**God shows unfailing kindness**

**2 Samuel 22:21-51**

Key verse 51

“He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.”

 Several years ago by God’s unfailing kindness, I became a citizen of the Unites States. When I opened the first page of the booklet ‘the Citizen’s Almanac,’ it read, “Today you are a citizen of the Unites States of America. Your fellow citizens recognize the sacrifices you have made to reach this milestone and with open arms we welcome you. The Unites States offers an abundance of freedom and opportunity for all its citizens and we wish you all the best along the way.” More recently I had seen an article about how to be successful in life. It came up with some tips from the world’s most successful people. In the article I read about Steve Jobs saying “Be brave enough to follow your intuition,” Abraham Lincoln had said, “Don’t let discouragement stop you from pressing on,” Walt Disney had said, “Believe in your capacity to succeed.”

   We may sometimes wonder if we will be able to be successful when we live by the literal teachings of the Bible. Today’s passage offers us some tips for success through our ancestor of faith, David. I am eager to share with you regarding what led him to be so successful. His song is full of thanks and praise to his God. I’d like to call this chapter as David’s life testimony. Again the key v. reads, “He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.” David believes that every great victory came from God. David says that God shows unfailing kindness to him & his descendants forever. So I will focus on how our living God shows unfailing kindness. I divided today’s passage into 3 parts. First, All his laws are before me.(21-29) Second, Who is God besides the Lord? (30-46) Third, God lives! (47-51)

**Part 1, All his laws are before me. (21-29)**

 Look at v. 21. “The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he has rewarded me.” 1 Kings 15:5 reads, “For David had done what was right in the eyes of the Lord and had not failed to keep any of the Lord’s commands all the days of his life—except in the case of Uriah the Hittite.” So David’s sin against Uriah being the exception, David was considered to be a man of God. Look at  verses 22-24. “For I have kept the ways of the Lord; I am not guilty of turning from my God. **23** All his laws are before me; I have not turned away from his decrees. **24**I have been blameless before him and have kept myself from sin.” David points out here that he has kept the ways of the Lord and he is not guilty of turning from his God. As we studied last week, David called to his God in prayer. In this way he never deserted God, but habitually communed with him, sitting before the Lord, praying, singing, giving thanks and writing psalms. Take notice of his saying, “All of God’s laws are before me.” He says in psalm 1, “Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, **2** but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. **3** That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither - whatever they do prospers” David must have meditated, memorized the Scriptures and had personal time with God. How many of us can say that the law of God is always before us? His righteousness has to do with his personal way of life that he always put God’s laws ahead of his own desire and ideal thoughts. David also kept himself from sin. Twice he had the opportunity to kill Saul, but both times he denied himself and saved his life. In this way he struggled to live before God. Look at v. 25. “The Lord has rewarded me according to my righteousness, according to my cleannessin his sight.” Here David repeated that God rewarded him according to his righteousness. It reminds me of terms in behavioural science; ‘positive reenforcement.’ Whenever a child is doing a positive thing, a father reward him or her. For example a father gives candy to his daughter when she picks up her toys. In this way she will be re-enforced of the behavior of cleaning up. Likewise David like a child of God kept the ways of the Lord and to put God’s words before him. So God was delighted in him and had rewarded him again and again.

   Indeed his testimony before God is sincere. However we should be aware that he is also a sinner like us. When he committed sins of lying, adultery and even murder, he sincerely repented of his sins with tears especially when he was rebuked by Nathan who delivered God’s truth. He experienced God’s mercy and forgiveness of sin. How great and amazing is the kindness of our Lord, to give us righteousness, and later to reward us for it? We can never say we deserve such a thing, but by his grace he freely pours out his blessings. Praise God for his love and his unfailing kindness!

   Look at v. 26-28. Let us read them responsively. “To the faithful you show yourself faithful, to the blameless you show yourself blameless, **27** to the pure you show yourself pure, but to the devious you show yourself shrewd. **28** You save the humble, but your eyes are on the haughty to bring them low.” David points out that God treats each person based on what one has done. To the faithful, God show himself faithful. To the blameless, God show himself blameless. To the pure, God show himself pure. God saves the humble. Often times it seems to us that faithfulness, purity, and humility have no value in this world for people think that whatever works, is likely true. But God is living among us and richly rewards us according to our personal faith. In a proportion to our faith God show himself to us without fail. If we have little faith, we only see a small amount of God’s goodness. But if we get to know him more, God will reveal himself more gladly. However the opposite is also true! God humbles those who are too arrogant. To the devious, God will show himself shrewd. Do you remember Ahithophel, who counseled Absalom in the rebellion against David. He was very crafty but his advice was evil. God was determined to frustrate his counsel through Hushai. The Lord saves the humble, those who fully trust in him. How then could David maintain a good relationship with God? Look at v. 29. “You, Lord, are my lamp; the Lord turns my darkness into light.” He says that the Lord is his lamp and the Lord turned his darkness into light. He could’ve easily forgotten who had made him so successful. Thankfully he’s enlightened and he was able to see that God had helped him every step of the way, thus being able to maintain his humility before the Lord his God. This is another reason he applies God’s words to his daily life. In contrast Saul’s life story was one of the great tragedies and was summed up in 1 Chro. 10, “**13** Saul died because he was unfaithful to the Lord; he did not keep the word of the Lord and even consulted a medium for guidance, **14** and did not inquire of the Lord. So the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David son of Jesse.”

**Part 2, Who is God besides the Lord? (30-46)**

 Look at v. 30. “With your help I can advance against a troop; with my God I can scale a wall.” Here David again gave credit to the LORD for his great success. A siege of a walled city such as Jerusalem (2 Sam 5) was usually a long and tedious process, but David was enabled to scale city walls and overcome an enemy city. With God’s help, David could overcome all obstacles. David became invincible with God’s help. So when David conquered and became more and more powerful, he personally knew that the Lord had established him as king over Israel.

 Look at v. 31.“As for God, his way is perfect: The Lord’s word is flawless; he shields all who take refuge in him.” One day David had to learn this the hard way. When David was fleeing from Saul, he lied to the priest at Nob and as a result all the priests were slaughtered. He learned that he had to trust in the Lord and God’s words. He now continues to praise the Lord in v. 32 “For who is God besides the Lord? And who is the Rock except our God?” David gives the highest glory to the Lord for he is God, he is the Creator, the Sovereign, the Mighty, the Righteous, and there is only one–the Lord and God of Israel. David served him as his master. In schools growing up we learn about many gods: the gods of Greece, the gods of Rome, the gods of Asia, the gods of Hinduism, but let’s confess like David, there is only one God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

  Look at v. 33 - 46. Let us read them responsively. “It is God who arms me with strength and keeps my way secure. **34** He makes my feet like the feet of a deer; he causes me to stand on the heights. **35** He trains my hands for battle; my arms can bend a bow of bronze. **36** You make your saving help my shield; your help has mademe great. **37** You provide a broad path for my feet, so that my ankles do not give way. **38** “I pursued my enemies and crushed them; I did not turn back till they were destroyed. **39** I crushed them completely, and they could not rise; they fell beneath my feet. **40** You armed me with strength for battle; you humbled my adversaries before me. **41** You made my enemies turn their backs in flight, and I destroyed my foes. **42** They cried for help, but there was no one to save them—to the Lord, but he did not answer. **43** I beat them as fine as the dust of the earth; I pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets. **44** “You have delivered me from the attacks of the peoples; you have preserved me as the head of nations. People I did not know now serve me, **45** foreigners cower before me; as soon as they hear of me, they obey me. **46** They all lose heart;    they come tremblingfrom their strongholds.” Here David speaks of many of the aspects of God who strengthens us, makes our way secure, trains our hands for battle, and gives us the shield of victory, as he did with David. With God’s help, David crushed his enemies completely, so that they could not even rise. God made them turn their backs in flight, but David pounded and trampled them like mud in the streets. When David first became king, God gave him victory on every side: to the west, the south, the north and the east. God also extended that rule to foreign nations: people that he never knew feared and obeyed him. It reminds me of Deut. 28:13. “The Lord will make you the head, not the tail. If you pay attention to the commands of the Lord your God that I give you this day and carefully follow them, you will always be at the top, never at the bottom.” Whenever our hearts are right before God and obey his commands according to God’s will, He richly bless us with great victories to expand His kingdom like David. On top of success that will be ultimately of zero value, I also see this portion of passage as God’s unfailing help in every aspect for us in serving young college students and our children although it is very challenging task because of so many false gods in our generation. It’s blessed lives before our loving God for we will surely see many young people surrender their lives to Jesus Christ who is the King of kings. May God bless America to be a great kingdom of priests and a holy nation by raising up disciples continually with God’s unfailing help.

**Part 3, The Lord lives! (47-51)**

    Look at v. 47-50 “The Lord lives! Praise be to my Rock!  Exalted be my God, the Rock, my Savior! **48** He is the God who avenges me, who puts the nations under me, **49** who sets me free from my enemies. You exalted me above my foes; from a violent man you rescued me. **50** Therefore I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing the praises of your name.” David says with exclamation. “The Lord lives!” David experienced one thing through all victories against all his enemies that the Lord lives. It reminds me of hymn (# 262) ‘He lives,’ “He lives! He lives! Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way. He lives, he lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know he lives? He lives within my heart!” We know that David’s faith is genuine and personal. Praise be to my Rock! David called his Lord as the Rock. God is faithfully with him and God is trustworthy. Therefore he praised the Lord wholeheartedly.

   Now look at the key v. 51. “He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.” l believe that it is a kind of password for all his thanks topics he had mentioned so far. I believe that this unlocks David’s deepest insight into his relationship with God. So let us think about its meaning in detail. David says, “God gives me great victories.” But rather than remembering the victories themselves, David praised God who shows unfailing kindness to him and his descendants forever.” Here ‘kindness,’ is the Hebrew word "hesed," meaning "unfailing love, "loving kindness," "goodness," and "merciful kindness." Also "unfailing" means "bottomless," "boundless," "ceaseless," "consistent," "inexhaustible," and "reliable." This love is strong and steadfast. This love is unfailing and absolutely faithful. It is love and devotion in action. What a person desires is unfailing love. (Prov19:22) When the first family on earth, Adam and Eve broke God’s commandment to not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, they were doomed to die. But thanks to God’s unfailing kindness, he came up with a gospel message in Gen. 3:15. Regardless of people’s unfaithfulness, God has since given his servants His words of covenant in His faithfulness. Finally without fail at God’s time, God kept his promise. God so loved the world that he sent his one and only Son Jesus and had him die on the cross. Whoever believes him shall not perish but have eternal life.

  The phrase that David mentions, ‘unfailing kindness’ is not only found here. They were also shown in 1Sam 20(14-15). Let us revisit that passage for it is well fit here to see what unfailing kindness means. Jonathan said to David, “But show me unfailing kindness like the Lord’s kindness as long as I live, so that I may not be killed, and do not ever cut off your kindness from my family—not even when the Lord has cut off every one of David’s enemies from the face of the earth.” Here Jonathan didn’t regard their relationship simply as a friend, instead he served the Lord’s purpose first. He was free and could have a sincere heart. He didn’t have any underlying motives or jealousy. Loving David was costly. Jonathan would not become king after his father. But he believed that the Lord would establish David as king. He followed the Lord’s will and seek first God’s kingdom rather than his own ambition as a prince. He could freely support the work of God, believing that God was truly among them and doing what’s best. This freedom had him serve the Lord despite his own inner struggles. He then became a true blessing to David. It shows us that we can view those around us in many ways. They can be friends, enemies or acquaintances. It all hinged upon how we choose to be to them. Jonathan showed us the good example of choosing to do right to David and to love him. So Jonathan only asked David here to show kindness to him. But it was not kindness in human kinds. He could’ve said, “I will help you, but make my family important people in your kingdom.” But he didn’t. He only asked for kindness, but a very specific one: “unfailing kindness like the Lord’s kindness.” He asked David to practice the Lord’s unfailing kindness to him and to his descendants. This tells us that Jonathan first knew personally of God’s kindness. He knew that it was unfailing. He knew that it was merciful and extends through generations. Jonathan developed a godly character and his actions towards others became like that of the Lord’s.

  He went beyond acting like a normal person, but to act like the Lord in their relationship with each other. So Jonathan asked that David would spare him and his family rather than killing them as many would do when taking over a kingdom. Rather Jonathan asked him to act like the Lord and show unfailing kindness. Because of his personal faith in the Lord, Jonathan secured their relationship in the right way. He fully supported David at the risk of his own family. It was because he trusted in God and believed in God who was eternally good, kind, and sovereign. He really set the good example of how to love others in a godly way. Later David remembered this when he became a king in Israel. He couldn’t forget Jonathan’s kindness in the Lord and showed unfailing kindness as equivalent respect to his son, Mephibosheth. (2Sam 9:7) “Don’t be afraid,” David said to him, “for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table.” What a story as they practiced God’s unfailing kindness! We should follow their good examples in our relationships with others.

  God created us in Jesus’ own image. God’s unfailing kindness is one of his most important characteristics. Jesus asked us to be perfect like our Father in heaven. So it would be no surprise to us that God encourages us to show loving kindness for it’s his very nature. God wants us to imitate him. People who love God are to display kindness and faithfulness toward each other. One day Jesus was asked a question about which is the greatest of the Laws of Moses. Jesus replied, (Matt.22:37-40) “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these 2 commandments.” Jesus even said on another occasion that we are to “love our enemies.” All of this stemmed from our Lord God who so loved the world that the only solution was for him to lose his Son. It is the greatest act of loving kindness the world has ever seen. Thanks to his unfailing love, the [debt](http://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/loving-kindness-andy-payne-sermon-on-covenant-131065.asp?Page=3) was paid in full. Yet as a response to this great love, we now should want to love as God has loved us. This is how God builds a faithful community, one believer at a time. May the Lord help us to build our community by this godly love and kindness towards each other. Jn 13:34-35 read, “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

  Personally I have to confess that I have hard time loving my Bible students for my love is conditional. I had been similar to a businessman who expects to see tangible results quickly. If I didn’t see what I expected to see, my love quickly faded and I gave up easily. But through preparing this message, my love for them should be based on the love of God instead of my conditional love. God’s unfailing kindness is limitless and unconditional. This is the only reason why still young people keep coming one by one to Jesus Christ because they have never heard of such a story of love before. They never experienced such love in their broken family or in this heartless world. It is found in the Bible only. While I was preparing this message, I was greatly disturbed by a news on Friday night. A gunman went on a drive-by shooting rampage in a student quarter in UC Santa Barbara. At least 7 people were killed, including the attacker, a young man named Elliot Rodger. He was the son of a divorced father, Peter Rodger, assistant director of the movie ‘The Hunger Games.’ He made the haunting video posted on social media day before titled ‘Retribution.’ He said on the video, “I'm 22 years old and I'm still a virgin. I've never even kissed a girl. College is the time when everyone experiences those things such as sex and fun and pleasure. But in those years I've had to rot in loneliness. It's not fair. You girls have never been attracted to me. I don't know why you girls aren't attracted to me. But I will punish you all for it. Tomorrow is the day of retribution, the day in which I will have my revenge.” No doubt he was mentally ill. But it is more than a mental issue. Had he known the love of God, he would have been saved from his extreme thoughts. May the Lord help each of us to grow as men and women of love and kindness, after God’s own heart like David, a shadow of our Lord Jesus Christ to share such God’s love by reaching out all west coast campuses including UCSB.

  Psalm 23:6 reads, “Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.” The word “pursue” means: to search for eagerly. Also to dwell in the house of the Lord is not simply to dwell in a place like a church. Rather it’s to live in the literal presence of God. It is to experience God in all of His goodness on an ongoing basis in every area of our lives. It’s to have a sweet fellowship, walk, and talk with God and experience His unfailing love like David. Our one desire should be to seek God in our lives. We should base our lives in the light of His presence and the strength of His Word. The more we seek Him and get to know Him, our understanding will be enlightened as to His unfailing love.

  Looking back on my life in Christ, I am very thankful to the Lord. By His grace, I am able to know His eternal love. Had I not been able to know it, I would have lived a life chasing after money and fame in this world. But God had sent his servant to me and I had chance to study the Bible and find meaning and purpose in the Lord. Now I confess that I have been faithful only because of God’s unfailing love and kindness. With God’s help I can serve campus mission continually. May the Lord help me to not forget His unfailing love and continue to live by faith by putting God’s words before me like David.

 In conclusion, let us read today’s key verse again. “He gives his king great victories; he shows unfailing kindness to his anointed, to David and his descendants forever.” May the Lord help us to have the same faith and vision as David had had and continue to be faithful and always putting His words before us and be victorious in serving Him. Help us to experience God’s help in every aspect of our lives and to confess that God truly lives! Most importantly, help us never forget God’s unfailing kindness for us and our descendants forever.

**One word: God’s unfailing kindness!**