

## **Free to worship**

A sermon by the Rev. Frances Savill

Sunday July 11, 2021

2 Samuel 6:1-5,12-19

This morning we come to a great moment in the Bible – a day of celebration to the Lord.

Presbyterians might take a page from the Bible when we have a party.

Presbyterians have great food, and we invite everyone to join with us as we give thanks to God, but we are not so good at dancing as we might be.

Thankfully, we have been influenced by our Jewish Christian friends – including the Levitans, to help teach us that *dancing and singing* should be part of our celebrations.

The setting for our passage is a great victory for God's people.

It's really a three-fold victory.

David was anointed king over the Northern and Southern kingdom, they defeated the armies of the Philistines in battle, and the Ark of the Covenant of God was returned to the people.

The Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of God's presence with the people had been captured by the Philistines and now it was back in its rightful place in the midst of God's people.

David organized a parade, and a party in the streets.

Everyone was given food for their household so all could eat, all could share in the joy.

And David danced before the Lord.

David danced with wild abandon, not thinking about what anyone else thought, but he danced with all his might to the Lord.

David, was called a man after God's own heart.

He was a great leader of the people, and in many ways a great king.

The people prospered under David's kingship.

I was thinking about some of the things that made David a great King and leader.

We see some of the answer in this passage and in Chapter 5. With every decision, David enquired of the Lord, what he should do, the Lord answered, and David followed God's direction (usually).

When David followed this method, he was successful, and the kingdom flourished.

Today we are inducting elders.

Some of you have been ordained as elders and know something of how session functions, or you know how a session should function.

For others of you it is mystery.

I have worked with many different sessions over the years.

I have worked with a great number of elders over the years.

And I want to thank you for electing and calling an excellent session.

You have recognized God's call on people, you have prayed, and those who are serving as elders have prayed, and the church is blessed.

I, as part of session, am blessed.

The people who have been called and elected, I have had the privilege of serving with already.

And I know that they are people who seek God's will.

When session meets we read the Bible together, we pray together, we pray for you, we pray for God's direction in the decisions that are before us.

We take time to thank God for you, for the good things God is doing in our midst, and we seek to be faithful to God, and keep our eyes fixed on God, seeking what is God's will for God's church, and how to care for the congregation that has been entrusted to us.

When David fought, he fought for the Lord.  
When David danced, he danced for the Lord with all his might.  
What David did, he did for the Lord.

He lost himself in worship and praise of God.  
That's not easy for us to do as Presbyterians.

We are not good at having our eyes so fixed on God, that we forget about everyone else.

Michal, the wife of David, the daughter of Saul, a proper princess, thought David was making a fool of himself.  
He was not conducting himself in kingly fashion, he wasn't concerned about his image.

Instead of being caught up in the joy and celebration, Michal was throwing stones- criticizing David from the sidelines.

It occurs to me that it's easy to criticize from the sidelines- there are always people playing that part, usually they are not the people who have done the work, or been engaged in bringing the victory.

Today our elders elect are going to take vows, and you are also going to take vows.

Our elders promise to perform their duties in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, striving to build up Christ's church and to strengthen its mission in the world.

But this is a partnership.

We share this mission and ministry.

We are all under the Lordship of Jesus.

We need to be praying for one another and all of us have our eyes fixed on Jesus and where he is leading us together.

We have much to give thanks to God for as Calvin Church.  
Today we celebrate as we induct new elders.  
Today we gather in worship, doing all things with joy before the Lord.

I pray that all of us will be given hearts like David, a man after God's own heart, that together we would seek God's will, and have the courage to carry it out, and all that we do, we might do to the fullest for the glory of God.

Thanks be to God.

**Prayer:** Gracious God, you have given us the example of David, a mighty leader, who served you well and led your people well. We pray that you would give us hearts like David, hearts that seek you, and have courage to follow your leading. WE pray that you would teach us to so have our eyes fixed on you that we wouldn't worry about the world around us. Help us to do everything well for you and for your glory.  
Amen.