

Keeping promises made

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(1 Samuel 8:5). The heartbreak was that Israel became like the nations in more than just its choice of rule by a king; Israel also followed its neighbors in sin. Thus the history of the kingdom of Israel was an ongoing battle against idolatry and failure to be the holy people of God.

This was further compounded by the performance of Israel's first king, Saul. Although chosen by God and anointed by Samuel, Saul did not live up to the heavy responsibilities of making Israel into a godly kingdom. God saw Saul's disobedience as a rejection of His Word, which resulted in God's rejection of Saul as king (1 Samuel 15:26; 1 Chronicles 10:13, 14). Even while Saul was still reigning, God directed Samuel to anoint Saul's successor, a new king who was not Saul's son (1 Samuel 16:1). The dynasty of Saul's house lasted only one generation, approximately 40 years (see Acts 13:21).

David had no royal qualifications to be king. Yet he had personal qualities that added up to the extraordinary credentials that God desired. His bravery was a hallmark (1 Samuel 17). David became a victorious military leader in the service of Saul, so successful that Saul became jealous (18:6-9). David was also a talented musician (see 16:23), the author of many psalms.

Most importantly, though, was the fact that God saw in David "a man after his own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14). Paul explained this phrase to mean that God was confident that David would "fulfill all my will" (Acts 13:22). Although David, like King Saul, failed and committed sin, his response was unlike Saul's response. Saul responded to sin with arrogance, stubbornness, and rationalizing.

David, however, came to God in humility and repentance.

After the hideous episode of adultery and murder caused by David's lust for Bathsheba, David wrote, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). David was spiritually submissive to God. In fact, David's career was charac-

terized by the strong presence of God's Holy Spirit in his life (1 Samuel 16:13). This week's lesson will help us understand why God's love for David has implications for us today.

David (2 Samuel 7:8-9)

1. Through what faithful prophet did God speak to David? (v. 8)

God's chosen vessel for speaking to David was the prophet Nathan. God wanted to remind David that He, the Lord of hosts, had taken him from the "sheepcote." The sheepcote, or sheepfold, was usually made of rough stones forming an enclosure to protect the sheep at night and keep out animal and human intruders. Normally, it had no roof. Several flocks could be contained in the pen, and one of the shepherds would guard the door. In the morning, each shepherd would call for his sheep, and the sheep would go to their shepherds since the sheep knew their shepherd's voice. During the day, a shepherd would take his sheep to various pastures.

2. Why did God remind David of his humble beginning as a shepherd for his father? (v. 9)

God was reminding David of his newly beginnings as the youngest son of Jesse of Bethlehem. In Jewish culture, the eldest usually received the greatest blessing in a family. He was chosen by God and anointed by Samuel to eventually become the ruler over the combined kingdoms of Judah and Israel (1 Sam. 16:10-13; 2 Sam. 2:4; 5:3).

3. How did God help David in his steady rise to power as king? (v.9)

It is important that we remember how God deliver us from hardships in our lives. God wanted David to remember how He helped David rise to power as King of Israel. In his review God tells about how He had gone with David wherever he had traveled, especially as he became a fugitive from jealous King Saul and as he fought against the enemies of Judah and Israel. David had divine aid when he went up against foreign warriors. One outstanding episode was his defeat of the Philistine giant named Goliath. David struck him with a stone from his sling and then used Goliath's own sword to decapitate him and send the Philistines fleeing.

Pastor back after tour of duty as Army chaplain

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could still join the army. "The things I got to do in the army, a civilian priest wouldn't get to do. It was the best ministry for where I was in life."

Carey was asked to celebrate Mass, and other religious rites wherever the soldiers happened to be, sometimes in unfamiliar surroundings. His unit trained in the desert, the Arctic tundra and in the jungle. He went overseas as well, taking two tours in Germany, including a base that was used as a live fire post.

"Weapon systems from

around Europe would zone in there. That's where people practice firing all the weapons," Carey said, adding that there was minimal danger. "It was a training area. It was very regulated."

Carey's unit was never deployed into a combat zone, although it did train other units that were preparing for deployment. Carey spent time in "decompression sessions" talking to soldiers who were returning from war zones, when the advice was often a reminder that soldiers are "normal people that have been in abnormal situations." He also accompanied officers

delivering the news of a soldier's death to the family.

Carey will be serving 210 families at St. Agnes, a relatively small number compared with other Greenwich parishes. St. Agnes, in a converted carriage house and positioned in a grove of trees off of Starvich Road, is a decidedly different change of scenery for Carey. After years of traveling from state to state and across the ocean, a church in one spot sounds appealing.


"It's very homey here. Everyone has been very gracious to me," Carey said. "I'm excited to be here."

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