart-level grief that we've sinned against God and harmed others. It moves beyond the mind and reaches the emotions. It feels the weight of sin—not to despair—but to return to God.

2. Honest Ownership

v.3-4 For I know my transgressions, and my sin is always before me.

Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight; For David, he did not play the victim. There was no blame-shifting, no alibis, no excuses, well it's in my genes, it's my parents' fault, it's my teacher's fault, well you provoked me so you are to blame, my circumstances drove me to this. None of that. He says, "I did this evil." Grace begins where self-defense ends.

3. Surrender to God's Authority

V.4 so you are right in your verdict and justified when you judge. David doesn't argue with God. He doesn't demand a deal. He acknowledges that sin has consequences and yields to God's wisdom and justice. Brokenness doesn't try to control the outcome—it trusts God with it.

4. A Desire for Real Change

V.10 Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. David doesn't just regret what happened. He longs to become someone different. True repentance, true brokenness doesn't go back to what it was like before being broken, it's a deliberate, desperate

commitment to heart change. True repentance isn't perfection overnight—it's a new direction. A steady, noticeable turn toward holiness.

Grace had the last word in David's life, and it can in yours too.

Is there an area of your life that God is waiting to give you his grace through brokenness?

Where do you need to stop hiding and start confessing?

Where do you need to own sin instead of excuse it?

Where is God inviting you—not to shame—but to healing?

Maybe the breakthrough you've been praying for is waiting on the brokenness you've been resisting. Because God's grace is closest not to the strong, but to the surrendered.

We've learned so much from David's life—his courage, his worship, his repentance, his trust. But the greatest lesson from David's legacy is this: **David is not the hero we ultimately need. David points us to the One we do- Jesus.**

What our hearts long for is not merely the example of David—but **the Son of David.**

Not a flawed king—but a perfect King. Not a broken shepherd—but a redeeming Savior. Jesus is the true and better David:

- **The King after God's own heart**—perfectly aligned with the Father's will.
- **The humble King** who didn't grasp for power but emptied Himself for us.
- **The greater Champion** who faced our ultimate enemy—not Goliath, but sin, Satan, and death—and won.
- **The innocent One** who waited on God's timing, suffered under evil men, and never once compromised.
- **The righteous Judge** who confronts evil and establishes true justice.
- **The Good Shepherd** who didn't just lead the sheep but became the Lamb—our sacrifice, our substitute.
- **The risen and reigning King** who holds all authority in heaven and on earth, who rules His church now, and who will one day return to sit on the throne of David forever.

Everything admirable in David is only a shadow. **Jesus is the substance.** Everything beautiful in David's story is a signpost. **Jesus is the destination.** David can inspire you. **Jesus can save you.** David could point the way. **Jesus is the way.**

And one day, this King will return—bringing perfect justice, unending joy, and a renewed heaven and earth. On that day, every knee will bow, every tear will be wiped away, and every broken thing will be made whole under the reign of the King of kings.

So the final question isn't: "How much do you know about David?" The final question is: **Do you know Jesus—this true and better King?** And will you bow your heart to Him today?