

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 20TH-21ST, 2024 // 1 SAMUEL

SPARING THE ENEMY (1 SAMUEL 24:1-7)

David was anointed as God's choice to be king of Israel by the prophet Samuel in chapter 16.

- God had communicated to Saul, the current king of Israel, that the day was soon coming when he would no longer be king because of his own rebellion and sin (1 Samuel 15).
- The Spirit of the Lord had left Saul, and God had allowed an evil spirit to torment Saul, which drove Saul to madness and jealousy.

Even though David has done nothing but serve, fight for, and honor the king, Saul has been on an obsessive, violent, and sadistic campaign to kill David.

- All of that leads us to this passage, where David is given the perfect opportunity to avenge himself, take matters into his own hands, and take action to rid himself of all his immediate problems by killing Saul.

After returning from pursuing the Philistines, Saul took 3,000 men and went to the wilderness of En-gedi to continue his pursuit of David (vs. 1-2).

- As Saul went along to the road, nature came calling, and Saul went into a cave to relieve himself (vs. 3).
- It just so happens that David and his men were hiding out in that cave! David's men see this as God delivering Saul over to him (vs. 4).

Apparently, the Lord, at some point, had given David a promise that He would deliver David's enemy over to him (1 Samuel 15:26-29, 16:1, 20:15).

- Just because God spoke this to David at some point didn't mean this was automatically the right time to fulfill that promise.
- It is tragically easy to confuse our desires and circumstances with the will of God.

David was a man after God's heart—he had a deep-seated desire to see things God's way, to do things God's way, and to be totally submissive to the will of the Lord in his life.

- We get a sense in this narrative that David knows (probably through the guidance of God's Spirit) the right thing to do. It's not the easy thing to do, but it's the right thing to do.
- The easy choice is not always the right choice.

David has a choice: Saul is alone and vulnerable, and if David kills him, all his immediate problems would be over, and he would surely ascend to the throne of Israel.

- But David also knows the word of God (Exodus 20:13), and that if God anointed Saul as king, God would be the One who removed him.
- David decides to simply cut off a corner of Saul's robe and quiet his men (vs. 5-7).

It's so easy to get sucked into the trap of believing that doing the wrong thing is justifiable in order to get the right result that we hope for.

- It's easy to justify doing things that disobey God and dishonor others just because it's the path of least resistance, and it's what our flesh wants.
- When we're obedient, patient, and seek to do the right thing that obeys God and shows honor, God sees, and He will sort out the details.

MY LORD, KING, AND FATHER! (1 SAMUEL 24:8-19)

Even simply cutting off a bit of Saul's robe bothered David's conscience.

- There is a bit of prophetic significance in Saul's royal robe being torn by David: it was a declaration that the kingdom and royalty would be transferred to David.
- As Saul left the cave and walked back to his men, David called to him and knelt low to the ground to honor him (vs. 8).

In verses 9-15, David pleads with Saul and tries to get him to see his complete innocence.

- Notice how respectful and honorable David is—he calls him "my lord," "the king," and "my father."
- David could've been spiteful, angry, and disrespectful, but despite all Saul had done to him, he showed honor and kindness.
- Ultimately, David refers the matter to the Lord and lets God handle this situation (vs. 15).

Some of us might want to see David giving Saul the "what-for," but David doesn't even accuse Saul of jealousy or paranoia; he simply pleads with him that this must be a misunderstanding due to someone advising Saul poorly (vs. 9).

- Do we want to prove a point or make a difference?
- David begs Saul to see the truth of his character—David wasn't a rebel and didn't wish harm on Saul in any way (vs. 10-11).

David calls upon the Lord to judge, handle, and deal with the situation of how Saul had treated him, but David says to Saul, "My hand will never be against you" (vs. 12, 15).

- The Lord is a righteous judge, and God can handle injustice and dishonorable people much better than we can.
- It is not wrong to acknowledge and confront the sins of injustice and dishonor. However, we are not called to seek revenge or retaliate dishonorably.

David's act of mercy, kindness, and honor in the face of Saul's murderous dishonor melts the heart of Saul (vs. 16).

- Saul weeps and calls David his son and affirms David's innocence and righteousness in the face of his own violence and wickedness (vs. 17-18).
- Saul has been cursing and wanting David dead, and now, because of David's remarkable act, he blesses him (vs. 19).

DO YOU SEEK TO PROVE A POINT OR TRULY MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Often, when it comes to confrontation or disagreements, some of us simply want an outlet and expression for our sinful flesh and pride.

- When we respond dishonorably to dishonorable situations or people, the situation gets messier, more painful, and more unresolvable.
- How would God have me resolve this?

"YOU WILL BE KING..." (1 SAMUEL 24:20-22)

Now Saul confessed that he knew David would be the next king (vs. 20).

- Saul simply asked David for the same promise of mercy that David had made to Jonathan (vs. 21).
- Though Saul had done nothing to merit this act of mercy from David, David made a promise.
- Saul went back to his home, and David returned to his stronghold (vs. 22).

THE POWER OF MERCY (VS. 22A)

Mercy is when we don't give someone what they rightly deserve.

- We are commanded to show mercy because God has shown mercy to us (Ephesians 4:32), and we are to demonstrate His mercy to others (Micah 6:8).
- We are to show mercy because we are going to need mercy in our future (James 2:13).
- Giving mercy, grace, and forgiveness frees us.

THE WISDOM OF CAUTION (VS. 22B)

"David and his men went up to the stronghold."

- Even though Saul had partially expressed his sin, the validity of true repentance and a changed heart is not demonstrated by the emotion or sincerity of a moment—it is shown by the direction of one's life.
- David had every right to stay in the stronghold until he *witnessed true repentance* in Saul's life.
- Forgiving, showing mercy, extending grace, and loving a person like Jesus does not mean that the relationship is immediately 100% restored when they express remorse or that we must place ourselves in a position for them to continually hurt or mistreat us.
- It is wise to be cautious and observe the fruit of their life first before we extend any more trust.

Killing Saul would have made a lot of sense, yet David stands firm in his honor of the king because he sees it as impossible to honor God and achieve the purpose of God by breaking the commands of God.

- When we are in situations of discomfort, pain, or injustice, we are faced with similar decisions that also might make a lot of sense from a worldly vantage point.

FROM A WORLDLY VANTAGE POINT, IT'S EASY TO JUSTIFY...

- An ungodly romantic relationship because of loneliness, discontentment, or a bad marriage.
- An unwise financial decision because of convenience.
- Finding relief from a stressful career or lifestyle through a private vice or secret addiction.
- Dishonorable attitudes, words, or actions toward an employer or coworker who has mistreated us.

WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR OUR CHOICES.

- People are going to show us dishonor, treat us poorly, and do unkind, unloving, and unjust things to us—that's on them, and God will deal with them.
- We are accountable for the choices we make in response—we can do what seems easy, comfortable, or aligns with the desires of our flesh and what we want.
- We can seek revenge or look to retaliate.

CHOOSING THE PATH OF HONOR.

- Even when we are treated dishonorably, we are still expected to honor God with how we choose to respond (Hebrews 13:18).
- We are also called to show honor to everyone (1 Peter 2:17) and treat others how we wish to be treated (Luke 6:31) REGARDLESS of who they are.
- We are still accountable for OUR choices.
- Romans 12:17-21, ESV

LEAVE IT UP TO GOD.

- If your heart's desire is to see things God's way, to do things God's way, and to be totally submissive to the will of the Lord in your life, the Holy Spirit will guide you to the right choices.
- Sometimes, making the right, God-honoring choice means saying no to shortcuts and being patient by trusting in God's timing and plan.
- God is a far better judge than you are—let Him deal with those in your life who have mistreated you.
- God knows far more than you do and has a perfect plan with perfect timing—let Him open doors for you and work things out.
- Do what is honorable, wait on God's plan and timing, and trust the Lord.