

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

DECEMBER 31ST, 2023 // 1 SAMUEL

### CONTEMPT (1 SAMUEL 22:6-10)

#### LANDMARKS

At this point, Saul has heard about David's band of disgruntled men. Sitting under a tamarisk tree, he holds a spear and begins his speech.

- The last time he was under a tree in Gibeah, he was with a priest (Ch 14); this time, he is looking for one. The spear is familiar, too – it usually accompanies his rage.

#### MEN OF BENJAMIN

Saul, the king of Israel, has not unified his kingdom. He chooses only those from his own tribe. He has become a tyrant but cannot enforce his tyranny alone.

- **Modern-day bullies will try to enlist others to their cause by implying that everyone else is against their way of life.**

#### THE BRIBE

Saul berates his men and accuses them of thinking that David would give them land and farms or make them leaders in his army. But because Saul is king, only he has the resources to reward these men.

- **David's men had come to him and were willing to give their lives for the freedom they had found from Saul's tyranny.**

#### PARANOID

Saul is convinced that these men had partnered with his son, Jonathan, and were withholding information to protect David.

- Saul suffered in fear that didn't exist. He had created the danger in his mind, and it didn't come from Jonathan or David.
- **Much of our own fear comes from what we think "might" happen.**

#### DOEG

Doeg is a servant after Saul's own heart. He hadn't given information (plus lies) until just the right time when only he could take credit and prove that he was faithful to the king.

- **There will always be someone to cry foul with those that accuse. Twisting the truth is their skill, and their lies can lead to suffering for the innocent.**

### UNLEASHED (1 SAMUEL 22:11-19)

#### ASSUMPTIONS

Saul sends for Ahimelech, and his questions for "the son of Ahitub" assume that he was guilty of conspiracy. Instead of seeking truth or even confessing his own sin and seeking God's forgiveness, he allows his paranoid rage to take over...again.

- **Fear makes assumptions and accusations. Wisdom seeks truth.**

#### REBUTTAL IN AN ILLEGAL TRIAL

Ahimelech first defends David and makes the same argument Jonathan had made before: David is honorable and innocent. He then gives an account of his time with David and clarifies that he was faithful to the king in his service to David.

- A trial required two witnesses by law, but Saul didn't care about the law or the truth.

#### THE VERDICT

Saul pronounces a verdict on Ahimelech and his entire family – everyone will die. Saul is set on murder. He has already tried to kill David (God's anointed) several times, his firstborn son twice, and now, "the priests of the Lord." Saul has set himself against God.

- **When we falsely accuse, judge, and condemn, we set ourselves against God.**

#### TOO FAR

Saul's command to his soldiers was not obeyed. There are some things that should never be done, and Saul has gone too far.

- **At what point do we decide to stop? How much sin is too much sin? How often will we hurt ourselves and others before we realize that it is time to say no to sin and yes to repentance and forgiveness?**

#### WAY TOO FAR

Enter Doeg. When no one else is willing, Doeg steps up to satisfy the king. In the aftermath, we find that everyone and everything in Nob was destroyed.

- **Evil is never satisfied with a little destruction. It will continue to consume until there is nothing left. Its goal is to remove all hope.**

### SAFE (1 SAMUEL 22:20-23)

#### HOWEVER...

One person, Abiathar, escaped. We don't know how; we just know that he brought the news to David. David had cried out to God (Psalm 34) and could now realize the results of his deception to Ahimelech.

- **We may come to a place of repentance and forgiveness, but it will take strength and courage to face our consequences.**

#### I AM RESPONSIBLE

This is a major shift in David's life. As a young man, he had been faithful to God and his duties. Now, he had failed and would have to own his mistakes. He chooses to follow God and commit to keeping others safe. He would put others before himself. He would act like a real king.

### DON'T BE AFRAID, YOU WILL BE SAFE

David would keep his word and Abiathar would stay with David throughout his reign. Saul would still pursue David and there will be many battles – physical and spiritual. It wouldn't be easy, but he would be safe.

- **Do we believe Jesus when He says, "Follow Me"? Why are we still afraid? Is there more we can do to know Him?**

#### ESCAPE

- Life's struggles can cause us to run.
- **We may need to stop our running long enough to see who we're running from.**
- **We may find that running away from God means we're running toward Satan and sin. It may be time to turn around.**

#### MESSENGRERS

- As we live, God will send messengers.
- **As we live, Satan will send messengers.**
- **As we live, we will have to discern the truth from the lies. We must prepare ourselves for each messenger and deal wisely with what we discover from each one.**

#### WANTS AND NEEDS

- We want peace, but we don't want to pay.
- **We want to be safe, but we don't follow.**
- **Real peace and safety are found when we are close to Christ. Will we confess our need for forgiveness? Will we follow Him? Will we work with His people for His glory and the good of our community? Will we take the next step before it gets worse?**