

David spares Saul's life again

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[0:00] As the church Lord and as individuals so that we might serve you better in this coming week and forevermore. Amen.!

Amen. Well, this week's been an interesting week. The media have told us that King Charles III has got cancer. He was being treated for an enlarged prostate and they found cancerous tissue in his body.

It's being diagnosed early, thankfully. So hopefully it will be treated and it won't come back. But we don't know. Currently, the king is now undergoing treatment to eradicate this horrible disease.

The king is experiencing a trial in his life. It's not going to be easy for him. So we pray for him that he will get better soon.

Likewise, here in our passage this morning, tribulation in the desert. We see a king in waiting going through another trial in the desert like we saw a couple of weeks ago.

[1:16] A tribulation that will bring about some helpful lessons to David and for us this morning if we are listening to the voice of God.

So let's look at this passage. Please turn there if you haven't got it in front of you. It's 1 Samuel chapter 26.

1 Samuel chapter 26. And I would like the children to help this morning. So it's especially helpful, children, if you've got a Bible in front of you. Yeah? Please, children, make sure you have a Bible so you can help me this morning.

Where are the children, by the way? Can you put your hand up so I can see you? Hello. Good to see you. Oren. Yep. Any more at the back? No? Great. So the children are going to help me first. So are you ready, children? From the passage. Where did Saul go to find David in verse 2? I've got some help for you on the screen.

[2:31] The W of Ziph. It could be with a D in your Bibles, depending on the translation. It could start with a D. Can anybody put their hand up? Verse 2.

Bethany? Yes, that's right. The desert of Ziph, or the wilderness, it might be translated in your passage. Now, perhaps someone else.

How many men did Saul take in verse 2? How many men did Saul take with him? Gracie? Brilliant. Well done. 3,000 men. That's a lot of men, isn't it? To go on this trip. And what did Saul do on the hill of Hakila?

He made a something in verse 3. What did he do on this hill of Hakila? Yep.

[3:26] Daniel? Well done. Yeah, he made a camp. Yeah. You can see that in the picture behind. You look closely. And lastly, how does David find out where Saul and his men are in verse 4?

Yeah. Isaac? Isaac? He sent out scouts. And men are not Saul. And then they're dead. Thank you. Yeah, he sent out scouts. Or perhaps in your translation, it says spies.

To find out where Saul is and his men are. Where this camp is. That's right. I think there's one more actually. Yeah. And lastly, who does David see lying down in the camp?

S and A in verse 5. Yeah. Bethany? That's right.

Saul and Abner, who's actually a family relation and his commander. That's right. Good. Thank you, children.

[4:35] So, my first point is more trials from these verses 1 to 5.

Life is full of trials, isn't it, brothers and sisters, friends? In our lifetime, we experience the whole range of them. Some are seemingly small.

Some loom large in our lives. And David encountered diverse trials that most of us will probably never face.

Imagine 3,000 fighting men wanting your life. Setting off to destroy you. Coming close to you. Hunting you down. How would you feel? David has had his fair share of tests. As we've seen through this book.

[5:33] A boy fighting against the Philistine giant, Goliath. As a shepherd boy, protecting his sheep from lions, bears and wolves.

Going to war against his enemies, the Philistines. And perhaps Saul is up there as the highest test in David's life.

David has had countless attacks and threats from Saul. And we've seen them, haven't we? Remember the spear being thrown at him?

Do you recall how he had to leave his home and run away? Brothers and sisters, life is full of tests. Having evasive dental treatments.

Having to deal with a difficult customer or colleague at work. Dealing with unruly children. Facing a tempestuous boss.

[6:34] Being picked on in the school playground. Going through bad health. Add your own ones. And the Christian life is the same.

We are expected to face them. And we shall face them day to day. In James chapter 1 verse 2 it says, Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.

For you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect.

That you may be perfect and complete. Lacking in nothing. The church then was going through diverse trials.

How should we see these? Should we try and escape them? Hunker down and ignore them? We can't. They are given to us from God.

[7:39] To make us steadfast. In Romans it says, Rejoice in your sufferings. Knowing that suffering produces endurance.

And endurance produces character. David's character. David's character was made through these ordeals. I'm sure he would have wanted them to go away.

But in hindsight, he would have said, These were good for me. They made me trust in God more. They made me braver.

More of a leader. Wiser. More resilient. More able to cope with life. Wiser. Do you see life like this? Thank God for those trials in your life. That get us through life. That help us depend on him more.

[8:44] Otherwise, life would be easy, wouldn't it? And we wouldn't rely on him. More trials. What trials are you going through now?

Perhaps you've had this trial all your life. Most of your life. Do you see how God has shaped you through it? Moulded you more like the Lord Jesus Christ.

Has he deepened your trust in God? How can you see God working through those trials to strengthen your character?

Do you see the benefits of them? Well, let's look at the next section. Verses 6 to 12.

And we've got some more questions for the children. Are you awake, children? Are you ready?

Verses 6 to 12. Okay. So, what does David decide to do in verse 6?

[9:50] Go into where? What does he decide to do? Yeah, Otis? Thank you, Otis.

Yeah. He decides to go into the camp with Saul, Abner and the 3,000 men. Wow. What a brave man.

Who offers to go with him in verse 6? There's someone who's brave enough to go with David. David asks, who will go down with me?

Who goes down with David? Oh, in the camp yet, Bethany? Thank you. Yeah. In verse 6, it says, Abishai, son of Zeruah, Joab's brother.

Yeah? He says, I'll go with you. Yeah, Abishai goes down. And what time of the day do they do this in verse 7?

[10:59] When do they go down into the camp? Gracie? At night time. Well done, Gracie. Yeah. That's right. You see that in verse 7.

Went to the army by night. Oh, how daring. Next question. Boys and girls. What is Saul doing at this time?

And what is near his head in verse 7? I've got you some prompts on the screen to help you. So first of all, what is Saul doing in the camp in verse 7?

Gracie again. Well done, Gracie. Yeah. That's right. He's asleep. As well as Abner and the rest of the men.

And what is near his head? Anybody? Boys and girls? Isaac Rayfield? Sorry? A spear.

[12:03] Well done. Yeah. And there's something else as well. Oh, perhaps it doesn't say that. No. Yeah, it just says a spear. Oh, Bethany?

There's a jug of water. Yeah. Where was that? Which verse is that in? In verse 12, someone shouts. Thank you. Yeah, there's a jug of water as well.

We'll look at that. But in verse 7, it just says a spear near his head. And what does Abishai want to do? In verse 8, boys and girls. What does Abishai want to do?

So they're down in the camp. They've got into the camp. They're right next to Saul and Abner. Some of the pictures will help you with this. What do they decide to do?

What does Abishai actually want to do? Is Orin there? Can we ask Orin? Because you haven't asked. No? No? No? That's right.

[13:06] Yeah. He wants to kill Saul with the spear. In verse 8. If you look at that. And what does David think about this?

In verse 9. What does he think? Is he in agreement with Abishai or not? In verse 9. Okay. Otis. Go on. Don't destroy him. Thank you. That's right. What does he say? Yeah. Don't destroy him. Who can lay a hand on the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?

I think we've read that before, haven't we? A couple of chapters back. So David is in disagreement with Abishai. And the last two questions.

What do they do instead, boys and girls? Verse 12. Looking at verse 12. What do David and Abishai do instead? Bethany?

[14:09] Well done. Yeah. They take the jug and they spit and they walk off somewhere. Intriguing. And lastly, why did no one wake up in verse 12?

Why did no one wake up? Gracie.

Well done. Yeah. Exactly. Because the Lord had put them into a deep sleep. Wow. Thank you, boys and girls. You've done really well this morning.

More protection. That's my second point. More protection. Secondly, we see God's protection over David, Abishai, Saul, and Abner, as well as all his men.

Firstly, David and Abishai. Would you have the courage to enter a camp of 3,000 men stalking your life?

[15:19] David certainly gets the gallantry award here, doesn't he? For this audacious act. And our mind boggles.

One thinks, why on earth would you do this, David? It seems rather foolish. Perhaps he had this plan in his head all along that we see.

We don't know. We're not told. Furthermore, Abishai also gets credit, doesn't he? For wanting to accompany him on this daring raid.

Two people against 3,000. Not an even match. Surely, they are risking their lives. However, night is on their side.

And someone else is. The Lord is sheltering over David. All the men are put into a deep sleep from Yahweh.

[16:24] We see that, don't we? No one saw or knew about it in verse 12. Nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping. Because the Lord had put them into a deep sleep.

David's God is with him. Protecting him against these Philistines. Against giants. Against evildoers. Against Saul and against whoever else. Isn't that comforting? That God is with us in these trials that we go through.

That his safe hand is over us. In the workplace. At school. In our ill health. In our old age. In a stressful job. As a solo mum. God protects his people in difficult times.

[17:27] Be encouraged. Psalm 46. God is our refuge and strength. A very present help in trouble.

Therefore. Therefore. We will not fear. Though the earth gives way. Though the mountains be moved. Into the hearts. Of the sea.

We are protected. Brothers and sisters. Saul and his men as well. They have more protection. Not only does God graciously look after David and Abishai.

But here. He is also merciful towards Saul. Abner. And the men. David must have been tempted. To kill Saul. He is right there. Asleep. With the sword. The spear. By his side. And he could gain the kingdom.

[18:26] Straight away. Fast forward. But he doesn't. His prime enemy. Number one. Is just one strike away from death.

What a golden opportunity. David's life. Would be so much easier. If he were dead. No more hiding in the bush.

Fleeing for his life. He would gain the kingship quicker. Yet. He allows Saul to live. Why? Well. Verse 9.

Don't destroy him. Who can lay a hand. On the Lord's anointed. And be guiltless. He would be guilty.

Of killing the Messiah. The anointed king. God's chosen one. This. Is not. David's job. Verse 10.

[19:25] As the Lord himself. Will strike him. Either. His time will come. And he will die. Or he will go into battle. And perish.

Brothers and sisters. Friends. The Lord. Would strike him. Like he had done with Nabal. Last week. Do you remember? Nabal had a heart attack.

And 10 days later. The Lord. The Lord. Struck him down. Or. He would die naturally. Or. He would die. In battle.

We will soon see. How he dies. What protection. Oversaw. The Lord has kept. Him.

The king. Despite his sinfulness. His hatred. And jealousy. Of David. Vengeance is mine.

[20:22] Says the Lord. Leave that to me. Leave judgment. To God. Perhaps this morning. You're not. A believer.

In the Lord Jesus Christ. And you don't know. This protection. From God. You must deal with life's problems. All by yourself. Don't you want.

This divine. Safety. Of the almighty. Don't you want. God. To be on your side. He can be yours today.

His hedge. Of protection. Can be your defense. Are you not jealous. For this. Don't you want. That safety.

The creator. Of the universe. To be your friends. Your guide. Your help. The one. Who can help you. In your day. Of distress. This God.

[21:19] Is just a prayer away. If you don't know this God. Please come. And speak to me. After. The service. Well. We're going to have an interlude. Now. We're going to have a song.

That Anya and Ruth. Are going to sing. For me. It's a new song. Anya thinks. We've sung this. Ten times. I think. So. David.

Now. In verse. 13. Of chapter. 26. Because he's. He's changed location. Now. I don't think he's in the camp.

Boys and girls. I think he's somewhere else. Where is. David. And probably. Abishai. And perhaps. Some of his men. Isaac Rayfield. He's on a hillside.

Thank you. Yeah. And David crossed over. To the other side. And stood on the hill. Some distance away. Thank you. Now.

[22:15] What does he do. In verse 14. Anybody else. What does he do. In verse 14. I've given you some help. With the prompts.

If you look on the screen. He. Something. We're beginning with C. Bethany. That's right. He calls. Yeah.

He called out to the army. And to Abner. Son of Ner. Aren't you going to answer me. Abner. So he calls.

And. For any ornithologist out there. What animal. Is David. Behaving like. And we're going. Fast forward.

To verse 20. The screen helps you. For this one. Samuel's an ornithologist. What is it? Samuel says.

[23:11] A red legged partridge. Well. Let's look at verse 20. Does it say. Red legged partridge. It just says partridge.

Doesn't it? Yeah. Partridge. Partridge. Partridge in the mountains. But. I'm sure. Any ornithologist. Would know. What a red legged partridge is. Is that on the screen Samuel? Thank you.

You can get grey ones as well. Is Jack in the room? Jack. You're an ornithologist. Any more partridges that you know of? No. Perhaps one on a pear tree.

Yeah. That's right. David. David. Is behaving like a partridge. Why? Because any ornithologist will be able to tell you.

That a partridge is. A calling bird. Yeah. They call out. They call out.

[24:11] Just like that. And David is over the ravine or the mountainside the hill. Calling to Abner. Okay.

And Abner wakes up. and what does David accuse Abner and the men of not doing in verse 15 look at verse 15 boys and girls what does David accuse Abner and the men of not doing it's not just Abner by the way it's plural it's the men as well they're responsible or irresponsible Bethany thank you for not guarding Saul David says you're a man aren't you and who is like you in Israel why didn't you guard your lord the king someone came to destroy your lord the king thank you what do they deserve according to David in verse 16 boys and girls what does Abner and his men deserve anybody see that in verse 16

Gracie thank you yeah you and your men deserve to die because you did not guard your master then lastly who wakes up and why is he in the wrong according to David verse 17 and verse 18 who then wakes up and why is he in the wrong according to David have I got that right verse 17 and 18 have I got that wrong is it right yeah yeah that's right Saul wakes up verse 17 Saul recognized David's voice and said is that your voice David my son

I wonder how he felt when he woke up David replied yes it is my lord the king and he added why is my lord pursuing yeah so yes why is my lord pursuing his servant what have I done and what wrong am I guilty of he's guilty of nothing isn't he thank you boys and girls so guilty is my next point in verses 13 to 15 the king should be protected right imagine everyone king Charles the third's bodyguards okay they're going away um perhaps they're walking around Brighton okay Charles has come down to Brighton to say hello with his entourage and they're going down North Street I couldn't imagine Charles going down North Street but uh imagine it um and his bodyguards go past a nice coffee shop we have plenty of them don't we per capita we've got the most coffee shops in Brighton and he sees a lovely coffee shop oh you can name it let's just go in there the bodyguards say let's just quit let's have a coffee dying for a coffee they go in there can you imagine on their special engagement down to Brighton protecting the king and the guards go off into this coffee shop and have a coffee the king would be defenseless wouldn't he if someone attacked him and he would be flabbergasted wouldn't he you can imagine Charles well David shames Abner the commander and his men wake up Abner he calls are you a man or a mouse verse 15 we read that didn't we are you a man aren't you or are you and who is like you in Israel why didn't you guard your lord the king as I said you plural it's all the men not just Abner they are all labelled irresponsible they should have been watching over their king Saul the verdict you deserve to die for this to prove it look here is the spear and the water jug his men were not doing their job properly one recalls the disciples who fell asleep guarding Christ before his death but we are all guilty aren't we brothers and sisters friends of letting our king down all of us are guilty before God there is only one holy king who can stand on our behalf stand in our place and plead for our innocence before God there is only one who takes our guilt and our shame by bearing our wrath that we deserve in his death releasing us from that guilt and that shame there is only one perfect Messiah and that is the Lord

Jesus Christ let's move on the innocent in verses 17 to 20 verse 18 let's read and he added why is my Lord pursuing his servant what have I done and what wrong am I guilty of David has had enough he cries over the valley towards Saul and this has a tone of righteous anger of frustration why do you seek to harm me Saul what have I done to you life on the run must have been hard for David and his men on many levels now it seems like tipping point verse 19 now let my

[31:12] Lord the King listen to his servant's words if the Lord has incited you against me then may he accept it as an offering if however men have done it may they be cursed before the Lord they have now driven

me from my share in the Lord's inheritance and have said go serve other gods he's being driven to go and live in a pagan land he says into the enemy territory to serve other gods well he's not is he but that's what he's saying he's hounded in the next chapter we see that David is far away he's going to be far away from the temple of the Lord far away from God's face his presence in verse 20 now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the

Lord David is pleading his innocence he has done nothing wrong to Saul on the contrary he has shown kindness to him and he has sought no retribution David here is a model for us in how he wants to be close to God close to his people close to the temple the presence of the Lord do we have that desire to walk closely with the Lord do we want to be with the people of God his church to have a close relationship with them to share our lives with them there Ralph Davis has a great snippet in his book which I forgot this morning so we can't read from Del Ralph Davis so never mind I can't do that let's conclude deliverance that's the conclusion isn't it verse 21 to 25 firstly we see Saul admits his guilt can't we in verse 21 Saul said I have sinned come back David my son because you considered my life precious today I will not try to harm you again surely I have acted like a fool and a very greatly Saul is just like Nabal!

We saw that last week don't we? He's a fool he's a foolish king who's coming to his sorrowful end and we'll see that in a couple of chapters he admits his guilt before everyone Saul admits his guilt like Nabal a fool David's reward verse 23 the Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness David is rewarded for his bravery his wisdom his patience he has been faithful to Yahweh and he's a model for us isn't he and he points us to an even better king and there's a prayer isn't there in verse 23

David's prayer sorry 24 he says as surely as I valued your life today so may the Lord value my life and deliver me from all trouble David's prayer was answered as God delivered him once again time and time again he delivers David and he wrote many psalms about them psalm 54 could be based on this passage you can read it in your own time and then Saul blesses in verse 25 do you see that then Saul said to the David may you be blessed my son David you will do great things and surely triumph and this blessing is fulfilled David goes on to arguably be the best king

[36:04] Israel has ever had yet even though he's a great model for us he's still not good enough as we've learned through this series he points us to one who has tested far more than any other human being who sweat drops of blood for you and for me who took his people's guilt on his shoulders who was innocent of any transgression of any wrongdoing the perfect man God who protects us who sustains us who delivers us out of the savoury sin breaks our chains so that we might go free and that's the Lord Jesus Christ well what will happen next we'll come back next week and you'll find out we're going to sing actually we've got two songs to finish with we're going to sing a song about

Jesus a