

1 Kings 1

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[0 : 00] Now turn with me, if you will, to the passage that we read there, 1 Kings chapter 1, and there in verse 46, we read the words, Moreover, Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne.

Or as it says in the authorized version of the King James, it says, Also, Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom. Now King David was now an old, a very old man, weak and bedridden. Long, long ago were the days when as a young boy he came to prominence when he killed Goliath, or the days when he was hunted in the hills by Saul in his jealousy who was determined to put an end to him, and the days when eventually he came and became king of Judah and then of Israel and reigned and had a great and wonderful reign. But now that's coming to an end. Just in days he'll be, as they say, gathered to his fathers in death. And in his weakness, Adonijah, one of his sons, thought this is just a great time for him, a good time to seize the throne and become the king of Israel.

And so he managed to rope in Joab, the general of David's army, Abiathar the priest, and they were all ready to make Adonijah king.

When in the midst of all their shouting and reveling, they hear blasts of trumpet sounds and rejoicing coming from another quarter, and that breathless messenger rushes into their gathering with words of alarm on his lips that end with the words of our text. And also Solomon sits now on the throne of the kingdom. At once, Adonijah, Joab, Abiathar, and all those that are with him, they're stunned with shock.

They know that they're now in dreadful trouble. Adonijah, knowing that his father's weakness had thought that he could use that situation to take the throne by force, something that his brother Absalom had tried to do and failed years before, when the father maybe was beginning to show some weakness, but he still showed that he was made of steel, and Adonijah's rebellion came to nothing.

[2 : 35] But this man was so arrogant and so self-confident, and he doesn't stop to think. Israel and the people of God, they're the people of God, and he's already made it clear who should succeed David as king.

And Solomon, the son of Bathsheba, was the one of God's choice. And Adonijah, so sure of himself, he couldn't believe the message that was coming in would be anything but good when Jonathan comes tearing into his camp. And he welcomes him with a word of a messenger, with a message that dashes all his hopes to the ground. And the reveling and the reality of their situation is suddenly shown to be in terrible danger. And they realize where they now stand, an open rebellion against the king of the land and of the people. And they're exposed to all the consequences of such an act of high treason.

It was Jonathan, the priest's son, who came with that startling news. And we could say about that news, that was news, first of all, of David's masterstroke. It was news that set the revelers in disarray.

And it was news that sent Adonijah to beg for mercy. And these are the things I want us to look at as we consider the news that finishes with these words, that Solomon, that moreover Solomon has taken his seat on the royal throne. So here was, first of all, news of David's masterstroke. You see, the message displayed the mastery of the king. The whole rebellion had begun on the premise that David was finished. He can't do anything now. And there was nothing to hinder them just to do their own thing and to go their own way and to follow their own desires. There would be no opposition to their plans or their ideas. As there might well have been and had been in David's stronger days, they could move against him. They could ignore him without any fear of being brought to account. But just how wrong they were. Old King David is not to be dismissed easily, certainly not as easily as that. And you see him move swiftly and actively and definitely.

[5 : 12] And you notice first of all, you note first of all with David, there was a refusal to fail the God that had saved him. Now David may be lying there in weakness, physical weakness of body, but the news of the purpose of God and his promise to Bathsheba, that Solomon's mother, is about to be frustrated, puts fire into his bones. And the old lion of Judah rises, rather like a lion I can imagine, waking up in the morning and shaking the dew drops from his mane. He shakes himself, and David is suddenly, very definitely, in charge again. And you see the incentive that motivates him. And this is a striking thing. Verse 29, he says, it is as the Lord lives who redeemed my soul out of distress.

Assuredly, Solomon shall reign after me, so I will certainly do this day. The Lord who redeemed me out of distress, as sure as he lives, that's why I will do it.

Here was his reveal, the revealed purpose of God, who had identified Solomon as the chosen one. And David's declaration that he would walk in the way of God's will, that he had declared in the days of his strength, it's now recalled and adhered to in an hour of physical weakness. So whatever else was failing in David's body, and he's weakened from the days of his strength, it was not his love for God. It was not his resolution and his determination that in all things his God would be honored, obeyed, and served, and as much as he possibly was in his power, the will of his God would be done.

And so he rises to heights of faith and decisiveness that marked him in the old days of his prime. Because a threat, you see, had come as he saw it to the honor of his God and God's good name, that he might fail in doing the will of the Lord, and to whom he owed everything as his Redeemer and as his Lord. He wanted to hallow the name of his God, to honor that name. You know, it's so easy in times of trouble, in times of personal crisis, in times of weakness, that things are allowed to slip in many a Christian's life, and to drift away, and we excuse ourselves if evil is permitted to triumph, because, well, we just weren't up to it at the time. Of course, you know the well-known saying that all that is required for evil to triumph is that good men do nothing. Well, David was not going to be in that category. Not so, David. His conscious debt was to his God, the Lord he loves. And that galvanizes him into action, and to downright refusal to lie there inactive when the purpose of God is about to be frustrated, or where people are trying to frustrate it. And there are times when you and I need very much to leap to action, just because the name of our God and our Lord is being maligned.

And when the purposes of God are being openly defied, let's just pray that God may so steal and resolve his people to remember their debt to the Savior, the one who loved them, the one who came from the glory of heaven and willingly and gladly went to that horrible cross and paid the penalty for their sin, that He did that for them, that they might remember the debt they owe to Him and to honor His cause by refusing to fail their Lord. Yes, first there was refusal of David on David's part, but also there was resignation in favor of the one God had chosen. There was refusal to fail the God who saved him and resignation in favor of the one God had chosen. You see, his refusal to fail God, the God He loves, is expressed in a very resolute action that He sets in motion that day.

[9 : 55] It means the end of His reign. It means the end of His position. It means the end of His influence. In fact, it is nothing short of total abdication of all that was His as the king and ruler and the Lord's anointed in that place. It means the recognition of young Solomon as the king and placing all power and authority in his hands. David will be no longer king, but he'll be one who himself is submitted to another ruler. It means that by doing it now, he forestalls all those who would have the throne for themselves, and this He does in total decisiveness and authority. For He shall be king in my stead. I have appointed him king over Israel and Judah. You see, David stood down so that the Lord's chosen one might reign.

You see, here is the only way of meeting the challenge of evil in any situation. It is let the Lord's chosen reign in the situation. Let Him reign in our personal lives.

Our personal lives are spiritually weakened and undermined. We're standing on the rotten foundation of a failing sinful lives. We need someone to reign in our lives who has the power to rule. We are no match for the power of evil, for the Adonijahs who will take the throne of our life and rule. Make God's anointed one king. Great David's greater son, Jesus. My mother was converted in Glasgow at a mission conducted by a Mr. R.T. Archibald, who I think worked for Scripture Union, and she told me how the slogan above the preacher was this, make Jesus king, and that's what we need to do. We need to crown Jesus king.

We need to have Him ruling in our lives. We need to abdicate, step off the throne, and say, Lord, You come. You sit on the throne. You reign. If we care to be right with God, we can only be right with God if Jesus Christ is ruler and king in our lives. Be resolute. Have the courage to say, yes, I yield to you, I yield to you, Jesus. Take my life. Cleanse me from sin. Reign in my heart. Rule in my affairs.

[12:48] Yes, it was news of David's masterstroke. But secondly, it was news that set the revelers in disarray. You see, first of all, how futile their plans had become. David's masterstroke forestalled and foiled Adonijah's plans. It was all done in the open in Gihon. Solomon was anointed king on the instruction of David by Zadok the priest and Nathan the prophet with the oil reserved for the purpose, oil that was kept in the tabernacle for such an occasion. So many of you, I'm sure, know Handel's great coronation ode, which uses the words of this chapter with David, Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet going to anoint the king. And then Solomon was set on the king's mule and was publicly proclaimed king. There was no denying what David had done and that Solomon was now the rightful king.

He was no rebellious snatcher of power. He was the legitimate ruler of Israel. And he was set there with the blessing and the authority of David, his father, and the kingdom behind him. And of course, the blessing of the God who had set him there and put it in David's heart that that's who should be the king. It's as though the tide had suddenly gone out. And these guys, Adonijah and their friends, who thought they were riding along safely, have finally suffered that the tide is out and their boats are sitting on the mud flats and they can't move. They're finished. They're high and dry, like useless boats stranded on dry ground, as the wicked and godless of this world will find themselves one day. There's nowhere to go. They're exposed in all their sin and weakness and hopelessness. Their claim that Adonijah was king now just seemed to be nothing short of total nonsense. The throne was occupied. He couldn't have it. Their efforts were wasted. Their feasting and celebration had been premature, and their hopes now were completely dashed. The march of events was swift. And as soon as David had declared the will of God and Benaiah had said, Amen, it was like the Lord's scythe going through a field and cutting men down where they stood. What could they do about it? The Lord's chosen, the Lord's chosen one was reigning, and they didn't know it. You know, Satan's rebellion against God had led men captive and women captive in the affairs of men, that rebellion that began in the Garden of Eden that has caught every one of us up in it. People may rage.

That rebellion has been already forestalled by God's masterstroke because he has appointed his king. He has set him king, and he reigns now. God's king and savior is appointed. People may rage. They may scheme. They may plan to go their own way. They may rest power in their own hands. They may laugh and scoff. But always in the end, as Psalm 2 said as we sang there, it's a vain and empty and hopeless thing. They may imagine that they will reign and that they can dismiss God's king and his church and say, who bothers with the like of that? They can laugh at Nathan and Zadok, the officials who are loyal to the king, as men who are totally irrelevant to their goals. They've got their own things to do in life. But God's king is appointed, and God's king will reign, and in the end, he cannot be resisted. To be left in Satan's kingdom, we'll be pursuing only selfish, earthly goals, and we'll be proved worthless and useless in the end. For a waste of a life is such service.

You notice how futile their plans appeared, and you notice how dangerous their position proved.

[17:30] They thought they'd be in place of leadership and power in a new kingdom. They'd be safe and sure, but in a flash, it's all over. It's like those men in Psalm 73 who are strutting through the world and saying, how does God know, and is their knowledge with the most eye? And then suddenly, it's like somebody awakening from a dream, they see the reality of the situation and how God comes into their life.

The discovery of the enthronement of Solomon exposes them as rebels, as people who have refused and resisted the king's authority and rule in their lives. They were people who tampered with the plan of God. They had acted as though the situation was a human one only. But David knew God's... David knew the work and the kingdom was God's. He knew there was another dimension to life. You remember Gamaliel's warning to the priests of the Sanhedrin, you be careful lest, haply, you'll find yourselves fighting against God. There is such a thing as the Lord's anointed. It is a person or be it a work or some of the both things that are concerning that which is anointed. And the Word of God says, touch not mine anointed and do my prophets no harm. God has a work

in hand. God is moving forward. Where do you stand in relation to that? See, David lived by that from the days of Saul's persecution of him. Even in the grimace situation when his life hung, it seemed, by a thread. And even to protect his own life or further the promise of God to himself that one day he would be king, he had the opportunity to take the life of Saul. But he refused to stretch out his hand against God's anointed king. How bad it is to be exposed as a rebel to the true king. But to be fighting against God, although trying to frustrate His purposes on your life, interfering with His anointed is a terrible thought. The question is, where are you and I in relation to God's anointed today? God has given him the kingdom, but does He rule in your heart?

Do we acknowledge Him as King? Have we crowned Him as Lord? Or are we living in rebellion and are we saying like these men in the parable, we will not have this man to reign over us? I'm king here. My life as my own. I will do what I like. And lastly, it was news that sent Adonijah to the horns of the altar.

There was a reality here that Adonijah could not escape. He knew now that he stood in open rebellion against a publicly anointed king. He was fighting against the purpose of God. He was exposed as a rebel against the throne. And he realized he was caught in the midst of an attempt to take the crown.

[21 : 10] While the legitimate king reigned rightfully, he had put himself in a place where his life was almost certain to be forfeit. To be guilty of treason. That's pretty serious. That's guilty and worthy of death. And the sentence of the text also, Solomon sits on the throne of the kingdom on Jonathan's lips, must have fallen like a thunderclap on his ears, bringing that reality home to him. Now he must have been aware his whole ploy was illegal, treasonous, rebellious, but the bland arrogance and thoughtlessness of sinful people is such that they think always they'll get away with it. There's no problem really until such a time as the word comes home to them, as the Holy Spirit opens their eyes, as the message comes through that there is a Solomon on the throne with whom they have to deal and before whom they must stand someday.

It doesn't occur to them. There may be repercussions and consequences. But one day the gospel comes and they see something of the king. They learn of Jesus.

They learn how they've defied him and how they're going on defying him. And that's what Peter, as Peter announced in Jerusalem to the crowd at Pentecost, people who had been involved not very long before in the murder of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Peter, in preaching that sermon, he faces this great crowd that have come to see what all this is going on and the excitement of the day the Holy Spirit came on the church. And as he preaches, he says to them that these signs that you've seen and this rushing wind and the flames of fire and the men speaking in a way that everybody understands it in their own language, what does it mean? He says these are signs accompanying the coming of the Holy Spirit.

God, you see, has made Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. And what you now see is that He is a highly exalted and He has poured out this Holy Spirit. This is what He promised to do.

[23 : 29] This is the proof that He, that you have crucified the Lord of glory. And what was the result? These hardened men that couldn't see anything but their own thing as they got rid of Jesus. They saw, they stood exposed, and they cried out, men and brethren, what shall we do? Jesus reigns. What are you going to do? What shall you do?

What can we do? There is a reality that we cannot escape. He is on the throne. He is the one with whom we have to do. And there was a reality that He could not escape. And lastly, there was recognition that mercy was His only hope.

There was an altar in the temple court. As you went, as they went up to the temple, the first thing you encountered was the altar, the place of sacrifice before you advanced forward into the temple. The corners of that altar had horns. And it's not clear exactly what the significance of these horns. They may have the very practical purpose of tying the sacrifice to the altar. There's a psalm that says, bind to the altar horns, the sacrifice. And maybe that was what they were for originally. But they became a place of a refuge, a place where a man could run, someone who had blood on their hands that they might find safety by holding on to them. And people found there were people who were in terror of their lives, for they realized it was the last place of hope where they might find mercy in the utter distress and fear that was in their hearts. And it was there that the arrogant Adonijah brought to his knees suddenly goes. Where is the bravado now? Where is the arrogance? Here he is trembling like jelly, cowering like a trapped animal, clinging to the horns of the altar for

religious protection, and revealing what he now is, just a nothing whose life hangs by a thread. His life now depends totally on the mercy of another. His presence there is a total admission of his guilt. But above all, it means that he has absolutely nothing to plead. He can't turn and say, ah, but I am this and I am that and I've got that in my favor. He knows he's finished. He's got nothing. All that he does, he has nothing that he deserves.

His only hope is that he will find mercy. And you know, that is the place that every single one of us must come. Mercy is what we need. You know what mercy is? Mercy is something that a judge can give to a man who has been found guilty.

[26 : 45] He's finished. He's been exposed. He's been found guilty. He knows that he is waiting for the judge to pronounce sentence. And what he's hoping is that sentence won't be too severe, that there might be mercy found in the judge's heart.

Mercy is something that only the judge can give to a person who's just finished. That there might be mercy there. It's someone who says, I have nothing to plead. I have nothing to get me out of this. And you and I have nothing to get us out of our rebellion and our sin against God. We stand guilty and exposed. And our only hope is this, that there is mercy with the Lord. But that is the gospel. This is the gospel.

God delights in mercy. There is mercy with him. Not only is he ready to give to those who look for mercy, but they don't deserve. That's what mercy is. He gives us pardon out of his mercy. But he goes further.

He gives us what we do not deserve. He gives us grace. He gives us pardon. He gives us new life.

[28 : 06] He makes us his sons and daughters. When we recognize it is the right of the judge to condemn us. But at the same time, we're trusting that the judge will show mercy and hold us from our deserts and grant us forgiveness in life.

You see, the gospel news is this, that there is mercy with the Lord. And more than that, there is grace to cover all our sin and all our need.

Mercy, as I've said, withholds from us what we deserve and gives to us what we don't deserve in grace. That's his promise to you and me tonight. Jesus is on the throne. We maybe have an Aaron Adonijah. Maybe we've been trying to take the throne.

Let's recognize that God has put the true king on the throne. May he rule in our lives. Tell him now you surrender to him.

There is mercy with him. There is mercy with him. There is grace as well. There is forgiveness with him, as we sang in Psalm 130, that he may be feared.

[29 : 20] And he will say, go to your house in peace. That's what Solomon had to say to the rebel Adonijah. You just go to your house. But it's not an empty peace. It's peace that Christ has bought for us when he paid for his people's sin at Calvary.

It's rock solid, sure, and eternal. For this is our God who delights in mercy. Why hesitate to go to him?

Let's pray.