

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

Second Step, Joy!

II Samuel 6:12-23

Intro: In **ch6**, David sets his heart & mind to bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem so that the presence of **YHWH** might reside in the capitol of a united Israel. David had nothing but good intentions & he had the goodwill & agreement of all the people but this exercise in religious fervor ends in tragedy & failure. David's joy turns to dread! But, **YHWH** soon makes it clear that His severe act was **not** His last word on the ark. Sure, when Uzzah grabbed hold of the ark, the Lord "broke out" against him & he was cut down; but the ark was **not automatically deadly**. You'd have a hard time convincing Hophni & Phinehas of that; or the Philistines; or the men of Beth-Shemesh; or Uzzah for that matter; but witness the **blessing** Obed-edom experienced while the ark sat for 3 months in his household (**11**).

Knowing the ark's history, if (as in **vs10**) David shows up at your door & asks if he could drop a box off at your house most folks would say, "**Are you crazy? Are you outside your mind?**" but Obed-edom didn't. He **gladly** opened his door & **cheerfully** accepted the responsibility of caring for the ark. How is this possible? The ark still represents **YHWH** & His holiness & righteous justice hasn't changed – it cannot change. No, Obed-edom gladly receives the ark b/c he understands that the ark is only deadly to those who approach it incorrectly. Hophni & Phinehas used the ark in a superstitious way & it cost them their lives. The Philistines used the ark in an idolatrous way & their people suffered greatly b/c of it. The men of Beth-Shemesh & Uzzah approached the ark in a presumptuous way & were judged. So, what makes Obed-edom think things will be different for him? Is he just being brave? No, this is nothing less than the **courage** that comes from having a **humble & faithful** heart. When God's people approach His presence with **honest humility & faithful trust**, He cannot help but respond to them with nothing but amiable love & divine blessing.

Notice the degree of **YHWH**'s blessing: it was noticeable to everyone! **YHWH**'s blessing most likely appeared in the form of fertility: in the field, the flock & the family. Josephus says that Obed was poor before the ark arrived but w/in those 3 months, his financial position increased to the envy of his neighbors. Obed was a living example of the fact that when God's Word is obeyed & His holiness is respected, blessings follow. All things considered,

you could say with accuracy that the “**curse**” of the ark didn’t come from the heart of God but from the disobedience of man.

There are many who desire divine blessings today; they announce their needs & petition others to pray for them & there’s nothing wrong with that but there’s also nothing right with that. Being on the prayer list doesn’t necessarily guarantee your prayers will be answered. If you truly desire the Lord’s blessing on your life, you must approach Him yourself with a humble & faithful heart. You cannot simply declare your need for God’s blessing & then be dismissive or flippant about God’s presence in your life. You can’t rely solely on other people’s piety. God expects & requires that from each of His children. Obed-edom received the ark gladly & was blessed abundantly & David heard about it!

12a- This is the hinge of **ch6**; this bridges the gap between David’s fear & frustration in **1-11** & his joy & exultation in **12b-23**. David easily recognized **YHWH**’s **disapproval** of their actions in Uzzah’s death but now he could just as easily recognize **YHWH**’s **favor** towards them in Obed-edom’s prosperity. David gets the point: **YHWH**’s true intention has always been to **bless** His people thru the ark, **not destroy** them. David wants this blessing for himself & his people. The ark belonged in the tent he had erected for it in Jerusalem & since **YHWH** was now at peace with David & all Israel, they set about cheerfully to bring the ark in, but not in the same way as before.

12b-15- **I Chron 15:1-4, 11-16** shows that David learned his lesson & made sure that everyone involved approached the ark only in the way **YHWH** had prescribed. Clearly the ark is now being carried as ordered in **Num 4:15**, on the shoulders of the Kohathites. David was now determined to do God’s work in God’s way. But, **YHWH**’s favor was not assumed. After the Levites took their 1st 6 paces, David had them stop so he could offer a sacrifice to the Lord. This sacrifice was elaborate, excessive, over the top & it communicated a desire for **atonement**, **consecration** & especially a **longing for fellowship**. David didn’t just talk about having a humble & contrite heart; he offered clear evidence of it. When no judgment fell, David knew **YHWH** was pleased with what they were doing & they proceeded on their march.

danced- David danced enthusiastically in worship before the Lord. He didn’t hold back anything in his own expression of worship. David didn’t dance out of any feeling of obligation or compulsion; he danced out of heartfelt

worship. He was excited to bring **the ark of the Lord** into Jerusalem in accordance with God's Word. His dance was personal & sincere: he was celebrating the coming of **YHWH's** presence into the capitol city.

It's hard to miss the emphasis on **joy** in this passage: they transport the ark **with gladness** (12b); David is dancing & cavorting with all his might (14) & the people are shouting & blowing the rams horn (15b). This is more than just a religious procession – this is holy delirium over the presence of God. But how does this compare to then emphasis of the 1st half of **ch6**? Here, we're to **cheer** with **YHWH's joy** but there, we're to **tremble** before **YHWH's holiness**. Which is it? Which 1 is necessary? Both! This is how the Bible balances truth. We're not supposed to **compare** or **contrast** these 2 main points, we're supposed to **combine** them. Fearfulness & gladness are held together in the chapter b/c in **YHWH's** presence you should both shudder & dance! Whether you recognize it or not, **ch6** is showing us that a fearful sense of God's holiness does not **suppress joy**, it actually **stimulates** it. **Ps 2:11b** states in clearly in 3 words: **rejoice with trembling**. But, you have to be 1 of God's children to know how true this paradox is.

The remainder of **ch6** is a success story – the ark arrives in Jerusalem; but even this success contains a tragedy.

16-19- When the ark was safely installed in the tent David had built for it, David offered 14 more sacrifices. After that, he sent away the people with a gracious prayer & a generous treat. David blessed the people **in the name of the Lord of hosts**. This doesn't mean he just attached **YHWH's** name at the end of his prayer as if it were some magic incantation. No; **in the name of** simply means **under the authority of**. In the old movies when the cop was chasing the robber on foot, he would often exclaim, "**Stop in the name of the law!**" Does he mean to imply that the law had a name? No! He's merely commanding them to stop under the authority of the law he is sworn to enforce. If the robber fails to observe the authority of the law, he's doomed to suffer the penalty that comes from transgressing that law. David is asking **YHWH** to bless the people as they show honor & respect to His presence among them. He also gave to each some bread, meat & a cake. His generosity to the people was a token of his **joy** & **gratitude** towards **YHWH**.

Despite all this joy & gladness & in the midst of it, the tragedy was that as Michal observed David's expression of worship, she despised him in her heart. 1 might assume that if David was **only** wearing a linen ephod (14b)

that her attitude was warranted b/c of all the “wardrobe malfunctions” that must have occurred. But **I Chron 15:25- 29** tells us that is just not the case. David was wearing a fine linen robe under the linen ephod just like all the other priests in the procession. He was appropriately dressed for this grand occasion. So what is Michal’s problem with David?

20-21- It’s 1 thing to despise someone in your heart but quite another to confront & attack them with biting sarcasm. Imagine it, David’s all pumped up & excited about what God has accomplished in Israel today. He has exhausted himself in worship before the Lord, has graciously blessed all the people but still has the presence of mind to realize he still has both the privilege & the responsibility to speak a blessing over his own household as well. He’s probably going over what he’s going to say in his head, maybe scribbling some notes on a parchment or lambskin, then he meets ole sour-puss at the door & she just let’s all the wind out of his sails. In stark contrast to Obed-edom, David’s house exudes **contempt** instead of **blessing!** So what is Michal’s problem with David?

We get an indication of what’s up when the writer refers to Michal 3Xs as the **daughter of Saul**. She’s certainly not acting like David’s wife or even Jonathan’s sister for that matter. The writer wants us to understand that her spiteful sarcasm is the voice of the **previous monarchy**, the **former regime**. Like Saul, Michal is concerned with **royal dignity, proper decorum, outward appearances**. A king has a certain image to maintain & he shouldn’t put himself on the same level as the **riff raff**. David had an answer. He didn’t consider the slave girls to be the audience: **It was before the Lord** – **YHWH** was the audience! It wasn’t a performance for the people but worship for **YHWH**. David recognized in Michal the pride & spiritual blindness of her father. Saul’s 1 desire was to gain & keep his popularity with the people but David preferred to live & serve so as **to please the Lord**. He reminds Michal that God chose him to replace her father & that he would do whatever the Lord prompted him to do. Not only did David have a different view of the audience of his worship – he had a completely different view of what dignity really was.

22-23- David doesn’t see himself so much as Israel’s king but as **YHWH**’s servant & humility is appropriate for servants. So he will seek to abase himself before the Lord more & more. For David: humility is dignity! To him there’s nothing demeaning about groveling before God! I don’t believe David

is lashing out in anger against Michal. He probably felt that whatever Michal's opinion of him may be, it could not be more humbling than his own view of himself. **Spurgeon** once said, "Brother, if any man thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him, for you are worse than he thinks you to be." David wasn't worried about Michal's opinion, or the slave girl's, or the peoples, or even his own – David was only concerned with **YHWH**'s opinion of him. With that kind of perspective, the attacks, the slander even the failures can be seen in the proper light – everything pales in comparison to God's opinion & His delight in us.

So, Michal & David represent 2 kingdoms: The old regimes desires propriety, keeping up appearances, doing things only for the approval of others while the new kingdom celebrates joy – more specifically: the joy of God's presence! Michal is like someone putting new wine into old wineskins: it just doesn't work. Today, there are many folks who are only concerned with **ceremony & externals**, with **procedures & mechanics**, with **meetings, decency & order** but who can't really understand anything about the joy of the Lord. An undue focus on religious external leads to nothing but barrenness in life & in the Christian walk. Other folks can drum up all kinds of excitement for sports or concerts but can't see to produce nothing but a professional detachment for Jesus Christ. I'd not saying we should be swing from the rafters & rolling down the isles but exuberant praise &/or tears of repentance aren't too much to ask in light of all that God has done for every believer. 1 theologians put it this way, "There are, doubtless, times to be calm, and times to be enthusiastic; but can it be right to give all our coldness to Christ & all our enthusiasm to the world?"

The ark was a metaphor – a symbol of a greater reality. Was the ark important? Yes, but only b/c it symbolized the presence & glory of God. God gave specific, detailed instructions on how the ark was to be handled & He expected those instructions to be followed. What does this teach us about the importance, the sanctity of His presence & glory today? These things, which are vastly more important than a wooden box covered in gold, should also be treated with deliberate respect & all the honor we can muster. We can't be flippant or dismissive or too casual with the presence of God in our lives. To do so is to warrant His displeasure. If we cannot properly honor the Lord then we are honoring other things too much.

