



The Battle is the Lord's

Do you recognize that quote? It's from 1 Samuel 17:47. The young boy David, who would eventually become a King reigning over God's people, makes this assertion as he is standing on the field of combat before the giant Goliath, armed with no more than a sling and five stones. Goliath, as the champion of the Philistine army, represented a threat to the lives of people who David loved, and to the way of life of David's community. And he appeared to be, to all intents and purposes, too big to be defeated. Yet it was during an earlier episode in David's life, at the time that he was anointed for kingship by Samuel, that the Lord had cautioned the old prophet not to be fooled by the way things appear. "People look at the outward appearance," God says to Samuel, "but the Lord looks at the heart."

Each spring Pastor Jamie brings us a sermon series out of the Old Testament, and this Sunday (May 3) he will be commencing a new series entitled *DAVID: After God's Heart*. Over the next couple of months we'll be looking at nine key stories from the life of the shepherd who became a king, and unpacking their meaning for us in our lives today. This week Jamie will start with that account of Samuel's journey to Bethlehem to anoint the youngest son of Jesse (1 Samuel 16:1-13), and next week we'll move on to the well-known story of David's encounter with Goliath (1 Samuel 17).

As you read these passages and prepare your hearts to hear what God has to say to us through the next two weekly messages, there are rich analogies to be drawn. We, like David, find ourselves facing an adversary – the Covid-19 pandemic – that represents a threat to the lives of those we love and a threat to our very way of life. And it can seem like it is too big to be defeated. But take courage. As David reminds us, the battle is the Lord's.



Do This in Remembrance of Me

In anticipation of his impending death, his resurrection, and his eventual ascension into that realm that we know as heaven, Jesus instituted a ritual of remembrance. He gave us the practice of celebrating the Lord's Supper together so that even as we are separated from him in the flesh, we will not forget that he is always present with us in spirit, and will be coming again in glory when all things are made new.

On Good Friday, as part of our pre-recorded virtual worship service, we included an opportunity for those who were watching to join together at the Lord's Table by receiving the elements in their own homes. Many people reached out to say how blessed they had been to have the opportunity to break bread together in this way. We are pleased to let you, the members of the Sevenoaks family, know that we will be carrying on our long-standing tradition of celebrating communion together on the first Sunday of every month. Each month the members of a different household will lead us in this sacred ritual.

This coming Sunday (May 3) will be a communion Sunday, so there are two special arrangements that we invite you to make in advance. The first is to make sure that you have something at hand to represent the elements of bread and wine (crackers and juice?) so that you can partake when the time comes. And the second invitation is to consider planning to watch this Sunday's service starting at 10:30. That way, as many of us as possible can have the experience of taking communion at the same time.

Devotional Guide

Along with this newsletter you will have been sent – either in hardcopy or in electronic format – a copy of the weekly devotional guide that we have prepared for you, your household, and/or your online Gospel Community to use as you follow the upcoming preaching series on David.

For each story in the series, we have provided you with some thought-provoking questions to reflect upon. And along with the scripture passages from 1 Samuel and 2 Samuel that Jamie and Tim will be preaching on, we've also suggested an accompanying Psalm that you can read each week.

If you haven't received a hardcopy booklet version of the devotional guide, but you'd like us to send you one, just call the office and let Tammy know, and she'll arrange to mail one out to you.

AFTER GOD'S HEART



Give Her the Reward She Has Earned

During this season of social isolation, physical distancing, and quarantine lockdown, some losses are harder to take than others. Many of us experienced a degree of grief over the fact that Easter came and went without us having an opportunity to gather together. And now Mother's Day is coming (Sunday, May 10), and many of us will not get to visit or visit with or pamper the women in our lives in the ways that we'd like to be able to. Still, the Covid-19 crisis has brought out the creativity in a lot of people. If necessity is the mother of invention, it seems appropriate that we invent some new ways to celebrate Mother's Day.

A surprising number of Bible-reading Christians are unfamiliar with a unique passage that is included in the second half of the very last Chapter of the Book of Proverbs. Proverbs 31:10-31, which serves as an epilogue to the Great Book of Wisdom, describes a woman who the editors of Bible translations over the ages have referred to as "The Wife of Noble Character." If you are not familiar with this passage – and even if you are – we encourage you to give it a read. The description is of an "extraordinary" woman, yet set out in that description are many of the characteristics that we see in the "ordinary" women – mothers, grandmothers, wives, sisters, aunts, friends – that we know.

Many of the women of noble character that we know share this with the woman described in this passage ... that the source of the radiance in their lives is that they are, just like the subject of the author's discourse in this passage, women who fear the Lord. The passage ends with an admonishment to the reader: "A woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate." Arise, children, and bless your mothers this Mother's Day. They have earned our blessing.



Church Garden Help

Now that I (Pastor Brian) am working mostly from my study at home, one of the things I miss most about the church office is the view that we have – especially at this time of year - of the beautiful gardens in the courtyard. All of the flowers on the church property are attentively, skillfully and lovingly looked after by Paul Forrest, our volunteer gardener. His use of his hands to care for this little corner of God's good earth is nothing short of an inspiring act of service and worship to the One by whose hand all of Creation came into being, and by whose Spirit it is all held together!

The time has come, however, when we need to recruit some labourers to toil alongside Paul in his work. There is some medical stuff going on in his life, and it may put him in a position, over the course of the next few months, to be unable to give the garden as much of his personal time and attention as he usually does. So we are looking for a volunteer or two (or three). Are you a gardener? Do you love flowers in general and roses in particular? Do you have a few hours each week that you are willing to give in service to the church? (And ultimately to the Master Gardener whose church it is?) If so, call the church office and let Tammy know, and she'll pass on your name to Paul.

Global Advance Fund

Through its work in Global Ministries, the **Christian & Missionary Alliance in Canada** strives to reach people all over the world with the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That great work taking place out in the nations, and the work that is done here at home to support our International Workers out in the field, is being impacted by the worldwide COVID-19 crisis. Financially, this work is supported by the many local churches and individual donors across the country who contribute to the **Global Advance Fund**. But because many local churches and their members are now strapped for cash, we are beginning to see what many fear may become a significant reduction in the level of giving to the Global Advance Fund.

At Sevenoaks the financial picture is not looking nearly as bad as it is in many other Alliance churches. Our Missions Fund presently has enough money in it to meet all of our commitments to our missionary partners in the field for the entire rest of the year. So we're making an unusual request.

If you regularly contribute to our Missions Fund, or if you are thinking about making a donation to the Missions Fund, we request you to **NOT make any contributions to the Sevenoaks Missions Fund for the next few months**. Instead, we encourage you take *whatever amount you were going to give to our Missions Fund* and donate it **directly to the Global Advance Fund**. You can do this online by visiting the CMACAN website's 'Give' page at <https://www.cmacan.org/give/>, or you can mail them a cheque to

The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada
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Like Joseph in Egypt, we find ourselves with plenty of grain in our storehouses - at a time when others are experiencing scarcity - thanks to God's blessing. Like Joseph, we know that when God blesses us, we are called on to respond to that by using what we have to bless others. People around the world need the message that our IWs bring. Our IWs need the support of the Global Advance Fund. And the Global Advance Fund needs the extra help that we can afford to offer in this season.

Financial Giving

Cheerful, sacrificial giving is part of our life in Christ, an act of worship to the living God & an expression of trust in Him. Your generosity helps us fulfill our vision of knowing Jesus & making Him known.

Online via Pushpay

Make a secure, one-time donation or set up a recurring gift to the church using *Pushpay*. Use a credit card & designate where you want your gift to go.

Online Banking

There are 2 ways to give through your financial institution's online banking site:

1. Bill Payment

Like paying bills, add **Sevenoaks Alliance Church** as a payee. Note your offering envelope number as your account number.

2. E-Transfer

Like sending money to someone, add **life@sevenoaks.org** as a payee. Enter the amount you want to give & make up a security question. Then be sure to send the security question answer for the e-transfer in a separate email to **life@sevenoaks.org** so that we can accept it.

Cheque

Make a cheque payable to **Sevenoaks Alliance Church**. Ensure that your name or offering envelope number is clear for tax receipt purposes. Place the completed cheque in an envelope & mail it to the church office.

Thank you for supporting the ministry of Sevenoaks Church!





C.A.M.P.U.S. Prayer Technique

Learning how to hear what God has to say to us is a really important part of having a full, rich meaningful prayer life. It is important for us to talk to God, but it is perhaps even more important for us to listen. What makes it difficult and strange for many of us to do this is the fact that God seldom speaks to us in an audible voice. Hearing God means learning to discern the “sound” of the still, small, inner voice through which God speaks to us.

If this is something that you are not used to doing when you pray, it is something that you can - and should - put some effort into teaching yourself. It can seem strange, and even fruitless at first, because like many things in life it takes practice to learn how to do it well. But if you have patience, perseverance and trust, it will produce fruit for you in time.

In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 the Apostle Paul encourages Timothy, the young and less experienced pastor who he is mentoring, to remember that *“All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* If one of the primary ways in which God speaks to us personally is through our reading of Scripture, it makes sense that these are some of the kinds of messages that we should be listening for from God: messages of instruction, messages of correction, even messages sometimes of rebuke.

In our last newsletter we encouraged you to consider using the S.T.A.R. acronym to focus your prayer when you are seeking to hear God. (Stop, Take time to breath, Acept what God is saying to you, and Respond accordingly.) Now we’d like to introduce you to another useful acronym, which spells out the word C.A.M.P.U.S. Just like with the S.T.A.R. technique, this is a technique which involves slowly, carefully and attentively reading a chosen passage of Scripture. As you read that passage of Scripture over and over, and as you open up your heart and your mind to hear what God wants to say to you, you ask six very specific questions of Him:

Lord, what Command do you have for me?

Lord, what Application do you have for me?

Lord, what Message do you have for me?

Lord, what Promise do you have for me?

Lord, what Understanding of this passage do you wish to teach me?

Lord, what Sin do you want me to confess?

Try using this simple technique. It is remarkable what we can hear... when we listen.

Contact Information

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Help us keep your information current.
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