

Readings for August 2018

Sunday 5th August 2018

2 Samuel 11:26-27, 12:13

When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. Then after the time for mourning was over, David sent someone to bring her to the palace. She became David's wife, and they had a son.

The LORD was angry at what David had done, and he sent Nathan the prophet to tell this story to David:

A rich man and a poor man lived in the same town. The rich man owned a lot of sheep and cattle, but the poor man had only one little lamb that he had bought and raised. The lamb became a pet for him and his children. He even let it eat from his plate and drink from his cup and sleep on his lap. The lamb was like one of his own children.

One day someone came to visit the rich man, but the rich man didn't want to kill any of his own sheep or cattle and serve it to the visitor. So he stole the poor man's little lamb and served it instead.

David was furious with the rich man and said to Nathan, "I swear by the living LORD that the man who did this deserves to die! And because he didn't have any pity on the poor man, he will have to pay four times what the lamb was worth."

Then Nathan told David:

You are that rich man! Now listen to what the LORD God of Israel says to you: "I chose you to be the king of Israel. I kept you safe from Saul and even gave you his house and his wives. I let you rule Israel and Judah, and if that had not been enough, I would have given you much more. Why did you disobey me and do such a horrible thing? You murdered Uriah the Hittite by having the Ammonites kill him, so you could take his wife.

"Because you wouldn't obey me and took Uriah's wife for yourself, your family will never live in peace. Someone from your own family will cause

you a lot of trouble, and I will take your wives and give them to another man before your very eyes. He will go to bed with them while everyone looks on. What you did was in secret, but I will do this in the open for everyone in Israel to see.”

David said, “I have disobeyed the LORD.”

“Yes, you have!” Nathan answered. “You showed you didn’t care what the LORD wanted. He has forgiven you, and you won’t die. But your newborn son will.”

Ephesians 4:1-16

As a prisoner of the Lord, I beg you to live in a way that is worthy of the people God has chosen to be his own. Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other. Try your best to let God’s Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living at peace. All of you are part of the same body. There is only one Spirit of God, just as you were given one hope when you were chosen to be God’s people. We have only one Lord, one faith, and one baptism. There is one God who is the Father of all people. Not only is God above all others, but he works by using all of us, and he lives in all of us.

Christ has generously divided out his gifts to us. As the Scriptures say,

“When he went up
to the highest place,
he led away many prisoners
and gave gifts to people.”

When it says, “He went up,” it means that Christ had been deep in the earth. This also means that the one who went deep into the earth is the same one who went into the highest heaven, so that he would fill the whole universe.

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Christ chose some of us to be apostles, prophets, missionaries, pastors, and teachers, so that his people would learn to serve and his body would grow strong. This will continue until we are united by our faith and by our understanding of the Son of God. Then we will be mature, just as Christ is, and we will be completely like him.

We must stop acting like children. We must not let deceitful people trick us by their false teachings, which are like winds that toss us around from place to place. Love should always make us tell the truth. Then we will grow in every way and be more like Christ, the head of the body. Christ holds it together and makes all of its parts work perfectly, as it grows and becomes strong because of love.

John 6:24-35

They saw that Jesus and his disciples had left. Then they got into the boats and went to Capernaum to look for Jesus. They found him on the west side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Jesus answered, "I tell you for certain that you are not looking for me because you saw the miracles, but because you ate all the food you wanted. Don't work for food that spoils. Work for food that gives eternal life. The Son of Man will give you this food, because God the Father has given him the right to do so."

"What exactly does God want us to do?" the people asked.

Jesus answered, "God wants you to have faith in the one he sent."

They replied, "What miracle will you work, so that we can have faith in you? What will you do? For example, when our ancestors were in the desert, they were given manna to eat. It happened just as the Scriptures say, 'God gave them bread from heaven to eat.'"

Jesus then told them, "I tell you for certain that Moses wasn't the one who gave you bread from heaven. My Father is the one who gives you the true bread from heaven. And the bread that God gives is the one who came down from heaven to give life to the world."

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The people said, "Lord, give us this bread and don't ever stop!"

Jesus replied:

I am the bread that gives life! No one who comes to me will ever be hungry. No one who has faith in me will ever be thirsty.

Sunday 12th August 2018

2 Samuel 18:5-9, 15, 31-33

David said, "All right, if you think I should."

Then in a voice loud enough for everyone to hear, he said, "Joab! Abishai! Ittai! For my sake, be sure that Absalom comes back unharmed."

David stood beside the town gate as his army marched past in groups of a hundred and in groups of a thousand.

The war with Israel took place in Ephraim Forest. Battles were being fought all over the forest, and David's soldiers were winning. Twenty thousand soldiers were killed that day, and more of them died from the dangers of the forest than from the fighting itself.

Absalom was riding his mule under a huge tree when his head caught in the branches. The mule ran off and left Absalom hanging in midair. Some of David's soldiers happened by,

Ten of Joab's bodyguards came over and finished him off.

The Ethiopian came and said, "Your Majesty, today I have good news! The LORD has rescued you from all your enemies!"

"Is my son Absalom all right?" David asked.

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The Ethiopian replied, "I wish that all Your Majesty's enemies and everyone who tries to harm you would end up like him!"

David started trembling. Then he went up to the room above the city gate to cry. As he went, he kept saying, "My son Absalom! My son, my son Absalom! I wish I could have died instead of you! Absalom, my son, my son!"

Ephesians 4:25-32, 5:2

We are part of the same body. Stop lying and start telling each other the truth. Don't get so angry that you sin. Don't go to bed angry and don't give the devil a chance.

If you are a thief, quit stealing. Be honest and work hard, so you will have something to give to people in need.

Stop all your dirty talk. Say the right thing at the right time and help others by what you say.

Don't make God's Spirit sad. The Spirit makes you sure that someday you will be free from your sins.

Stop being bitter and angry and mad at others. Don't yell at one another or curse each other or ever be rude. Instead, be kind and merciful, and forgive others, just as God forgave you because of Christ.

Do as God does. After all, you are his dear children. Let love be your guide. Christ loved us and offered his life for us as a sacrifice that pleases God.

John 6:35, 41-51

Jesus replied:

I am the bread that gives life! No one who comes to me will ever be hungry. No one who has faith in me will ever be thirsty.

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The people started grumbling because Jesus had said he was the bread that had come down from heaven. They were asking each other, "Isn't he Jesus, the son of Joseph? Don't we know his father and mother? How can he say that he has come down from heaven?"

Jesus told them:

Stop grumbling! No one can come to me, unless the Father who sent me makes them want to come. But if they do come, I will raise them to life on the last day. One of the prophets wrote, "God will teach all of them." And so everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him will come to me.

The only one who has seen the Father is the one who has come from him. No one else has ever seen the Father. I tell you for certain that everyone who has faith in me has eternal life.

I am the bread that gives life! Your ancestors ate manna in the desert, and later they died. But the bread from heaven has come down, so that no one who eats it will ever die. I am that bread from heaven! Everyone who eats it will live forever. My flesh is the life-giving bread that I give to the people of this world.

Sunday 19th 2018

1 Kings 2:10-12 ,3 :3-14

David was king of Israel forty years. He ruled seven years from Hebron and thirty-three years from Jerusalem. Then he died and was buried in Jerusalem. His son Solomon became king and took control of David's kingdom.

Solomon loved the LORD and followed his father David's instructions, but Solomon also offered sacrifices and burned incense at the shrines.

The most important shrine was in Gibeon, and Solomon had offered more than a thousand sacrifices on that altar.

One night while Solomon was in Gibeon, the LORD God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Solomon, ask for anything you want, and I will give it to you."

Solomon answered:

My father David, your servant, was honest and did what you commanded. You were always loyal to him, and you gave him a son who is now king. LORD God, I'm your servant, and you've made me king in my father's place. But I'm very young and know so little about being a leader. And now I must rule your chosen people, even though there are too many of them to count.

Please make me wise and teach me the difference between right and wrong. Then I will know how to rule your people. If you don't, there is no way I could rule this great nation of yours.

God said:

Solomon, I'm pleased that you asked for this. You could have asked to live a long time or to be rich. Or you could have asked for your enemies to be destroyed. Instead, you asked for wisdom to make right decisions. So I'll make you wiser than anyone who has ever lived or ever will live.

I'll also give you what you didn't ask for. You'll be rich and respected as long as you live, and you'll be greater than any other king. If you obey

me and follow my commands, as your father David did, I'll let you live a long time.

Ephesians 5:15-20

Act like people with good sense and not like fools. These are evil times, so make every minute count. Don't be stupid. Instead, find out what the Lord wants you to do. Don't destroy yourself by getting drunk, but let the Spirit fill your life. When you meet together, sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, as you praise the Lord with all your heart. Always use the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to thank God the Father for everything.

John 6:51-58

I am that bread from heaven! Everyone who eats it will live forever. My flesh is the life-giving bread that I give to the people of this world.

They started arguing with each other and asked, "How can he give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus answered:

I tell you for certain that you won't live unless you eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man. But if you do eat my flesh and drink my blood, you will have eternal life, and I will raise you to life on the last day. My flesh is the true food, and my blood is the true drink. If you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you are one with me, and I am one with you.

The living Father sent me, and I have life because of him. Now everyone who eats my flesh will live because of me. The bread that comes down from heaven isn't like what your ancestors ate. They died, but whoever eats this bread will live forever.

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Sunday 26th 2018

1 Kings 8:22-30 ,41-43

Solomon stood facing the altar with everyone standing behind him. Then he lifted his arms toward heaven and prayed:

LORD God of Israel, no other god in heaven or on earth is like you!

You never forget the agreement you made with your people, and you are loyal to anyone who faithfully obeys your teachings. My father David was your servant, and today you have kept every promise you made to him.

LORD God of Israel, you promised my father that someone from his family would always be king of Israel, if they do their best to obey you, just as he did. Please keep this promise you made to your servant David.

There's not enough room in all of heaven for you, LORD God. How could you possibly live on earth in this temple I have built? But I ask you to answer my prayer. This is the temple where you have chosen to be worshiped. Please watch over it day and night and listen when I turn toward it and pray. I am your servant, and the people of Israel belong to you. So whenever any of us look toward this temple and pray, answer from your home in heaven and forgive our sins.

Foreigners will hear about you and your mighty power, and some of them will come to live among your people Israel. If any of them pray toward this temple, listen from your home in heaven and answer their prayers. Then everyone on earth will worship you, just like your people Israel, and they will know that I have built this temple to honour you.

Ephesians 6:10-20

Finally, let the mighty strength of the Lord make you strong. Put on all the armour that God gives, so you can defend yourself against the devil's tricks. We are not fighting against humans. We are fighting against forces and authorities and against rulers of darkness and powers in the spiritual world. So put on all the armour that God gives. Then when that evil day comes, you will be able to defend yourself. And when the battle is over, you will still be standing firm.

Be ready! Let the truth be like a belt around your waist, and let God's justice protect you like armour. Your desire to tell the good news about peace should be like shoes on your feet. Let your faith be like a shield, and you will be able to stop all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Let God's saving power be like a helmet, and for a sword use God's message that comes from the Spirit.

Never stop praying, especially for others. Always pray by the power of the Spirit. Stay alert and keep praying for God's people. Pray that I will be given the message to speak and that I may fearlessly explain the mystery about the good news. I was sent to do this work, and that's the reason I am in jail. So pray that I will be brave and will speak as I should.

John 6:56-69

If you eat my flesh and drink my blood, you are one with me, and I am one with you.

The living Father sent me, and I have life because of him. Now everyone who eats my flesh will live because of me. The bread that comes down from heaven isn't like what your ancestors ate. They died, but whoever eats this bread will live forever.

Jesus was teaching in a Jewish place of worship in Capernaum when he said these things.

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Many of Jesus' disciples heard him and said, "This is too hard for anyone to understand."

Jesus knew that his disciples were grumbling. So he asked, "Does this bother you? What if you should see the Son of Man go up to heaven where he came from? The Spirit is the one who gives life! Human strength can do nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are from that life-giving Spirit. But some of you refuse to have faith in me." Jesus said this, because from the beginning he knew who would have faith in him. He also knew which one would betray him.

Then Jesus said, "You cannot come to me, unless the Father makes you want to come. That is why I have told these things to all of you."

Because of what Jesus said, many of his disciples turned their backs on him and stopped following him. Jesus then asked his twelve disciples if they were going to leave him. Simon Peter answered, "Lord, there is no one else that we can go to! Your words give eternal life. We have faith in you, and we are sure that you are God's Holy One."

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