

# THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

FEBRUARY 3RD-4TH, 2024 // 1 SAMUEL

## SPARING THE ENEMY (1 SAMUEL 26:1-12)

The people of the city of Ziph (who had betrayed David earlier, 23:19) rat out David once again by reporting his whereabouts to Saul (vs. 1).

- Even though Saul had previously expressed repentance for his murderous pursuit of David, he apparently hadn't meant it—he takes 3,000 of his men to pursue David (vs. 2).
- Fortunately, David and his spies were able to spot Saul and his army first (vs. 3-4).
- David went to scout out where Saul was and found Saul and his men in their camp asleep (vs. 5).
  - For the second time, David is given the perfect opportunity to kill Saul.
  - As Saul slept, David and Abishai quietly crept to where Saul and Abner were lying down (vs. 6).
  - There next to Saul's head was his spear—which would've also acted as his scepter (vs. 7).
- Abishai was sure it was God's will for him to kill Saul and put an end to his violent campaign against the Lord's true king, but David stopped him (vs. 8-9).
  - For Abishai, this would've been perfect poetic justice—the spear used to kill Saul would be the king's own spear, the same spear that was thrown at David in an attempt to kill him!
  - But David would have none of it.

David had seen what the Lord did to Nabal, and he was sure that Saul's life would end at the right time and in the right way, whether by natural death or judgment from the Lord (vs. 10).

- David had already made up his mind that he would never strike down the king of Israel—God had anointed Saul king, and God would remove Saul as king.
- Instead of taking Saul's life, David took his spear and water jug to prove to Saul a second time that he had no intention to kill him, even when he was given the opportunity to do so (vs. 12).
  - God's supernatural intervention was present that night, as God had put Saul and his army into a deep sleep.
  - No one saw David and Abishai, no one knew, and no one woke up.

## REASONING WITH THE ENEMY (1 SAMUEL 26:13-25)

David and Abishai crossed over to the hill opposite Saul's camp, where David called out to Abner, the commander of Saul's army (vs. 13-14).

- David calls Abner out—taunting him for not protecting the king by asking him to find the king's spear and jug of water (vs. 15-16).
- Saul wakes up and recognizes the voice coming from the hill as David's and calls out to him, to which David responds (vs. 17).

Once again, David asks Saul why the king was pursuing him—what had he done to deserve such horrible treatment? (vs. 18)

- If David had sinned and the Lord had incited Saul against him, he volunteered to bring an offering and make things right.
- But if people had incited Saul to pursue David, he swore that they would be cursed before the Lord (vs. 19).

David's simple request is for Saul not to let his "blood fall to the ground"—there was no reason for Saul to kill David (vs. 20).

- Once again, Saul is overcome with emotion and expresses remorse and repentance (vs. 21).
- Real repentance is not shown by the sincerity of a moment or the public display of emotion—it is demonstrated by a changed life.

David doesn't seem to buy Saul's expression of remorse—his only response is to let one of the young men come retrieve Saul's spear (vs. 22).

- David reminds Saul (and probably himself) of an important truth—"the Lord will repay every man for his righteousness and loyalty."
  - David had shown Saul great mercy, and he believed the Lord would repay him for that.
- Saul had not shown David mercy, and David believed the Lord would repay for him that. "For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Matt. 7:2, NIV)
- David refused to take the throne of Israel through murder and rebellion—he would wait on God's timing and let God do it for him.
  - Saul also affirmed this truth (vs. 25).

## "DO NOT BE DECEIVED: GOD CANNOT BE MOCKED. A MAN REAPS WHAT HE SOWS" (GAL. 6:7, NIV).

There are natural consequences to our actions—every time we make a choice, we're also choosing the consequences of that action.

- If we sow anger, revenge, and selfishness, we will receive what those things naturally produce.
- Good things don't grow overnight—we have to be patient as we do good and wait to see fruit.

## SURRENDER TO THE ENEMY (1 SAMUEL 27:1-28:2)

What do we do with this season/stage of David's life? Does God sanction David's compromise, deceit, and murderous raids?

- Not at all—notice how the name of God, talk of God, and seeking God are suspiciously absent from David's life in Chapter 27.
- Through a progressive series of poor choices, David veers off the path and enters into a season of compromise and sin.

## DISCOURAGEMENT, DOUBT, AND DESPAIR (VS. 1)

Even though God had provided for and delivered David from his enemies supernaturally many times, David was probably tired.

- David had every reason to stay in the land of Israel and continue to trust God for protection and provision, but his discouragement manifested as him doubting God's ability to continue to protect and provide for him.
- Sometimes, the life of faith looks like enduring in obedience and faithfulness to Jesus even when everything in you feels like throwing in the towel and giving up (Heb. 12:1).
- Faith often means pushing through the discouragement and despair by simply believing God's promises and choosing to keep going.

- This is why we need encouragement!

## FINDING REFUGE IN THE UNBELIEVING WORLD (VS. 2-4)

In his discouragement, despair, and doubt, David decides the safest place to be is in a pagan, idolatrous land (Gath) under the leadership of a pagan, idolatrous king (Achish).

- David's reasoning was essentially, "When Saul finds out I'm in Gath, he'll stop looking for me."
- David moves all 600 of his men and his entire family into this pagan, idolatrous land.
- Sometimes, as Christians, we're tempted to go back to living a self-centered, worldly, "easy" life full of comfort, pleasure, and sin.
- Often, we think life will be easier for us because we won't have to worry about things like holiness, serving God/others, and living under the accountability of Scripture.
- That "freedom" always costs us something.

## COMPROMISE (VS. 5)

David—the future king of Israel, the man after God's own heart, the one who "fights the Lord's battles"—seeks favor and calls himself the servant of a pagan, idolatrous king in requesting a city to live in with his men.

- When we stop living for God's glory and His approval, it's very easy to find ourselves living for the approval and favor of the world.

## COMPLACENCY (VS. 6-7)

Achish, King of Gath, gives David the city of Ziklag, a town about 25 miles southwest of Gath.

- For 16 months, David resides as a servant of a Philistine king in lands he was meant to liberate.
- David should have felt uncomfortable and uneasy in his conscience living in Ziklag and paying tribute to the pagan king Achish.

## LAWLESSNESS (VS. 8-9)

While living in Ziklag, indirectly serving the Philistine king, David deceptively raids the surrounding Canaanites as a mercenary and bandit.

- David would attack these villages and encampments, kill everybody, strip the loot, and return to Ziklag.
- This was no way for the man after God's own heart to live! This was violent, greedy, and self-serving.
- When our hearts have surrendered to worldliness, compromise, and complacency, there's no telling the kind of actions or behaviors we're capable of committing and justifying.
- Sin will take us further than we want to go, keep us longer than we want to stay, and cost us more than we want to pay.

## LIES AND DECEIT (VS. 10-12)

Achish thought David was attacking cities in Judah, but he was actually raiding the allies of the Philistines.

- At the same time, David eliminated the danger of any survivors taking the word back to Gath to expose David's lies.
- David would bring Achish false reports from his raids, which Achish believed.
- Lifeways of lawlessness and sin require us to conceal and hide our behavior from others.
- When we know how we're living is wrong, the biggest lies we tell are lies to ourselves! ("At least I'm not doing \_\_\_\_\_," "It's not that big of a deal," "I can stop anytime I want," "I'm going to stop after this one last time," "It's not hurting anybody").
- Lies always hurt people—and they hurt us first.

## BONDAGE (28:1-2)

David lies to Achish, telling him he has raided the people of Israel—now he is forced to live that lie and surrender himself to be the permanent bodyguard to this enemy king!

- David has come to a very low place—because of his compromise, wickedness, and sin, he now has to fight on the side of the enemy and march out against Israel.
- "You're gonna have to serve somebody..."—Bob Dylan.
- In this cosmic, transcendent battle of good vs. evil and light vs. dark, there are only two sides, and there is no neutral ground.
- The great lie is that living for yourself and pursuing personal autonomy apart from God is "freedom"—but it's simply bondage to a kingdom of darkness and evil.

## THE MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART?

- David gives into doubt, discouragement, and despair and sinks into a downward spiral of compromise and sin.
- David kills innocent people and lies to cover it up.
- David finds himself enslaved by and even fighting for the enemy!
- Yet, this is not how David's story ends—God's not done with David.

## CONSEQUENCES.

- Sin always has consequences (Gal. 6:7).
- David's sin leads him into a crisis of loyalty against his own people (28:1-2, 29:1-11), and it leads to the destruction of the entire city of Ziklag and its inhabitants (30:1-2).
- Even after David repents, later in life, he's disqualified from the task of building the temple because of his bloodshed (1 Chr. 22:8).

## MERCY TRIUMPHS OVER JUDGMENT (JAMES 2:13)

- Despite David's failures and repeated disobedience during this dark season, David will turn back to the Lord (1 Sam. 30:6).
- Even though David sinned and ran from the Lord, God responded and forgave him.
- In God alone, David found mercy, strength, and wisdom to continue to pursue God's purposes for his life.

## "PRONE TO WANDER, LORD I FEEL IT..." -COME THOU FOUNT

- Do not let discouragement, doubt, and despair be the lens through which you view God—believe God's promises in your life, despite your circumstances or emotions.
- Know that your freedom isn't found in autonomy or a life lived apart from God—that is a lie.
- Watch out for the small temptations to compromise, be complacent, or seek the world's approval.

## YOU DON'T HAVE TO STAY WHERE YOU ARE RIGHT NOW.

- Maybe you've run far from God and sank to depths you never thought possible—it is not too late for you (Isa. 55:6, Rev. 3:20).
- There might be some consequences for your sinful and poor choices, but that is the Lord's loving discipline in your life (Heb. 12:6).
- God's mercy, grace, and restoration are available for anyone who would repent and call on Jesus.