

# The Christ Must Suffer III

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[ 0 : 00 ] Father, would you open our hearts to hear your word this evening. In Christ's name, Amen. If we could get David to reminisce about his life up to this point, I'm sure there would be plenty of high points, fun stuff, you know, defeating the bears and lions and Goliath, etc.

But I think probably the big story, the thing he'd talk about the most up to this point would be Saul's hostility towards him. And it's been a big concern of the last, I guess, three weeks we've been preaching and probably for next week as well because that's what it's been talking about. And when you're interpreting the Bible, when you're asking yourself, what is God trying to tell us here? Repetition is something you want to pay attention to. So all this drama that David is going through, there must be a reason.

It must be trying to communicate something important to us. And in the last few weeks, I've tried to get across the idea that the book of Samuel is possibly the most important book in the Old Testament in terms of us understanding who Jesus is, and for lots of reasons.

In particular, one big reason is that it helps us get around the question of Christ's suffering, why the Christ had to suffer.

[ 1 : 28 ] Because David is like a proto-Jesus. He is a Messiah. He is a forerunner to Jesus. And his suffering sheds light on Christ's suffering.

And we talked about last week that one of the lessons we've learnt from David is that his suffering was just inevitable. Because David was a threat.

David was a threat to Saul's dynasty. So why did David suffer? He was a threat to these powers. Why did Jesus suffer? He was a threat. He was a threat to the kingdoms of the world. He was a threat to the gods of our own heart. Why is it hard to be a Christian sometimes?

Why do we suffer? Excuse me. Do you remember last week, we talked about how David collected this small army, about 400 people, and they aligned themselves with David.

[ 2 : 36 ] They were disillusioned by the leadership of Saul, aligned themselves with David. And in doing that, they shared in David's fate.

And as Christians, we are fugitives with the Messiah. We share his fate in many ways. So again, this week, we hear the story of David just in trouble.

And we ask ourselves, why does it have to be like this? And what does it tell us about Jesus? So let's get into it. Scene 1, is chapter 23, 15 to 18.

You might want to grab your Bibles out. Chapter 23, 15 to 18. So in this first scene, we've got Jonathan's visit to David to encourage him.

And it's really nice. It says in 17, Do not fear, for the hand of Saul, my father, will not find you. You'll be king. I'll be next to you. And they make this covenant together.

[ 3 : 48 ] And it says in verse 16, And he strengthened his hand in God. It's really wonderful. But it's more than just kind of like a nice kind of meeting. The author here is setting up some contrasts between Jonathan and Saul.

Jonathan, as you remember, is Saul's son. The first contrast is how comically easy it is for Jonathan to find David. So Saul has got thousands of men out trying to find David and kill him.

He's got spies everywhere. He's got whole cities dobbing David in. And in verse 16, it just says, And Jonathan rose and went to David.

Just easy. Just, I'll go and see David. So easy. And what is this trying to say? Well, it's setting up the contrast between him and Saul. Like, clearly, God is looking after David.

And clearly, he's hindering Saul. But the second contrast is even more telling. And it's a bit more subtle. Jonathan says to David, You're going to be the king. I'll be at your right hand.

[ 4 : 49 ] Now, this is not Jonathan being all sort of like, Hey, you probably need a number two guy. You know, I've got some experience.

You know. No, it's not that. It's him just affirming once again that the throne is not his. It's not. Jonathan's just saying, The throne's not mine.

It's yours. And I'll serve you. Now, compare that to Saul's later on in the passage. Saul, you remember, you hear just Jen, who did a really lovely reading, Reviar, Jen.

Saul also says, Yes, I know. After he repents. Yes, I know you're going to be king. Yeah, I know, I know, I acknowledge it. Finally, I acknowledge it. But I want to make a deal with you.

Look after my ancestors. Keep my dynasty alive. These two responses in contrast to each other, right? You've got, you've got them both recognizing that there is a king, but very different responses.

[ 5 : 52 ] And they reflect our modern responses to God, I think. One, there is a God, I submit my life to him. That's the Christian response. Two, there is a God, let's make a deal.

Let's brainstorm. Let's work some stuff out. God, I recognize you're the God. Now, help me, help me achieve my goals.

That's not the Christian way. That's the fluffy, foggy spirituality of, you know, of a lot of the West. Yeah, sure, there's a God. I'll make him part of my life, maybe.

He can help me do some stuff. Like, keep my dynasty alive. That's what Saul is saying, right?

Jonathan, his thought pattern, there is a king, I am not it.

Saul, there is a king, but I still kind of want to be king as well. And I hope you see the incongruity in that.

[ 6 : 56 ] If you're here and you're not a Christian, I hope you see that that doesn't make much sense. Okay, let's move on. Great scene, friends encouraging each other.

It's a bittersweet scene though, because it's the last time that these great friends see each other alive. All right, the next little scene is chapter 23, 19 to 29. David is betrayed by the Ziphites, another great, great biblical name, the Ziphites.

The Ziphites say to Saul, we don't know why they do this, maybe they're just kind of angling for some, I don't know, bonus. And so they say to Saul, hey, listen, we know where David is. This is verse 19.

And Saul gives the impression of being a little bit paranoid now in verse 22 and 23. Go make yet more sure no one see the place where his foot is and who has seen him there.

For it is told to me that he is very cunning, therefore take note of the lurking places, my precious. I mean, it just all sounds a bit kind of like, you know, it all sounds a bit sort of like he's going a little bit mad here.

[ 8 : 02 ] Well, it turns out to be true. David is with the Ziphites say, so Saul sends some troops in. Saul's on one side of the mountain, David's on the other side of the mountain. Saul perhaps attempting some kind of pincer maneuver. And he's catching up and then a messenger comes and says, the Philistines are attacking us.

And it's the one thing that threatens Saul's kingdom as much as David does. And that's the Philistines. You know, he can't ignore the Philistines.

So, he doesn't. He leaves his pursuit of David. And so David is saved kind of by the Philistines. Or more correctly, God uses the Philistines to save David.

And I just, I love this stuff. I love this story. I'll say it again. It's one of the, in the midst of David's dramas, there is this, his fugitive life, his outlaw life, there is this continual assistance that God is with him.

You know, by the, the fact that his best mate comes to visit him and strengthens his hand in God. The fact that God uses the Philistines to rescue him in what looked like a hopeless situation.

[ 9 : 09 ] God continually assists David. Because God will not abandon his king. And the greatest echo of that is obviously the resurrection. God did not abandon Christ to death, to Hades.

He resurrected him. More about that later. Okay, chapter 24. This is the last scene. Saul has, it doesn't really say this, but we assume that Saul has sort of sorted out the Philistines and is on the hunt again for David.

So he's in rugged terrain and needs to go potty, go to the bathroom. And so he goes into a cave and in a, in a crazy situation, David with his 600 men are in this cave.

And, it's just, you know, it's an awkward situation.

So David's guys, David's guys go, David, look, here's a chance, you know.

[10:25] Here's a chance to kill Saul. Carpe diem, my friend. Surely this is God. You've literally caught him with his pants down. You know, there is no, there's no way out here.

You can take this guy down and you will be king, right? So that's what David's men are saying. And it seems quite reasonable.

David crawls up and instead of killing Saul, he cuts off the corner of his robe. And when Saul leaves, David yells down to him and said, I don't know why you're chasing me.

I'm innocent. I had a chance to kill you. Here's the proof. You know, just let God be the judge of all of this, okay? But I'm innocent. And Saul remarkably repents.

And that's the end of the chapter. I'll now make two succinct points and then we'll finish. Point one.

[11:37] The scene where David had a chance to kill Saul and doesn't is very much like the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. In Matthew 4, I'll read it in a moment, but it's, it's, it seemed like a tidy solution to all of David's problems, right?

Kill Saul, get the throne. But he didn't do it. Even cutting the robe was too much for him. When Jen read it out, there's this, Saul repents of even, I mean, David repents of even cutting his robe.

That was too much for him, touching the Lord's anointed, because there still was God's chosen person to be on the throne at that time. Anyway, this is huge echoes in the temptation of Christ, in the last part of the temptation.

Let me read that to you from Matthew 4, verse 8. Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory. And he said to him, All these I give you, if you fall down and worship me.

Then Jesus said to him, Be gone, Satan, for it is written, You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. Then the devil left and behold, angels came and were ministering to him. You see, Satan agrees with the what here in Matthew 4.

[12:55] He agrees that Christ will be king over all. There's no debate there. But Satan doesn't agree on the how. Satan offers Christ the quick and easy yet corrupt approach.

The shortcut to the kingdom. Now the how of the Messiahship is very important as I think, David, as this whole book plays out.

How is God going to do it? How is God to bring about his kingdom with his chosen king? By the easy method? No, clearly not. We've had 10 chapters that said this is not going to be easy.

But the easy way is a great temptation for us, isn't it? Seven easy steps to a better prayer life. Whatever you want, pick your title. When I cook and I look up recipes, I'm drawn to the ones that say easy at the start. Easy casserole. Easy this. We like easy.

[14:06] But the way to the throne for David would not be easy. The way to the cross was not easy. The way of discipleship is not easy.

point two, this passage constantly affirms the sovereignty of God. Meaning that God is in charge. God lets happen what is going to happen. He's moving his plan forward.

Saul's bowels were under the sovereignty of God. the Philistine army was under the sovereignty of God. David's journey to the throne was under the sovereignty of God.

And David knew it would be wrong to take the kingdom by violence. Not because that particular act of violence was wrong. There's plenty of violence in the Bible.

[15:04] But to take the kingdom before it was given to him was wrong. God had allowed Saul to remain king for a while.

And David recognized it wasn't his place to knock him off. David humbly submitted to the will of God and was obedient. That was tough for him.

But it was the right thing to do. And the right thing is hard. But God was with him. Let me finish here. I want to use a contemporary example that brings these two points together. That discipleship is not easy and God is sovereign. It's an example I've used before.

It's an example of sex because it's such a big deal in society. God created sex to be this wonderful act between people who are married.

[16:08] God has and if in God's sovereign will, God has not brought a husband or a wife into your life, well, the easy way is to kind of, is to take, isn't it, is to take what God hasn't given you.

It's to just have sex with boyfriend or girlfriend or random hookup. it's easy, it's quick, it meets our desires, it feels good for a time. But it's us, it's a symptom of us wanting to take control of an area of our life that actually belongs to God.

God's way isn't always the easy way. God's way means that we suffer, God's love.  
And yet, we trust. You read the Psalms. It's the way of David that we trust, even though when it's  
hard. It's the way of David, it's the way of the cross, it's the way of discipleship.  
Amen. Colm. . .  
[17:47] . .