

## An Anointed Calling

**David and all the men with him . . . mourned and wept and fasted till evening** (2 Samuel 1:11-12).

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 1:1-12

**Song:** “I Am Thine, O Lord”

The words stunned Greg. His father had said, “You can’t take my grandkids to the mission field.” Greg knew God wanted his family to serve on foreign soil, yet the unhappiness and disappointment from his family challenged his resolve. Many tears were shed when his family moved across an ocean to work as missionaries.

The Amalekite thought he was delivering good news to David, yet David responded with sorrow at Saul’s death. There was no joy or triumph. David recognized that his own anointing would mean sacrifice. His humility showed in his graciousness toward Saul and Jonathan during their lifetimes and after. David was king, but at a great price.

We who follow Christ may also experience loss—in a career, of a friendship, or even of deep ties with family. But God stands beside us with unending comfort and undeniable peace. We may not understand the purpose of the price we pay, but grace will carry us through every difficulty. Never undervalue God’s calling. It is sacred. It brims with purpose. Stand firm in it. Those He calls to serve, to give, or to teach, He equips with His Spirit. Our job is to move forward in faith.

**Father**, help us with Your grace through the losses we face. In Jesus’ name, amen.

December 6–12. **Kathleen Dunlap** lives in Colorado with her husband, son, and two crazy dogs. She enjoys cooking new recipes, knitting, and exploring the mountains.

## Time for Grief

**David took up this lament . . . and he ordered that the people of Judah be taught this lament** (2 Samuel 1:17-18).

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 1:17-27

**Song:** “No One Understands Like Jesus”

The white casket’s top and sides were covered with black markings—messages, doodles, and names. The family and friends of Rachel Joy Scott, victim of the April 20, 1999, Columbine School shooting, poured out their grief and love. To memorialize her life, Rachel’s family started a nonprofit organization to combat bullying in schools. Their laments blossomed into actions.

David created a song of honor for Israel’s fallen king. Even though Saul had disobeyed God, he had once experienced God’s anointed power. During Saul’s life, David had reminded Saul of his purpose (1 Samuel 24:10). Now, at Saul’s death, David recalled Saul’s good deeds and God’s design for his life. David compelled others to sing with him. Together they remembered.

God abides with us in our sorrow. There is no tear He does not see, no cry He does not hear, no wound He cannot heal. He understands our expression of loss that we convey in a song, a poem, or a painting. Talk to Him of your heart’s ache. Gather others around you in your lamenting as King David did. Through our words and memories, we honor God’s gift of life. We will move into deeper faith and passionate hope. We understand that nothing with God is wasted, not even a death.

**Father**, keep our hearts secure in You as we cry and remember. Thank You that You work continually on our behalf, even in sorrow. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Long-Awaited Justice

**“Will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night?” (Luke 18:7).**

**Scripture:** Luke 18:1-8

**Song:** “Faith Is the Victory”

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks took a seat on a local bus—a seat not allowed for her because she was black. Her peaceful protest of the segregation of white people and black people in the United States triggered nationwide reforms. However, change took time. On July 2, 1964, nearly nine years after Rosa’s action, the Civil Rights Act, granting equality to every person regardless of skin color, was signed into law.

Jesus relays a message of persistence from a woman who desperately wanted a judge to hear her plight. The judge acted in stubborn unreasonableness, but his demeanor did not deter the woman. She did not know what the outcome would be, but she believed in her cause. Her actions showed it. She never gave up.

We see only our current circumstances, not the full span of time from God’s viewpoint. Our limited understanding can halt our progress unless we proceed in faith. We will not comprehend God’s timetable in a season of suffering, unanswered prayers, or unjust circumstances. Take courage in God’s promises. Continue the work He has set for you to do. God does not neglect His children. He sees your battles. He works in and through your faith. Your persistence will be blessed. Remain steadfast. Triumph is on the horizon!

**Father,** help us to know that justice is on the way. Thank You that You are our good Father. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Stop and Hear

**The multitude rebuked [two blind men], because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us** (Matthew 20:31, *KJV*).

**Scripture:** Matthew 20:29-34

**Song:** “He Giveth More Grace”

Thomas and I sat in a class with six other couples. Local county trainers spoke to us of children who needed foster care. We had said we were available to host younger children; that is, until the trainer provided statistics regarding an overflow of teenagers in the system. Teens are the most vulnerable and at-risk demographic. I looked at my husband. We both felt the Holy Spirit tug our hearts: our home would house a teenager.

Two blind men yelled for Jesus to help them. They were loud and aggressive. The crowd around them, which included Jesus’ disciples, shoved them away. The angry voices said, “We don’t have time for you.” Yet Jesus responded to the men immediately and healed them willingly.

Is someone near you calling out? It is the single mom in your church? Is it the homeless population in your city? Is it the child in your home? Like the two blind men crying to Jesus, people are calling to us. We can ignore them as we scurry to complete our ever-growing to-do lists. Or we can pause, ask God for grace, and respond with compassion. We may need to stoop down, turn around, or look up. Jesus modeled the way of empathy, connection, and gentleness. He constantly had time for others. May we practice His pattern.

**Father**, give us eyes to see and ears to hear—like Jesus. Help us to break from our busy schedules to help others around us. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## The Inside Matches the Outside

**David grew stronger and stronger, while the house of Saul grew weaker and weaker** (2 Samuel 3:1).

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 3:1-5; 5:1-5

**Song:** “Higher Ground”

Dotsie Bausch was driven to succeed. After recovering from drug and alcohol addictions, she competed as a cyclist in the 2012 London Olympic Games. She won the silver medal. She then progressed to win other championships and set a world record. Her secret? Her diet. Dotsie believes an athlete’s success stems not only from training but also from consuming healthy foods. Her foods directly influence her performance.

David strengthened his growing kingdom with strong men and brave actions. He also built a good reputation regarding his love for God, his loyalty to his friends, and his compassionate heart. How he acted outwardly was fueled by his inward beliefs. Saul’s house, by contrast, grew weaker because of disobedience, self-protection, and greed for glory.

The source of each life will determine its strength. Your intake affects your output. As healthy foods strengthen our bodies, so healthy spiritual practices strengthen our souls. Where is your time going? Who are your friends? What do you value most? Guard the diet of your soul. Nourish yourself in God. He is the source of a steadfast heart, secure mind, and calm spirit. Read His Word, speak with Him daily, meditate on His truths, and fellowship with His people. Your soul’s health will then thrive.

**Father,** help us to guard our hearts, minds, and souls. Show us what is good and true and helpful to take into our lives. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Blessings on the Way

**Thou hast made [the king] most blessed for ever: thou hast made him exceeding glad** (Psalm 21:6, *KJV*).

**Scripture:** Psalm 21

**Song:** “He Keeps Me Singing”

Tears fell from Bettye’s eyes as the doctor gave her the news. Her baby had no heartbeat. The small life was gone. Sorrow enveloped her heart. A few days later, in the early morning light, she read King David’s words, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning” (Psalm 30:5, *KJV*). Bettye clung to hope. Over the next few years, God gave her two other children. Her heart rejoiced once more.

Consider David’s turbulent journey to the throne and his subsequent reign. Saul repeatedly attempted to kill him. Absalom, his son, revolted against him. The Philistines waged war. A plague devastated Israel. David personally sinned against God. Yet, through all David’s trials, God blessed him, established him, and gave him abundant grace.

We will walk through tough seasons—perhaps a job loss, a miscarriage, or an illness. When our values are challenged, our plans falter, or we lose something we held too tightly, God creates more room for His fullness. His Spirit encompasses every circumstance. He rebuilds our shattered dreams. When our minds and hearts fix on Jesus’ love and peace, we can endure every hardship. Our hope remains secure. Like David, acknowledge God as your source of strength and joy. Blessings will come. Trust Jesus, even in the darkness.

**Father,** Your presence permeates every path of life. Your abundant love and matchless grace hold us tightly. Thank You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

## Practicing Kindness

**“Is there anyone still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show kindness?”** (2 Samuel 9:1).

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 9:1-7, 9-12

**Song:** “Count Your Blessings”

Anticipation filled Dianna’s heart. When the chime sounded, she opened the door to greet the pizza delivery lady. As she took the pizza, Dianna placed a \$100 bill in the lady’s hand. The lady began to cry. “This is exactly what I need,” she said. Dianna smiled. “God blessed me. I wanted to share with someone else.”

David, fully established as king, inquired how he could help the remaining household of Saul. We might think that Saul, the one who had tried to kill him, was the least likely person to deserve David’s favor. But David was compelled by God to ask this question. Because God was gracious to David, he was generous.

Jesus forgave our sins and granted us eternal life. His sacrificial love becomes the driving force behind our deeds. Empowered by His love, we tirelessly seek those who need care and attention—whether a friend, a neighbor, or a stranger. David’s question about who we can show kindness to demands our response. May we not miss any person who needs aid in our community, church, or family. We are the living body of Christ, so let us move, serve, and give as His representatives on earth. We have a seat at our King’s table of provision. Let us work to ensure that everyone else has that opportunity too.

**Father,** thank You for Your kindness to me. Help me show kindness to people around me. In Jesus’ name, amen.