

Misunderstanding

2 Samuel 6:6–7

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. Up until this week, we have seen a David who was very deliberate and patient. But, he gets a little too excited and opts for a quicker plan than God's. This leads to a catastrophe.

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

And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah; and God smote him there because he put forth his hand to the ark; and he died there beside the ark of God.

Reflection

Once again, we see someone who disregards the order of God. God had given specific instructions for how and who could carry the Ark in Exodus 25. David, like Asahel or Joab before him, gets carried away and transports the Ark as he sees fit rather than in accordance with God's will. Although David put the Ark on a "new cart," he failed to have the Ark carried by men using poles of acacia wood.

This seems like such an honest mistake by Uzzah. He is simply trying to keep the Ark from falling. Maybe he had some ill intent, or maybe he wanted to touch this sacred object to see if it was all it had been made out to be. But all the narrator wants us to know is the severity with which the Lord takes mistreatment of his presence.

If one reads the modern commentaries, the biggest question scholars have is how a God of love could so harshly punish a seemingly innocent mistake. This reveals that the modern understanding of love has been skewed. We are often working with a distorted, overly sentimental understanding of God's love. We talk about God's love as though it were a wrathless ocean of sheer acceptance and mere affirmation. God loves us unconditionally, he accepts and meets us as we are, we are told ad nauseum. There is this sense that we are all so fragile and insecure, and what we really need is a "divine pat

on the back.” Conceived in this way, God’s love reduces him to a kind of cosmic life coach or cheerleader. The impression we are given is that our faults or failings do not really affect God, or if they do, it only provokes his pity, not anger.

A lot of people today who talk about God’s love cannot make sense of moments like this in the Scripture—when God’s love cannot tolerate even seemingly innocent mistakes like Uzzah’s. Maybe the contemporary view of God’s love as a “divine pat on the back” to an insecure humanity is not accurate. Let’s be clear: this view of God’s love is not only unbiblical; it is a product of our slothful times. We do not want God’s love to demand anything from us. We want it to be something that makes us feel cozy and comfortable in our ineptitude and fallenness. In other words, we do not want God’s love to shake us from our sloth. Any view of God’s love that is used to justify moral laxity is false and damnable. It must be opposed.

It is true that there is no sin that, when confessed, God cannot forgive. But it does not follow that God’s forgiveness is careless or indifferent. God cares deeply for us, which is why he will not allow us to disregard him, our greatest good. The flimsy, ethereal view of God’s love as a kind of blind affirmation of our lifestyles or identities (a mere pity for our sin) is a view that enables our sloth, our moral relaxation.

Have you been seduced by a false understanding of God’s love, in which he does not punish or purify his people? Have you remained in sin or affirmed the sin of others with the thought that God loves you anyway? Bring yourself honestly before the Lord in prayer today and listen for his truthful response.

Now place yourself before God, and converse with him.

Week 4 Action Items

Plan a Midsummer's Eve Bonfire for Friday and invite men into your fraternity.

Recommit to your daily prayer.

Evaluate your technology use.

Mark Reading as Complete