

## 2 SAMUEL 6:1-15

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### PRELIMINARY REMARKS

- Welcome!
- We're in a season of new beginnings:
  - New schools, new routines, new opportunities/challenges.
  - Here at church, new ministry year, new buildings, and new sermon series too.
- Over next three weeks, we'll explore how God makes all things new.
  - But today, I want to start ministry year with message on gospel of Jesus Christ.
  - The simple gospel that we can all understand but never outgrow.
- If that theme – the gospel – sounds familiar, our text might not be...
  - Turn with me to **2 Samuel 6:1-15**...
  - Let's read wild text and see how it takes us to Jesus and his love [**Read. Pray.**]

### INTRODUCTION

- Navigating cultural differences can be tricky...
  - Experienced this as an immigrant.
    - Transition made easier by fact I'm white/educated/middle-class.
    - Been a smoother journey than others experience.
  - Still cultural curiosities/confusions:
    - Things about America it was hard to understand → Some things I'm not sure I'll ever wrap head around.
    - Lots of small things too:
      - Drive on wrong side of road → Different time zones → Parades.
      - And don't get me started on vocabulary. [POT PLANT STORY.]
- Just as I had to navigate cultural differences when moving to America, we need to navigate some cultural differences when we come to the OT.
  - Some things we read may seem strange, hard to understand.
  - But let's keep our minds open to see what we can learn.

**Transition:** Most powerful thing in our text today is Ark of God.

- Might surprise you – seems a little random/obscure...
- **What** was it, **why** is it so important, and **why** is David moving it???

### CONTEXT

- **What was the ark?** If you've seen Indiana Jones, you know:
  - **Rectangular box** about 4' long, 2' wide/high; made of **wood**, covered with **gold**.
  - Various things kept inside it, including stone tablets inscribed with 10 Comms.
- **Why was it so important?** Represented **God's presence** among people.
  - **Josh 3:** Carried Ark to banks of Jordan – waters parted; people entered PL.
  - **Josh 6:** Carried Ark round Jericho – walls tumbled; enemies conquered.
- **Why is David moving it?** Taking to Jerusalem (capital city) to make important statement:
  - *God will not be peripheral to this kingdom!*
  - *He will be at the center of all we do.*

## Transition:

- So, Ark – box that represented God’s presence – being moved to Jerusalem.
- Nothing wrong with any of that – but journey going to teach us 2 gospel truths.

## CONTENT

### 1. The Bad News: There’s DANGER in the Presence of God (VV5-7)

#### State:

- David/Israelites get ark – symbol of God’s presence – and it’s a party.
  - It’s loud. It’s fun.
  - **V5:** David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.
    - Landon, this is the line up I want in worship next week...
    - Everyone, make sure to come back, it will be awesome.
- Party in full flow, ark is on cart pulled by oxen with Uzzah serving as one of the ushers.
  - But then, **V6:** Hit a bump in road → Oxen stumble → Ark wobbles → Uzzah puts out his hand to steady it → And then the music stops.<sup>1</sup>
  - **V7:** The anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God.
- Seem harsh?
  - Uzzah was just trying to help! Supposed to let Ark fall in the dirt? Seems OTT.
  - Many people put off by this: How can you believe in God that’s so severe?
  - **Dale Ralph Davis:** *“For me, passages like this are evidence of the supernatural origin and trustworthiness of the Bible. This Uzzah story goes so against the grain of human preferences. We would never have ‘invented’ a God like this – not if we want to win converts and influence people. This God is not very marketable. Anyone who says the God of the Bible is merely a projection of our wish fulfillment has not read the Bible.”*<sup>2</sup>

#### Illustrate: But WHY did this happen? HOW do we make sense of this?

- First, need to understand **the rules:**<sup>3</sup>
  - God gave Moses very specific instructions for how ark was to be moved.
  - You can read these in **Numbers 4** but here’s a summary:
    - Don’t **look** at the ark – cover it with a cloth.
    - Don’t **touch** the ark – carry it on poles.
    - If you do – look or touch – YOU. WILL. DIE.
  - Uzzah’s lifeless corpse reminds us – God is true to his word.
- Second though, need to understand **what these rules symbolized.**
  - God doesn’t make rules up randomly...
    - Rules teach us about who he is: *Don’t murder bc I’m a God of life... Don’t lie bc I’m a God of truth...*
    - So here: Rules tell us about who he is: *Ark is symbol of my presence, so don’t mess around with it – I’m not to be messed with.*
  - **The rules – don’t look/touch – symbolize our separation from a holy God.**
    - Like paper/fire can’t exist together – fire will consume the paper.
    - So sin/holiness can’t coexist – **Our God is a consuming fire (Heb 12:29).**
  - Uzzah didn’t just break the rules, he disregarded holiness of God.

- Made the mistake of believing that the ground was dirtier than his hands.<sup>4</sup>
- If you put your hand in a fire, you will get burned; and if you disregard God's holiness, you will be consumed.

**Apply:**

- I wonder how much we reckon with the holiness of God.
  - Have we, like Uzzah, become too casual in our approach to God?
  - Have hard time with texts like this bc we have forgotten his holiness and our sin?
- ***The Picture of Dorian Gray*** – Oscar Wilde's only novel – tells story of distinguished gentleman with devilishly good looks.
  - Appearance so striking that artist becomes infatuated with him.
  - Paints full-length portrait of him.
- Dorian takes vain delight in picture until depressing realization dawns:
  - Picture captured his beauty – but only moment in time.
  - It will stay beautiful, but he himself will age – own beauty will fade.
- Prays things be reversed: He remain same while picture grows old/gray. Wish is granted.
  - As Dorian sinks into life of crime, sensuality, and sin:
    - Body retains perfect youth and vigor.
    - Portrait grows into hideous record of evil.
  - May be beautiful on outside, but portrait reveals he's ugly within.
- **Can't read book without wondering:**
  - What would portrait of our inner lives look like?
    - Shades of selfishness, strokes of materialism, shadows of lust.
    - Sin paints an ugly picture.
  - Like Dorian Gray, most of us would keep portraits hidden.
- And all this means there's DANGER in God's presence.
  - He's not senile, fuzzy grandpa in sky.
  - He is holy, and if we disregard that – we too will die.

**There's DANGER in the presence of God.**

**Transition:** But there's more...

**2. The Good News: There's DELIGHT in the Presence of God (VV8-15)**

**State: Look how story unfolds...**

- Doesn't end with Uzzah lying on floor.
  - At first David is angry with himself (V8) and acknowledges his own sin (V9).
  - But after leaving the Ark in nearby town, he determines to try again.
  - Fetch ark and, once again, make their way to Jerusalem...
- Definitely not a somber affair → Party starts again.
  - **V12:** All the people are **rejoicing** → **V14:** David himself is **dancing** → **V15:** All in Israel are **shouting**.
  - It's loud. It's wild. It's fun → It's a celebration. It's a carnival. Wait a second... it's a parade!

***There's delight in the presence of God!***

**Transition:** But how can the people be delighted in the presence of such danger?

## **Illustrate:**

*First, need to say:*

*Point of text NOT that you move from danger to delight by getting everything right.*

- Very superficial understanding:
  - Uzzah broke rules and God killed him.
  - So don't break rules and God won't kill you.
- What's the problem with that?
  - All of us have already broken the rules!
  - Like Uzzah, we've all touched the Ark.

*Here's the point of this text:*

*We move from danger to delight through sacrifice.*

- That's what David does here.
  - **VV12-13** are the key verses of entire passage: **So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. And when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal.**
  - This time, they fully acknowledge the weight of God's holiness and the seriousness of sin...
    - As soon as they begin, David offers a sacrifice.
      - Blood is shed to cover their sins...
      - Blood is shed to give them clean hands.
    - Covered by this sacrifice, they continue with great joy!
- All of which – of course – points us to the ultimate sacrifice...
  - **Heb 10:4:** **For it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.**
  - **Heb 9:26:** **[So Jesus] appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.**
    - Like Uzzah, Jesus dies...
    - Not for his own sin, but for ours...
      - Blood is shed to cover our sins...
      - Blood is shed to give us clean hands.
      - Covered by his sacrifice, we can continue with joy!

## **Apply: Have you moved from danger to delight?**

- As novel nears its end, Dorian Gray reforms his ways.
  - Conscience strikes him and he determines to live righteously.
    - Wonders if new-found goodness has reversed portrait's decay.
    - Looks only to find even more appalling and grotesque image of himself.
  - Our good deeds can't save us – it's not something we can fix...
- But this is where the novel ends and the true fairytale of the Gospel begins...
  - You can't change your portrait... but Jesus can...
  - In fact, if you believe in Jesus your portrait now looks like him.
    - God doesn't look at you and see anything grotesque.
    - He is as pleased with you as he is with Christ.
  - ***You are as safe in the presence of God as the Son of God himself.***
  - In the gospel, he makes you new:

- Fear is replaced with celebration.
- Danger gives way to delight.

**Transition:** Do you see how this transformation happened for David?

### CONSEQUENCE

- **Before** the sacrifice, he was angry (V8) and afraid (V9).
- But **after** it, in V14, we see delight: **David danced before the LORD with all his might.**
  - Not sure I've ever done that... But I'm gonna do it now!
  - Just kidding... But this is the kind of joy we can experience in God's presence.
    - We are imperfect people, but we are perfectly loved.
    - So we can delight in being with our God.
- I wonder:
  - What might it look like to dance this week?
    - As the busyness ramps back up – school, events, deadlines, work...
    - As our struggles continue – in relationships, finances, health...
  - Can we be intentional to remember the joy we have in Christ?
    - We cannot ignore the responsibilities and troubles of life...
    - But we don't have to be controlled by them either.

### THE CLOSE: Can I encourage you to be intentional about finding joy this week?

- What makes you come alive to God?
  - If it's **worship**, maybe listen to joyful music as you start your day.
  - If it's **fellowship**, schedule time with friends and share the joy you have in Christ.
  - If it's **mission**, plan to serve someone this week.
  - Or maybe it's something else:
    - Time in the Word/prayer? Make time for it!
    - Getting out in nature? Take a walk this afternoon.
    - Silence and solitude? Find an hour to step away.
    - Dancing??? Go for it.
- Whatever it is, don't neglect it this week...
  - God loves you, and through Jesus, he's taken you from danger to delight.
  - Dancing doesn't have to be your thing → But find a way to let your heart dance.

## RESOURCES AND ENDNOTES

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### Resources

This list contains some of the resources that were used to prepare this sermon series. Check them out if you want to dig a little deeper.

- Dale Ralph Davis, *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*.
- Donald MacLeod, *Joy Changes Everything*.
- Jackie Hill Perry, *Well-Intentioned Sin Is Still Sin and Deserves Judgment*.

### Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> I owe this line to Dale Ralph Davis's retelling of the narrative in *2 Samuel: Out of Every Adversity*, 75.

<sup>2</sup> Davis, 75.

<sup>3</sup> Davis makes the connection to Numbers 4 in his commentary on this text.

<sup>4</sup> I adapted this line from a Jackie Hill Perry article where she quotes R. C. Sproul: "Uzzah assumed that his hand was less polluted than the earth." Accessed [here](#) 8/9/24.