

Lead us not into temptation

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 February 2024

Preacher: Philip Wells

[0:00] I hope you are enjoying the hymns. We're looking at some classic hymns today. The Join All the Glorious Names by Isaac Watts, a revolutionary hymn writer back in the day.

Joining All the Glorious Names of Wisdom, Love and Power. And as you went through the song, you might have noticed that the names were in italics and he put in the different names of Jesus Christ.

And Be Gone Unbelief by John Newton, converted slave trader. The Lord changed him dramatically. He became a prominent London preacher.

And at one point in his ministry, when he'd done Bible studies with his flock, he would change them, turn them into songs. So they would learn the song to do with the Bible study, go home, and they could have the song to remind them of what they've learned.

And that song that we sung, Be Gone Unbelief, My Saviour Is Near, is a very pastoral song. It's a sort of advice a pastor would give his flock. As we sing it, we're singing it to one another.

[1:07] And we're saying, look, folks, it's a bit like when the ship was on in the storm and Christ was in the little boat and the storm raged, but the boat didn't sink.

And we're singing to one another, your life is a bit like that. You might get waves and distress and problems, but with Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.

So there's some beautiful words there. And we're going to sing in due course, how firm a foundation you saints of the Lord is laid for your faith in his excellent word.

So these are very contentful songs. They're not very much on rhythm and zappiness, but there's lots of good content. So I hope we can appreciate that.

We're going to turn to 1 Samuel 27, which is what Jerome read to us. And we're going to be looking at that. So a fairly short chapter, but we're going to be looking at that.

[2:09] And let's pray as we do so. Notice there's no clock up there, so I might go on for ages. So I usually get some guidance from that. But anyway, there's another clock there. Let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can encourage one another in spiritual truth, in following you, in basic principles of the Christian life.

And help us to encourage one another again from your word. Please impart your spirit's wisdom.

And we pray that each of our lives would be touched by your word, that we may live for you, because we need all the help we can get.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. One of the prayers we prayed in the Lord's Prayer is, lead us not into temptation.

And I don't know whether you've ever thought of the value of that particular prayer. And I think that's a good way for us to begin this morning.

[3:20] Lead us not into temptation. The Christian life isn't an easy life. It's never been advertised as an easy life. It's a wonderful life, but it's not necessarily easy.

I mean, one good exponent of this was the old preacher John Bunyan when he wrote Pilgrim's Progress. And the pilgrim is on his way to the Celestial City.

And in the second book, his wife is on her way to the Celestial City. But it's not a smooth ride. There is a path to follow, but it's a narrow path.

There is a giant along the way who tries to intimidate and capture the pilgrim. There are distractions to divert the pilgrim.

You remember Vanity Fair. I think that's in Pilgrim's Progress, isn't it? A fair full of empty, pointless things to take the pilgrim's attention. Enemies who would try to destroy the pilgrim.

[4:20] And difficult decisions. Which way to go to test the pilgrim? And in this chapter, I think David faces a difficult decision.

He is actually under enormous pressure. And as he's looking at the situation, there does not seem to be a way out. And I don't know whether you've ever been in such a situation.

And we pray that we wouldn't get into a situation like that. Where you're thinking, this is so difficult. What is the way out? I guess that's not a million miles from the experience of some folk in our congregation who have been applying for jobs.

But there doesn't seem to be anything coming forward. What was the way out of that situation? Or maybe in financial issues that the bills keep piling up and money is short.

What's the way out of that situation? Or ill health, which just seems to go on and on and become unbearable. What's the way out of that situation?

[5:29] Or some folk in their homeland will find that they're economically, militarily, financially. It's a terrible place to be.

What's the way out of that situation? Or a young person who gets older each year. Actually, we all get older each year. But for this person, there's no future partner, apparently.

And what's the way out of that situation? What is the way out? Now, with all of those, there are lots of dodgy ways out, which will come to your mind. But if you're a Christian person, you don't want to take the dodgy way out.

You want to take the way of faith. So what is the way of faith? And I don't want to trivialize this, because this is a real situation that people really face in a heart-aching sort of way.

What is the right thing to do? I mean, if you're short of money, you could steal. If you're in a bind, you could tell an untruth. If you're short of a partner, you could end up rashly in an unwise relationship.

[6:36] Or it might be so intense that you just say, well, I don't think it's even worth carrying on. Carrying on in faith, or even carrying on at all. And I think that is something of the situation that David faced as we come to the beginning of chapter 27.

Let me just fill you in on the background. Not everybody will have followed all through the previous 27, 26 chapters. This is a historical book. It's in the history of ancient Israel.

It's in the time when the first kings were being appointed. We have God's king over God's people. And this is way before Jesus came. King is, yeah, king means king.

But it's also anointed. The anointed, the word in the Old Testament, is like Messiah, which is a word we have in English. And the equivalent word in Greek is Christ.

So king, anointed, Messiah, Christ, all really referring to the same person in this context. So Saul is the king, the anointed, the Christ. But there was something dodgy about the way he was chosen.

[7:51] He was anointed. He has failed significantly on at least two occasions or more. He has become changeable. He has become suspicious.

And increasingly, as we see him, he's sort of descending a tragic slope and losing grip as he goes. So he's the king, but he's not really going to carry on as king.

And we have the younger man, David, who is God's chosen king. He is the anointed, but he is at present rejected. He's not on the throne. He's actually being persecuted by Saul.

So Saul has changed from the Christ to the Antichrist, in a way. And David is, if you like, the king in waiting. And he is learning that there is no shortcut to the throne.

And the quote, that the Christ must suffer and thus enter his glory, might be appropriate to him. But the person who said that was actually Jesus, wasn't it, about himself.

[8:53] But David is, in a way, prefiguring that. And just to very quickly try and bring us up to speed where we've got to here. It's a long running in saga.

Saul became jealous of David. They sang this song. Was it country and western? I don't know. Saul has slain his thousands, but David his tens of thousands.

And, I mean, great for David's fan club, but Saul was pretty irked by that little refrain. Saul was searching, seeking.

There's a word used for that, to kill David. He used to seek to kill him with his spear. And I guess they might have thought, well, he's just having an off day. I mean, that's quite an off day, isn't it? Kill somebody with a spear.

But David dodged that. And then he sent his sort of secret police to arrest David. But David escaped. That's back at the beginning of it. David took refuge with Achish, the king of the Philistine king of Gath.

[9:52] The Philistines are the enemy. It's a pretty strange thing for David to do. But that's where he went to escape, first of all. And things got so hot for him there, he pretended to be mad.

And Achish said, I've got enough idiots already. Why have you sent me another one? And there are at least four occasions subsequently when Saul seeks or searches for David.

And he brings this huge army to try and just get one bloke. And I put the references there. And there's a repetition. These things are repeated four times.

He goes out with his army to seek, to search out, persecute, if you like, David. And David, here's another repetition, has twice refused to kill Saul.

Once when it was in the cave and once with a spear and water jug. And I remember talking to Mark about how to preach something that's a repetition. Well, the fact that it's a repetition is significant because it's just something happening again and again.

[10:51] And we're getting to the point where there's been so many repetitions that David is just thinking, enough is enough. I've had it up to here. I've had it up to here with being good to Saul.

I've had it up to here with being sought by Saul. I've just fed up of the whole thing. And he's got to that point. And that's what goes on in chapter 27.

Listen, so I suggest we look at it in, I think it's four. Number one, what David said in his heart. Number two, what he did with his feet.

And what he did was he went off to the Philistine city. Number three, his way of life. And number four, the conclusion. So we'll have a go in those. They're not all equal length.

But what he said in his heart, what he did with his feet, his way of life, and the conclusion. Okay. So let's see what it said in his heart.

[11:56] So it says, chapter 27, David thought to himself, one of these days I shall be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines.

They're the enemy, you remember. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel. And I will slip out of his hand. And I will escape from his hand.

So what it actually says, David said in his heart. That's the sort of literal translation. This is what David said in his heart. I wonder how the writer of this knew what David said in his heart.

But that's what the inspired text says. This is what was going on inside David. He said something in his heart. So I wasn't very good at drawing this. That's the heart.

And this is David speaking to David in his heart. That's what I was trying to mean by that little picture. David is speaking to himself in his heart.

[12:59] Now, just to say that in the Bible, heart is not the opposite of head. We say that these days, but that's not the way the Bible sees it. The heart is the core where deep motivations operate.

I mean, that's sort of on an emotional level as well as on an intellectual level. Deep motivations operate and plans are made. It's the core of the being right inside which determines the sort of person you are.

And David is speaking at this level in his heart. And what does he say? Worth noting what he says. One of these days, I shall be destroyed by the hand of Saul.

I shall be swept away by the hand of Saul. You'll never see me again. I'll be swept away by the hand of Saul. And the best thing I can do, so the word good is hidden there.

The goodest thing, the most good thing I can do, this is where good lies, is to escape. And that's a sort of intense way of putting it. Escaping to escape to the land of the Philistines or to escape swiftly to the land of the Philistines.

[14:11] And then I think at the end of verse 1, I will have escaped out of his hand. He's looking for a way out. I want to escape. And as he talks to

himself, he says, this is the way to do it.

I'll be swept away. And Saul will give up searching for me, which is what he's been doing time and time again. And I shall escape from his hand. That's what he said in his heart.

Now, my question is, was he right to say that? That's the question that hangs over this chapter.

Was he right to say that? Now, the things we say in our hearts are actually very important.

They can be foolish things or they can be wise things. But they're important things. So, the fool has said in his heart. What did the fool say in his heart? That's what the fool said in his heart.

Who said this? Speaking to himself, he says, soul, you have much goods laid up for you for many years. Take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

[15:15] Do you know who said that? It was the rich man, wasn't it? And Jesus tells about the rich man saying that in his heart. What a mistaken thing to say in your heart.

And God said to him, you fool. This night, your life is required from you. Here's somebody who treasured up. This is a good thing. She treasured up things in her heart. Who was that?

Mary. So, I could go off on a tangent on this. But I think the things that we say to ourselves, the stories we tell ourselves, the words we use to ourselves, are really significant for the way life develops.

And, you know, so I can ask, you know, what do you say in your heart? Do you ever catch yourself saying foolish things in your heart? And good to store wise words in our hearts.

So, was he right or wrong? Let me just, well, let's just weigh up what he was thinking.

[16:21] Let's weigh up how he got to this point. So, I think that one factor that he could have weighed up when he told himself whatever he was going to tell himself was previous experiences.

And I just looked back over his previous experiences. So, one thing was, if God hadn't done something for me, he'd still be a shepherd, wouldn't he?

He'd still be a shepherd. But God picked him out through Samuel and anointed him as king. So, he might look back on that and say, oh, that's significant. I ought to put that into what I'm saying in my heart.

I also noticed that back in his early days, he was given the spirit in a kingly way. The spirit of the Lord came upon him.

So, that's not nothing, is it? David, when you're saying things to yourself, just look back and think, you were anointed as a king and you received a kingly spirit upon you.

[17:23] And if you care to look back, look back in your diary. Do you remember that time when there was the two armies?

And you were quite young then, probably a bit of a rash, impetuous person. But that rashness and impetuosity stood you in good stead because you went up to Saul and said, I can kill that giant.

And he had sort of young faith. He didn't bother to see the problem. And he thought, well, if God's with me, I can just do this. And he did. Have you forgotten that, David?

That was a pretty miraculous, unexpected deliverance from God. And you were right in the middle of that. Have you forgotten that when you speak to your heart? And there have been multiple narrow escapes.

He said, and I think I quoted it correctly in 20 verse 3. Is it 20 verse 3? Verse 3? Yeah. There is just a step between me and death.

[18:23] That's how David assessed the security of his situation way back. Just a step between me and death. But David, the step was never taken. Do you see what I mean?

He was saying, I was that far from death. But you never crossed that boundary. You've always been delivered. And as he looks back, you know, how does he assess this when he speaks to his heart or speaks in his heart?

Because he could be saying, God's seen me through this and seen me through this and seen me through this and seen me through this and seen me through this. And a long catalogue of things.

Or he could say, I escaped there. I escaped there. I escaped there. But my luck will run out sooner or later. I think it was in one of the songs that we sang.

Or is it one that we're going to sing? His love in time past forbids me to think. He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink.

[19:30] By prayer let me wrestle and he will perform. With Christ in the vessel I smile at the storm. That's the way of faith, isn't it? Not easy to say that.

You need to take yourself in hand and not just listen to yourself. You've got, this is why Lord Jones would say, you've got to speak to yourself. You've got to say, hold on.

Just look at all these things God's done for me in the past. And if I may, on a practical level, I think it is helpful because our memories are very selective. You know, we sometimes only remember the bad things.

To keep a diary or a journal and be able to look back and say, well, God did this for me. And he did do that for me. And, you know, that's not nothing. But to remember how God has answered prayer and sustained in the past.

So you can draw the right conclusion when you're speaking to your heart. So think previous experiences. And previous words, just looking back over how we got to this point. His dear friend Jonathan, on more than one occasion, encouraged him and said things like this.

[20:38] David, you will be king and I will be second to you. Now, that was helpful. It wasn't quite right, though, was it? Because Jonathan won't be second to David.

So, you know, David might say, well, he got that whole thing wrong. But he didn't get it all wrong, did he? That was encouragement. You will be king. Saul himself had said to David, David, my son, you're right.

You will be king. And Saul has said this, too. And the marvellous Abigail, the really clever and decisive woman, who is now his wife, had said to him a couple of chapters ago, when the Lord has fulfilled every good thing he promised.

So people have encouraged David. It's worth, there's a great value in friends who will tell you encouraging truth.

Have you forgotten, brother, sister, this promise? Have you forgotten these comforting words? Because sometimes we need other people to tell us those things, don't we?

[21:52] It really does help. Because we're sort of down in a spiral and somebody says, well, hang on, you might be in the clouds down there, but the sunshine up here, let me send you a beam of sunshine from God's word.

And we were seeing in 2 Peter that by great and precious promises, we escape the power of this world for the world to come. So he had people who told him God's promises.

And God's promises are things that we should remind ourselves of. David, have you reminded yourself of God's promises as you are speaking in your heart?

And another factor in what he's saying to himself, as well as the experiences he's had and the words that he has received, are the realities as he sees them.

And he's under chronic pressure. Now, I haven't worked out, I don't know how many years it is, that he's been on the receiving end of either a spear from Saul, or a hunting party, or a visit from the secret police, or whatever.

[23:01] But let's assume it's been unrelenting. And there is something when pressures just come and come and come and come, it wears us down, doesn't it?

Chronic pressure. Another reality is Saul just doesn't seem to give up, does he? We had the one chapter where Saul said, You're right, David. I'm sorry. I'm completely wrong. You'll be king. But he didn't give up. Saul went back to the city. David went back to the stronghold. And although Saul had said the right words, he didn't give up. He was very determined. And we seem to get the same thing.

He's determined. You can't trust him. He says something one day, changes his mind. It's just impossible. And we think of the physical and mental frustration.

So they've got no city. Am I right in saying that? They seem to be moving around a lot. You know, the wives and the children are probably saying, Can't we just stay in one place for a bit?

[24:03] You know, just getting comfortable. And then we have to move everything. And that rock that I was sitting on last night was so uncomfortable. I didn't get an hour's sleep. You know, just wearing down physically and mentally.

And I also put spiritual isolation. He's not with, as far as we can tell, he's not with a company of encouraging people.

He doesn't have Samuel to confer with. He doesn't have Jonathan to confer with. He does have his wife, Abigail, who we know is a woman of faith.

He doesn't mention that he talked to her about this. But I think there's a degree of spiritual isolation going on here. And spiritual isolation has an effect on people.

And I guess the people who are sitting in front of me are here. So they're not, in that sense, spiritually isolated. But if you're watching at home, or if you're watching on YouTube at some other time, I hope that you are, that is not a symptom of your being spiritually isolated.

[25:12] Because that's a dangerous place to be. And you start saying things to yourself which are not helpful. And Mark pointed this out to me in the previous chapter.

He's also already been having seed thoughts about running away. It's in chapter 26, verse 19.

He's already started thinking, sort of slightly negative thoughts.

He's already started thinking along those lines. And I think it's worth pointing out that although the Christian life is hard, it is a supernatural life in the sense that we walk by faith and not by sight.

That's what the Apostle Paul said about his ministry. I think it's true for all Christians. We can't live the Christian life without supernatural faith in a supernatural God.

[26:35] We walk by faith and not just according to the realities that we see and feel. It's a bit harsh to say that to David.

But it is true, isn't it? We walk by faith and not by sight. And of all the voices and experiences that are put into this conversation that David has with himself, there's one voice that you'll notice is not present.

There's one conversation that he doesn't have. The clue is the ephod, which came to him in an earlier chapter, which revolutionized his strategy.

Because the ephod is what? It's a priestly thing. And what does it enable you to do? Guide in decisions.

Guide in decisions. Guide in decisions. Yes, it's a way of asking God for guidance. That's what the ephod does. And there is an omission here, isn't there?

[27:41] There is no mention David sought the Lord. There is no mention David asked the Lord for guidance. There's no mention David stopped and prayed about it.

He did what I guess we're prone to do. He just made up his mind. A significant omission. There is no mention of the name of God in this chapter, I don't believe.

It's a godless chapter. And it sort of describes the situation of somebody who is one of the Lord's people, who sort of lost touch, really, with the Lord.

That's what I think, anyway. And he comes to this conclusion. He says in his heart, I will run away. So before we go to the second section, let's just notice that the factors of this world are very strong. David is just the same as us in this. Sense, what we sense, bodily and mental pain, even the way God doesn't seem to answer our prayers, his providence, the way he runs things, all of these can build up within us.

[28:55] And I think we ought to be very sympathetic to David. Quite understand the pressures you are under, David. But I do, I hope I'm not being uncharitable, but I do question whether this is really a faith-based decision.

So, David, brothers and sisters, when you're in a situation like this, don't forget, do look back on what the Lord has done. Don't be tunneled visions.

Do remember what the Lord has said. Don't be isolated. Do gather the encouragement of believing people. And above all, don't just act without stopping to ask the Lord, to pray and listen to God's voice.

Sometimes your mind is going so quickly, you can't even do that. But do make the effort, even if it's just a prayer, help me, Lord. Don't just act without praying.

And here's a good prayer. Lord, lead us not into temptation. Don't let me get into that situation where I'm in such a pickle and a fix that I'm going to end up doing something rash.

[30:06] Lead us not into temptation. So that's what he said in his heart. So let's now move to what he did with his feet. And what he did with his feet is in verse 2.

And David and 600 men with him left and went over to Achish, son of Maok, king of Gath. David and his men settled in Gath with Achish.

Every man had his family with him. David had his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel, Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal. And when Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.

What a relief. All those verbs of searching, no longer. I'll run away. Saul's number one enemy is welcomed by the Philistines.

The Philistines thinking, well, if he's Saul's number one enemy, then he'll be our friend. And he settled in Gath with Achish. And it worked. You know, what a relief.

[31:09] First good night's sleep we've had in years. Saul stopped searching. And then David says to Achish, verse 5, it's very polite, this.

If I have found favor in your eyes, it's almost like a prayer, isn't it? Let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns that I may live there. Why should I be any trouble to you?

Why should your servant live in the royal city with you? And on that day, Achish gave him Ziklag. And it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since.

So that's something good there, isn't it? David lived in Philistine territory for a year and four months. So he says, can I go and live out of the way, politely and convincingly, live out of the way in just a quiet place and get a bit of peace and quiet, and that is going to be fine.

So at this point, I point out, I think Jack said this to me, the best of men are men at best. And just think that David is actually capable of great inconsistency.

[32:25] He was the man who killed Goliath out of the blue, but when this pressure is on him, he goes to Gath.

And for all his achievement and blessing, he is just a forgiven sinner. He's a work in progress. So don't put him on a pedestal. Don't put any Christian leader on a pedestal.

All Christian leaders, if you put them on pedestals, they're going to disappoint you one way or another. The only person to put on a pedestal is Jesus. Because he didn't make any mistakes. And he approached the most difficult situations with the maximum wisdom. You think of all those questions they asked him in Jerusalem in that last week of his ministry. Really difficult question. And Jesus just, with wonderful wisdom, just slices through, comes through with complete integrity. Just wonderful. Put him on a pedestal. But don't put anybody else on a pedestal.

[33:27] So he escaped to Ziklag. It all worked. Well, it did all work. It did all work. And I wonder whether that's a little bit scary, actually.

Because if we're right in thinking this was a bit of a dodgy decision. I mean, let me just stop and say, if he had said to me, well, what's your alternative? You're being so, you know, faithful and everything.

What's your alternative? I would not have an alternative to offer. You know, it's the same thing in, you know, advising people in some sort of pastoral sense. Well, what's your alternative?

And often you say, well, I don't know. I don't have an alternative, but I'm just not at all sure that what you're proposing is a good idea. Anyway, here we go. God didn't stop him doing this.

Now, you remember when he was all ready to go and slaughter Nabal? Nabal's wife jumped on her donkey and got in the way and said, David, you really don't want to do this.

[34:29] Just hold on a second. And he was prevented from doing that rash thing. Do you remember that? But God doesn't intervene this time. I don't know whether that's a bit scary.

I find it a little bit scary. A little bit like when Jonah was determined to do the opposite of what God told him to do. And instead of going to Nineveh, he went off in the opposite direction to go to Tarshish.

And God didn't stop him. You know, he got to the port and lo and behold, there is a cruise liner all there. And it wasn't really a cruise liner, was it? There is a boat all ready to go to Tarshish and you can just jump on it, pay your fare, off you go.

You know, if God had wanted to, he could say, well, I'm sorry, we're booked up for Tarshish until next year. Can't go. But God didn't.

I'm also thinking of the villagers when Jesus cast the demons out of the pigs. Do you remember that? And they said, go away, Jesus. And he did.

[35:34] You know, God doesn't always prevent us making rash decisions. He doesn't always rescue us from our rashness. So I think when Jesus says, watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation, that's a good advice, isn't it?

Let's not be caught out by rash decisions that we haven't really thought through in faith. Well, let's come to the third thing, his way of life.

His way of life. And what was his way of life? In verse 8, David and his men went up and raided, lots of lovely names here, Geshurites, the Gerzites, the Amalekites.

From ancient times, these people had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt. Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels and clothes.

Then he returned to Achish. And Achish said, where did you go raiding today? And David would say, against the Negev of Judah, or against the Negev of Jeremiel, or against the Negev of the Kenites.

[36:43] So they're friendly to Israel, those people. And he did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought they might inform on us and say, this is actually what David did.

And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory. And I'm picking up on that word practice because it is, sorry to be technical, the word mishpat.

It usually means law. It usually means law, judgment, counsel, statute, something like that. And it's usually positive.

You know, the law of the Lord is perfect. I don't know whether that's, that's probably a different word, but the way things ought to be done is how, is what that word usually means.

But in here it means, this was the law of his life. This was the way of life David had. And let me just pick out a couple of strands.

[37:46] There is a certain heartlessness and ruthlessness about it. Did you think that when it was read, did you sort of go, ooh, when it was read? Raiding and looting the historic enemies of Israel.

Well, let's not read sort of 21st century sensibilities back into just the way things were done in those days. But there is, it does, even so, it does seem a bit heartless, doesn't it?

He did not leave a man or a woman alive. And presumably that extended to children. It doesn't say that. I wonder if that's the case. And it's repeated in verse 11.

He did not leave a man or a woman alive to be brought to Gath. Let me point out that when the Amalekites later on invaded Ziklag, they left everybody alive, didn't they?

And David caught up and retrieved all his family. I'm right, aren't I? That's what happens later on in the story. So even the nasty Amalekites don't slaughter everybody when they go raiding, but David did.

[38:55] Now, you can understand exactly why, can't you? I mean, politically, it's vital. If he didn't do this, he'd be sunk. If the message got back that David is pulling the wool over the eyes of Achish, he would be sunk.

But, you know, are we happy with that? In a sense, it's unavoidable. You can see the logic of it, but you think, well, it's not really a good place to be, is it?

David can be heartless. It's not a good thing. Later on, he could be heartless and ruthless with Uriah the Hittite. Not a good thing to learn, not a good path to go down.

And this was his mishpat. You know, you think, ah, David, I wish there was some other way because I don't really like to see you doing this month, you know, week after week, month after month, for however long it was, a year and four months.

And it's also a life of constant deception. He says to Achish, I mean, it's blatantly untrue, he says, I went and raided, this is around verse 10, I went and raided Israelite communities or friends of the Israelites.

[40:24] That's what I went and did. That's where I got these camels and sheep. You know, welcome to some of them. But it's not true. He's constantly living a life of deception.

And so much so that Achish trusted David, verse 12, says, he has become so obnoxious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant for life.

And David has won Achish's trust by deception. I don't know, I'm not comfortable with that. I mean, trust is a precious thing, isn't it?

And to win somebody's trust by deceiving them day in, day out, I'm not happy with that. But this was his mishpat, this was his practice, this is his way of life.

And he's getting used to deceptive pragmatism. And, yeah, what can you say? I mean, what you can say is this does lead to some unforeseen circumstances which we'll see in a moment.

[41:33] So here's the, so that was number three which was his way of life. And number four, the conclusion. Well, again, it isn't a conclusion.

I think you'll do it. Is it you next week, Steve? So we bated breath look forward to seeing how this goes on. It's more of a cliffhanger really, isn't it?

Because, sorry? It's Saul. It's Saul. Yeah, so we'll have another cliffhanger. Yeah, after a week fortnight. Because in chapter 28, verse 2, in those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel.

And Achish said to David, I trust you so much. You're such a good warrior. You must really stink with the Israelites that you are going to be my choice troops.

You're going to be up there with me. I understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army. You're going to be fighting against those, your own people.

[42:35] You're going to be fighting against the people that you are there to serve and protect. Now then, David, where has this got you?

Achish is gathering for a decisive battle against Israel and you must come with me. And I think, you know, this really is, where is this going to lead? How are you going to get out of this one, David? You know, you started and it seemed like a really good idea and it worked, but look where it's got you now. And of course, Saul is headed for disaster too and it's a fascinating story so we look forward to hearing about that.

David's heading for disaster, Saul's heading for disaster, they're both in a fix. The only person in this story who is not in a fix is God. The only person who comes out well from the story is God because he isn't in a fix.

He knows how he's going to bring David to the throne. He knows how he's going to work all the pieces on the chessboard so that remarkably David, well, I won't spoil the story.

[43:48] Our God is great. He, this is our comfort, isn't it? This is where it's really good to be a Calvinist, to know that God is sovereign and that I'm a Christian because he chose me and he knew all about me and yet he still chose me and he's promised to bring me to heaven even though he knows what a silly person and a sinful person I can be.

Nothing's going to put him off bringing me to heaven. He knows the end from the beginning. He knows our folly and our weakness and our mess and our muddle but he still keeps his promises. Amen? He still keeps his promises and is that good or what? That is the good news, isn't it? I'm going to stop there.

This was the, having been a listener to sermons quite a while, I realise it's quite helpful to be reminded of what the bloke actually said and what he did say this morning was what David said in his heart.

He looked at the factors involved in that little conversation, the experiences he could have looked back on, the achievements he could have looked back on, the encouragements he'd received, the realities he had to fight against as it were, the fact that he didn't pray, at least it's not recorded, what he did with his feet, he ran away, it worked, in a way, his way of life, he ended up in a situation where there didn't seem to be any option apart from ruthlessness and deception, that's a dangerous place to be and there were consequences and the conclusion that David is in a fix but God isn't and I'll try and remember to put that up at the end.

[45:42] Oh, I've got it in twice. Perhaps I didn't put it at the end.
We're going to sing How firm a foundation you saints of the Lord is laid
for your faith in heaven.