

David Spares Saul Again then Flees to the Philistines

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Date: 23 March 2014

[0 : 00] Thank you.

We will not be afraid. All mountains fall into the sea.

The waters fall and roar. We will not fear.

Though mountains quake. As waves engulf the shore. A river flows through streams divine.

The city of our God. The holy place.

[1 : 29] In which the Lord. Most high at its above.

God is within. His holy place.

The city will not yield. For God will come.

A grateful day. To be her help and shield.

When nations are in disarray. The kingdoms disappear.

[2 : 30] God speaks. God speaks. God speaks. His mighty voice. The whole earth.

Melts with fear. The Lord. The Lord. Almighty.

Is with us. To strengthen. And sustain. For Jacob's God.

Our strong defense. And fortress. Will remain. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We're going to join together in prayer.

[3 : 31] Let's pray. Father, we pray that our minds might be focused upon who you are. We confess how easy it is to be distracted and to how quickly to allow other thoughts to come into our minds.

And before we know it, our focus has been spoiled. And we've lost sight of why we're here. And we come away with that feeling of emptiness and weakness because we have failed to listen to your word and fail to realize what we're singing.

The wonder and the grandeur of what we're singing, which reflects the wonder and the grandeur of God, the living and the true God.

So we pray to come asking that your spirit will so work within us to create within us that spirit of healthy fear as well as joy.

And as well as drawing us to meet with you collectively. We are so aware that there is no place in the whole universe where you where there is no presence of God.

[4 : 44] And yet, Lord, there is a very special sense in which when your people gather, you meet with them just like your presence was concentrated among your people in the temple in Jerusalem.

So, Lord, you have promised in a very special way to meet with your people as they gather. And we ask tonight that you will give us an awareness of what we are doing.

And Lord, give us to truly confess our sins because as we meet with you like Isaiah and as we gaze upon the reality and the holiness of God, we are made aware of our own sinfulness.

And we pray to to to confess our sin because you are faithful and just and you will cleanse us from all iniquity. So, Lord, bring us in faith. We come in the name of Jesus, our Lord and our Savior.

And we ask that he may be made more and more precious to us. We pray that you will reveal him to us in all of the Bible. We pray that you'll remind us that the whole Bible points to that moment when he would come into the world as a baby and that moment when he would give his life on the cross and rise again for our forgiveness and for our cleansing.

[6 : 01] And so, Lord, as people who have been washed and sanctified and and renewed by Jesus, we pray to come with our whole heart. We ask, oh Lord, that you will fill us with your spirit this evening.

And if there's anything that stands between us, then we pray to remove it. And we pray that you will that you will come and meet with us in all your preciousness and in your glory.

And Father, we thank you that as well as meeting us here, you you are willing to meet with us where we are day by day. You know our family circumstances. You know where there is worry and concern and perplexity.

You know, Lord, where there is frustration and where there is darkness and where we do not know what a day or an hour may bring.

And we we know that that's true in any case, whoever we are and whatever is within us. We pray that you will that you will remind us again that our lives are in your hands and that you are in control and you love your people more than sometimes we than we imagine.

[7 : 14] We pray, Lord, to remember that your love never ends for your people and your love is expressed first and foremost in the coming and in the death and the resurrection of Jesus. Lord, give us always whenever those seeds of doubt enter into our minds to doubt your love and to doubt what you have given to us as your people.

Bring us back to the cross where we read that he who did not withhold his own son, but gave him up for us all. How shall he not also freely with him give us all things?

We have everything if we belong to you, everything that we need for living. And we ask that we will depend upon you and take all our cares, casting all our cares upon you this evening, whatever they are.

They may be health issues. There may be sadness in our homes. There may be uncertainty. There may be family issues. There may be economic issues.

Money circumstances. Lord, there may be the breakdown of relationships within the homes. There may be the breakdown relationships in people's places of work and perhaps where friendships have become frayed and become fragile.

[8 : 35] Our Father in heaven, give us to take everything to you and ask, Lord, that you will come in and that you will strengthen us in all of these circumstances.

And that you will remind us afresh that sometimes it is when we are in those times when everything else seems to be stripped away from us that we need to turn to you and we need to draw close to you.

And we need to say that God is our refuge and our strength. Father in heaven, we give thanks that you have declared yourself as such. And we pray to be reminded of that even at this moment in Jesus name.

Amen. We are going to read together from 1 Samuel and chapter 26.

So, on page 299, 1 Samuel chapter 26, page 299, and then we're going to sing and then we're going to read from 1 Samuel 27.

[9 : 46] This is what we've been doing from time to time. For those of you who don't normally worship with us or here for the first time, we've been going through the life of David, and for the past few weeks, we've been tracing this seemingly endless pursuit between David and Saul, rather Saul and David, in which Saul, out of rage and jealousy, seems determined to kill David, and he's going to pull out all the stops in order to destroy him.

But we've seen that so far that that has not been successful, and we will see that it ultimately will not be successful either, because God is in control and God is with David, preparing him for the kingdom.

And what we'll see also, and what we have seen, is how this whole experience in David's life was a testing and a preparation, a training ground in which David has learned the skills of leadership and patience and trusting in the Lord, because the kingdom that God was preparing David for was his kingdom, God's kingdom, his own covenant kingdom.

And we've sometimes been reading two chapters and going through those two chapters. We're going to do the same thing again tonight, except for one thing. I want us, instead of just reading them 26 and 27, I want us to compare the two chapters, because there is, I don't think there's a single comparison in the whole Bible that is more stark than this comparison between 26 and 27, and we'll be looking at that comparison later on.

This is the way in which God has chosen to tell this story. This is God's story. It is there for a reason, and we are to read it. This is the word of God, and we are hearing God's word right now.

[11 : 36] Then the Ziphites came to Saul. The Ziphites were distant relations of David, which makes it all the more shocking and all the more surprising.

The Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeath, saying, Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hakela, which is on the east of Jeshimon? Then Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, with 3,000 chosen men of Israel to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph.

And Saul encamped on the hill of Hakela, which is beside the road, on the east of Jeshimon. But David remained in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness, David sent out spies and learned that Saul had come.

Then David rose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Saul was lying within the encampment, while the army was encamped around him.

Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Joab's brother Abishai, son of Zeruiah, Who will go down with me into the camp of Saul?

[12 : 45] And Abishai said, I will go down with you. So David said, and Abishai went to the army by night, and there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment, with a spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay round him.

Then said Abishai to David, God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear. I will not strike him twice.

But David said to Abishai, Do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? David said, as the Lord lives, the Lord will strike him, or this day, or his day will come to die, or he will go down to battle and perish.

The Lord forbid that I should put out my hand against the Lord's anointed, but take now the spear that's at his head and the jar of water and let us go. So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head, and they went away.

No man saw it or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them. Then David went over to the other side and stood afar off on the top of the hill, with a great space between them.

[14 : 01] And David called to the army and to Abner, son of Ner, saying, Will you not answer, Abner? And Abner answered, Who are you, calls to the king? Then David said to Abner, Are you not a man?

Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your Lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the king your Lord. This thing that you have done is not good. As the Lord lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your Lord the Lord's anointed.

And now see where the king's spear is and the jar of water that was at his head. Saul recognized David's voice and said, Is this your voice, my son David?

And David said, It is my voice, my Lord, O king. And he said, Why does my Lord pursue after his servant? What have I done? What evil is on my hands? Now therefore, let my Lord the king hear the words of his servant.

If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering. If it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord. For they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods.

[15 : 07] Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth, away from the presence of the Lord. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea, like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains. Then Saul said, I have sinned.

Return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have acted foolishly and I've made a great mistake.

David answered and said, Here is the spear, O king. Let one of the young men come over and take it. The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness. For the Lord gave you into my hand today and I would not put out my hand against the Lord's anointed.

Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the Lord. And may he deliver me out of all tribulation. Then Saul said to David, Blessed be you, my son David.

You will do many things and will succeed in them. So David went his way and Saul returned to his place. And that, by the way, was the last time they ever saw each other, because despite Saul pleading with David to return, David could never trust that Saul would do him no harm.

[16 : 27] They both went their separate ways and that was the last they ever saw of one another. We're going to sing again and this time it's Psalm 119.

It's on page 400. It's the Scottish altar version. It's on page 400 and it's verse number 9. We're going to sing five stanzas to the tune St. Paul.

Psalm 119, traditional version, verse 9. I'm going to sing all the way down to verse 15. By what means shall a young man learn his way to purify, if he according to thy word thereto attentive be?

Unfeignedly have I sought with all my soul and heart. O let me not from the right path of thy commands depart. Five stanzas, 9 to 15, and we're going to stand to sing.

I want to preach a blind young mother his way to purify if he according to thy word there to attend to hear.

[17 : 44] And will be thee have I sought with all my soul and heart.

O let me not from the right path of thy home on the right path.

Thy word I in my heart have been that I open on thee.

O Lord, God of ever blessed heart thythe statistics warmly debt, the judgments of thy
burned each one shall make nightêm Thank you.

Thank you.

[19 : 51] In the ESV Bible, 1st Samuel chapter 27. Now watch this. Compare this chapter with the one that we've just read. Then David, and remember that there was no chapters originally.

Chapters have been put there subsequently. So we don't need to think there was a long space of time between chapter 27 and chapter 26. In fact, that word then with which the chapter begins almost implies that it was immediate.

Then. Then David said in his heart, Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There's nothing between. There's nothing better for me that I should escape to the land of the Philistines.

Then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand. So David arose and went over, he and the 600 men who were with him, to Achish, the son of Mal, king of Gath.

Now I hope you're remembering what's happening. I hope you see what's happening here. Philistines were the sworn long-term enemies of Israel. Goliath was a Philistine.

[21 : 06] Verse 3, And David lived with Achish at Gath, the king of the Philistines. He and his men, every man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, Nabal's widow.

And when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer sought him. And David said to Achish, If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be given to me.

In one of the country towns that I may dwell there. But why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you? So that day Achish gave him Ziklag. Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day.

And the number of the days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a year and four months. Now David and his men went up and made raids against the Gerashites, the Gergesites, and the Amalekites.

For these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt. And David would strike the land and would leave neither man or woman alive, but would take away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the garments, and come back to Achish.

[22 : 14] When Achish asked, Where have you made a raid today? David would say against the Negev of Judah. In other words, he was lying. Or against the Negev of the Geramilites.

Or against the Negev of the Kenites. And David would leave neither man or woman alive to bring news to Gath, thinking, lest they should tell about us and say, So David has done.

Such was his custom, and all the while he lived in the country of the Philistines. And Achish trusted David, thinking he has made himself an utter stench to his people Israel.

Therefore, he shall always be my servant. So says the word of God.

We pray that God will bless his word to us. Let's bow our heads in prayer once again. Our Father in heaven, we give thanks and we rejoice so much that we are not only able to pray for a sense of worship here in this place, but we're able to come together in praying for the whole world this evening.

[23 : 21] The world is your creation. The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. And you have a purpose for this world. That your word describes us. That the earth will be filled with the glory, the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

We thank you that you have a great purpose for this world. Even although there is so much sin and sadness and lawlessness taking place in the world. So much misery.

Your word tells us why there is misery. And we recognize it so much, Lord. When we hear and when we read about tragedy taking place all over the world.

And fear and tension. We pray, O Lord, for that world. We pray that your kingdom will come. And that your will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Because we believe with all our heart. That's the reason why Jesus came in. To bring peace to this world. And we believe that peace ultimately one day will come to the world when Jesus comes again.

[24 : 21] But we also believe in the peace of God that passes all understanding, that belongs to everyone in the gospel. And to that end, we pray that more and more people will come to know Jesus through the gospel.

And we pray that we will be active in prayer for those who have gone out to different places. And for every place this evening where people like ourselves are gathered together and where people are hearing the gospel for the first time.

Lord, we rejoice to think this evening that there are people who are hearing the gospel. And we give thanks, O Lord, for the many ways in which the gospel is spread in this world.

We give thanks for the day in which we live, in which communication has revolutionized the way in which we live. And in which your word is spread like wildfire.

We give thanks, O Lord, that literally your word can go viral over the internet. We give thanks, O Lord, for the ways and means in which the gospel is spread. through the means of video and through the means of internet and as well as books and pamphlets and leaflets and as well as personal contact.

[25 : 36] We pray never to lose sight of the value of personal witness and contact. And that's what lies within each one of us. We pray, Lord, to fulfill our responsibility to be your witnesses here in this world.

And we pray for your forgiveness when we have failed to do so. And we pray that we will be restored to a place where we can be effective as witnesses for you. We pray that you will powerfully work within us.

We pray that you'll powerfully work within your church all over the world this evening. We pray, Lord, for the Far East this evening, for places like China, for Thailand, for Burma, for Laos, and for places of the north of India.

We ask, Lord, for Vietnam and for Cambodia. And we pray, Lord, for places like Mongolia, places where there is, there are Christians, there are churches in these places, growing churches, and yet churches that place the difficulty of getting the message of the gospel through to people who have a Buddhist background and who think in terms of what Buddhist teaching is.

We ask, Lord, for the power of the Spirit to be evident in these places and for many, many people to turn to Jesus, to repent and to come to know that new life that is given to them in the gospel.

[27 : 00] We give thanks, O Lord, for the power of your Spirit. We ask, Lord, tonight that you will hear our prayer, that you will answer our prayer, that you will give us to know that our labor and the Lord is not in vain.

Forgive our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing now in Psalm 40, and that's on page number 51. It's the Sing Psalms version of Psalm 40.

We're going to sing from verse 13 down to verse 17. The last four verses of the psalm. The tune is Finart. Psalm 40, verse 30, is on page 51.

Be pleased, O Lord, to rescue me. O Lord, come quickly to my aid. May all who seek to take my life with shame and turmoil be repaid. Psalm 40, verse 30, is on page 51.

To the end of the psalm. Be pleased, O Lord, to rescue me. We're going to stand to sing. Amen. Give ■■■■ O Lord, come quickly to my aid.

[28 : 12] May all who sing to take my life with shame and turmoil be repaid.

May all who walk my overthrown and that disgrace the way they give.

May those who walk me to my face become a fault of their own shame.

But let all those who seek your faith be joyful in your all their days.

Let those who love salvation sing. Exalted be the Lord always.

[29 : 37] Yet I am pure and in great heat. Lord, think on me, I humbly pray.

You are my Savior and my help. Come, O my God, do not delay.

Amen. In last month's newsletter, I quoted a cowboy.

a very famous man who lived in the 1930s by the name of Will Rogers and if you read what I wrote he said this even if you're on the right track you'll get run over if you just sit there well I'm going to quote him again and this is another thing that he said he said good judgment comes from experience and a lot of that comes from bad judgment good judgment comes from experience and a lot of that comes from bad judgment I want us to see in these two chapters that there is both good judgment and bad judgment in David the good judgment comes in chapter 26 his behavior is absolutely spot on he's in control of everything in fact you can't help comparing it with the previous chapter where he had completely lost control when he heard that Nabal was refusing to give his men food and water he was ready to kill him because he lost his temper with him he had it in his mind to go to Nabal and to destroy his whole house until that is that Nabal's wife Abigail took it into her head took matters in her own hands and raced out to stop David just in time before he was going to fulfill what his heart wanted him to do that's because he lived on his emotions because he reacted emotionally in temper and in anger to what his men had told him that's no way to win the respect of your men and it's no way to lead as soon as you lose your temper you've lost it you've lost your authority you've lost your leadership if you're not in control of yourself you cannot win the respect of others and that's the danger that David was in in chapter 25 but in chapter 26 it's like a different man altogether in the face of great danger Saul is at it again the Ziphites have gone to him again I'm not entirely sure who the Ziphites were they tell me that they were distant relatives of David which seems to suggest to me anyway that there was an old family score in Judah and the Ziphites there perhaps was a conflict about land there usually was in those days and the Ziphites saw this as an opportunity of getting rid of David because they didn't like his clan or they certainly didn't want him to be king over them perhaps jealousy again we don't actually know but this is the second time that the Ziphites have gone to Saul and they've said they've told him where

David is and that was enough to ignite Saul's fury once again it seems to have gone into abeyance we don't quite know how long that took there seems to be have been a little break Saul was perhaps doing something else he got distracted but now he's at it again the Ziphites have come to him they're winding him up again Saul has gathered his three thousand chosen men and once again he has determined in his own heart to pursue David and to destroy him except this time David is ready for him David has grown he's grown up he's grown wise experience has taught him the experience of Nabal and what nearly happened with Nabal and having seen God's hand intervening in what he was about to do and having been delivered from his own foolishness and his own anger by the Lord he was now a wiser man he was more mature he was ready this time for what was going to happen in 26 Saul when Saul comes after him David has his spies he's prepared he's ready he knows what's going to would have been the utter the height of foolishness for David not to have known or not to have guessed that at some point in the future Saul would take it into his head again to pursue him so he's ready for him this time he sends his spies and they spot where Saul rests for the night and every step of the way in chapter 26 David is cool calm and collected that's because he has discovered and rediscovered that God is in control and God is not going to allow this to end with David's destruction God's purpose is that David will be on the throne and if God has promised that then David is the most secure man in all the world whatever happens whatever the dangers are David is the most secure man in all the world because nothing can go against nothing can destroy him and so David acts according to that promise that doesn't mean he makes a fool of himself it doesn't mean he acts rashly or foolishly he acts with skill and with determination of with wisdom he's as wise as a serpent and he's as harmless as a dove so he goes to the place where

[36 : 05] Saul and all his three thousand men and they're all snoring David can see them from afar off or perhaps not even afar off we don't quite know where he was there's obviously a valley in between them and and the Saul and his men were all sleeping soundly we read that God had sent them into a a deep sleep but that didn't excuse Abner for failing singularly to protect his king that was his one duty the first priority that Abner had the commander of Saul's army had in any case David said to Ahimelech the Hittite to Joab's brother Abishai he said will you go with me let's let's have a little task force to go down with me into the camp so off they went and when Abishai said to David when he saw how vulnerable Saul was a sitting duck when he saw how vulnerable he was fast asleep he said he pleaded with David he said to David look all it will take is one stroke and that's it the whole conflict will be finished now David same temptation again you saw that two times ago two chapters ago when Saul came into the cave to relieve himself and David and his men were back in the cave they saw this as God's providence here is the chance that you've been waiting for let's go and kill Saul and that will be the conflict over the whole thing will be finished we won't any longer have to be fugitives on the road running from the king here it is again same temptation same suggestion and David could have been tempted to think well maybe the last time I was wrong maybe

God did give it give him into my hands and maybe here he is giving him again and if I don't take this chance then but David's thoughts and his mind were far deeper than that because David was a man after God's own heart which meant that he was a man who sought first the kingdom of God and put God in the right place the first and foremost priority in David's heart was obedience to God he had to live according to why because he loved God read the Psalms if ever you have any doubt as to what kind of mind David had read the Psalms that's why we sing them because we want to love God in the same way we want to praise God in the same way David was a man after God's own heart and which meant that as far as he was concerned he was not going to shed innocent blood or rather the blood it wasn't it wasn't innocent so much innocent as the blood of a man who God had appointed to the throne I think we saw already that the significance of that was very very important because Israel were God's covenant people God had put

Saul on the throne and therefore it wasn't for David to take the law into his own hands and if it was wrong once it's still wrong if you resist temptation one time then resist it again don't be surprised when the same thought comes into your head the same temptation repeats itself time and time and time again if it's wrong once it's wrong again and it's wrong again and again and here it is coming all the way back bouncing back again to David and he says the same thing to Abishai he says do not destroy him for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless David says as the Lord lives the Lord will strike him this day he will come or his day will come and he will go down to battle and perish I wonder how he was so sure of that well I'll tell you because just a few who knows how long before in chapter 25 David had been persuaded by Abigail to leave the matter in the hands of God don't take this into your own hands leave it God is in control and guess what happened a few days later

God struck Nabal down and the problem was resolved what did David learned he learned that if he leaves things to the Lord and not takes things into his own hands which he shouldn't and acts out of temper then God will take care of it and here he is having learned that and now he is talking to Abishai and he's saying here is what I've learned this is what we're to do leave this to the Lord one day Saul's time will come and he will die this will one day all be over but you see when you're in it when you're in the darkness and the uncertainty and when your life is on the line and when it appears as if the solution is in your hands then it's very hard not to take it very very hard to trust the Lord and you do it just because of that it is right there are some things you have to do in this world just because they're right not because they're easy or because they always feel right but because it is right because you know in your heart what is right and what's wrong because you know God's word you know how God's word leads us and guides us and because we're being guided by the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit never guides us into the wrong places when we get ourselves in the wrong places as we will see it's our fault it's because we deliberately take the wrong route it's not because the Holy Spirit doesn't make it clear what's the right choice and what's the wrong choice for David it would have been wrong after all that God had taught him you see here's a here's a man who's learning and he's growing and he's being more and more mature as time goes on and so what they did was instead of killing Saul they decided to demonstrate to Saul how close they had got without killing him in order for David to show Saul once and for all that he could have killed him and if he had meant to do him hard harm because Saul all the time made out as if David was a threat to him and to his reign in the kingdom here was David's opportunity now by showing by taking the jar of water and the spear and by showing him how close he had got to demonstrate to Saul and that's what he did he took the jar and he took the spear and off he went up the hill to where Saul could see him he called out to Abner and he rebuked Abner he indicted Abner for failing to look after the king here was the king of Israel and 3,000 men and not one of them is on watch that was a disaster that was a complete failure I want you to imagine even in our day that would be a court martial offense and in those days the commander of your the first responsibility you had the commander of the king's army was to protect the king and Abner is fast asleep it was a complete embarrassment utterly shameful so the first person that David spoke to or shouted at rather was Abner what are you doing I came in I was right next to him I was within a hairspray of him I could have cut his throat there and then and you didn't protect him you're the man who should be dead you're the man who should be punished not me instead of that you're taking your 3,000 men and you're chasing me instead of Abner and the whole thing of course there and then I believe that Saul's world just crumbled in front of him because he realized that everything was not as he thought but you see the problem is with Saul he was so obsessed obsessed with rage and with jealousy against David he was so obsessed with his own pride that David could never trust him again and so after the conversation that they had there's something very pathetic about that conversation isn't there

there's something very there's something quite emotional about it as well because David I believe he comes close to tears in verse 19 where he pleads with the king and he tells the king how much he's missing being at home and he tells the king what is this all about why is my life why are you hunting me like a flea like a partridge in the mountains and all the time I just want to go home you're keeping me away from the lord's worship you're keeping me you're actually saying to me away with other people away with other nations you're not you're no longer one of us and I think that that hurt David more than anything else hurt him more even than the fact that his life was in danger and that was the last time that they ever saw one another

[45 : 19] Saul went his way back to Jerusalem or rather back to where he was wasn't Jerusalem at all it was back to Judah and David went his way they never saw each other again you know there's something so wrong you can imagine that this might happen where there's a Philistine and an Israelite and there of course there were sworn enemies of one another but you don't imagine this happening amongst God's people there's something devilish about Saul something demonic about the way he the way he had made up his mind to to become so obsessed with David as being a perceived threat to him David was never a perceived threat to him jealousy and pride are the two things I'm not saying there aren't other things there are plenty of other things but there are two things that we need to guard against because who knows once you start on the road of jealousy and pride you don't know where it's going to end there's no rationale behind it and so here's these two men who could have supported one another

David could have been such a help to Saul in so many different ways and Saul because of his own devilish attitude because he allowed himself to become captive but by his own pride and his own jealousy and that's what it is when we allow ourselves to be taken over by our own uncontrolled emotions and when reason gets pushed out then there is only the road of destruction it gets worse and worse and worse it's a lesson to us all now here's the contrast throughout the whole of chapter 27 like I say David is composed he's wise he's in control he's reasonable and he's right no one can deny that everything David did in chapter 26 was the right proper good thing to do and then it all goes pear shaped for David immediately

David said in his heart now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul and the same David who we've respected so much in chapter 26 as a man of God every step of the way is one that we say amen to by the end of chapter 27 we're wondering if this is the same man if we were to be teleported all the way back into Gath land of the Philistines and we were to focus in we were to zoom in on David and his family and his men you'd be thinking what in the world are they doing here it's the last place in the world I would ever expect to find an Israelite heir to the throne let alone a man after God's own heart living amongst the Philistines the very place that God forbade his people from associating with and yet there he is he's walking like a Philistine he's talking like a Philistine he's not worshipping their gods he hasn't gone that far but in order to live amongst the Philistines you can't do it and be a true Israelite at the same time you've got to comply you've got to assimilate you've got to be in as many ways as you possibly can a Philistine and that's what happened because as soon as he took that decision at the beginning of chapter 27 and took that step in the direction of the Philistines it cost him it nearly actually cost him his life we're going to see later on we're not going to finish this tonight we're going to see in chapter 29 how this all ends thankfully once again because God intervened but if David had followed on this course it would have cost him his life but let's see what happens he wins the confidence of Achish king of Gath how they didn't remember that he was the one who had killed Goliath

I cannot understand but in any case that is what happened he wins the confidence of Achish king of Gath he asks him for a town to be given to himself so they give him Ziklag for himself and his family and his men and their families and so he settles this is not this is not a temporary residence he's not asking just to stay the night he's asking to settle amongst the Philistines but when you are in the wrong place you will discover two things you will discover that being in the wrong place as a child of God is going to cost you you will also discover that it will make you miserable it's got to be that way David had to live a lie while he was with the Philistines he had to every day prove himself maybe not every day but regularly prove himself so what he would do was he would go out with his men and they would attack a common enemy like I think it says here the Amalekites for example so he would attack a town in Amalek they would kill everyone in the town in case anyone lived to tell the tale they would take the plunder and they would go all the way back to Achish and then he would lie to Achish and he would say

I attacked a town of Judah today he didn't attack a town of Judah Judah were his own people but Achish believed him he believed that David had turned against his own people and had become a stench in the nostrils of all of Israel and so he thought he had him for life that's what happens if you make that decision to be in the wrong place to go in the wrong direction then it will cost you your integrity it will cost you your witness and it will cost you your peace and the reason I say that is because you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit and if you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit then there will be turmoil when you choose the wrong road the road of disobedience instead of obedience

[52 : 26] God will make sure that you never ever settle while that's the case and yet at the same time the Philistines will make sure that you are caught in a trap as David was every so often David would have to in order to preserve his own security and his own safety he would have to prove himself by going out on a mission and he would have to come back again and he would have to he would have to suffer the bad conscience of telling a lie to him knowing that he would that one day he would be caught and he would be exposed that's the cost when we take the wrong route that's the bad judgment God is still there he's still working in David God's not going to let him go and that's no excuse to us to live any way we want

David was miserable we'll see in chapter 29 that this this came to a crisis point it's got to you can almost see it coming it can't carry on like this and the crisis did come we'll find out in two weeks time God willing what happened so the question then is how did David get into this position how did he find himself how did he land himself in this fix how did he manage after being such an example of obedience and maturity in chapter 26 how do we how is it that we do we find such a contrast in chapter 27 well the answer is in verse 1 the answer lies in what David said to himself he said in his heart now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul there is nothing better for me that I should escape to the land of the Philistines then Saul will despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel and I shall escape out of his hands that was the turning point

I want you to compare that with what David said in the last in the last chapter to Abishai when they were considering whether Abishai was going to take Saul's life or not David is so confident and he's so right he says do not destroy him for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless and David said as the Lord lives the Lord will strike him down and now at the beginning of chapter 7 David's saying the opposite he's saying I will perish one day by the hand of Saul he seems to have lost his confidence in the Lord he seems to have lost sight of the Lord's dimension in his life it took faith for him to talk to Abishai but his faith is now shaken I don't know how that came to be maybe somebody spoke to him maybe somebody sowed the seed of doubt into his heart maybe somebody unhinged him it's so easy to do to become unhinged in your faith and the least little thing can do it for us to lose sight of who we are and what God's done for us and God's control over us but you know when we rest in God's word that's all we've got we're hanging on God's promise and in chapter 26

David was hanging on God's faith cannot see exactly into the future faith simply rests on the word of God it's the same in the Christian life as well how do you and I know that there will be a resurrection we've never seen a resurrection God hasn't shown us what it's going to be like on the day that the graves will all be open Jesus will come again and the dead in Christ will rise how do you and I know and yet we believe it don't we we believe in the resurrection that's why we're here because we've come to lay hold upon this great truth that God will one day come for his people in Jesus Christ we rest in that we are confident and yet there are times when we're not so confident times when that seed of doubt creeps into our hearts and asks us the same way as the devil asked Eve in the garden of Eden did God really say not to touch of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil and Eve listened to the devil and we listen to him sometimes as well and our faith becomes unhinged and these questions come in and sometimes take hold of us don't they if we're honest with each other probably saying what's he talking about surely he doesn't well let me let me tell you yes I do and I believe that the vast majority of

Christians they go through times when they lose sight or becomes all clouded and obscured everything that we sometimes preach in the pulpit now we preach with joy and with confidence and with faith and yet in our own hearts there are times when these questions creep in and say do you really believe that David was this this is what David had to had to countenance the last chapter he's saying to Abishai God will take care of it now he's saying to himself when it comes to himself he's not so persuasive and neither is he so open to his own persuasion because it's only him and him this time he's not talking to Abishai he's talking to David and he's going to make this decision and it's going to be based on what he concludes in his own heart I want to ask you tonight what are you saying to yourself you're saying I don't know what you're talking about yes you do think about it we all talk to ourselves all of us from time to time you may not be conscious of it all the time but you think about it we all talk to ourselves in our own souls in our own hearts and the decisions that we make are always a result of what we say sometimes that conversation doesn't last very long does it sometimes it lasts very short and before you know it you're doing something that's rash and unthinking but you still talk to yourself you've still come to some conclusion it's been like a twinkling of an eye and yet you've still come to some conclusion the wisest thing of course is to is to take a lot longer in what we say to ourselves and even wiser to always bring God into it whenever we talk to ourselves whenever we reason some of the greatest men in the bible had their faith shaken john the baptist if ever there was a man Jesus said among those born of women there hasn't arisen somebody greater than John the baptist he was a man who spent years preparing for the coming of Jesus when he met Jesus he recognized him behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world and yet when he spoke to Herod Herod had him imprisoned for years and who knows how long he was in prison we don't know but for certainly a long time and it appears that Jesus never saw him in prison that's a question in itself we don't know what exactly happened but what we do know was this that John the baptist faith was shaken so he sent his men out to Jesus and he asked Jesus are you the one who was to come or should we look for another or Peter do you remember the excitement when he saw Jesus fear turned to excitement when he saw Jesus walking on the water he said to him Lord if it's you tell me to come and walk on the water Jesus said comes off he went stepped out of the boat at first the excitement was enough to carry on what the faith and the excitement went together here I am walking on the water but then it it suddenly dawned on him what he was doing and fear got a hold of him he lost sight of the power of God all he saw was the wind and the waves and he began to sink his faith was shaken well that's what happened to David it seemed so certain one day had faded the next so much that in his mind instead of reason conversation there was another conversation this time with himself

[61 : 39] now i will perish one day by the hand of saul that's what happens when fear takes over where faith should be it's what happens when we lose sight of the god dimension it's then that we make our decisions on what appears on the outside and not on the reality of what god has promised your decisions always take place think about it on what you say to yourself before you know it you take that decision you make that choice and one thing leads to another gath the last place in the world where david should have found a resting place the more of this went on the worse it got what are you saying to yourself this evening are you saying i need to get home and watch the tv that's your conversation with yourself don't tell me you don't talk to yourself that's what you're saying you're saying to yourself i don't feel very comfortable here because i'm not a christian that's what you're saying to yourself perhaps there are many times that you've heard the gospel you've heard the greatest message in the world what do you say to yourself as you're listening to the greatest offer promise gift that anyone could ever offer you in jesus christ what do you say to yourself when you hear time and time again that christ came into the world to save sinners to give his life so that your sin and your guilt could be forgiven to ask you to come to faith in jesus to tell you time and again that it's free it's the gift of god which is eternal life in jesus christ what do you say to yourself don't tell me you say nothing i don't believe you you may have convinced yourself that you say nothing i don't believe you do there's always a conversation going on in your mind perhaps it's a conversation like tomorrow perhaps it's a conversation that just fills the void with what you're going to do and what you're looking forward to do and everything that's in your life there was another conversation in the bible in the new testament this was a man who all of a sudden he looked out his window and he saw that his fields were had yielded the greatest crop that he ever had which meant that he was mega rich he said to himself he said to himself listen he said to himself what shall i do i've had much goods many goods laid up for many years and i know what i'm going to do i'm going to tear down my barns they're not big enough i'm going to build bigger ones and i'm going to say to my soul i'm going to tell my soul you have you have years of plenty left over take it easy eat drink and be made that's what he said to himself please don't tell me you don't talk to yourself god said you fool this night your soul will be required of you and that man was lost because of what he said to himself there's another man in the new testament who said to himself the prodigal son remember luke chapter 15 when often wasted his father's money on riotous living all he had left was the food that the pigs were eating and it was at that

point whatever he had said to himself in the past that was the point where he came to himself he came to his senses the first thing he did was he said to himself how many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread and here am i perishing with hunger i will arise and i will go to my father and i will say to him i have sinned and that conversation was the turning point which led to his new life to his forgiveness and to his going home what's yours let's pray our father in heaven we pray tonight that that as we speak to ourselves that we will come to the right conclusion that we will be honest with ourselves pray that you will keep us from trying to persuade ourselves of all the wrong things because we want to blank out everything that you've said to us we pray tonight to stop and to listen to what you're saying to us and to know afresh that the only way to live is to have christ to have that forgiveness that only he can give us and so we pray that in our conversations in our own hearts that we will say what the prodigal son said i will go to god i will ask his forgiveness and i will yield my life to him in jesus name amen we're going to sing in closing in psalm number 143 it's the traditional version of the psalms the second version and it's verse 6 that's on page 439 the tune is heber and it's verse 6 to verse 8 lo i do stretch my hands to thee my help alone for thou well understandst all my complaint and moan my thirsting soul desires and longeth after thee as thirsty ground requires with rain refreshed to be 6 to 8 from page 439 lo i do stretch my hands we're going to stand to sing to thee my help alone for thou well understandst all my complaint and moan my thirsting so desirest all my thirsting so desirest all my thirsting so desirest all my thirsting and longeth after thee as thirst he run required with rain he so desirest all my thirsting with rain he will be fresh to thee

Lord, let my prayer prevail, to answer it makes me.

For though my strength of fear, I know thy face in me, lest I be light to those that do in darkness sin.

For him the downward goes into the dreadful pit.

[69 : 54] Because I trust in thee, O Lord, cause me to hear.

Thy lovingkindness free, when, Lord, in the love of me, Caught me to know the way, where my thoughts should be.

For while my soul on high, I do lift up to thee.

Now may the grace of our Lord and Savior be just the love of God the Father, and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with each one of us, both now and always. Amen.