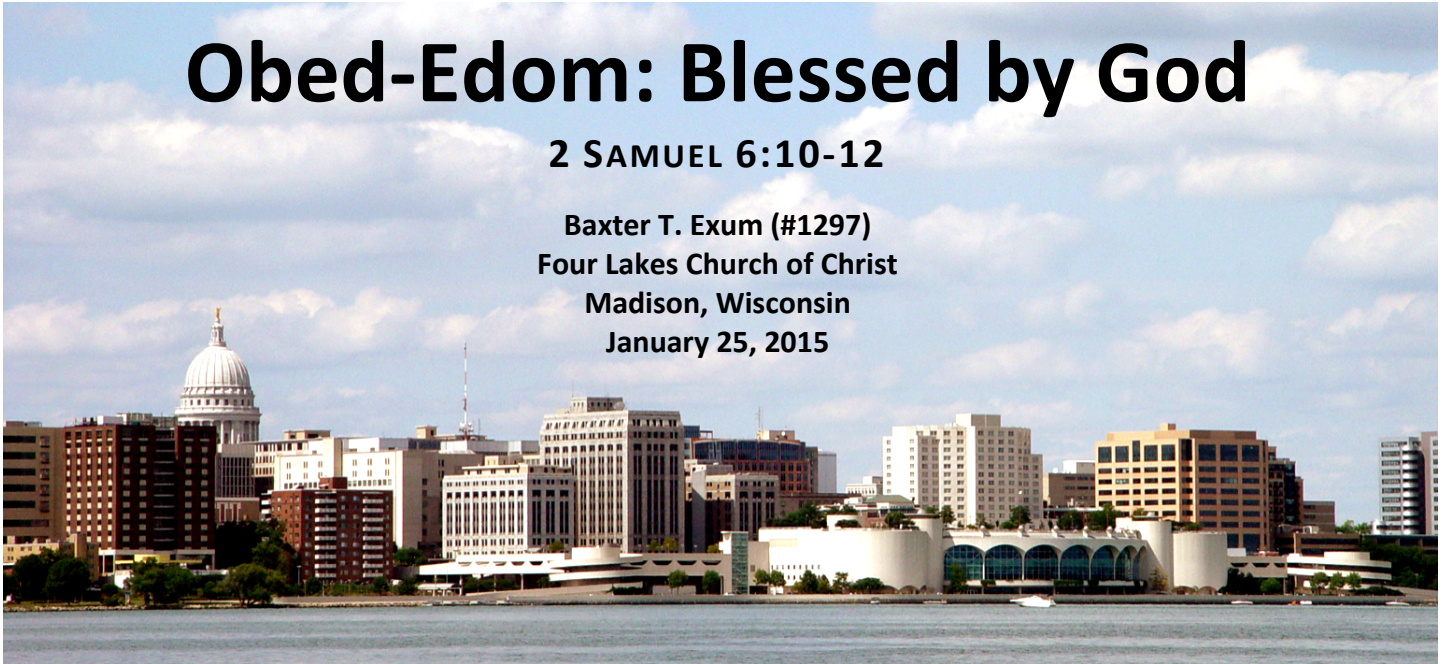


Obed-Edom: Blessed by God

2 SAMUEL 6:10-12

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Four Lakes Church of Christ
Madison, Wisconsin
January 25, 2015



If you were here with us last Lord's Day morning, then you know that we looked together at a rather unusual and dramatic account from the life of King David in 2 Samuel 6. We looked at the fact that all of us make mistakes, and when we do make mistakes, we are often able to learn and move forward a little wiser than we were before. Last week, then, we learned a lesson from Uzzah, and although the incident didn't do Uzzah much good, it is still possible for us to learn something based on his behavior. Uzzah, of course, was struck down by God for touching the Ark of the Covenant.

The Ark of the Covenant was basically a gold-plated wooden box about the size of our Lord's Supper table up here, just a little bit smaller, and it was the place where God met with his people, the place where sins were forgiven under the Law of Moses. It was actually designed with gold-plated rings on each side, into which were placed gold-plated wooden poles, and the Law was very specific that the men from one particular tribe (the Levites) were to be the only ones to carry the Ark.

We know, however, that there was a time during the book of Judges when Israel drifted away from God, and the Ark was actually captured by the Philistine army. Through an interesting series of events, the Philistines quickly realized, though, that they wanted nothing to do with the Ark, so they sent it back. Well, the Bible tells us that the Ark stayed near the border of Israel for a period of more than 40 years, until we get to the point of our lesson last Sunday morning, where King David tries to move the Ark to Jerusalem. They put the Ark on a new cart (just as the Philistines had done many years earlier), but as they travel, the cart hits a pothole, Uzzah reaches up to keep the Ark from falling, and he is struck dead by God right there on the spot. David gets scared and quickly brings the Ark to the nearby home of Obed-Edom as he tries to figure out what went wrong.

Last week, we took three basic lessons from what happened here. And I realize that last week's outline was a little bit unusual. I might have lost some of you along the way. The middle point had two sub points, so as we very briefly review, I want to make it as clear as I can. We learned, first of all, last week, that GOD MUST BE HONORED. Secondly, we also learned last week that THERE ARE NO EXCUSES THAT CAN EVER POSSIBLY OVERRIDE THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING AND OBEYING WHAT THE WORD OF GOD ACTUALLY SAYS. And this is where we had those two sub-points. First of all, when it comes to excuses, everybody involved in this incident seems to be SINCERE. The people were celebrating "*with all their might*." Sincerity, though, does not

erase the need for obedience. And then, in the same way, POPULARITY cannot be used as an excuse either. Again, in 1 Chronicles 13, we find King David checked with everybody but God on this. He brought everybody in to help make the decision – hundreds, thousands, military leaders, religious leaders, even the entire nation. However, right and wrong is not determined by the number of people doing it. Excuses, therefore, are no substitute for knowing and obeying the word of God. And then finally, we also learned last Sunday morning that THERE IS A VALUE TO DISCIPLINE. Obviously, getting killed didn't do too much for Uzzah, but King David did learn something. As a result of what happened here, the entire nation learned that God is to be respected and obeyed, a valuable lesson. They went back and did their research, and from this point on, they moved the Ark just as God had directed. This is because of the discipline that fell on Uzzah.

This morning, I would like for us to move on to a much more positive aspect of this passage and even go a few verses further, as we focus our thoughts on the good that came from this incident, and especially, the good that happened to the family of Obed-Edom (2 Samuel 6:10-12). In our lesson this morning, I would like to refer to an interesting piece of artwork by Jack Baumgartner, an artist in Rose Hill, Kansas. Mr. Baumgartner was born in 1976 and has made an amazing print of this particular character in the Bible. Last night, I sent out a link to his website along with the bulletin. He's even written a song to go along with this passage. The entirety of the work is on his website, and as we move through the various lessons this morning, we'll be thinking about several details from this very interesting piece of artwork.

The main point this morning is that Obed-Edom is blessed for what he does here. And I find the contrast quite fascinating. On one hand we have Uzzah who is killed, and on the other hand we have Obed-Edom who is tremendously blessed – we have two very different consequences as the result of how these two men interacted with God. One is cursed, and the other is blessed. As to exactly what the blessing looked like, I do not know. Some have suggested that perhaps his car ran a little bit better. Maybe his wife got a little bit prettier. Perhaps his children started listening a little bit more carefully. Maybe, like Jacob, his flocks and crops multiplied a little bit faster than his neighbors'. Obed-Edom, though, is blessed. The question is: What can we learn from this?

Uzzah is struck down for touching the Ark, King David is terrified, and we pick up with 2 Samuel 6:10-12,

¹⁰ And David was unwilling to move the ark of the Lord into the city of David with him; but David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. ¹¹ Thus the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household. ¹² Now it was told King David, saying, "The Lord has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God." David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness.

As we think about what we have just read, we know the lessons we've learned from Uzzah. This morning, though, I want us to focus in on the life of Obed-Edom, this man who was blessed by God. And as we look at this passage, I would suggest three lessons based on Obed-Edom and what he did here.

- I. **First of all, as we look back at this paragraph, we find that Obed-Edom OPENED HIS HOME TO GOD.**

I would like for us to try to go back and imagine this scenario. Obed-Edom is most likely at home, minding his own business, he lives out in the middle of nowhere – probably for a reason, he is most likely a farmer, he

most likely enjoys the peace and quiet – and one day he hears quite a commotion outside. There seems to be some kind of parade passing by on the road that goes by his house. And almost as soon as he hears these thousands of people going by, it is obvious that something has gone terribly wrong. And soon there is a knock at the door. He opens the door (perhaps Mrs. Obed-Edom is looking over his shoulder), and when they open the door, there is King David, crown and all, in full military attire. The king has a look of shock on his face, a look of anger, perhaps even a look of terror. Behind the king is the Ark of the Covenant, the sign of God's presence, the most holy object in the history of the nation, and behind the Ark are 30,000 soldiers (by the way, that number is almost exactly how many undergraduate students there are at UW Madison right now) – so imagine 30,000 soldiers (every undergrad at UW right now), and these 30,000 soldiers are pretty much standing in Obed-Edom's front yard. He tries to take this in, he tries to process what is happening right here on his front porch, and as he tries to soak all of this in, as he tries to focus, King David opens his mouth, "Excuse me, sir. But my name is David, and we have had an incident out here in front of your house. There was this huge pothole up the road, and we are not exactly sure what happened yet, but it seems that God has killed a man for touching the Ark. And I'm not exactly sure how to ask, but we'd like to ask that you take the Ark and keep it in your living room." Can you imagine that conversation? Can we even imagine? Here is a gold covered box that has just killed a man, and the king is asking that Obed-Edom bring it into his own home. And I would add: At this point, it is for an unknown length of time. It might have been overnight, it might have been for a few days, but the last place it stayed, you might remember that the Ark stayed there for more than 40 years!

At this point, then, Obed-Edom had a very important decision to make! Thankfully, Obed-Edom opened his home to God. He welcomed the Ark into his home, even though God had just killed a man for touching it, and even though King David himself seems to be quite terrified of it. Can you imagine me asking you to keep this table in your home for a while? And oh, by the way, if anybody touches it, they will die. Where would you put it? What would you tell your children? Kids, do not touch the huge box in the living room! Obed-Edom, though, made himself available. Obed-Edom said, "Yes" and opened his home to God. It might have been inconvenient, even a little bit dangerous, but Obed-Edom accepted the responsibility.

I think of those words over in Hebrews 13:2, "***Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it.***" Obed-Edom literally had golden cherubim staying with him in his home! He took the presence of God into his own home. We think of the Lord and those words about the judgment in Matthew 25, "***I was a stranger, and you took me in.***" Obed-Edom literally welcomed God into his home.

Today, we have the ability to welcome God into our homes as well – not in the form of a gold plated box, but in a spiritual sense. We welcome God into our homes by honoring his presence. For years, my parents have had a plaque on their wall that perhaps some of you have seen as well. It serves as a constant reminder and says, "Christ is the head of this house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation." Isn't that what Obed-Edom did here? He welcomed God into his home, just as we should also do today.

II. There is a second lesson from this passage – it is closely related to the first lesson – but it is the idea that once the Ark had been moved in, THE ARK ITSELF BECAME THE FOCAL POINT OF THIS MAN'S FAMILY FOR THE NEXT THREE MONTHS.

And again, this is hard for most of us to even imagine. However, I think we can very safely assume that Obed-Edom and his family probably thought a lot more about the Ark of God during these three months than they had ever thought about the Ark before. After all, it was now in their living room! It was not a gold covered box

in some far off place, but it was a gold covered box right there in their own home! And this is where we need to remember what was actually in the Ark. Certainly the outward appearance was quite impressive (as we discussed last week) – the gold, the cherubim, the rings, the poles, and so on. But the outward appearance was just part of it. And I say this, because God was very specific concerning what was to be placed INSIDE the Ark. Remember: The Ark was a box, and boxes are made for carrying things! What, therefore, was inside the Ark? What did God want the people to treasure? Above all else, what did God want the people to remember? What did God want the people to know? What items were the most important souvenirs of their time in the wilderness?

Well, if you were here last week, then you might remember that this was the homework assignment for today. And I hope that all of you completed the assignment. If you fail, of course, you need to take church again next year! By the way, partway through this week, I asked one of the young people of the congregation how she was coming along on the assignment. I asked her, “So, what was in the Ark?” And her answer was a look of utter shock and terror that the preacher would be asking her personally, followed by this answer: 1.) The tooth of some animal, 2.) Moses’ staff, and 3.) David’s crown. Well, that was certainly a creative answer! I should let you know that I have paid her \$5 for the privilege of mentioning this, on the condition that I do not use her name!

But as we think about the Ark spending three months in this man’s house, it is significant to note what also stayed in Obed-Edom’s house, by necessity, since certain items were inside the Ark. And when we dig into the Old Testament, we discover the first items placed in the Ark were the tablets of stone on which were written the Ten Commandments, engraved by the finger of God – God’s handwriting! Some of you have kept up with the news this week and the possible discovery of a section of the book of Mark, discovered inside a mummy mask in Egypt, dating to perhaps 80 or 90 AD. And if true, this would be amazing! This will sort itself out over the coming months and years, but if true, this would be the oldest manuscript evidence of the New Testament. Amazing! But think about the Ark of the Covenant in Obed-Edom’s living room. The Ark contained the original edition of God’s Law. I guess the first copy was destroyed by Moses, but the second copy also came directly from the hand of God. Obed-Edom, of course, could not see the stone tablets as he was not allowed to open the Ark, but he would have known that the Law was there and that it had been there for a period of roughly 500 years. If you are taking notes, if you want to look into this more a little later, you might want to know the passage listing the contents of the Ark is found in Hebrews 9:4. In the Old Testament, several passages mention the stone tablets being placed in the Ark, but the most straightforward reference comes in Deuteronomy 10:1-5. First of all, then, by hosting God’s Ark in his home, Obed-Edom and his family would have had a renewed appreciation for God’s Law, knowing that it was right there in their living room.

And the lesson for us today is: God’s word still belongs in our homes. I know there’s a big outcry today over God’s word being removed from our schools and public life in general, but in that controversy, let us not neglect to keep up with God’s word in our own homes. Let us not neglect to make the word of God a priority. What good does it do to have the Ten Commandments on the wall of our local courthouse if we fail to study the Bible in our own homes?

The second item inside the Ark was a jar containing a sample of manna. The word “manna,” of course, is actually a question, “What is it?” When God miraculously provided bread from heaven, it covered the grass almost like dew every morning except for the Sabbath. When the people saw it for the very first time, they said, “What is it?” or “Manna” in the Hebrew language. The people would scrape it together and eat it, “Give us this day our daily bread,” as Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount. The sample of manna in the Ark, therefore, was a reminder of God’s provision. God takes care of his people.

For those who are taking notes, God's command to keep a sample of manna is found in Exodus 16:32. Now imagine the impact it must have had on this family, having a gold covered box in your living room, knowing that inside there was a reminder of God's provision, a constant reminder that God is good and that God will always care for his people. You know, we have the same reminder as Christians under the New Covenant. In Matthew 6:25-34, the Lord Jesus tells us not to worry about temporary things like food and clothing, because God has promised that if we put his kingdom first, he will take care of us. And that is the purpose of the jar of manna in the Ark of the Covenant. It was meant to be a reminder of God's care, and Obed-Edom had this reminder in his own home. Today, as Christian families, we need to acknowledge God for our blessings on a regular basis. Thanking God in prayer is the most obvious way of doing this. But we can also acknowledge God directly in other ways. Christian fathers have a responsibility especially to remind the family that the family's blessings have come from God, "God has been good to our family."

As most of you have hopefully figured out by now, the third item placed in the Ark is Aaron's rod which budded. The reference here goes back to Korah's rebellion and the resulting fallout in Numbers 16-17. Basically, a group of people rose up to oppose God's appointed leadership, Moses drew a line in the sand, and those who persisted in the rebellion were swallowed by the earth. Message delivered! And yet the next day a bunch of people started whining that the punishment was too severe. As we have studied many times before, more people have been killed by God for whining than for any other sin! And so on that day, nearly 15,000 people died for whining. God wanted to put his stamp of approval on Aaron very publicly, so the Lord instructed that a leader from each tribe was to place his staff in the tent of meeting overnight. Well, they did, and the next morning, Aaron's walking stick had not only budded, but it blossomed and bore ripe almonds. At that point, God said in Numbers 17:10, ***"Put back the rod of Aaron before the testimony to be kept as a sign against the rebels, that you may put an end to their grumblings against Me, so that they will not die."*** Aaron's rod, therefore, was placed in the Ark as an ongoing reminder to cooperate with God's appointed leadership, and not to grumble against them. No whining! And specifically, no whining against the leadership. Every family needs to remember this: No whining! In the family, dad leads. In the church, elders lead. In God's kingdom worldwide, Jesus himself is our king. Obed-Edom, therefore, lived for three months with a daily reminder of this: Respect God's appointed leaders, and do not whine!

For three months, the Ark of the Covenant was the focal point of Obed-Edom's home. Today, of course, there is another box that is the focal point of many homes. We usually measure these boxes diagonally, don't we? Perhaps yours is 32" or 42" or maybe even 60". In many homes, every piece of furniture is very carefully arranged to point to this particular box. We focus on it for several hours every day, sometimes even as we eat. I am not against television. However, some of you who have been in our home have noticed that we do not have a TV either in the living room or even in sight of our kitchen or dining room. We made the decision many years ago that without that distraction we might actually talk to each other when we are together, and we have never regretted that decision. I'm not saying that needs to be your decision, but we do need to be careful which box we focus on when we are together as a family. Obed-Edom decided to focus on the Ark.

III. As we go back to the text, I would point out one more idea here, and that is: As a result of what happens on this occasion, OBED-EDOM'S LIFE CHANGES FOREVER.

In fact, it seems that this incident had a way of rearranging this man's priorities. And for this, we need to turn over to that parallel account in 1 Chronicles 15 (p. 668). Over in 1 Chronicles 15, we simply have a parallel record of what happened here. The setting is now three months later after David has had a chance to research what went wrong. In verse 11, David calls the priests and Levites together. In verse 13, King David basically

says: I figured out what we did wrong. We should have had the Levites carry the Ark! And so various priests and Levites are assigned to carry the Ark. They set out on the journey, and in verse 16 David goes looking for some musicians. When we get to Jerusalem, we're going to need some musicians. We're going to need some people to sing. And at that point, the way I look at it, a hand goes up in the back. It's Obed-Edom, "I want to be a singer! I want to be one of the musicians!" We find his name in verse 21. In addition to musicians, King David also needs gatekeepers for the Ark. He needs men to take responsibility for keeping the Ark safe. And once again, a hand goes up in the back. In addition to serving as a musician, Obed-Edom is now also listed as serving among the gatekeepers (in verses 18 and 24). Once the Ark is settled in Jerusalem, King David once again goes looking for help. This time he needs servants, ministers before the Ark of the Lord, men to lead the various celebrations, thanking and praising the Lord God of Israel. We read about this over in 1 Chronicles 16:4-5, and once again, Obed-Edom is listed among those who serve. In most of Chapter 16 we have a psalm commissioned by King David to celebrate the moving of the Ark into Jerusalem. You will notice the verse format in verses 8-36. Skip down to the end of that, and notice verses 37-38, ***"So he [King David] left Asaph and his relatives there before the ark of the covenant of the Lord to minister before the ark continually, as every day's work required; and Obed-edom with his 68 relatives; Obed-edom, also the son of Jeduthun, and Hosah as gatekeepers."*** We can skip over to 1 Chronicles 26, and we see his name again in verses 4-8, ***"Obed-edom had sons: Shemaiah the firstborn, Jehozabad the second, Joah the third, Sacar the fourth, Nethanel the fifth, Ammiel the sixth, Issachar the seventh and Peullethai the eighth; God had indeed blessed him. [not a better running car, not a prettier wife, but with many children] Also to his son Shemaiah sons were born who ruled over the house of their father, for they were mighty men of valor. The sons of Shemaiah were Othni, Rephael, Obed and Elzabad, whose brothers, Elihu and Semachiah, were valiant men. All these were of the sons of Obed-edom; they and their sons and their relatives were able men with strength for the service, 62 from Obed-edom."*** Do we realize what this means? Obed-Edom led his family to God, and he moved his entire family to Jerusalem to continue full-time in service to God. They kept the Ark of God for three months, and it made such an impression on this man, his attitude from this point forward was, "God, whatever you need me to do, I will do!" This man had his pen ready before they could put a signup sheet on the bulletin board. And as a result, God blessed him with children and grandchildren who also served God in Jerusalem, godly men who served for generations.

Conclusion:

This morning, we have learned something from the life of Obed-Edom, a regular guy who just happened to live along a road with a particularly large pothole. 1.) He opened his home to God, 2.) the Ark became the focal point of his home for three months, and 3.) this experience changed his life forever. Uzzah disrespected God and paid with his life. Obed-Edom, on the other hand, responded to God's call on his life with faithful obedience. As we close, we get back to our scripture reading from Romans 11:22, ***"Behold then the kindness and severity of God; to those who fell, severity, but to you, God's kindness, if you continue in His kindness; otherwise you also will be cut off."*** Our response to God determines how God responds to us. There are two options: The severity that was shown to Uzzah or the kindness that was shown to Obed-Edom. As Peter said about the Lord Jesus in 2 Peter 2:7-8, he is a cornerstone, a solid rock to some, but he is a stone of offense to others. Some will turn to the Lord for strength, but others will be crushed under his power. That response is completely up to us.

This morning, we would invite you to follow Obed-Edom's example. He saw what he needed to do and he did it. Today, we are offered salvation through Jesus, and we respond with belief, repentance, and burial in water for the forgiveness of sins. If you want to talk about it, let us know. If there's something we need to pray about

as a congregation, let us know. But if you are ready to obey the good news right now, you can come to the front as we sing this next song. Let's stand and sing...

NOTE: We had a fill-in song leader on this Sunday who was given about 5 minutes to pick some songs. I jokingly told him that any songs would be great, as long as they were about Obed-Edom. Amazingly, every song fit perfectly:

There's Within My Heart
Give Me the Bible
I Want to Be a Worker
Let Him Have His Way with Thee
He Paid a Debt
The Steadfast Love of the Lord
What a Friend We Have in Jesus

To comment on this lesson: fourlakeschurch@gmail.com