

LESSON 5
THE DAVIDIC COVENANT
(For Group and Sunday School Leaders)

David is described as doing what was “just” and “right”, which are two of the primary attributes of the character of God (Psalms 33:5; Jeremiah 9:24) and virtues of people that pleased the Lord (Psalms 106:3; Ezekiel 18:5). By executing justice and doing righteousness, one could expect to continue in the covenant promises and blessings between God and his people. As king, David’s godly leadership brought blessings upon the land and people. His administration enforced and fostered authentic worship, and he led military campaigns according to the word of the Lord. He kept records and commands with such competency that future generations could remember all the wonders that the Lord had done.

As great as David’s reign was, a greater king would come. Isaiah 9:6-7 pointed to an expected king whose reign would be much greater than David’s glorious rule. It drew upon David’s kingship and pointed Israel toward the hope of a future ideal king who would rule as God himself, over all the earth and in righteousness and peace for all time. In this way, Isaiah applied 2 Samuel 8:15 to Jesus, the Son of God. The connection offered by Isaiah shows that Jesus is the Davidic King, the Messiah for whom all of Israel longed.

We will look at the Davidic Covenant and the blessings that flow from the covenant. Then to fully understand what it means to be blessed, we will examine Psalm 34 and 63 and the significance of being blessed and the expectation of God that we share His blessings with others. As you work your way through these questions, ask yourself: Am I following Christ, expecting earthly gifts of comfort and prosperity to follow? Or am I seeking Christ because He is the ultimate blessing and worth every sacrifice? What are you seeking more than anything else?

Read 2 Samuel 5-16; Psalm 34 and Psalm 63

1. What is the Davidic Covenant?

The Davidic Covenant refers to God’s promises to David through Nathan the prophet and is found in 2 Samuel 7. This is an unconditional covenant made between God and David through which God promises David and Israel that the Messiah (Jesus Christ) would come from the lineage of David and the tribe of Judah and would establish a kingdom that would endure forever. The Davidic Covenant is unconditional because God does not place any condition of obedience upon its fulfillment. The surety of the promises made rests solely on God’s faithfulness and does not depend at all on David or Israel’s obedience. The Davidic Covenant centers on several key promises that are made to David. First, God reaffirms the promise of the land that He made in the first two covenants with Israel (the Abrahamic and Mosaic Covenants). This promise is seen in 2 Samuel 7:10, “I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed. Wicked people will not oppress them anymore.” God then promises that David’s son will succeed him as king of Israel and that Solomon would build the temple. This promise is expressed in 2 Samuel 7:12-13, “I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. Another Son of David would rule forever and build a lasting House. This is a reference to the Messiah, Jesus Christ, called the Son of David in Matthew 21:9.

The promise that David’s “house,” “kingdom,” and “throne” will be established forever is significant because it shows that the Messiah will come from the lineage of David and that He will establish a kingdom from which He will reign. The covenant is summarized by the words “house”, promising a

dynasty in the lineage of David; “kingdom,” referring to a people who are governed by a king; “throne,” emphasizing the authority of the king’s rule; and “forever” emphasizing the eternal and unconditional nature of this promise to David and Israel.

- 2. Take a close look at 2 Samuel 11-16. How does this answer the question that God raises in verse 5; “Are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?” Do you think that David expected this response? Is God’s statement a blessing or a curse since David would not build the temple as he expected, but rather his son, Solomon would?**

Not only does God grant rest from threatening powers, but He also declares “the LORD himself will establish a house for you.....I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name..... Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me, your throne will be established forever.” This is a beautiful play on words as God says that David is not to build a temple; rather, God will build David a house (royal dynasty) that will last forever. This covenant is grounded only on God’s firm and gracious purpose. It finds its ultimate fulfillment in the kingship of Christ. What a beautiful blessing that the royal line of David would continue after David’s death by dynastic succession. It marks David as the one whom God has chosen and enthroned to rule in his name as the official representative of God’s rule over his people and in Jesus Christ this promise comes to ultimate fulfillment. (Matthew 1:1; Mark 1:11)

- 3. One might ask why was David blessed? David had many failures and even some flagrant sins, but he kept coming back. David saw God Himself as the supreme blessing and he expresses that in Psalm 34 as David tells us how to enjoy God and His blessings. What does David say we are to do that opens the way to God’s grace and His blessings?**

David had a heart for God. Despite his brokenness, he kept coming back to the Lord, repenting of his sins, and seeking God as his chief joy and treasure. David would agree with Asaph when Asaph wrote in Psalm 73:25, “Whom have I in heaven but you? And besides You, I desire nothing on earth.” In Psalm 34 David tells us that to enjoy God and His blessings, we must be willing to seek Him for salvation, fear Him and walk in His ways. David was so close to being taken captive by Achish when he was recognized by the soldiers at the gate. But he used deception by acting like an insane man in front of Achish who fell for the ruse and let David go. But David continued the deception and eventually his own men turned against him and threatened to stone him to death. Ultimately, David recovered from all of these trials caused by his own deception, and it was then that he realized that deception and evil are not the way to the good life. In his effort to seek refuge from God, David wrote Psalm 34 and pointed out that there is only one way to enjoy God and His blessings and that is to seek God for deliverance, fear Him, and walk in His ways. What we learn from reading Psalm 34 is that even when we are in difficult situations, full of brokenness, sometimes caused by our own doing, God is faithful to rescue those who seek Him, fear Him and taking refuge in Him (verse 4, 8, 9 and 11) To fear God is to obey Him and obeying Him leads to enjoying God and experiencing His blessings. The entire psalm repeats the theme, “I’ve received God’s blessings; you can too! (Verse 3). In verses 4-10 the idea is, “God rescued me; He can rescue you, too! And then the invitation is seen in verse 8, “O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!” So, God expects us to share His blessing with others so that they too might also be rescued in spite of a broken and contrite heart.

4. Psalm 63 another psalm by David shows us the significance of what it means to thirst after God. Again, read over this Psalm. What application do you find?

KING DAVID WROTE THIS PSALM WHEN HE WAS IN THE WILDERNESS of Judah. What a dry and barren place it is! Look at what David wrote: “O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water” (v. 1). In other words, David says, “Here I am in this dry, hot, dangerous wilderness, and I really would love to have some water. However, what I really want is God.”

When you find yourself in a dry wilderness situation in life, what do you do? Follow the stages in David’s experience. First, he seeks God. He wanted to see God’s power and glory as he had seen it in the sanctuary. He wanted to see that wilderness turned into a sanctuary. David had been in the tabernacle. He had seen the glory of God, but he wasn’t satisfied with that. We are satisfied to hear about God and sing about Him in church. Then we come to the wilderness. We should be like David and say, “I want to see God’s glory through this wilderness experience just as though I were worshiping God in the church service.”

Next, he blesses God. “Thus I will bless You while I live” (v. 4). David also is satisfied with God. Satisfaction doesn’t come from circumstances on the outside. It comes from blessing on the inside. “When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches” (v. 6). Finally, he rejoices in God. “But the king shall rejoice in God” (v. 11). That’s what God wants from us, even in the wilderness. — Warren W. Wiersbe, *Prayer, Praise & Promises: A Daily Walk through the Psalms* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2011), 175.

5. How does David’s walk with God differ from many today?

How easy it is to fall into the trap of “ritual religion”! So many Christians know little of a vital, fresh, day-by-day relationship with the Lord. I did not say an inactive relationship. Christians have never been more active! The tyranny of the urgent is no theoretical problem. Many a believer jumps off the Sunday treadmill of activities only to hop on the weekday treadmill of meetings, appointments, functions, rehearsals, clubs, engagements, banquets, studies, committees, and retreats. I heartily agree with the one who said, “Much of our religious activity today is nothing more than a cheap anesthetic to deaden the pain of an empty life!”¹⁰

That’s a harsh truth to ponder. As a pastor, I hope to help you cultivate a consistent and meaningful walk with the Lord Jesus Christ, a relationship that thrives without needing to be pumped up and recharged with an endless succession of activities. I would wish that we all might know our Lord in such a significant way that this divine companionship, this healthy vertical relationship, becomes a steady, serene, daily communion. — Charles R. Swindoll, *Living the Psalms: Encouragement for the Daily Grind* (New York City, NY: Worthy Books, 2012).

6. Swindoll wrote a book on the Psalms called *Living the Psalms: Encouragement for the Daily Grind*. He contrasts what is written in the Psalms with the grind of daily life. What grind of daily life is this Psalm contrasted against?

We must find ways to live beyond the grind of ritual religion.

In *The Pursuit of God*, A. W. Tozer writes,

I want deliberately to encourage this mighty longing after God. The lack of it has brought us to our present low estate. The stiff and wooden quality about our religious lives is a result of our lack of holy desire. Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people. He waits to be wanted. Too bad that with many of us He waits so long, so very long, in vain.

Every age has its own characteristics. Right now we are in an age of religious complexity. The simplicity that is in Christ is rarely found among us. In its stead are programs, methods, organizations and a world of nervous activities which occupy time and attention but can never satisfy the longing of the heart. The shallowness of our inner experience, the hollowness of our worship and that servile imitation of the world that marks our promotional methods all testify that we, in this day, know God only imperfectly, and the peace of God scarcely at all.¹¹

Psalm 63 is David's song about what it means to have a desperate longing for God, and what it means to be fully satisfied in Him alone. It is not a song of activity but of quietness. David didn't write a march to impel busy feet, but a sonnet to woo thirsty souls.

Believe it or not, many people don't know they're thirsty. You may not feel a deep longing to cultivate an ongoing personal interaction with God. That's probably because you have dulled your spiritual senses with activity. Career activity. Social activity. Religious activity. If so, your first response may be to slow your pace, to simplify. — Charles R. Swindoll, *Living the Psalms: Encouragement for the Daily Grind* (New York City, NY: Worthy Books, 2012).

7. When did David write this Psalm?

David's song of the thirsty soul, preserved for us as Psalm 63, may resonate deeply with you. Perhaps you have finally come to the end of rat-race religion. Hopefully, you have decided to leave the hurry-worry syndrome and find complete satisfaction in the Savior, in the worship of Him alone. If so, you are rare. In fact, you are almost extinct! But, if you have come to the end of religious activity only to feel more emptiness, then this ancient song is for you. If you have not, it will sound mystical, perhaps even dull. David's quiet song, you see, is written for the few who are still thirsty—for those who prefer depth to speed.

The superscription reads: "A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah." David composed this ancient hymn, not while serving in the tabernacle, but in the isolation of the rugged wilderness south of Jerusalem. Most likely on the run from Saul, David found himself alone, removed, obscure, separated from every comfort and friend, acutely feeling the effects of thirst, hunger, pain, loneliness, and exhaustion. — Charles R. Swindoll, *Living the Psalms: Encouragement for the Daily Grind* (New York City, NY: Worthy Books, 2012).

8. What was his pressing need in this desert time?

Even so, he didn't regard these as his most pressing needs. He identifies his deepest need in the first verse:

O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly;
My soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You,
In a dry and weary land where there is no water.

Right away we see that he was not seeking literal food, water, comfort, or rest; he needed communion with his Lord. The “dry and weary land” is a vivid picture of his surroundings in the Judean wilderness, as well as our world today. So few believers are living above the daily grind of activity. So many today are captivated by an obsession for collecting “stuff,” storing their “stuff,” and then pursuing more “stuff.” As a result, their homes become cluttered while their souls grow more hollow. The land is indeed “dry and weary,” but that only makes the yearning stronger! Since “there is no water” in that kind of land, David longs for his thirst to be quenched from above. — Charles R. Swindoll, *Living the Psalms: Encouragement for the Daily Grind* (New York City, NY: Worthy Books, 2012).

9. Psalm 37:7 says “Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him. What can we learn from this passage and how can that affect our ability to enjoy God and His blessings?”

If we take these five words seriously, we will find ourselves overcoming three obstacles that get in the way of a successful Christian life: running ahead of God, giving orders to God, and interfering with God’s plans.

Be patient and don’t run ahead of God. “My soul, wait.” We live in a society that is always in a hurry, and this includes Christians who seem to have lost the ability to wait on the Lord. In spite of our slogans and promotional schemes—“Reaching the world in our generation!”—the Lord is not in a hurry. He could have created the universe in an instant demonstration of power, but he chose to create it in six days. King Saul ran ahead of God and lost his crown, while Joseph in Egypt patiently waited in prison and one day received a crown. Jesus might have come to earth as an adult on Monday, died on the cross on Friday, and been resurrected on Sunday, but he stayed in Nazareth thirty years, spent three years ministering, and then died and rose again. Jesus is “Lord of the Sabbath” (Mark 2:28), which means he is Lord of our time. We must not be trapped by the competitive eagerness of the world. “Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him” (Ps. 37:7) and be ready to act when he commands you. — Warren W. Wiersbe, *Old Testament Words for Today: 100 Devotional Reflections* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2013), 76.