

David's Census, Judgment And Purchase...Threshing Floor

2 Samuel 24:1-25

MEMORY VERSE

2 SAMUEL 24:14

“Please let us fall into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great; but do let me fall into the hand of man.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A soft (foam) ball or bean bag and a timer (a watch with a second hand will do).

The enclosed list of questions (a few copies), scissors, pencils and pipe cleaners.

Small prizes (pencils, erasers, stickers, etc.)

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Alpha-Pass

For this activity, you will need a soft (foam) ball or bean bag and a timer (a watch with a second hand will do). The object is to pass your way through the alphabet before time runs out.

Form a circle. Hand one player the soft ball or bean bag. Explain to the children that this is a game of fast thinking. You will name a category such as “food” and then begin the timer. You will then name a food that begins with the letter “a” such as artichoke. Then you will quickly toss the ball to someone across the circle who will name a food beginning with the letter “b.” That person will then toss the ball to someone else who has not had a turn. After everyone has had a turn, repeat. See if you can make it through the alphabet before time runs out (allow 2 or 3 minutes to see how far they can get). NOTE: You may want to delete letters such as “Q” or “X”.

Play again using a different category. You can use the categories below or think of your own. For younger children, you can have them just name the alphabet or just think up names without keeping to alphabetical order.

Categories may be:

Anything in the Bible

Bible Characters

Animals on Noah's ark

Names of friends and family

Food

Favorite things to do

Ask the children when they are done whether they thought it was important for everyone to do what they were supposed to do in order for the game to work. What if someone did not do what they were supposed to? Would it affect the rest of the group getting to the goal? Today, we will learn about how David decided to do things his own way—it affected a lot of other people.

LESSON TIME!

It is a good thing to learn from the mistakes of others. In today's lesson, David made a big mistake. He chose to disobey God's command and to trust in his own resources to fight the battle before him rather than trust in God. Sadly, His sin ended up hurting a lot of people around him. **Our strength is in the Lord, not in what we have.**

2 SAMUEL 24:1, 2

Again the anger of the LORD was aroused against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, "Go, number Israel and Judah."

So the king said to Joab the commander of the army who was with him, "Now go throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, and count the people, that I may know the number of the people."

Since the Israelites were going to war, David decided to count and sign up the fighting men of Israel to see how many soldiers he could depend on in battle. Why was this a problem? David is disobeying God; for God warned David not to take a census and count the people. God knew that if David counted his troops that he would be looking at his own power and strength—those soldiers whom he felt he could depend on to fight battles--instead of looking to God. God wanted David's trust to be in Him alone.

God does not need a large army to fight His battles for Him. He can defeat an army of several thousand with just a few hundred soldiers as He did during the time of Gideon. By David counting his troops, he was showing that his faith was placed in his own military power and not in the Lord. David's help could only come from God, not from the resources that he had. **Our strength is in the Lord, not in what we have.**

Note: God was angry with the people of Israel because they were forsaking Him and continuing in sin. Verse 1 says that God moved David against them. In other words, God was working out a couple of things at the same time. It's amazing how our all-knowing God can do that! God was going to use this situation to work in the lives of His people while working in David's heart at the same time.

2 SAMUEL 24:3,4

And Joab said to the king, "Now may the LORD your God add to the people a hundred times more than there are, and may the eyes of my lord the king see it. But why does my lord the king desire this thing?"

Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab and against the captains of the army. Therefore Joab and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king to count the people of Israel.

Joab reminded David that God is in control. He asked David why he would want to take a census. If God chose to, He could make the army 100 times larger. But David would not listen to Joab and overruled him; so Joab and the military leaders went to count the army of Israel.

Joab gave David some wise advice. Have you ever been given some good advice and maybe did not listen to it? It is good to be reminded of what the Bible says and what God wants for our lives. Even great kings like David can lose focus sometimes. **Our strength is in the Lord, not in what we have.**

2 SAMUEL 24:5-9

And they crossed over the Jordan and camped in Aroer, on the right side of the town which is in the midst of the ravine of Gad, and toward Jazer.

Then they came to Gilead and to the land of Tahtim Hodshi; they came to Dan Jaan and around to Sidon;

and they came to the stronghold of Tyre and to all the cities of the Hivites and the Canaanites. Then they went out to South Judah as far as Beersheba.

So when they had gone through all the land, they came to Jerusalem at the end of nine months and twenty days.

Then Joab gave the sum of the number of the people to the king. And there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

Joab and the military leaders traveled throughout the land to count and sign up the Israeli army. It took nine months and twenty days to complete. Joab reported to King David that they had 800,000 soldiers in Israel and 500,000 soldiers in Judah. Sounds like a pretty big army, doesn't it? Maybe David felt like a pretty powerful ruler with an army of that size.

The truth was that God had greatly blessed David. He did have a large army. God had made him and the nation of Israel wealthy and strong. But God did not want David to take his eyes off of God and dependency on Him and look instead to His blessings.

Sometimes, it is hard for us to live by faith. We are tempted to take our eyes off God and begin to count up all the things we have that will help us meet the needs before us. God wants our focus to be on Him and His resources, not ours. Let us not feel secure and self-sufficient by counting up our material blessing. Our trust must remain in the Lord in times of prosperity just as in times of poverty. **Our strength is in the Lord, not in what we have.**

2 SAMUEL 24:10

And David's heart condemned him after he had numbered the people. So David said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done; but now, I

pray, O LORD, take away the iniquity of Your servant, for I have done very foolishly."

David knew that he had done wrong. He knew he had made a foolish decision. David called out to the Lord to take away his iniquity or sin. When we realize our mistakes and sin, we should never run away from the Lord. It's time to run to God. 1 John 1:8,9 says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

2 SAMUEL 24:11-13

Now when David arose in the morning, the word of the LORD came to the prophet Gad, David's seer, saying,

"Go and tell David, 'Thus says the LORD: "I offer you three things; choose one of them for yourself, that I may do it to you."' "

So Gad came to David and told him; and he said to him, "Shall seven years of famine come to you in your land? Or shall you flee three months before your enemies, while they pursue you? Or shall there be three days' plague in your land? Now consider

and see what answer I should take back to Him who sent me."

David now had to choose the punishment. Such an exercise would make him clearly realize his responsibility—not only was he responsible for the sin but the punishment as well. He could not blame anyone else. By telling David he was to choose the punishment, it made David realize that he was responsible for both

the sin and the punishment. He could not blame anyone else for the results. It must have been an extremely difficult choice, because it would affect others.

David was told he would have three choices. His people could go hungry for seven years, he could have to run from his enemies for three months without God's help, or there could be three days of plague or serious illness in the land. All three of these are very serious. Which do you think David would choose?

If we choose to disobey God's Word, we will bring upon ourselves trouble and pain. The Bible says that we will reap what we sow. If you plant a sunflower seed you will get a sunflower. If you plant an apple seed you will get an apple tree. If we plant sin and disobedience, we will reap destruction.

Sadly, we also see from David's experience, that our sins affect not only ourselves, but those around us. It is true that God used this situation to discipline his people, but David's sin had a very direct result--many lives were affected. We need to remember that our obedience or disobedience will affect other people.

The Right Scroll

David had to make some very important decisions about obeying the Lord. In this craft you will make a scroll to help you think of ways that you can be responsible and make the right choices.

Use the enclosed list of questions. Cut them out to make "mini" scrolls. Using a strip with a question, roll with a pencil to make into a scroll. Cut pipe cleaners into several 1 1/2" to 2" pieces. Glue a piece on to each end of your scroll. Allow your scroll to curl on both sides so that it closes in the middle.

Have some of the children in class share their question and how they might answer it.

2 SAMUEL 24:14

And David said to Gad, "I am in great distress. Please let us fall into the hand of the LORD, for His mercies are great; but do not let me fall into the hand of man."

This was a very difficult decision to make. David wisely knew that God was gracious, so He decided to put his trust in the Lord. He would leave the choice up to God. Do you see the change in heart? Before he put his trust in his great army; but now, he would put his trust in God. A hard lesson had been learned.

Lessons learned from our own mistakes are hard lessons. May we put our trust and confidence in God alone. **Our strength is in the Lord, not in what we have.**

2 SAMUEL 24:15,16

So the LORD sent a plague upon Israel from the morning till the appointed time. From Dan to Beersheba seventy thousand men of the people died.

And when the angel stretched out His hand over Jerusalem to destroy it, the LORD relented from the destruction, and said to the angel who was destroying the people, "It is enough; now restrain your hand." And the angel of the LORD was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

The terrible plague—the consequence of sin--spread from Dan to Beersheba.

When the angel started to wipe out Jerusalem, God was grieved that so many people had died and stopped the punishment. In the New Testament, we are told that God is not willing that any should perish, but that everyone would come to repentance (turn their lives away from sin and towards God).

Unfortunately, some people will decide their own judgment by refusing to turn away from their sin and turn towards God. God's heart is that all men, everywhere, would turn to Him in repentance. Jesus died on the cross so that we would never have to taste of His judgment. Have you turned your life over to Jesus?

2 SAMUEL 24:17

Then David spoke to the LORD when he saw the angel who was striking the people, and said, "Surely I have sinned, and I have done wickedly; but these sheep, what have they done? Let Your hand, I pray, be against me and against my father's house."

When David saw how his wrong decision had destroyed his people, he repented, admitted his sin, and asked for forgiveness. He then pleaded with God for his people. He told God since he was the one who sinned, he should be the one to be punished. He realized the effect his sin had on others. May we remember this valuable lesson.

2 SAMUEL 24:18,19

And Gad came that day to David and said to him, "Go up, erect an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite."

So David, according to the word of Gad, went up as the LORD commanded.

When David asked for forgiveness, God sent the prophet Gad to tell David to build an altar and to offer a sacrifice on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite where the angel had stopped. David obeyed God and followed His instructions. Again, David had quite a change of heart. He was now listening to God's Word and obeying Him. **Our strength is in the Lord, not in what we have.**

2 SAMUEL 24:20,21

Now Araunah looked, and saw the king and his servants coming toward him. So Araunah went out and bowed before the king with his face to the ground.

Then Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" And David said, "To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the LORD, that the plague may be withdrawn from the people."

When Araunah, the owner of the threshing floor, saw David coming he went out to meet David. He bowed out of respect for the king. Araunah asked David's purpose for the visit. David told him that he needed to buy the land to build an altar to the Lord and to sacrifice so that the sickness would stop.

2 SAMUEL 24:22,23

Now Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take and offer up whatever seems good to him. Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and threshing implements and the yokes of the oxen for wood.

"All these, O king, Araunah has given to the king." And Araunah said to the king, "May the LORD your God accept you."

Even though Araunah was not an Israelite, he offered to give the land and everything David needed for the sacrifice. Araunah said to David, "May your God accept you and your sacrifice." This was now David's opportunity to turn a bad situation into something good. He could now be a witness for the Lord to Araunah.

2 SAMUEL 24:24

Then the king said to Araunah, "No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the LORD my God with that which costs me nothing." So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver.

David insisted on paying for the land and the sacrifice. David was grieved over his sin. He desired this sacrifice to be from him. Another person could not pay for them. So David bought the land and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver, a fair market price.

2 SAMUEL 24:25

And David built there an altar to the LORD, and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. So the LORD heeded the prayers for the land, and the plague was withdrawn from Israel.

David built an altar to the Lord and offered his sacrifice in true love and repentance. He asked God to forgive him and his people. God accepted the offering, forgave them as He promised, and stopped the plague.

May we learn important lessons from David's experience. May we keep our eyes focused on the Lord. Just as David should not have trusted in his vast army but in the greatness and power of His God, so we should trust in the Lord, not weighing or counting on our own resources. **Our strength is in the Lord, not in what we have.**

May we also remember, the grief David experienced as he realized his own sin affected many others. When we are tempted to do wrong, we need to think of what it will do to those we love, our families, and our friends. What we do, either good or evil, affects everyone around us. They suffer too, even though they did not do anything wrong.

Name that Obedient Person!

There are many examples in the Bible of people who obeyed. See how many people the children can find by playing this game. Form two teams (divide the class in half). Make sure that all of the children have Bibles before beginning. Give a verse from the list provided below. The first team that looks up the verse and correctly names the person who gives the command and the person who obeyed will get a point for each one (two points are possible for each round). Continue until all of the verses have been looked up. You can find additional verses if you would like to.

When done, declare a winner. You can then hand out a small prize to all of the children for their obedience in playing the game and listening in class today.

BIBLE VERSES – WHO GAVE THE COMMAND AND WHO OBEYED?

Exodus 18:17-21- “Select capable men and appoint them as officials.”

Acts 16:29-31 – “Believe in the Lord Jesus.”

2 Kings 5:9-10 – “Go wash yourself seven times in the Jordan.”

Luke 19:5 – “Come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.”

Joshua 3:6 – “Take up the Ark of the Covenant and pass on ahead of the people.”

Ezra 1:2 – “Make a proclamation to build the Temple at Jerusalem.”

Esther 5:7, 8 – “Go to the king to beg for mercy.”

1 Kings 17:10-11 – “Bring me a little water and a piece of bread.”

Genesis 37:12-14 – “Go see if all is well with your brothers.”

John 2:1-5 – “Do whatever he tells you.”

Ruth 2:8-14 – “Come over here. Have some bread and dip it in the wine vinegar.”

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in God and not in their own resources or strength. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.

