

David: So Godly, So Human

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Date: 06 May 2018

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn for a little back to the sections of God's Word that we read together and looking at chapter 27 in particular, but we focus on the first verse of chapter 27.

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

Now as we know, David was a quite remarkable man, although God described him as a man after his own heart.

And David had a passion and a zeal for the glory of God. He had an intense love for God. He wanted the honor of God to be great.

He wanted the nations of the world to know God. And you just read through the life of David and the Psalms of David, and you realize here is a man who was so full of praise and love for God.

[1 : 1 1] And yet, David was so human. And I think that's one of the great things about the Bible. While they highlight many of the virtues and many of the great qualities of the saints and highlight their faith, they also show us maybe sometimes the darker side or certainly the more human side as well.

And David, while he was so God-centered and had an incredible passion and love for the Lord, he was also incredibly human.

He had his faults. He had his faults. He had his sins. He made bad decisions. He was somebody who knew everything about temptation and even what it was to succumb to temptation.

And yet, irrespective of when he went wrong, he went straight back to the Lord, or eventually back to the Lord, and seeking for forgiveness and seeking for direction.

And David did get it wrong at times. But he always tried to get right again with God. And so God's testimony of David was that he was a man after his own heart.

[2 : 2 3] And just as we look at what we've read today, we see both the God-centeredness of David, a Christ-likeness, but we also see his humanness.

We see things that aren't so good. Now, as we know, David was being hunted by Saul. He was actually, for seven years, David really was on the run.

And I think we would find that really hard to understand because back, I think it's in chapter 23, it tells us that Saul hunted David every day. For seven years, it was Saul's aim to get David one way or another.

And you have to ask yourself, why on earth was Saul so desperate to kill David? Well, it came from jealousy. No other reason. There was a day when Saul thought David was wonderful.

David, in fact, had been employed by Saul, playing music to Saul to soothe the troubled spirit that he had. And we know that David was the one who, when Saul and nobody else in Israel was prepared to face Goliath, that David went out and he killed the great giant.

- [3 : 37] And after they routed the Philistines, after the killing of Goliath, David was still in Saul's eyes, such a great young man, till they came back home.
- And the women lined the streets and they were singing, Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands. And Saul, at that moment, changed.
- He looked at David in a new light and he turned on David. He became intensely jealous of David. He saw David not as somebody to be welcomed into his palace, but somebody to be got rid of.
- He was a threat to him, so he thought in his own mind. And as we read through the life of David, at no point was David ever a threat to Saul. David was the most loyal, the most humble servant of Saul.
- And yet Saul couldn't see it because he was twisted in his own inside with jealousy. And you know, there's nothing, there are few things that distort people's lives like envy and jealousy.
- [4 : 48] It twists them. They can't see rationally. They can't see reasonably. They see the person that they're jealous of. Or they see things about them that nobody else can see, things that aren't there.
- There's just a perversion that's taken over. And it's murderous. We've often talked about it. But you look at Cain. He was so jealous. It's murderous. He killed his brother because of jealousy.
- Joseph's brothers, they were going to kill him, but eventually they sold him off as a slave. Daniel was put into the den of lions because of jealousy. Because he got a more prominent place than the other people.
- And so they had to get him down. They tried to take him down. And it would be very interesting to see in public life how many people's lives have been destroyed because of jealousy.
- How many people, even in the political world, have been taken down because others have been jealous of them. It would be very interesting to see if the root cause is actually jealousy.
- [5 : 52] Power struggles. And the interesting thing is that though David was on the run for years, David slept better than Saul.
- Saul would have the best bed that money could buy. He was living in the palace. He had all the power, all the authority. And yet he was a troubled spirit all the time. David, he writes some of his psalms he wrote when he was being chased by Absalom and other times when he was being chased by Saul.
- And he talks about sleeping. He says, for instance, In peace I will lie down and sleep. For you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety.
- That's what he wrote when he was on the run. And again, as we sang there in Psalm 3, I lay down and slept. I awoke again for the Lord sustained me.
- I will not be afraid of many thousands of people who have set themselves against me all around. See, David was able to sleep because he had peace of conscience. He had only done right.
- [7 : 01] Saul was the one who had done wrong. And despite all Saul's wealth and all that he had amassed and all the power that he had, he was a troubled soul.
- While David at that time had nothing. His bed was often just the grass. He slept under the stars. He slept in caves. But he slept a lot better.
- Because he was right with God. And you know, you and I may be jealous sometimes of people who outwardly seem to have amassed huge fortunes. They seem, everything seems to be going well with them.

Maybe they don't sleep that well. We don't know. But you know, when you're right with God, and when God's peace is in your heart, no money. You can't put a price on that.

And that's how it was for David. You couldn't put a price on the peace that he had. So here we have Saul, and he's trying his utmost to kill David.

[7 : 59] That's what we find in quite a few of the chapters in 1 Samuel. We find that. So Saul had been told by the Zivites that David was hiding in the wilderness.

And that he was on the hill of Achille. And so Saul takes 3,000 men. David had 600 men following him. Sympathizers and family and such like.

They had joined with him. And while on the one hand they were a great encouragement and support to David, it also put an awful lot of responsibility on him as well. Much easier for one person to hide than when you have 600.

But Saul went with a force of 3,000 chosen men. In other words, this would be the equivalent of the Israeli SAS. It would be the commanders of the day.

And Abner, who was an amazing soldier. And David bears testimony later on when Abner was actually killed at a later time of just what a great and wonderful soldier Abner was.

[9 : 08] Abner was the leader, the commander of that. So he takes these 3,000 elite soldiers and away they go hunting for David. And we read about it.

There came the time when they saw, or David had sent out spies. He was always checking what was happening because Saul would go off. He would come back. In fact, if we had read in chapter 24, we find that there David again spared Saul's life when Saul was hunting him.

He had the opportunity. And Saul went into the very cave that David was hiding in. And David could have killed him, but he didn't. And so here we find that Saul and all his soldiers are encamped.

And they've made a kind of circle around him. And Abner is lying beside him. Saul has put his spear into the ground just at his head. And there's a water jug beside him. And so David and Abishai, they sneak down at night into the camp.

And Abishai says to David, hey, let me one strike. I'll pin him to the ground. He won't even know. I won't have to hit him twice.

[10 : 20] I will plunge my spear through him. And you think of what that would mean, not only for David, but for all these people who are following him. It would mean that at that moment, when Saul was gone, then David was a free man.

He would no longer be an outlaw. And he was going to become king. These people who followed him knew he was going to become king. And they would immediately be rewarded for their loyalty to him.

Their lives, everybody's lives would change like that. One strike, he said, that's all I need. David said, no. And the reason David said no was because Saul was God's anointed.

And he said, I will not lift up my hand against the Lord's anointed. And he says, the Lord will deal with him. Maybe he'll die in battle one day.

Maybe somebody else will kill him. But I certainly won't. And it's here we see the Christ-like spirit of David. Here is, if ever a person had a right to do something.

[11 : 36] David has been hounded. His family have been hounded. For seven years he's been living as an outlaw. Here is his chance to make right what is wrong. But he won't.

And long before we read these words, David knew it was true. Do you know what it says? Revenge is mine. I will repay, saith the Lord.

And that's something we must always remember. Because revenge is part and partial of our human fallen nature. It is something that we automatically have within us.

When somebody does something to us, straight away we want to get back. We want to get even. We want some way of hitting back. You will often see it in children.

One hits, the other hits. That's why there's wars. That's why there's always the retaliation. The revenge. Somebody who does something bad, I'm going to get even. Well, here was David's opportunity to get even.

[12 : 38] But no, he's not taking it. Because God had anointed, authorized the anointing of Saul. And he said, I will not. Whoever lifts his hand, I will not lift.

And whoever lifts his hand against Saul will not be guiltless. And I'm sure David was so thankful that that's what he did. Because it wasn't very long after this, just within two years, that Saul was killed in battle.

In fact, he ended up falling on his own sword. And David would have been so thankful. Because forevermore, if he had killed Saul, that guilt would have remained with him to his dying day.

But he hadn't put out his hand. And, you know, this is where we see a Christ-like spirit. And when we apply this to ourselves, it's often very difficult.

You know, we can read the Bible. And we read these things. And we say, oh, well, that's very noble. And that's wonderful. What a great spirit. That's the spirit that the Lord requires of us. The Lord requires us to forgive our enemies.

[13 : 49] To forgive those who have done wrong to us. He, in fact, asks us to do good to them. Rather than taking revenge to do good.

And sometimes you say to yourself, whoa, you're asking me to do the impossible, Lord. But that's what he asks us to do. And that's where we see that Christianity is so different to the way of the world.

And so here we are with this most human of men. And yet we see Christ-like. We see him God-centered.

We see the fear of God in the heart of David. And so he's displaying this incredible forbearance in the face of where he could have really sorted things out himself.

So David takes Saul's spear and water jug and away he goes. And then he shouts back. And it's almost quite comic. And he shouts to Abner, who was the bodyguard.

[14 : 52] Abner, call yourself a bodyguard? And Abner's quite angry. Who's calling upon the king? And David's basically saying, and he'd be waving Saul's spear in the air.

Abner, see what I have. Abner, you're not much of a guard. And of course Saul, Saul is immediately humbled. Because he realizes that David was standing above him.

Could have plunged the spear into him but spared his life. And here's Saul with 3,000 men trying to kill David. And Saul was a very complex person.

But he was utterly unstable and irrational. And the Spirit of God had departed from Saul in the way, we don't look on that like as if the Spirit can depart from a believer.

But it was meaning that when he was anointed as king that God gave him, there was a special anointing, as it were, where God was with him as king of his people.

[16 : 00] But because he was refusing to obey God, God said, I'm taking away that, what was given to you. And so Saul then, he went on a kind of downward spiral.

And he ended up consulting mediums. Wizard, the witch of Ender. He went, because he couldn't find the mind of God. He started delving down in the dark, in the dark places.

And he ended up killing himself. And a real downward spiral. There was an incredible instability in a very gifted man. So David, he said to David, look, I've sinned.

I'm really sorry, David. You're a good guy. He said, just go home. So David said, send somebody for your spear and the water jug. Saul went back home.

But David didn't go back home because he didn't trust him. And it's then that we find David going from this supreme moment of great faith, of great trust in the Lord, of living in such a Christ-like way, showing God's mercy and forbearance to somebody who didn't deserve it.

[17 : 19] And yet, at the very next moment, we find David saying, David said in his heart, now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul.

Isn't that amazing? But it's so human. It's so like ourselves. Going from a moment of great faith into great weakness.

And David, notice what he does. David said in his heart. So David is actually having a discussion with himself.

David said in his heart, now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. The most dangerous thing, if we can call it that, to have a discussion with us, your own heart.

You know what the Bible tells us about our heart? That the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? And at this moment, David has taken his eyes off the Lord.

[18 : 21] And he's begun to look at the situation. Now, we're not being too hard on David. Because as we say, he was being hunted every day for years. And if we were in that situation, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year being hunted.

There's no doubt. But there are times we would sink. Well, David has hit a major sinking. And he's gone way down. And he felt there were times when David wrote, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

David wrote, how long will you forget me, Lord? Forever. How long will you hide your face from me? You know, that's one of the things I love about the Psalms.

The Psalms get right in, right into the very depth of your being. The Psalms hit into parts that nothing else really does.

And sometimes the Psalms use language that we would almost be afraid to use. And this is how we find the humanness and the God-centeredness of David right throughout the Psalms.

[19 : 26] Because sometimes he's in despair and he thinks God's done with it. How long? Have you forgotten me forever, Lord? And yet by the end, he's back up and he's praising God. Lord, there's no God like you.

And that's the beauty. But that is Christian experience. And that's where David was. But David, all of a sudden, gives in to weakness.

And David says, you know, one day I'm going to perish by the hand of Saul. What can I do? And do you know what David does? He stops trusting God. Because year after year after year, he was trusting God that God would hide him and protect him.

And now David says in his discussion with his heart, I know what I'll do. I'll go down into the enemy territory. Saul won't look for me there. Big risk because David was somebody that the Philistines knew only too well.

He had killed their great champion. The women in the streets of Jerusalem were shouting or singing, Saul has slain his thousands and David is tens of thousands of the Philistines.

[20 : 33] But David reckoned it was safer there than on the hillside. But you know what he was doing? He was making decisions based on his own human thought, his own human logic.

And he was leaving the land of Israel where God's promises were centered. And he was going into enemy territory. And, you know, he was there for a year and four months, but it was not good for him.

It wasn't good for his soul. It wasn't good for his conduct. Because David went in a bit of a downward spiral in there. Achish, the king of Gath, gave him this city, wee city, Ziglag, to stay.

But you know what David was doing while he was there? David would go on raids because, well, they had to support themselves. But David would go on raids down amongst the Amalekites and other people.

But his behavior was terrible because he was going into towns and into cities. And they were slaughtering everyone so that nobody remained alive.

[21 : 40] And they took everything, all the loot with them. And they would come back to Ziglag. And Achish, the king of Gath, would say, where were you? Where were you going down? Where did you go fighting? Where did you get all that loot?

Ah, he says, down in Israel. He was kidding on to Achish that he was going down into parts of his own land. And he was slaughtering and taking away.

And Achish was rubbing his hands together. And he says, I have David for life. He has become a stench in his own land. Now, of course, that wasn't what was happening.

But this is the way David was operating. And this is what happens when we give in to temptation. David was tempted. He was tempted.

Take the easy option out. You have been day after day, week, month, year after year, you've been bombarded. You can't take any more. Take the easy option.

[22 : 40] And Satan does that to us so often. Take the easy option. And you know this. See, when you're being tempted and tempted and really tempted. And you give in to temptation. Do you know what happens?

First of all, there's a relaxing. And you say to yourself, oh, I actually feel better. All that pressure I was under has gone. Oh, you might not analyze it that way.

But you're saying, I'm glad I give in. I'll move on a wee bit down the line. You'll then be saying, oh, I wish I hadn't given in. Because when you give in, when you're fighting against temptation, it's there.

It's there all the time. But when you give in, that battle stops. But you've succumbed. And it's easy for a little. But it's not easy for long.

Because what you've done or what you've given in to always has consequences. And that's what happened to David. When he gave in and stopped trusting the Lord and took matters into his own hand, he went on a downward spiral of brutality and slaughter and lying and deceit.

[23 : 51] And, you know, it came back to haunt him. Because there came a time when David, fool of the Lord, he said, you know what I want? You know my great lifelong ambition.

Do you know what I want to do? I want to give God the best place ever to live in. He's living in this tabernacle. I am going to build a temple for the Lord. And it's going to be spectacular.

All the wealth of the land is going into this temple. Well, Nathan the prophet came to David and he said, you know, your idea is good. The Lord loves your idea. But you're not going to build it.

The Lord's not going to let you build it. Why? Because your hands are red with blood. Because David had spent so much of his time slaughtering people.

God says, you can't build it. Because you're a man of blood. God. So David, of course, David's son Solomon built it. And it's here again we see the greatness of David.

[24 : 52] Rather than being hurt over this, he was so thankful that the Lord had allowed that his son would build it. And he spent the remainder of his life building up the resources for the building of the temple.

But he didn't get his dream. Because he went wrong from the Lord. And there's always a cost when we go wrong. But then we come again.

And there's so much that we could look at here. Time is going. Very briefly, we turn to chapter 30. And you know something awful nearly happened. The Lord spared David.

Because the Philistines, we didn't read all that. The Philistines assembled for battle against Israel. And David and his men were going to fight with the Philistines.

Achish had them lined up. In fact, Achish knew what a wonderful fighter and soldier David was. Was going to have him as his own personal bodyguard. Oh, David.

[25 : 56] You were in a really bad place. See the downward spiral? He completely lost his way. Because he lost his focus of the Lord. And he went down, down, down, down, down.

Where he was ready to fight Israel. The lords of the Philistines came to Achish and said, No way is David going to fight. That's a man who caused havoc against us.

What if he turns on his men against us during the battle? Out with him. So Achish said to David, You can't fight. And to his dying day, David would be so thankful he didn't.

Because Saul was killed in that battle. The man, when David was trusting the Lord, Oh, I won't lift my hand against the Lord's anointed. When David lost his way, He was ready to go and fight against Saul.

You see the importance of focusing on the Lord. Of not giving in to temptation. Despite how difficult and hard it is. But then we find this incident in chapter 30.

[26 : 57] Just two minutes. We find that David and his men come back after a time. They've been away. And Ziklag is in ruins. It's been burnt with fire.

All their wives and children have been taken. And as we read there, The men cried. They wept until they had no more strength within them. Of course, they didn't know exactly what had happened.

They didn't know that all their wives were still alive. Or their children were still alive. But the enemy had taken, The Amalekites had taken them away. And the people were, The followers of David were so distraught That they were ready to stone him.

That's what we read. Verse 6, And David was greatly distressed For the people spoke of stoning him. What did David do? Well, it tells us, David strengthened himself.

And the Lord is God. This is a moment David's getting back on track. Last year and four months haven't been good, David. But he's back on track.

[28 : 00] And it's wake-up time. And you know, The Lord often puts a wake-up time Into our experience. And he's saying, Come on. You've been going down the wrong road.

You've lost your way. David, you've lost your way. This was a wake-up. The people are ready to stone him. His wives are gone. His children are gone. The city's in ruins. Wake up, David.

And to David's credit, he did. And he goes to the Lord. And you know, If we go to the Psalms written at this time, We find David did four things. He trusted God.

He prayed to God. He meditated upon God. And he waited upon the Lord. Those who wait upon the Lord Shall renew their strength. And David's back on track.

In fact, It tells us In Psalm 59, I will sing of your strength. I will sing aloud of your steadfast love. He wrote that at a difficult time.

[29 : 00] The men of the city would be wondering. They would be seeing David. David in prayer. David in song. David singing. David, we're talking of stoning you. What are you doing? David's getting back with God.

And what was the result? They took off And they went after the Amalekites. And they managed to get back. They attacked the Amalekites. And they were able to get back Their wives and their children and everything.

David got himself back on track. And once you're back on track, It's amazing God again was with him. David's life is just so full Of illustration for us.

May we be given the grace to understand. And guard against giving in to temptation. I know it's difficult. Particularly when it goes on Day after day after day after day.

And Satan says, Just give in. That's what David did. But he suffered for it. And so will we. May the Lord grant us the strength And the grace to follow him.

[30 : 03] And to, like David, In the face of difficult times, To forgive people When we need to, Even when it's difficult to forgive. Let us remember this.

You know, sometimes people say, I can't forgive. I can't forgive him. I can't forgive her. Well, if you're a believer today, Remember, What it took God to forgive you.

It took God sending His only beloved son Into this world To become a curse for you. And to die for you.

In order to save you. That's what it took. God has forgiven you By having his son slain. That was the only way He could do it.

What a cost. That's what the Lord Is saying to us as well. Look, Look at what I did In order to forgive you. Surely, You can forgive others.

[31 : 04] It needs grace. It needs God's help. Can't do it in our own strength. But if we do, You know, the Lord, If we forgive, If we have a forgiving spirit, The Lord will grant us A peace That we cannot have As long as we're Incapable of forgiving.

Let us pray. Oh Lord, Our God, We pray that you will Bless us. And we give thanks again For your word And all the lessons That we learn in it. And we pray that These things might Go down deep within us That we might not Turn aside from it.

But that we may Lay these things to heart. Watch over us, We pray and take us To our home safely. Bless a tea and coffee In the hall Forgiving sin. In Jesus' name.

Amen. We'll conclude singing In the 61st Psalm. The tune is Arrington Psalm 61, Scottish Psalter. And it's on page 293.

O God, Give ear unto my cry, Unto my prayer attend. From the utmost corner Of the land my cry, To thee I'll send. What time my heart Is overwhelmed And in perplexity, Do thou me lead Unto the rock That higher is than I.

[32 : 18] For thou hast For my refuge been, A shelter by thy power. And for defence Against my foes Thou hast been A strong tower. Wonderful Psalm 61, O God, Give ear unto my cry.

O God, Give ear unto my cry, Unto my prayer attend.

From the utmost corner of the land, My cry to thee ascended.

For thy heart is overwhelmed, For thy heart is overwhelmed, And in perplexity, To thou me lead.

To thou me lead unto the rock, And higher is than I.

[33 : 39] For thou hast fought through For thou hast foe, For thou hast come, My refuge be! As sheltered by thy power, And for defense against my foes, thou hast been asked on power.

Within thy tabernacle I forever will abide.

And under cover of thy wings will come beneath me I.

Now may the grace, mercy, and peace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.