

# 1 Samuel 24

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Preacher: Geoff Stevens

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, thank you, Greg. We're certainly very glad to be here, too.

It's been such a blessing being a part of this church. Well, I'd like to begin tonight by asking you if you remember what it was like to be a kid and to have your parent tell you, you know, no, you cannot go to that movie.

No, you cannot go to that friend's house. No, you cannot do this thing that you have your little heart set on and to be told no.

And if you remember, think how your thought process of, well, that is just so utterly absurd. Why can't I just go see this movie? It's just ridiculous.

And you work yourself up into this sort of rebellious, you know, angry thing. And it's interesting because when you get to be my age, now you have your kids. It's I'm the one telling them no, right?

[ 1 : 10 ] And I'm the one saying, no, you can't go to that movie. And then they tell me things like, it's not like I'm going to, like, go do the things I see in the movie, you know.

And I say, well, that's not really the problem. The problem is, and then I start to explain myself and I start to reason with them. And then I realize, why am I, this is ridiculous. This is pointless. They're not going to understand the reasoning.

So what I've started doing as I'm learning how to be a parent is I put my arm around my child and I kind of whisk them away where no one else can hear. And I say, do you know that I love you?

And they say yes. And I say, do you know that I know things you don't know? And they say yes.

And I say, do you trust me?

And they say yes. And I go away hoping that the answer is yes. But that's the crux of the issue.

[ 2 : 14 ] And I think that our text tonight is about being patient and trusting God in the midst of trials. Being patient and trusting God in the midst of testing and in the midst of trials.

So just a brief recap on David's situation. So David's already been anointed to be the next king.

Anointed by God's prophet Samuel. And the problem is that he's not yet been crowned king

because there's another king who is still on the throne and who is a maniac.

And who is seeking his life and is pursuing him and is hunting him. And in fact, we're in a period now.

This chapter and a couple subsequent chapters is a period where David's going to be pursued by Saul. And Saul's trying to kill him. And so that's the context of 1 Samuel 24.

[ 3 : 27 ] So if you'll turn with me to page 246 in your pew Bible. It's a little bit lengthy. So just bear with me and read along as I'm going to go ahead and read the whole thing.

When Samuel returned from following the Philistines, he was told, Behold, David is in the wilderness of En Gedi. Then Saul took 3,000 chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the wild goats' rocks.

And he came to the sheep's fold, by the way, where there was a cave. And Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.

And the men of David said to him, Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.

Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. And afterward, David's heart was struck. David's heart struck him because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

[ 4 : 35 ] He said to his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my Lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed.

So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way. Afterward, David also arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, My Lord, the king.

And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. And David said to Saul, Why do you listen to the words of men who say, Behold, David seeks your harm.

Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, I will not put out my hand against my Lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.

See, my Father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands.

[ 5 : 43 ] I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. May the Lord judge between me and you. May the Lord avenge me against you. But my hand shall not be against you.

As the Proverbs of the ancients say, Out of the wicked comes wickedness. But my hand shall not be against you. After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue?

After a dead dog? After a flea? May the Lord, therefore, be judge and give sentence between me and you. And see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.

As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, Is this your voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. He said to David, You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil.

And you have declared this day how you have dealt with me, in that you did not kill me when the Lord put me into your hands. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe?

[ 6 : 55 ] So may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

Swear to me, therefore, by the Lord, that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David swore this to Saul.

And then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold. So I'd like to propose three things that we can do to be patient while we trust God in the midst of trials.

Number one is to understand the temptations that trials present us. Number two is to remember the purpose that God has for us in trials.

And number three is to cling to the God of trials. Okay, so first thing I'd like to consider is understanding the temptation of trials.

[ 8 : 08 ] You know, when we have a time of testing or a time of trials, when we're in a situation where we're under pressure, it sparks an inner crisis in our minds and in our hearts.

And we have an inner discussion with ourselves, right? We have, I mean, you know, it's not exactly the angel and the devil and each shoulder, but we have a conviction of what God might have us do in a situation.

But then we have this cloud of voices that are saying, well, what about this? And what about this? And have you considered this? And what about this? Right? And not all those voices are good voices.

Not all those voices are voices that are out for your good. Some of those voices are out to destroy your soul, actually. And I think that it's helpful to pause when we see, in this case, David under duress, to think through what might be going on in his head.

Okay? To think through what he's up against in these trials. So the first trial we'd like to look at is, let's look at verse 4 together. And the men of David said to him, here is the day of which the Lord said to you, behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.

[ 9 : 39 ] And then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. So what's going on here is that David and his men are hiding in this cave. And remember, their lives are...

Saul's come out with 3,000 men. And David has approximately 600 men in the cave. They're way outnumbered. Their very lives are at risk, right?

And so to David's men's eyes, God has given Saul into their hands. He served him up on a silver platter.

And the first temptation that I want to look at is the temptation to take the expedient way out in the midst of converging pressures.

That's a lot of words now. Let me try to unpack that. The temptation to take the easy, expedient way out in the midst of converging pressures.

[10:39] So what pressures was David under when Saul came into the cave to go to the bathroom? So he's in there all by himself, totally vulnerable.

David's men see it, and they're like, go kill him. And I want to think through a little bit what pressures he was under. He was under the pressure not only to kill Saul for himself and get out from under the threat of his own life being in danger, but he was also under this immense pressure from all of his men that are like, this is the right thing to do.

And that's the type of pressure we can also relate to, right? We've all been in a position where we have people that we, it's not even so much the opinions of people out there that we don't know and we don't trust. It's the people, the opinions of the people close to us, right?

And they come to us and they say, just do this thing. Just do this thing. Look how God's, look at how it's all aligned perfectly. So David's got this pressure of, to kill Saul to spare his own life.

David's got this pressure of his own friends and men are saying this is what God wants you to do. And David's own desire to have the throne that God's promised him.

[12:05] But David had the conviction that this was wrong. David had the conviction that God did not, even though the circumstances looked a certain way, that God did not want him to just kill Saul.

Because Saul was God's anointed. Saul was still in the office of king that God had established. And in David's mind, this was a vertical, this was out of love and respect and honor for God who had established this man as his man.

David did not feel like he had the right to kill this king, even though it would be expedient to do so. We can almost hear God's, we can almost hear God saying, to kill him, to kill Saul now would be murder.

It would be poison, poison to your soul, and it would taint your future kingship. Do not do it. Trust me. I will handle this in my own timing. But we can also imagine the voices, right, in David's head. We can imagine the voices saying things like, if I don't do this, things could get worse.

[13:20] The situation could get worse. I could get killed. He could, you know, David might tell himself, if I don't do this, I'm going to keep putting my friends in danger.

My friends may die. These men who are following me, in other words, he'd think of other people that are going to be put in jeopardy. He may say to himself, I may never get this chance again.

Man, have you ever been there? I've been there. Have you ever been facing a test or a trial and have that little voice come and say, you may never get this chance again? And it's like, oh, that pressure sets in, right?

You know, if we compare this temptation to Saul, back in chapter 13, Saul faced sort of a similar situation where Samuel said, look, I need you to wait for me seven days.

I'll come. We'll do the sacrifices. God will bless you. And then you can go in and fight the Philistines. Well, Saul's there. The Philistines are mustered. And there's a lot of them.

[14:22] And he's scared. And Saul's own people are starting to waver. And they're starting to, you know, there are all these converging pressures on Saul. Multiple pressures are coming at him at the same time.

And you know what he did? He decided to go ahead and offer the sacrifices and not obey God and cave into the, and do the expedient thing. And if you remember, that's when Samuel said, you've disobeyed the voice of God and the throne is going to be taken away from you.

All right. So that's one temptation we can observe in the passage. Second temptation that David faced is the temptation to take judgment and vengeance into his own hands and not leave it to God. So if you look at verse 12 with me, this is David speaking, May the Lord judge between you and me and may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.

So obviously David passed this test and he decided to not take vengeance into his own hand.

[15:36] But we can imagine how easy that would have been to do because Saul was so wicked. Saul had just massacred 85 priests of God, God's own people.

And you can be sure that David probably had it in his head. These were people David knew. David knew all about this. Not only did Saul murder these priests, but he also went and wiped out the entire town they were from, women, children, infants.

Saul was off the rails completely. And you could hear the voices in David's head. This man deserves to die. Take vengeance into your own hand and do it.

But he restrained his hand. I think he felt convicted that God said vengeance is mine.

I will take care of this in my own way, in my own timing. The ends do not justify the means. Okay, the third temptation I think we see in the passage is all the way at the end, the very last verse.

[16:46] So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Samuel returned home. Excuse me. Then Saul returned home. But David and his men went out to the stronghold.

Went up to the stronghold. So this is, you know, I love the way the Bible puts things sometimes. It's just sort of this little matter-of-fact period at the end of the sentence, which is, okay, AJ Casey dead because he knew that this was going to go on.

This was not ending. This was, he knew that this struggle to solve was not ending now, but he's going to continue. So the temptation, this is, this is, this is what we're going to do.

I think it's wrong. It's the temptation to doubt the word promises of God. To doubt the promises of God because of our presence of his circumstances.

You know, to face that, Saul's going back to his palace and gave him another act coming, another act coming.

[18:22] And he has to think to himself what is God doing? Is God still for you? This doesn't look like God's still for you.

You know, it's interesting how God is not predictable all the time.

And how, when we see that, when we see God being God and making his decisions and doing things his way, we are tempted to say, is God freeful to his word?

is God going to follow through on his promises? Okay, so these are, these are three temptations that David's up against as he's facing these trials.

And of course, in this passage, he passed the test. In this chapter, David passed the test. And that's obviously not always the case with me. So the second thing I want us to think about tonight is that we not only think about the anatomy of these trials and the temptations that they put to us, but also to remember the purposes of trials, God's purpose of trials.

[19:51] because the question of why is a huge question when we're undergoing a test or a trial.

Why? Why is this happening? What is God doing? What could he possibly be doing? And, you know, those of us that have some years on us, we've been through some trials, and we've been through some tests.

And so, you know how it is when we've been through some tests and trials. You can, sometimes God is gracious and he grants you the ability to look back and say, oh, that's what God is doing. But in the midst of trials, because sometimes we can't see those particular reasons, but what we do have are the general purposes of God in trials.

And that God wants us to know that. God wants us to be armed with the reasons why he puts us through trials in general. And there are many, many, and I only want to just touch on three here tonight.

[21:00] the first one is to bring about heart transformation.

You know, David is famous for being referred to as a man after God's own heart. And Saul was told, you're not going to be king anymore.

I'm deposing you because I'm going to find, I'm going to put in your place a man after God's own heart. And when God was going to pick out who was going to be king, he's rejecting this guy, he's rejecting this guy.

And, and, and God says, you know, man looks at the surface of things, but I look at heart. And, it wasn't as if God found this awesome, super Christian David tending the sheep whose heart was perfectly pure and awesome and God came down and settled on him that you're the one because you are good and your heart is poor.

It wasn't so much that as it was that, that God was going to put David through heart training. He was going to humble him and he was going to make him utterly dependent on himself so he could strip him down and rebuild him gradually into the man that he wanted him to be.

[22:26] You know, we can think about the same principle when we think about the people of Israel and God had liberated them from Egypt and saved them and was, was, had to, decided to put them through this wilderness experience, right, where they, where they had to travel through the wilderness on their way to the promised land.

So they'd already been rescued and they had the promise of the land where they were going but they're in this in-between time where God was literally giving them their food day by day.

He was, he was bringing the manna to them once a day. They weren't even, they weren't even supposed to keep extra because God was saying, I'm going to take care of you tomorrow. You're going to wait for it. And I'm going to take care of you the next day to wait for it. And, there's a purpose in these testings and trials.

The purpose, one purpose is to humble us and make us utterly dependent on God. a second purpose is to deepen and build and strengthen our faith as we walk along with God.

[ 23 : 42 ] You know, this is not too unlike how our friendships work just with each other with people. You know, friendships, good, long-lasting friendships, if you think about your own life, who are the people in your life that you would consider your best friends?

Usually, they're people that you've hit a bump or two. You've been through a trial. You've been through things with them and they've been true or they've helped you or they've proven to be there for you.

And, you know, there is a component of that with us and God. There is a component where without the trials and the tests and then us seeing that God is reliable and He meets us, and then we're like, oh, and then we step through that and then we're on to more things and then before, you know what, we've got 10 or 15, you know, when you, again, I hate to say, you know, when you hit my age and I'm, you know, I'm 45, okay, I'm not 90, but when you get to midlife, you've got some of these things under your belt.

Oh my goodness, when it was time to make this huge life decision, God intervened and He said, this way, not that way and I said, I don't want to go this way, I'm scared and He said, just trust me and then five years later, I'm like, why would I even, you know, this is just the best, this was such the best thing for me and my family, right?

And those experiences, they deepen our, they strengthen and deepen our faith and intimacy with God as we depend on Him and walk with Him. A third, a third purpose is that God is oftentimes preparing us for a particular mission.

[ 25 : 31 ] So obviously with David, God is trying to prepare David to be a righteous king, a courageous king, a humble king.

You know, back in ancient times, when we think of a king, we think of, you know, England and the monarchy and all that. But in David's time, he was the judge. When you're the king, you were also the judge.

The people came to you with all their problems and with all the, and he had to judge the people, not just go fight their battles. He needed wisdom.

He needed God's wisdom. He needed to be prepared for this role. And I wonder if in your life, you can think of things that God has put you through or maybe putting you through now that in five years, you're going to be able to come alongside another believer and say, I know what it's like to have a child that is struggling mightily with a life-threatening health issue.

I've been there and God saw me through it. And let me share my experiences with you just as an example. Sometimes, God, the purpose of trials and tests is to prepare us to be useful.

[ 26 : 48 ] And being useful is a huge blessing for our good.

I want us to see that being humbled is for our good. Being made to be dependent on God is for our good. Obviously, deepening our relationship with God and strengthening our faith is for our good and certainly being prepared to go on to do particular work that God has prepared for us is for our good.

God doesn't need us. He is perfectly content in Himself. All of this is for us, which is a hard thing to get our heads around.

Leads me into the last point here, the final point, which is that we need to cling to the God of trials. You know, the biggest point in trust is believing that the other person loves you and is out for your good.

If you can believe that, you can endure what the trial. If you doubt that, you may waver and say, God, does God love me?

[ 28 : 20 ] Does He even love me? Does He care? Am I His? Is He for me? If you're sitting there going, ah, I don't know, maybe not, you're in a bad and dangerous place.

God love me. And what we need to do is look to what God has done and look to Jesus and see that God came down and prove that He loved us.

this is not a doctrine in a book. This is a real personal book. God love you.

Ha ha ha ha ha. Ah ha ha ha. Thank you.