

The Glory of God

2 Samuel 6:1-5

Enter into the Lord's presence with joy and gratitude.

Are you beginning to see patterns of sloth or pride in your life?

You are in Jerusalem awaiting the ark. David takes the city of Jerusalem and fulfills the promise of God to the people of Israel. He will also reunite the kingly and priestly roles of humanity in attempting to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem to promote the worship of God. Up until this week, we have seen a David who was very deliberate and patient. But, he gets a little too excited when it comes to bringing the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. Rather than following the instructions God gave in Exodus 25 for transporting the Ark, David opts for a quicker method. This leads to a catastrophe and causes David to abandon his plan.

Pray that the Lord draws you out of sloth to embrace the kingly mission he has given you. Pray for the grace of freedom and humility for all Exodus Men, just as they are praying for you.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord and Master of my life, spare me from the spirit of indifference, despair, lust for power, and idle chatter. Instead, bestow on me, your servant, the spirit of integrity, humility, patience, and love. Yes, O Lord and King, let me see my own sins and not judge my brothers and sisters; for you are blessed forever and ever. Amen.

A Reading from the Second Book of Samuel

David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah, to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. And they carried the ark of God upon a new cart, and brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was on the hill; and Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God; and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel were making merry before the Lord with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

Reflection

Ever since the sin of Adam, humanity has been on a quest to regain the presence of God. This was Adam's calling, to walk with God in the Garden and, like a priest in the temple, to guard and cultivate the glory of the Lord. Adam was called to be a prophet, priest, and king—to proclaim the truth of the Lord in creation, to promote the worship of the Lord, and to rule on God's behalf. In the Old Testament, these three dimensions of the human person and his relationship to God had become separated. In our reading today, we see that David begins to bring together at last the priestly and kingly roles. As king, he also takes on a priestly role of bringing the Ark to the holy city and trying to promote the worship of the

Lord. David loves his kingdom, but he also loves the Lord's temple.

David is becoming stronger and stronger. Some of the challenges of his kingdom are being resolved. He now has space to focus on his own goals and the glory of his reign. But the central component of his life and his kingdom remains the glory of the Lord. During all the afflictions, trials, and uncertainties of the years in which King Saul pursued him, David learned to rely upon the Lord. He learned to make the glory of God central to his life and survival. Those years of testing, in other words, cemented in his soul a firm, stable discipline of prioritizing the Lord. Thus, when his kingdom begins to thrive, he does not become distracted by the duties and delights of leadership. Rather, he continues to put the Lord first and is able to find deep joy in the worship of God.

One of the surest signs of a slothful soul is the desire for dominion while feeling distaste for the temple. In other words, we want to rule or control the realm of our lives without bowing to the true king—without worshipping the Lord. The slothful soul has distaste for prayer and worship. The desire to go to Mass is diluted by the pull of tasks or a need for a “day off.” The routine of daily prayer is forsaken. Spiritual sacrifices are dismissed, as the soul feels justified in material indulgence and pleasure.

Where are you in this picture? Are you like fallen humanity, wanting absolute control without reverence for the Lord, yearning to be king while being unwilling to be priest? Or are you becoming like David, exercising prudent and courageous leadership, while also honoring the Lord and putting your worship of him at the center of your domain—your “kingdom” of work, home life, and hobbies? It is a sign of sloth that you want to reign without worship or that you will only pray or adore when you have your way.

Brothers, we need to find a way to set God's glory before us in all of our tasks, even the most mundane. We cannot lead our families, our co-workers, or our communities without being led by the Lord. Ask the Lord where you are holding your prayer or worship hostage for your kingship. Ask the Lord where you need to have His glory rather than your own at the forefront of your efforts. Is it in your work? Your home? Your “alone time?”

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 4 Action Items

1. Plan a Midsummer's Eve Bonfire for Friday.

John the Baptist's birthday was considered to be Midsummer's Day in the Middle Ages (the equivalent of the summer solstice). On this day, the length of the days starts decreasing. Thus, the length of the days models John's saying that he must decrease and Jesus must increase (See John 3:30). Jesus's birthday is right around the winter solstice—when days start increasing again. The evening before John's birthday was Midsummer's Eve, a time of celebration expressed through a gathering around a bonfire with traditional country dancing (such as square dancing).

Midsummer Eve is this coming Friday, June 23rd. Consider holding a bonfire celebration as a fraternity or family, but make sure your fire is big! Invite other men too, from your parish, work, and neighborhood. This event would be a great way to show them the kind of fraternity that we are building as men and the joy that flows from the Christian life. Invite them to join us in the Kings of Summer and the upcoming St. Michael's Lent. Our Midsummer Eve bonfire will be a great way to celebrate John the Baptist and to thank God for the blessings of the summer season. Make it an experience you won't forget!

2. Recommit to your daily prayer.

If sloth takes hold, what will it want to get rid of most? The devil will use any means possible to get you to put off prayer or to enter it with as many distractions as possible.

Daily prayer serves as the foundation for everything else that we do. It is the way to overcome sloth and pride by keeping an open door for God to act in our lives and to overcome our spiritual foes.

Recommit yourself to daily prayer against all obstacles.

3. Evaluate your technology use.

Sloth can creep in through technology. Jumping from distraction to distraction eats up our time and energy, crowding out freedom for prayer and others. Examine your technology use and make a firm commitment to any necessary changes.