

Day 35 – Mar. 17

We respect God by respecting God's chosen people. How we act toward others, from our Kings/Presidents to those serving us at a restaurant is how we treat God. Jesus made this clear when He said, "Whatever you do for the least of these by brothers and sisters, you do for Me." He was speaking specifically about the poor and the outcasts, but I believe it applies more broadly as well. David must have known this.

David shows his respect for Saul all throughout the book we've read. We never hear any slander from David, nor see any violence. In fact, when he has multiple chances to kill Saul who is seeking to kill him, he not only argues against it, he protects Saul from his own men when they decide Saul should die. Protecting one's enemies, whether in word or deed, is a very hard thing to do, but in so doing, we show our respect for God.

Today, Saul dies in battle. And again, David shows his respect for God in how he behaves. Far from rejoicing that his enemy, rival for the throne, and attempted murderer has died, David mourns deeply for him. He composes a song in his honor, and he even kills the man who dared to kill Saul. But David isn't standing up for Saul. In all of this, David makes it clear that he does not agree with Saul's actions. But Saul is "the Lord's Anointed", a phrase that exactly translates to "Messiah" if you can handle that, and therefore due respect not because of his own worth, but because of God's choice of him.

With an ever-downward-spiraling national code of civility, presidents who revel in slander and name-calling, and example after example of very good reasons to treat people without respect, this is our chance as God's church to live counter-culturally and in so doing, share the Good News of Jesus. When we refuse to slander, name-call, or lash out at others, it will be noticed. We'll be left out of some conversations, considered proud or haughty, or even receive some of the re-directed shade we are refusing to throw ourselves. And if we take it further and defend people like David did for Saul, we will surely be targeted as enemies. However, we will be noticed, and when we share that we will not condemn anyone because God does not condemn (John 3:17), that message will be pondered.

How are you treating people? Are you taking part in the social-media shaming and slander games? Or are you standing up for anyone made in God's Image, which is everyone?