

David, the Priest, Saul, and the Witches of Endor

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[0:00] folks let's let's uh let's pray father would you open our hearts to hear your word this evening in christ's name amen uh kathy and melanie ross thank you that was uh that was five chapters folks i think that's a record so well done well read it's cool stuff eh really cool stuff don't you wish you were preaching that uh it does seem like random kind of stories but there are wonderful truths in here profound truths which i think you will find um hard to listen to some of it uh so let's so let's get into it it's probably it's probably best to have your bibles open because we'll be sort of popping in and out of various texts here what we're going to do is going to look at the story of david first and then the story of saul and the passage is clearly trying to parallel those two guys but it pops in and out of them but we'll i'll simplify it for you we'll look at david and then we'll look at saul so chapter 27 david david becomes buddies with the philistines now in the story of samuel so far david's david's done pretty well like he seems like a good guy right like david oh david he's a great guy but the bible is very honest in its portrayal of people and in this chapter we begin to see uh cracks forming and david's character and his fortitude and those cracks will become wider and wider as we see in in second samuel so he's been very faithful to god yet this little crack starts to form uh we know that because chapter 27 begins with david saying in his heart now i shall perish one day by the hand of saul there is nothing better for me than that i should escape to the land of the philistines now you remember that he's been told a lot that he will be the king that he's going to be the guy in charge that he'll take over from saul that god's god's cared for him on many occasions and yet here he says saul is going to kill me and it's not a prayer it's just in a dialogue you know he's he's he's lost lost what it seems lost confidence in god's protection and i we don't know exactly why or what's going on there but you know does he does he view god's protection as his luck perhaps and he's thinking his luck has run out after being on the run for so long verse two it says he went over to the philistines is that that's a it's a lot it's a lot in those two words he went over to the philistines back to gath actually which is goliath's old city the philistines as you know were the enemies enemies of god the enemies of god's people this time he went to gath with a fairly sizable army and he's obviously a very charismatic guy because he very quickly endears himself to the king king achish and he says and he hangs out with the king in his court for a while and then he says to the king listen i know i'm being a burden on you um why don't you just give me a city you know which is an amazing thing to ask you know listen let me let me help you to help me to help you let me help you let me have a city and we'll call it even or something i don't know what he says but he manages to get a city and it's called it's got a great name um uh ziglag right ziglag and and uh it's so anyway he gets a city one of the things about this passage that really struck me when i was studying it is that

we see here after the heroic amazing david we see here that david is is just like us i think uh he is capable of doubting god he's capable of being fearful he can be at times motivated by uh self-protection and will do desperate things to gain control of his life you can relate to that right now as the story plays out david spends a year or so in this place and uh he raids local towns and cities goes in with his army and takes everything and then he goes back to the king king achish and he and he and uh he tells the king like hey it's totally cool i've been you know like i'm i'm killing the israelites well he's not he's killing the bad guys but he tells the king that he's killing the israelites and he gets away with it because he destroys these places he doesn't leave anyone alive so none of the the bad guys can go to king achish and say david is not what he seems so the king loves him on to the beginning of chapter 28 the first two verses there so king achish uh tells david he's really awesome and he says mate like we're going to go to war we're packing up we're heading to war we're going to fight the israelites and uh and then he says to david and you're coming with me it's going to be awesome now this this david is obviously in a bit of a bind here and he says to king the king achish he says uh in verse two very well you shall know what your servant can do which is very vague eh he's thinking in his head oh dear i've totally overplayed my hand this is a big problem but i've got to say something very well you shall know what your servant can do it's kind of like you know he king says so listen you're going to come in with me tomorrow and fight the israelites right events will happen you know so you'll be with me we'll be fighting them i will be in a location pursuing an activity yep don't worry about that you know so he's he's in trouble he's really in trouble here we skip over to chapter 29 skip over to 29 there we see uh see how this pans out so david is about to head off to war with the king and the king has appointed him his bodyguard which literally means the guard of his head it's i think it's a joke in the bible uh considering what david did to goliath and this is goliath city so anyway the generals the king's commanders are much smarter than the king say listen we can't have david with us what if he turns against us mid-battle uh that could be a total disaster and you've got to get rid of him the king caves in and and tells david look you can't you can't go remarkably david questions it he's like what i can't go oh this is outrageous like terrible can't believe it after all i've done for you you know i don't know we don't know what's going on in his head but he's very cheeky uh all right so summary so far david's faith i believe was flagging here he was desperate to control his situation but he shouldn't have worried because god intervened in a remarkable way through uh the generals of the enemies of god david in the midst of all this drama was safer than he thought folks you are safer than you think

you are you know god has called you to be in his family and even in your sinful attempts to control your life you are in god's hands you're safer than you think you are i loved uh that song we sung tonight the second the second verse of the you know ding ding ding ding ding you know that song i love that song it's kind of happy right i am available for backing vocals this evening mike chase beautiful bvs tonight wasn't that beautiful did you hear mike chase doing harmonies it's beautiful you guys hear that it's great anyway here we go um i just want to publicly acknowledge it i thought it was it was beautiful it's lovely okay so this my favorite song so far um second verse here listen to this our refuge other refuge have i none hangs my helpless soul on thee leave me not alone still support and comfort me all my trust on thee is stayed all my help from thee i bring cover my defenseless head with the shadow of thy wing isn't that beautiful other refuge have i none hangs my helpless soul on thee david trying to find his own refuge trying to gain control of his life he was safer than he realized you are safer than you think okay the next scene chapter chapter 30 let's jump over to chapter 30 uh what does david get up to next he hands back to uh zig lag a city the city that the king gave him he discovers that uh wives children stuff it's all been stolen raided by the amalekites who are baddies uh here david is on a good day gets the priest uh they pray and they say god should i go in pursuit uh what's going to happen if i go in pursuit god says go in pursuit uh you'll get your stuff back it's going to be great so david is in a crisis again but his reaction is very different than this time this time he seeks god he hears from god he obeys god so he's in hot pursuit he's got 600 men they get to some point 200 of those men can't go any further they're completely exhausted so the 400 keep going and they defeat the amalekites they get everyone back plus a bit more they're on the way back and some of the men say hey you know there's 200 that stayed behind that couldn't make it uh they shouldn't get any of this stuff you know they can get their wives but that's it they get nothing more and then david makes this remarkable speech uh 23 to 25 of chapter 30 you shall not do so my brothers with what the lord has given us he has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came against us who would listen to you in this matter for as his share is who goes down into the battle so shall his share be who stays with the baggage they shall share alike and he made it a statute and a rule for israel from that day forward to this day so the principle that david establishes here is the principle of grace and in doing so he is pointing to the character of the kingdom that's to come and this is the parable of the laborers in matthew 20 isn't it you know the story where a guy hires some guys in the morning to work all day for him and in the last hour he hires a few more and he pays them all the same wage so the guy that works one hour gets paid the same as the guy who worked all day and it doesn't sound fair does it right it doesn't sound right it doesn't sound just but but but but that's the kingdom it's not about fairness and we should be thankful that the kingdom is not about fairness because if it's about fairness none of us would be included it's about what the father wants to give us life forgiveness peace that's what the father wants to give us it's a gift it's grace and david here

is pointing forward to that one of the great traits of the kingdom so david finishes on a bit of a high here now let's have a look at the life of saw in these few chapters so back to chapter 28 team saw and the witch of endor i like the the witch sounds better than medium i think other translations says which just sounds a bit more dramatic you know saw and the witch of endor all right first of all uh let me say something one of the ways i've been preaching through samuel uh that we've been preaching through samuel is is looking at it at sort of 10 000 feet right looking down seeing what the big themes are um we just did that right talked about grace pointing to the kingdom right it's great stuff and uh that is a great way of looking at it it's a great way of getting the big ideas out of it uh but let us not forget that the story is also a private tragedy of a guy who turns from god and continues to do so the instinct of his heart is to find his own way and it's it's just awful and it's very sad so let's not forget uh the personal story and amongst the big themes here um and he is obviously contrasted to david who uh another individual another guy who really lived who mess messes up but his heart comes back to god his heart returns to god uh let that be a challenge to you okay saw saw sort of began well and samuel and samuel but pretty early on he showed signs of a resistance to god's word through samuel the prophet and to make a long story short and one you know he didn't want to be god's servant uh so god took the kingdom from him gave it to david and saw knew this and was driven mad with jealousy and tried to resist god by killing david and we've seen that no matter your resources the guy was a king army of thousands no matter your resources you cannot escape the judgment of god you cannot actually resist god and this this this chapter here chapter 28 is this vivid picture of of what life looks like without god and a picture of the futility of resisting god a life under judgment it's hell this is a picture of hell this is what hell looks like here over christmas i went to new zealand and australia kind of the big trip that you do when you are an expat uh every five years or so to visit the family and my family are kiwis but they live in australia now so i'm one of the things i did is played a few games of golf with my with my brothers and uh and all their friends and i don't come from a christian family and uh no one they know is christian and so i'm playing golf with all these guys who who are completely irreligious and they're australians and new zealanders which means they're you know not very nice basically and uh so not like canadians who are absolutely lovely people you know there's no there's they have no fear of kind of you know making fun of you and stuff so it was quite fun and i quite enjoyed that anyway so this guy is making fun of me a lot and i told him listen if if you don't back off i'm going to issue a fatwa on you and uh a fatwa is an islamic death death sentence and i was i was i was

banking on the fact that they didn't know anything about religion and that they thought perhaps i maybe could do that and uh and um and they all made a big joke of it and we all laughed now anyway the next day i contracted human hand foot and mouth disease uh from my nephew which is a which is a real thing it's not like it's not like a cow disease there's a human variation where you get blisters all over your feet hands and in your mouth and it's incredibly painful and horrible right i got that the following day and all these guys i played golf with because i you see them around all these guys i played golf with all just like you see what happens you see what happens and they're all talking about reversing the fatwa and and like how uh and how you know because i made a joke about that and that was you know like they basically said see god got you didn't he god totally got you and and uh it was funny except i was in a lot of pain um now that this is a this is a caricature um of what how people view judgment you know that that god will get you that god will sort of uh if you do something wrong god will get you but that's not what hell is so much it's more it's less about god getting you and more about god leaving you it's more about god abandoning you that's that's hell and and that's what's happening in this chapter that's what it looks like and it's awful and and the picture of saul uh going to this witch in a disguise in this philistine city to try and get some kind of control of his life it's a pathetic image of a king dressing up like a commoner slipping in the you know in the back of this little podunk enemy of god town to go see a witch and he has to do that because he's outlawed witches in his own country and then if you read the chapter we didn't read it he ends up on the floor just moaning and completely inconsolable it's a picture of hopelessness the witch conjures up saul samuel i don't know what to make of that so just put it out of your mind uh somehow and um and he tells him what saul what he what he already knew he says you have disobeyed god god has chosen another and then he adds some more news uh tomorrow you will die god has left saul and he is experiencing the the consequences of that and it's a bleak picture it's a bleak portrait and it is bleak today to be separated from christ isn't it ephesians 2 talks about this remember this is ephesians 2 12 remember that you were at that time separated from christ alienated from the commonwealth of israel strangers to the covenants of promise having no hope and without god in this world what a horrible horrible way to live to be and yet how wonderful is the thing that follows on ephesians 2 13 but now in christ and that's us now in christ chapter 31 the death of saul we're almost finished here there is an uh there is the war philistines do go battle israel they kill jonathan saul's son lovely jonathan that we all like uh kill all but one of saul's sons and then the archers find saul he's wounded uh and not wanting him to uh torture him or parade him around uh he asks his armor bearer to kill him but the armor bearer like david will not kill a god's anointed and so saul falls on his own

[20:24] sword and that is his life ended it's tragic the philistines strip him of his vestments uh your vestments represented your position they stripped him of his kingship basically they cut off his head um hung his naked body up on display for his enemies to mock and look at and then it says that uh some valiant men stole his body back to give it a proper burial it's a it's a brutal and tragic picture and in this picture we are forced to reflect on the futility of human power and 1 samuel 8 the people cried out in opposition to god's leadership and said there shall be a king over us give us a king and at the end of saul's life he is your king here he is it it demonstrates the foolishness of placing our hopes uh in a human king to save us um it says you're a fool to think humanity can sort itself out without god's chosen one the way saul was treated has a clear echo in the death of christ who was also hung naked for all to mock and in the case of christ someone came and cared for his remains but these deaths represent very different things don't they the death of saul what it looks like to try and fight your own battles what it looks like to reject god's leadership the death of christ the righteous one the faithful one the obedient one his death was not a tragedy but a gift and it was a gift because it should be us up there but he took our place and this is grace and we don't deserve it we are the 200 soldiers who couldn't fight for ourselves we're the 200 soldiers that were left behind who needed someone to fight on our behalf but receive the bounty anyway that's us folks if you are here and a christian continue to put your trust in this king god's chosen king because under his leadership you're safer than you know folks if you are here and you're not a christian would you consider jesus would you consider jesus amen john would you come and pray for us man you