

## SMALL GROUP STUDY GUIDE

**Message Title:** "The Lord is My Shepherd"

**Speaker:** Pastor Kevin Myers

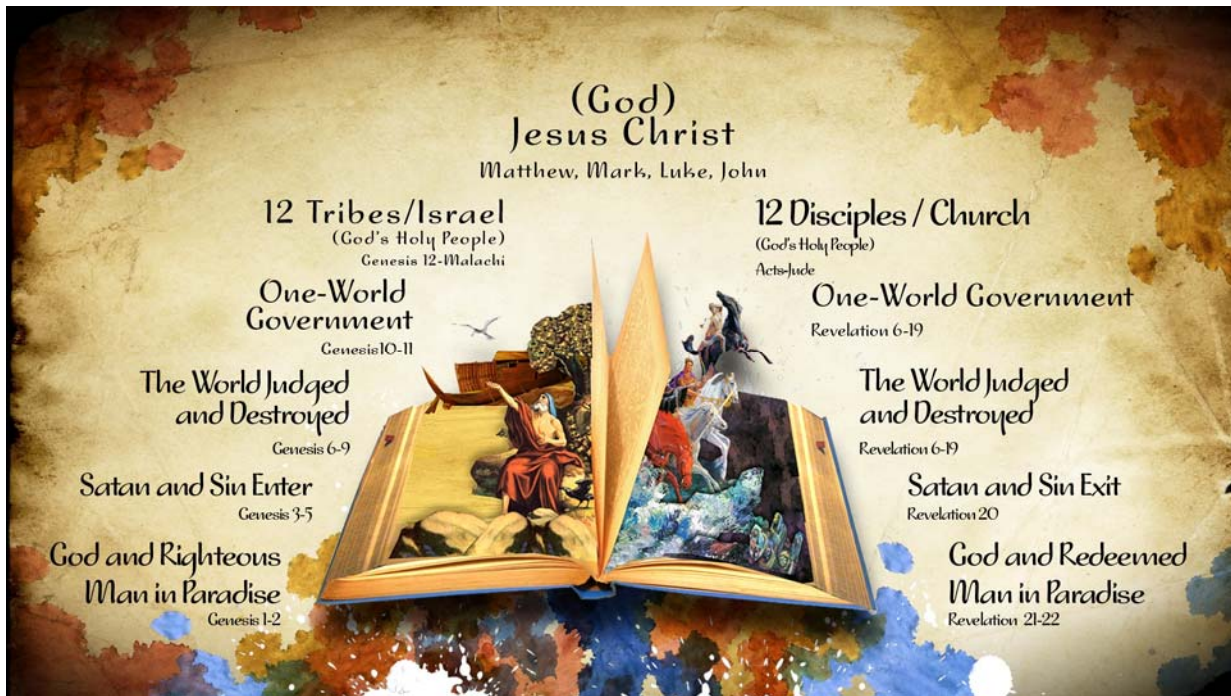
**Date:** March 9, 2008

### **Icebreaker:**

PK shared a light-hearted email from someone who claimed to be confused by the informal and inconsistent "dress code" at 12Stone. Did you know that our tradition of telling our neighbor "You look good," followed up by "Who cares?" had a scriptural foundation? Because 1 Samuel 16:7 says, "Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart," we don't think God cares much about what we wear to church, or whether our shirt is tucked or untucked. Did you grow up in a tradition that included wearing your "Sunday best" to church? When you first visited 12Stone, did our "come as you are" culture help you feel comfortable, or did it require a little adjustment?

### **Message Overview:**

This week, we dive into the story of David, one more "puzzle piece" in the major movement identified as "12 Tribes/Israel (God's Holy People)" in the big picture of God's story, below:



If King David could share one life lesson for Israel and for us, it might be this:

- Never Confuse **Faith Intention** with **Faith In Action**.

Trained as a shepherd, David had a unique understanding of what it means to live like a sheep and to know that **"The Lord is my Shepherd."** His life demonstrates that when you live "in the pen" and know that God is with you, He will give you:

- **Courage** in the midst of What We Run *From*; and
- **Confidence** in the midst of What We Run *Toward*.

**Discussion:**

(Leaders: Do not try to cover every question provided in this study guide, but rather review the complete list, selecting a mix of questions that work best for your group, mixing scripture research/discussion as well as personal application of the teaching principles.)

**Never Confuse *Faith Intention* with *Faith In Action*.**

- Read some excerpts from a song that the Israelites sang to God shortly after Moses led them in their escape from Egypt in Exodus chapter 15, verses 2, 11 and 13. Now, read what the people had to say after their first look at the Promised Land, in Deuteronomy 1:26-28 and 32. What happened to their faith? How could a journey that started with such good intentions get so far off track? Can you think of any other biblical examples of "faith intention" that failed to translate into "faith in action"?
- Have you ever known someone who "talked a good game" but never followed through with the actions they promised? In relationships, or in business, how much credit do we give others for their good intentions if they fail to deliver? In your faith journey, can you think of a time when you've had good intentions – to read the Bible, to pray, to give, to invite a friend to church, etc. – but failed to put your intentions into action?
- Read part of the David & Goliath story in 1 Samuel 17:8-11, 32-27 and 41-47. Why was David willing to step up and face the mighty Philistine when his brothers and the other Israelites were not? What made David different?
- Goliath was a literal giant who stopped the Israelites in their tracks and stalled their progress. What are the "giants" that test your faith and threaten to stall you on personal spiritual journey?

**The Lord is My Shepherd: He Gives Us Courage in the midst of What We Run From.**

- Look again at 1 Samuel 17:34-37. As a shepherd, how did David protect his sheep from danger? In Psalm 23:4, David wrote, "*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me.*" How did David's experience as a shepherd prepare him to be a giant-killer? How did it prepare him to be a king?
- This week's service included a video clip from the *Late Show with David Letterman* that revealed his rather extreme fear of snakes. Anybody else want to confess to an irrational fear? Snakes, spiders, escalators, clowns...what sends you running for cover? It may look funny to others, but it's real to you, right?

- PK shared a story from the 19<sup>th</sup> century writings of George Mueller about a man who was so consumed with working to provide for his family that he had little time for prayer or communion with God. He encouraged the man to make time for God, telling him, *"It is not your work which supports your family, but the Lord."* How do you think it would transform the Church today if all who call themselves followers of Christ fully embraced this truth and depended on God as provider and protector?
- In Psalm 23:4, David acknowledges God as the source of his courage: *"...you are with me; your rod and your staff; they comfort me."* Does knowing that God is with you give you real courage and tangible comfort in your real-life, every day challenges? How can you move the belief that God is with you from head-knowledge to heart-knowledge?

### **The Lord is My Shepherd: He Gives Us Confidence in the midst of What We Run Toward.**

- After David's time, God raised up king after king. For each, the essential question was whether they would live as their own shepherd or follow after God and trust Him as their shepherd. By the end of the Old Testament, Israel was a mess: conquered, divided, scattered. Read God's promise to His people in Micah 2:12-13. When and how was this promise fulfilled?
- PK shared a quote from writer Henry Blackaby: *"It's not always possible to recover from opportunities lost by unbelief."* Looking back at your life, can you see any opportunities that you may have missed because you failed to fully trust God and step out on faith? If so, how do you deal with that regret?
- The New Testament teaches us about the importance of putting our faith into action, too. Read James 2:14-26. Do you think the Church today, as a whole, is guilty of claiming to have faith but producing few useful deeds? In what areas? How can we do a better job of putting our faith into action?
- Psalm 23 ends with an affirmation that God's favor is real: *"Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* Do you share David's confidence in God's goodness and love – even during difficult circumstances? What evidence of God's goodness and love do you see in your own life?

#### **Wrap-Up:**

Challenge group members to consider this question: "Am I living like a sheep 'inside the pen', at peace knowing the Lord is with me?"

Pray together, asking:

- That we would know God as our protector, provider and caretaker
- That He would rescue us from anxiety, fear and discouragement
- That He would grant us the same confidence He gave David, that we might know in our hearts, *"The Lord IS my shepherd!"*



**Throughout the Week: (Optional)**

(Leaders: Share these optional exercises for further study and growth with your group.)

Try memorizing (or re-memorizing) the entire 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm this week. In your prayer time, try focusing on one verse each day, asking God to give you fresh insight into the beautiful metaphor of God as our Shepherd:

*"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.*

*He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,*

*he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.*

*Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.*

*You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.*

*Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever." (Psalm 23:1-6, NIV)*

## **Appendix 1: Historical Overview of the Life of David**

1041 BC

David, son of Jesse (1 Samuel 16:1), the youngest of eight boys (1 Samuel 16:10-11) was born in Bethlehem. As a young shepherd boy he was anointed by the prophet Samuel to become king (1 Samuel 16:1-13), because he was a man after God's heart (1 Samuel 13:14).

For a while David was in the service of King Saul as a harp player to calm him when evil spirits would torment him (1 Samuel 16:14-23). David also became one of King Saul's armor-bearers (1 Samuel 16:21).

While he was a young boy, David defeated the Philistine Goliath (1 Samuel 17). After this victory, he became a high army ranking official, was very successful and highly praised by the people. He became friends with King Saul's son Jonathan, and married King Saul's daughter Michal. But King Saul started becoming jealous of David and Saul tried to kill him (1 Samuel 18).

In the following years, David was on the run most of the time, trying to stay safe from King Saul. He was aided by both Michal (1 Samuel 19:11-17) and Jonathan (1 Samuel 20). While fleeing from King Saul, he gathered other men around him (1 Samuel 22:1-2) and remained a successful warrior (1 Samuel 23:1-6). On two occasions, though David could have killed King Saul, he graciously spared him his life (1 Samuel 24 and 26).

He also took two more wives, Abigail and Ahinoam (1 Samuel 25: 42-43).

During these years David often asked God what to do (e.g. 1 Samuel 23:2, 10; 30:7-8), but he also made some poor choices, when deciding on his own (1 Samuel 21:10-15; 27:1).

The years as a fugitive finally ended for David when King Saul and Jonathan died in a battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 31:1-6).

1011 BC

After grieving the death of King Saul and Jonathan, David became king over Judah (the southern part of Israel) and reigned from the city of Hebron. He was in constant war with the northern part of Israel, who was reigned by Ish-Bosheth, a son of Saul (2 Samuel 1:1 – 3:1).

During that time, six sons were born to David from six of his seven wives (2 Samuel 3:2-5).

Ish-Bosheth's reign became weaker and he even lost the commander of his army, Abner. Abner switched sides to go to David, but was murdered by Joab (David's commander) for personal reasons (2 Samuel 3:6-39). After reigning for seven and a half years, Ish-Bosheth was murdered (2 Samuel 4).

1004 BC

David became king over all of Israel and conquered Jerusalem. He made Jerusalem the capital of Israel and enlarged it (2 Samuel 5:1-12).

Over the course of time David took more wives and concubines who gave birth to many sons (2 Samuel 5:13-15 – in this list, the sons of Bathsheba are also included, although they were born later on).

David had the ark of God brought to Jerusalem and God made a covenant with him, promising him that his house and kingdom would endure forever (2 Sam. 6-7).

In the following years David had many military victories (2 Samuel 8, 10). He also showed integrity by the way he treated Jonathan's son Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9).

David committed adultery with Bathsheba, had her husband Uriah murdered and he then married her (2 Samuel 11). After their son was born, the prophet Nathan confronted and rebuked David about his sin. David repented, but their son died (2 Samuel 12:1-25).

Anmon, one of David's sons, raped his half-sister Tamar. David did nothing about it, so after two years Absalom (Tamar's brother) had Anmon killed. Absalom fled and stayed away for three years before he was allowed back to the city of Jerusalem. But it took another two years for Absalom to be allowed to see his father David (2 Samuel 13-14).

After many years, Absalom rebelled against his father King David and built up his own followers. He let himself be called king. David had to flee together with many of his supporters. Absalom not only took some of David's concubines for himself; he also tried to fight against David. But God's hand was over David, so that his people had victory and Absalom was killed (2 Samuel 15-18).

David's reign was restored, but the following years were still rather turbulent (2 Samuel 19-21, 24). Although he followed God's lead concerning the Gibeonites (2 Samuel 21), David went his own way again in the census (2 Samuel 24). Later on he could fight off the urge of his son Adonijah to want to become king, by making his son Solomon king (1 Kings 1).

971 BC

David died at the age of 70 and Solomon became king over Israel (1 Kings 2:1-12).

## **Appendix 2: Goliath and the Philistines**

The Philistines are mentioned for the first time in Genesis 10:13-14: "Mizraim was the father of the Ludites, Anamites, Lehabites, Naphtuhites, Pathrusites, Casluhites (from whom the Philistines came) and Caphtorites." They were a widely spread people, likely originating in Crete, an island south of Greece (see Jeremiah 47:4). Being an island people, they spread out early and could be found in Egypt and in Canaan (Genesis 21:32-34, Exodus 13:17).

In Canaan the Philistines occupied five cities: Gaza, Ashdod, Ashkelon, Gath and Ekron (Joshua 13:3). Except for Gath, they were all on the Mediterranean coast. Each city had its own ruler, but they pulled together to fight against their enemies. At the time of Saul it seemed that the ruler of Gath had the position of the leader of the rulers. They were one of the primary enemies of Israel and were only under control while David and Solomon were king in Israel. After that time they frequently attacked the territory of the Israelites.

Goliath came from the city of Gath (1 Samuel 17:4). He might have been a descendent from the Anakites (see Deuteronomy 9:2: The people are strong and tall—Anakites! You know about them and

have heard it said: "Who can stand up against the Anakites?" and Joshua 11:22: No Anakites were left in Israelite territory; only in Gaza, Gath and Ashdod did any survive.)

1 Samuel 17 describes Goliath as a champion who was over nine feet tall. His armor is noted in detail in verses 5-7. His spear was remarkable, especially considering the fact that the Israelites weren't able to make iron weapons (see 1 Samuel 13:19-22). Goliath must have felt invincible.

### **Appendix 3:**

#### **Genesis to Revelation Series Calendar**

##### **Message Topics:**

February 3  
Mirror Image

February 10  
In the Beginning

February 17  
Three Pivotal Promises

February 24  
Why is it called the Old Testament?

March 2  
Raiders of the Lost Ark?

March 9  
The Lord is My Shepherd....

March 16  
Christmas Gifts

March 23  
Why is it called the New Testament?

March 30  
Who Needs the Church?

April 6  
In the End

##### **Read Before:**

February 3  
(No reading – series overview)

February 10  
Genesis 1-3 (& 1-11)

February 17  
Genesis 12 & 15

February 24  
Exodus 1-4 & 20

March 2  
Exodus 25-27 & 40

March 9  
1Samuel 8, 16-17, Ps. 23

March 16  
Luke 2 & 4, John 3, 8 & 10

March 23  
Matthew 26-28, Acts 3

March 30  
Acts 1-2 & Jude

April 6  
Revelation 1, 19-22

Email any questions or feedback about this Study Guide to [robin.ritchie@12stone.com](mailto:robin.ritchie@12stone.com).