

“The Funeral Song!”

I. **INTRO:**

A. Communion: Surrender (*I surrender all*, lyrics)

1. When **the will of God** crosses **the will of man**, somebody has to die. Addison Leitch

B. Announcements:

C. Last Week: Saul lost his **dynasty**(ch.13); & then his **kingdom**(ch.15); & then his **crown**.

1. Instead of **death to self**(stop sinning), he chose the **death of self**(suicide).

D. Book Overview:

1. **David the king** is the central figure in 2nd Sam.

2. **Ch.1-10** records his **national victories**; **Ch.11-24** records his **personal defeats**.

- a) Or his **Triumphs**(1st 1/2) & **Troubles**(2nd 1/2). [see slope under crosses/David's up & down]

- b) The **turning point** is his sin of adultery(11), the **tragic consequences** of which affected both his family & the nation.

3. David confessed his sins, submitted to God's discipline, & spent the closing years of his reign preparing for the building of the temple.¹

4. This book is an exposition of two Proverbs:

- a) Prov.14:34 - **Righteousness** exalts a nation, **But sin** is a reproach to any people.

- b) Prov.28:13 - **He who covers** his sins will not prosper, **But whoever confesses** and forsakes them will have mercy.

5. **Saul** listened to men's lies & *lost his crown*; **David** obeyed God's Word & *gained a kingdom!*

E. 2nd Samuel records the beginning of an endless dynasty.

1. It also tells the life of a man about whom **more is known** than any other individual in the OT.

II. **THE FOREIGNER! (1-16)**

A. **THE DECEITFUL MESSENGER!** (1-10)

B. No doubt he was on the battle field as he came across Saul's insignias of kingship, his **golden armband**, & the **crown** he wore.

1. However, he didn't kill Saul as he claimed, because Saul & his sons were already dead. (see 1st Sam.31:5)

¹ Warren Wiersbe, With The Word, pg.181.

- C. **A GRIEVING CAMP!** (11,12)
- D. The Amalekite messenger must have been both *shocked & afraid* when they started tearing their clothes, mourning & weeping.
1. **Because the way he expected this to play out was:** he's bringing good news about Saul's death because he was their "enemy". Now they get to return to Israel. **He probably expected to be rewarded for such good news.** But this didn't look very good now.
 - a) In David's eyes, Saul was never his enemy.
- E. **So David demonstrates publicly that he had not been Saul's enemy & did not rejoice at Saul's death.**
- F. **A RIGHTEOUS JUDGMENT!** (13-16)
- G. Then at evening when the time of mourning had ended, David further interrogated the messenger & concluded the man deserved to die.
1. **If his story was true:** then the man murdered God's anointed king & deserved to die. **If his story was not true:** then the fact that he fabricated a tale about killing the king revealed depravity of his heart.
 - a) Lk.19:22 **Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant.**

III. **THE FUNERAL SONG! (17-27)**

- A. **HE ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE OF JUDAH!** (17,18)
- B. David's finally free from Saul's maniacal pursuit...**yet**, doesn't respond with **relief** or **ambition** or **righteous indignation**...but w/**poetic Grief!**
1. **Come on...** 10 years in exile, a bounty on his head, **fleeing, waiting, enduring!**
 - a) **Yet**, during those days/years David grew in faith, godly character; he was being equipped for the throne.
 2. When the day of victory finally came David composes **a funeral song** in honor of Saul and Jonathan.
 3. He pays tribute to the **life & careers** of Saul & his son Jonathan.
- C. The people of the East **unashamedly** display their emotions.
1. Their poets frequently write songs to help them commemorate both **joyful & painful** experiences.
 2. **Moses** taught Israel a song to warn them about **apostasy** in Deut.32.
 3. **The prophets** often wrote **funeral dirges** to announce impending judgment(Is.14)
- D. **Book of Jasher** - a collection of poems & songs that commemorated great events in the history of Israel. [in Josh.10:12,13 another poem was asked to be placed in it]

- E. **HE ADDRESSES THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL!** (19)
- F. (19) Saul was the beauty of Israel as God's anointed. We're prone to forget that Saul & his army had *risked their lives* to fight & win many significant battles. (1 Sam.14:47,48)
- G. Major Theme of the elegy (mournful poem, w/serious reflection) - **How are the mighty fallen** (3 x's: 19, 25, 27)
- H. (20) David ordered them not to spread the bad news of Israel's defeat, for the Philistines would take care of that.
- I. **HE ADDRESSES THE MOUNTAINS OF GILBOA!** (21)
- J. (21) This is where the battle was fought & Saul was defeated.
1. He asks that God's creation join him in mourning over the defeat of Israel & the fall of their king. [Think **Poetry**: *soulful*, not head]
 2. He ordered the mountain on which Saul died to become a dry, barren wilderness.
- K. **Shield?** - literally, metaphorically **or** both?
1. They did anoint their leather shields with oil; Saul was God's anointed.
 2. They did lose their shields & their lives. Their shields were defiled by blood.
- L. **HE PRAISES SAUL & JONATHAN!** (22,23)
- M. **The emphasis** - is on the greatness of Saul & Jonathan even in their defeat & death.
1. He celebrates their **skill & bravery** & their willingness to **give their lives** for their country.
 2. **Like Hebrews 11**, nothing is recorded in the song that speaks of any sins or mistakes in the lives of Saul & Jonathan.
- N. **This is the heart of the song!** - They are victorious warriors!
1. Jonathan's **arrows** hit their mark; Saul's **sword** didn't return unsatisfied.
 2. They were not only **great soldiers**; they were **gracious people**. They were **beloved in life & in death**. Loyal to **each other & to the people**.
 3. Remember when Saul went to the medium. He knew that he & his sons would die that day in battle. Yet he entered the contest determined to do his best.
 4. Jonathan knew his dad had disobeyed God & sinned against David, yet he stayed at his side in the fight.
 5. Yes, even though Israel was defeated that day David wanted the people to remember the greatness of their king & his sons.

- O. **Application:** Here then we find *a good example* to follow if you're asked to speak at a memorial service, for a family member or friend:
1. David only had **good things** to say about Saul, a man who was guilty of many crimes, & even who's death ended in suicide.
 2. He focuses on the **good** aspects of his life, the things worth **remembering**.
 3. The fact that he or she ended life in a tragic manner need not detract from the **lasting contributions** made during that life!
 4. Ps.86:5,15 **For You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, And abundant in mercy to all those who call upon You (15) But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.**
- P. **HE ADDRESSES THE DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM!** (24)
- Q. (24) The Israelite women to grieve their untimely deaths.
- R. **In spite of his faults & failures, during his reign Saul had brought stability to the nation.**²
1. **The tribes** had abandoned selfish independence & competition for *cooperation*
 2. **They were** striving to work together to better their economic position.
 3. **They had** greater safety in the towns & farmlands.
- S. **HE SPEAKS TO HIS BELOVED FRIEND JONATHAN!** (25-27)
- T. (26) The poem concludes with an *intensely personal* section in which David expressed a personal sense of loss created by the death of his best friend Jonathan.
- U. **Solomon described the love of husband & wife as "strong as death"**(Song 8:6).
1. And the friendship of David & Jonathan was that strong.
 2. **As I said earlier in ch.18,20 this has nothing to do with homosexuality.**
- V. (27) He compares Saul & Jonathan to **weapons of war** that had been lost & could never be used again.
- W. **David might have had several purposes in mind on why he wrote this elegy:**
1. To give honor to Saul & Jonathan.
 2. To teach the people to respect the monarchy.
 3. To show David held no grudges against his father-in-law & king.
 4. To set an example for us to follow in paying loving tribute to those who have died in battle to protect their country.

² Warren Wiersbe, Be Restored, pg.16.

X. As Americans we are not very well prepared to *deal with death*.

1. We avoid it by **not thinking about it** (until we have to);
2. We avoid it by **not seeing it** (in America the body of the deceased can quickly go from the hospital, to the funeral home, to the grave, & you don't even have to see it). [not inferring that you have to, its just very sterile/sanitary process]

Y. We also are not very good at bringing *comfort* either.

1. Someone dies & the family is asking the hard question, "why? why?" & the *comforter* responds, "*God is not to be questioned!*"
2. Or the family is crying & he/she says, "don't cry, but be happy they're with Jesus now!"
3. If someone gets saved because of the memorial often we use these converts as the reason God permitted their death. (but is that how God has to work to save lost souls?) [can be the results]
4. When the family wants to talk about the person who died in the future they might be told, "*turn it over to Jesus*", as if they don't need to talk about them.
5. A vital ministry in the church is to "*weep with those who weep*"(Rom.12:15)

Z. Broken hearts are **not** healed by **proxy**, Jesus did more then send a message to Mary & Martha when Lazarus died; He **traveled** to Bethany, **stood** by the grave, & **wept**.

1. And remember how he handled both styles of grief?

- a) Martha that needed **Intellectual** propping up; Mary needed **emotional** support!
- b) They grieved/mourned differently, & that was perfectly ok by Jesus!
- c) He meets them right where *their personality* takes them.

2. One evoked **theological truths & promises**; The other evoked **tears!**

- a) Martha needed to know that Jesus was **in control**.
- b) Mary needed to know that Jesus **cared**.

3. In that passage: Jesus gave **dignity** to our **grief & freedom** to our **emotions!**

- a) What a **beautiful tribute** that tears are to the deceased, telling them they were **loved & will be missed!**
- b) Jesus, knows what it's like to **lose someone you love**. He knows **how we feel**

AA. **Read list of Do's & Don'ts!**

What Do I Do, or Say?

Do be a good listener. Answer briefly any questions.

Do show extreme sensitivity.

Do remember words aren't always necessary (in giving comfort).

Do acknowledge the grieving person's pain.

Do allow them to express *whatever* emotion they are comfortable with.

Do say, "I'm sorry!"

Do give a squeeze of the hand, or hand on the shoulder (depending on its appropriateness, or familiarity with the individual)

Do remember there's always some **guilt** associated with the death of a loved one.

Do mention the loved one's **name** or recall *pleasant memories*.

Do remember the others who are grieving also.

Do help them to put off any decisions that don't have to be made right away (often they start worrying about the future, this obviously isn't the right time to make any "life" decisions at such an emotional time).

(With children) Do give brief & simple explanations. Use concrete & familiar examples.

(Remember being cared for is a very realistic concern for them).

Do give assurances, and extend hope ("You will be ok", "You will get through this.")

What I Shouldn't Do, or Shouldn't Say?

Don't avoid the grieving person.

Don't wait for them to reach out to you, reach out to them.

Don't be critical of the bereaved person's actions.

Don't ask countless loaded questions.

Don't use common euphemisms used to describe dying, including such phrases as "Bought the farm"; "Kicked the bucket"; "They have Expired."

Don't use expressions such as "killed," "decapitated," or "dismembered."

Don't encourage *flights of fantasy*, help them in the process of accepting the realities of death.

Don't say, "I know what you are going through." Everyone's grief is unique.

Don't try to answer when they ask "Why?"

Don't try to have "*all*" the answers.

Don't give platitudes, cliches or trite expressions, such as, "At least he didn't suffer", "Time heals all wounds", "The Lord knows best", "God doesn't make mistakes." These are true but they don't necessarily bring comfort at this time.

Don't tell a grieving mother who just lost a child, "well praise God you still have 4 other children!" ("5 - 1 does not equal plenty!")

Don't try to minimize the person's relationship to the deceased. (i.e. "You really weren't that close were you?")

Don't tell them about similar incidents or accidents. (well I had a brother that died like that, let me tell you the whole story)

Don't minimize the loss of a baby through a miscarriage, or still-birth.