

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 30TH-31ST, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

PARANOIA (1 SAMUEL 22:6-10) "HIS SPEAR WAS IN HIS HAND"

After David left the "stronghold," Saul discovered where he had been. As Saul was sitting under a tree with a spear in his hand, his corrupt mind was drowning in jealousy and hatred.

- Saul's disconnect from God had led him to paranoia. This led to jealousy, conspiracy theories, and a hatred for others.

NOTICE THE FOCUS ON SELF

Saul **views himself as a victim** and David, a natural leader, as an enemy. He also thinks everyone is against him and accuses them of conspiring against him.

- **When we don't follow God, we naturally follow ourselves. In this, we often blame shift and refuse to take responsibility.**

SAUL ALSO USED FEAR TACTICS

In order to tempt his men to join him in killing David, Saul used fear tactics to try to appeal to their greed and power.

- **Selfish and sinful leaders will try to manipulate others with the temptation of pleasure or power. They will also use fear as a means of control.**

THE RAT MERCENARY

As everyone sat in awkward silence at Saul's tantrum, Doeg spoke up and reported what he had witnessed in Nob. The irony in the report is that it shows, through the provisions of Ahimelech, that God was on David's side.

- The **contrast of choosing selfishness over God** is now becoming crystal clear.

SLAUGHTER (1 SAMUEL 22:11-19)

SAUL SUMMONS THE PRIEST

Once Saul knew of the priest Ahimelech "inquir[ing] of the Lord" and providing help to David, he called for him and his family.

- Saul accused the priest of conspiracy against him, but Ahimelech gives the rational response, "Who among all your servants is as faithful as David?"

LACKING GOD LEADS TO IRRATIONAL ACTION

Ahimelech defended his actions with several reasonable points: 1) David had always been an advocate of Saul. 2) David had come to the priest many times to inquire about God. 3)

Ahimelech was also a servant of Saul. 4) Ahimelech didn't even know there was a problem.

- Because Saul was selfish and rebellious to God, His commands, and His Word, his mind had become sinful and corrupt (Romans 1). **In his sin, he was unable to think rationally and, therefore, made destructive decisions.**
- **We will go down the same path if we refuse to be humble and seek God's will!**

"YOU WILL DIE..."

Saul had attempted murder several times, but here he assures an innocent priest that he and his entire family will be killed "because they sided with David."

- Though Saul commands his soldiers to carry out the task, they refuse because they are righteous men who trust David and God.

DOEG, THE EXECUTOR

Saul turned to a foreigner and possible mercenary to carry out the execution of the 85 priests before he traveled another hour to kill the citizens and livestock in Nob. Doeg seemed to have no problem with the order.

- Here, we see **sin carried out to its inevitable destructive ends.**

A DANGEROUS PROGRESSION

Saul started off loving God, but over time, he focused more on himself. **The pursuit of self leads to sin, and sin always destroys things.**

- The slaughter of an entire village is an extreme example, but **our unaddressed selfishness and unrepented sin will also do significant damage.**

THE RESULTS OF OUR ABILITIES

We are also reminded about the dangers of following people over following God. God had warned His people **not to put their trust in an earthly king over Him, but they refused and were now suffering the consequences.**

- We're to honor authority because God distributes it, but we ultimately follow Him.

AN ESCAPE (1 SAMUEL 22:20-23)

"ONE OF THE SONS OF AHIMELECH... ESCAPED"

Saul was unsuccessful at eliminating the priest's line. Abiathar escaped and fled to David for help.

- Once David heard of the tragedy, he didn't place all the blame on Saul. He actually **accepted responsibility for where he was and what he said.**

HOW RESPONSIBLE WAS DAVID?

David's scheming and lying resulted in tragedy. That being said, Saul's actions were his decision. **There is never an excuse to sin or let jealousy and hatred take root.**

- **Other people's sins against us are not an excuse for us to sin or retaliate. We must trust God and allow Him to punish sin.**

GIVING REFUGE

David invited Abiathar to stay with him and his people because he would find security with them since they had a common enemy.

- As Christians, we not only find refuge in Christ, but **we should also find refuge in the church because we have a common enemy and need community.**

A SONG ABOUT DOEG AND SAUL

In Psalm 52, David writes about the vindication of God on Doeg and also about Saul, "the man who would not make God his refuge" but took "refuge in his destructive behavior."

- **We must take careful inventory to make sure we're never walking down the road of selfishness or revenge.**

FEAR FILLS THE VOID OF GOD

- Like Saul, **when we lack a true and consistent relationship with God, something will fill that space in our lives.**
- When we rely on our or other people's abilities, we eventually grow in **fear** because we learn that our ways are limited and eventually come up short.

TWO VERY DIFFERENT PATHS (PSALM 52)

- So, **we have two choices: our way or God's way.** Our way may result in temporary power or pleasure but will ultimately lead to "destructive behavior."
- But, **if we "put [our] hope in [His] name, for it is good," we will reap the benefits of God's eternal knowledge and love.**

THERE WILL BE OPPOSITION (1 PETER 4)

- **Selfishness** and the destructive results of it will always be present and **will manifest through inconsideration, ridicule, hatred, and even violence.**
- Unfortunately, many will choose this path, and it will result in pain for them and for others. How will we respond to that?

HOW WILL WE RESPOND?

- It is easy to lash back out at an aggressive and sinful world, but we must trust that God will not only sustain us if we choose to live in relationship with Him, but he will also hold all evil into account.
- **How will we respond to the sin and brokenness of our world in 2024?**
- Will we try to **build bridges**? Will we show **love** and speak **truth**? Will we pray for people? Will we **trust that God is in control**? Will we **strive to advance the gospel and the Kingdom of God through how we live**?