

1 Samuel 18-19

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[0 : 00] Thanks. You've just won the Super Bowl.

What are you going to do next? Well, if you're a sports fan, perhaps you've heard this question before. The reporter asks a player after they've won some large sporting event, this very question.

You've just won X large sporting event. What are you going to do next? And the expected answer is always the same. I'm going to Disney World. You see, Disney World is not a place for training to smash your enemies on football fields or basketball courts.

No, Disneyland is a place of frivolity to celebrate a job well done. But I remember once watching an interview with a basketball player who had just led his team to the NBA championship.

And the reporter asked him, you just won the NBA championship. What are you going to do next? Expecting a typical Disneyland answer, Disney World answer. And he said, I'm going to the gym.

[1 : 27] Because this player knew that though he had won this great victory just now, there were yet future games ahead. And he wanted to win those as well. We find David in our passage this evening in a similar situation.

He has just slain Goliath, the story that we are brought up with from our youth. It has a happy ending, unless you're Goliath. But it's not the ending of the story.

There's no Disney World for David just yet. Rather, he faces still more challenges. Harder ones, even than Goliath. Royal ones that seek his life no less vehemently than Goliath did.

We pick it up in 1 Samuel 18 and 19. Now, our passage tonight is too long for us to read in full, unfortunately. So, I'm going to summarize a bit here at the beginning.

And then go back and in the course of the sermon this evening, focus on some particular points. So, 1 Samuel 18 and 19. As I mentioned, the story begins after David has defeated Goliath.

[2 : 38] He's talking to Saul on a nearby hillside, who asks some personal questions about him. And Saul's son, David, is there. And the text says that David loved Saul.

Jonathan loved David at his own soul. And Jonathan does a strange thing. He takes off his royal garments and he gives them to David.

That will be important as we go on, so mark that. And through the course of the rest of the passage, David, who is now attracted the attention of Saul, gets closer into Saul's inner court.

Saul learns he's a great warrior, sends him out to battle against the Philistines. But this sad thing happens. He kills so many Philistines that when he comes back into the city, these women say that Saul has killed his thousands, but David his ten thousands.

And this is the beginning of a fateful relationship between Saul and David. This will be the beginning of the rise of David and accruing love to himself and the decline of Saul as he's consumed with hatred for David.

[3 : 49] That hatred overflows in him trying to spear David against a wall a few times, trying to trip him up by marrying him off to his daughters, trying to kill him by sending him out in front of all these Philistines, greatly outnumbered, to get their foreskins.

Weird stuff. And then he takes the gloves off toward the end and he goes to kill David himself.

He's ultimately unsuccessful. And at the end, he goes to this place where David is hiding. He sent messengers over and over and over to find him. They go there and are overwhelmed by the power of the Holy Spirit and they can't bring David in.

Saul says, let me take care of this myself, goes in and the same effect happens to him. And at the very, very end of the story today, Saul strips naked and prophesies.

Lots of weird stuff. There's a question and answer period coming after the talk. So get yourself ready. In the midst of all of this, these two chapters, long and strange as they are, I want to pull out three themes.

[5 : 10] First, the schemes of Saul. Second, the devotion of David. And third, the laughter of the Lord.

The schemes of Saul, the devotion of David, the laughter of the Lord. So first, the schemes of Saul. Saul, though he is the king of Israel, is a man under a curse.

A few chapters earlier, he disobeyed God's spokesman, Samuel, by offering a sacrifice that was not permitted to him. Thereby, trying to grasp for himself authority not only over the temporal affairs of Israel, but also over its religious practices.

At that, God told Saul, now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought out a man after his own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be prince over his people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.

But in that story, Saul is not given the name of the man who will replace him. He just knows that the throne no longer functionally belongs to him. Another is going to rise and take it from him, but he doesn't know the name.

[6 : 22] So think of how great must have been his suspicion, knowing that someone, perhaps even someone he met, would be the one chosen by God to replace him.

Think of his worry, his paranoia, when anyone around him had success. And indeed, we see this in the song the women sing, Saul has slain his thousands, but David his ten thousands.

And this induces paranoia in Saul. Think of the precautions that he, knowing his days were numbered, must have taken. Did he set an extra guard at night, and then set another guard over that guard, all to protect him in his sleep, the sleep that escaped him all night long, because though his body was well-protected, he left his soul open to attack?

And all because he disobeyed the word of the Lord. Look here, then, how sin gives birth to worry and jealousy. When sin infects the soul, it kills the ability to rejoice in the successes of others.

So Saul is terrified when he hears the Israelite women rejoicing in the defeat of the Philistines with their song, Saul has slain his thousands, David his ten thousands. Verse 7. What a sorry situation Saul finds himself in, to be struck with fear and anxiety while the people of God rejoice around him.

[7 : 51] In response, our text says, in verse 8, in response to this song, Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him. He said, They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands, and what more can he have but the kingdom?

The scene here is like in a movie when a character suddenly realizes what he himself is saying. The music goes somber, the camera pulls in close to his face, and the face flashes with horror as he realizes, what more can David have but the kingdom?

The kingdom. David will have the kingdom. David is the man chosen after the Lord's own heart, chosen to care for Israel. David is the favored one of God.

David is the one who will keep the Lord's commandments. David! And now Saul is faced with a choice, it seems. What will he do with this new information that his jealousy and his paranoia have warranted for him, have gained for him?

What will he do with this? He has insight into the plan of God. Will he surrender it? Repent of his own disobedience, and praise the Lord as the one who lifts up kings and deposes kings?

[9 : 06] No. No. No. While the people of God rejoice, Saul will rage. So in verse 9, the text says, And Saul eyed David from that day on.

Saul, through the hyper-vigilant eyes of fear, has seen the plan of God and chosen to set his face against it. Around five times our text says some variation of Saul hated David, he was afraid of David, that he schemes against David.

Saul will now take up arms against him. Saul says in his heart, This man is the Lord's anointed, and I will pin him to a wall and watch him bleed out before my eyes.

Or I will send David out against a superior Philistine force that he cannot conquer. Or I will send assassins into his bedroom while he sleeps. And if all this fails, then I will kill himself, kill him myself, with my own royal hands.

He is the one the Lord has chosen, and I will stop him. And he tries to do all those things. Does Saul's behavior here sound strange to us?

[10 : 27] It is possible, you know. It is possible to set your face and your intention against the plan of God when you know it. It is possible to look at the Lord's chosen man and seek to destroy him.

Did you not do something like that this week? Did we not do something like that this week when the good plan of God for us was not good enough for us? When God's trustworthiness was not a good enough reason for us to trust him, and so we worried and we were anxious about the future?

When God's holiness was not something to be followed after, and so we allowed ourselves to feast our eyes on the evil of our computer screens? When we took advantage of God's patience toward us by being impatient with those around us, did we not see the plan of God for us and set our faces against it?

It is possible, you know, to strap on our armor and take the field of battle against the living God. It's called sin. Saul chose this for himself, and in the end, all of his schemes fell back upon his own head.

Will that be our fate as well when we choose sin? Or is there still some hope for us? Well, we will come to that question shortly. But we see throughout this text that even when faced by the good plan of God, Saul sustains his schemes.

[11 : 56] So the schemes of Saul. Now we turn our attention to the devotion of David. After we've looked at the schemes of Saul, we see the devotion of David in almost perfect contrast.

While Saul is anxious and scheming throughout, David seems not to take initiative almost ever in this story. He's frequently responding to what Saul does. He seems to have a tremendous amount of peace about him.

While Saul is treacherous against David, his best warrior, David remains devoted to the king against whom he never retaliates. Shockingly, the story seems to imply that even when Saul keeps hurling spears to him, David keeps obediently and humbly coming into his presence to play the lyre for him and attempt to soothe him.

Look at verse 11 here. Chapter 18. And Saul hurled the spear for he thought, I will pin David to the wall. But David evaded him twice.

And then the next chapter over, it's going to do it again. This seems to be a sort of pattern. And I'm not quite sure what in the world David's doing by continuing to go back. But it seems to have something of loyalty about it. David is devoted even to the king who tries to kill him.

[13 : 09] David's posture throughout is not one of scheming, but of trusting. He does not grasp at events around him, but he allows them to be guided by forces beyond himself.

Never, it seems, for a second, thinking those forces are blindly random or that they unfold by chance. So, when David decides to marry one of the daughters of Saul, it was Saul's idea from the beginning.

When David goes out against the Philistines, it was Saul's idea to put him there. And so on and so on. David responds obediently to the commands of the rightful king.

This responsiveness doesn't mean that David is simply lazy or inactive.

Simply put, since he doesn't see any good reason to do so, David doesn't allow himself to be struck by the spears that Saul hurls at him. He's not being lazy. He's not being passive. He's not allowing himself to be stuck to a wall.

[14 : 11] The principle seems to be this. When a good plan of God opens up for David in this passage, he acts upon that plan and does so with wisdom. But never in this story do we see him fretting and doubting.

Consider perhaps the weirdest story in this whole, the weirdest bit of this story, the episode of the foreskins. Let's read it together because it's weird. 1820.

Now Saul's daughter Michael loved David. And they told Saul and the thing pleased him. Saul thought, let me give her to him that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.

Therefore, for Saul said to David a second time, you shall now be my son-in-law. And Saul commanded his servants, speak to David in private and say, behold, the king has delight in you and all his servants love you.

Now then, become the king's son-in-law. And Saul's servants spoke these words in the ears of David. And David said, does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law since I am a poor man and have no reputation?

[15 : 17] And the servants of Saul said to him, thus and so did David speak. Then Saul said, thus you shall say to David, the king desires no bride price except the hundred foreskins of the Philistines that he may be avenged of the king's enemies.

Now Saul fought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And when his servant told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before that time he had expired, David arose and went along with his men and killed two hundred of the Philistines.

And David brought their foreskins that were given in full number to the king that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter Michael for a wife. But when Saul knew that the Lord was with David and that Michael, Saul's daughter, loved him, Saul was even more afraid of David.

So Saul was David's enemy continually. What's happening here? David, a poor shepherd, responds, he has no money to pay a bride price even though he seems to like this woman.

No worries, said Saul. The king desires no bride price except a couple foreskins. Now, Saul is not asking David to go down to the local Philistine children's hospital and see what they have lying around in the garbage bins.

[16 : 26] No. He's saying that David is to go and take these foreskins from grown men. And though the culture in times then are different from the culture today, I think one thing is in common.

Grown men don't like having their foreskins taken from them. They will fight you for them. And this is the point. He wants David to go against a hundred men.

This is a snare for David. And perhaps even the weirdness of it is an attempt to malign David in the eyes of the people around him. He's going to do this sort of weird and barbaric thing.

Perhaps this will lower his popularity ranking a bit. David goes and does it over and above 200 of them. He's strategic. He brings men with him and he takes advantage of the opportunities that are there to become Saul's son-in-law.

David's settled confidence in the plan of God is not an excuse for foolishness or laziness but an occasion to plan and act wisely yet without anxiety or despair and leave the result in the hands of the Lord.

[17 : 36] But nevertheless this is a trial that Saul sends to destroy David. So note this. Sometimes God saves David from the trials of Saul for example when he tries to kill him with the spear.

And sometimes God saves David through the trials of Saul. This is such an example. When Saul sends David out against Philistines he routinely destroys them and in the process he wins the favor of the people.

When Saul puts a stumbling block in David's way God does not simply whisk him away he lets him walk over the stumbling block or through it. He redeems these trials by allowing David to go through them.

The result is consistent. David's fame increases and Saul's rage burns yet fiercer. Yet through it all David maintains a consistent peace and rest. Perhaps you have wondered why God would do this for David or perhaps for you.

Perhaps we pray only to be saved from our trials rather than be saved through our trials. But if at all of these moments God has simply whisked David away from the trials of Saul from the schemes of Saul David would not have been able to attain the heights of power that he did.

[18 : 59] in all of these evil schemes of the enemy God was working for David a great salvation. And may it not be the case for you as well.

Perhaps the Lord will save you through your trials. Lord is Vault out in the to you to be a sort of weird Christian cliché, trust the Lord and all shall be well. You hear it often enough and it may sound to you to be trite, like a sort of bland pseudo-wisdom that you read on the inside wrapper of those dove chocolates or in a fortune cookie. But you know your experience is more complicated than can be represented in a fortune cookie. Trust God and it'll all be okay just doesn't seem to work. The world of the Bible, after all, is so very different than our own world and God is far too absent to be easily trusted, so it seems. But let me ask you this, if you were a historian transported back into the middle of these very events, how would you know from within these events that God was working in them? The narrator provides this information for us.

The Lord was with David. The Lord had favor on David. But it's not clear how visible that was. God never gives a word of encouragement to David while Saul is hurling his spears at him.

Even Samuel doesn't appear as God's mouthpiece to strengthen and bolster David along the way. The narrator is good to tell us that the Lord was with David, but if you were a reporter investigating these things while they happened, it seems to me that all you would see is a story of political intrigue, of secret dealings, of shrewd political calculations wherein it is not easy to trace the hand of God.

The very next toss of the spear could find its mark in David's throat, and then where would God be? So perhaps this idea of trusting the Lord even when we don't see him is not so unique to our experience.

- [21 : 13] Perhaps it's not so foreign from the experience of these biblical characters. Perhaps the world around them was just as confusing and opaque as it is to us sometimes. But David does not need to hear the audible voice of God or see the visible hand of God in his circumstances because, it seems, he trusts what the Lord had spoken to him earlier.

Back in chapter 16, David has received a secret anointing from the prophet Samuel, the spokesman of God. This is the last word up till this point that David has heard from God.

It's not as though they have conversations together every day. The last word is one of anointing and then silence.

Or rather, violence. Saul piles scheme on top of intrigue, on top of assassination attempt, and yet David maintains a restful trust. Not because he can make sense of all the events around him and because he sees the hand of God working in each one of them, but because he has decided to heed and believe the word the Lord had spoken to him back at his anointing.

And perhaps such a thing is true for us as well. Never, never are we told that we will see the hand of God in the situation of our lives as they unfold around us.

- [22 : 33] Rather, we are told that God is good and that he loves us. And when we do not see his hand, we can trust his character. Is your confidence in the word of the Lord this strong?

The rage of God's enemies against you will reveal what is the bedrock of your confidence. When the opposition of men and demons and the cares of this life come upon you, and they will come, when all of the edifice of your great plans collapses before your eyes, right before those eyes, once so keen in planning and preparing, are blinded by ignorance of what will happen in the future, what then will you do?

If you have built a life and have cultivated the habit of trusting in the sight of your eyes, the strategy of your schemes, the strength of your arm, what will become of you when all these are taken from you, as they seem to be taken from David?

The rain fell, the floods came, the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

But when those trials come, and the deepest foundation of our trust is not in our strength, or in our sight, or our schemes, but in the love of God that he has spoken to us, then we shall not fail.

- [23 : 56] Everyone, Jesus says, who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a man wise, who built his house on a rock, and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on the house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded upon the rock.

What is the word of the Lord that the Lord has spoken to you? What proof do you have of the Lord's love for you? David had an anointing, and a hope to look forward to, of some future Messiah who would really come and make all things right.

But we're not there yet in the sermon. If you are a child of the Lord, God promises that he is working for you a great salvation in the midst of all of your trials, every single one of which will end up with your good.

of course you can't see that salvation while it unfolds. Of course you can't. It was never promised to you that you would.

So do not set your gaze fervently to spy out all of the intrigue of the plan as it unfolds around you. Rather, direct your ears to the word the Lord has spoken to you, that word that was in the beginning with God, that smiling face of Jesus.

[25 : 20] Jesus. That word that says that God is willing to be reconciled to us. That God is willing not to count our trespasses against us.

That God is willing to give us a hope and a future. That word, Jesus. Trust in that. after the angel Gabriel comes to Mary to announce to her the birth of Jesus, she goes to visit Elizabeth and after recounting to her the story, Elizabeth says, blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her by the Lord.

Let that be true for us. It was true for David and as we have seen in the face of great opposition and touch to his life, David defends his devotion. So we've seen then the schemes of Saul and the devotion of David and we end now with the laughter of the Lord.

So, if it's true that this last chapter, 18 and 19, have little to say about the actions of God in the midst of all this and you couldn't see him if you were a reporter there at the time, and if it's true that David trusts in the Lord despite clearly seeing his face, where is the Lord in all of this?

Especially if he does not speak for himself. I submit that though he cannot be seen except through the eyes of faith, God is right in the middle of these events, laughing.

[26 : 46] So the third and final part of the evening, observe the laughter of the Lord. David is the Lord's anointed one. Saul is the king of Israel and is throwing spears and sending assassins out against him.

How are we to think about this theologically? What happens when a king goes against the Lord's anointed one? To understand that we have to look at another passage.

So turn with me to Psalm 2. Psalm 2. Psalm 2. We don't know if the psalm is Davidic, but we know that the characters involved in David's life here are in a similar situation.

So listen to this Psalm. Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth set themselves and the rulers take counsel against the Lord and against his anointed saying, let us burst their bonds apart and cast away their cords from us.

The kings of the world rage against the anointed one of the Lord. Rage. They will destroy him. And what is the response of the Lord to all of this?

[28 : 03] He who sits in the heavens laughs. The Lord holds him in derision. He will speak to them in his wrath and terrify them in his fury saying, as for me, I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill.

I will tell the decree. The Lord said to me, you are my son. Today I have begotten you. Ask of me and I will make the nations your heritage, the ends of the earth your possession. You shall break them with a rod of iron and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

Saul thinks he poses a threat to David. The Lord doesn't think so. The Lord's plan will not be stopped.

And if Saul chooses to take the field of battle against the Lord, only Saul will be the loser for it. But it's not only Saul here that the Lord laughs at when he opposes him.

It's all of the kings of the world. It's all of the nations. All the combined military power of NATO, all the diplomatic skill of the UN, all of it poses no threat to him.

[29 : 14] The Lord laughs and yet they rage. And perhaps there are no two more fundamental principles of political theory in the Bible than this.

The nations will rage against the Lord and his anointed and the Lord will laugh. From the opening pages of Genesis when the people of the world threatened to take heaven by storm until the last chapters of Revelation when the whore of Babylon makes war against the people of the Bible with stubborn and dogged consistency the kings of the world make war against the Lord and his chosen ones and the Lord just as constantly frustrates and dashes their attempts.

The gates of hell will not stand against the church of the Lord. To be a Christian is to recognize that we will sometimes be the object of rage in high places.

but it is also to recognize that the Lord is stronger than any power in those high places. From kings to demons our God has fearsome enemies like Saul and when we choose to enlist in his service we enlist to be their targets.

This is what we sign up for. It's what we see here with David. Does Saul scheme for David's downfall? God will laugh at him.

[30 : 45] Even while he works for David a great salvation. And here icing on the cake. When God vindicates his king he makes even his enemies submit to him.

Look back at the end of 1 Samuel 19. The story goes like this. Saul has sent his messengers to fetch David.

They've all failed. Now he himself goes and on his own personal royal assassination attempt. The spirit of the Lord overwhelms him. He strips off all of his clothes and worships.

Look there at verse 24. He too stripped off his clothes and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said is Saul also among the prophets.

Again, weird stuff. Ask about it in questions and answers. But do you remember how the story began? Do you remember what Jonathan did when he loved David?

[31 : 44] He took off his royal garb and he gave it to David as if to say that you David and not I are the rightful king of Israel the rightful heir to the throne. This Jonathan did willingly but not Saul.

Saul will never give David that sort of legitimacy willingly. But at the end under the influence of the spirit of God he will take off all of his clothes symbolically representing that he himself has lost legitimacy in the throne of Israel.

Saul's attempts to frustrate the plans of the Lord will never succeed and the Lord will laugh over him. So how will you grant your submission and obedience to God?

As Jonathan did willingly or as Saul did by compulsion? And have the kings of this world ceased to rage against the chosen ones of God?

Any even cursory glance at the news will tell you that they have not. From China to Pakistan to Nigeria the kings of the world rage and rage and rage against the Lord's beloved ones against his chosen ones.

[33 : 13] A recent example on February 15th the Islamic state released a video showing the execution of 21 Egyptian Christians who were targeted precisely because they were Christians.

In the video the Christians clothed in their orange jumpsuits are marched out by individual men clad in full black with daggers tucked into their belts they're pushed to their knees in the sand and each of the Islamic state fighters saws off their heads.

King Saul could not have thought of anything as heinous as this. The kings of the world rage to this day against the Lord and his anointed. And yet mere seconds before he is killed one of the Christians in that video can be seen muttering to himself a prayer over and over.

Save me Lord Jesus Christ. Help me Lord Jesus Christ. These are the last words from his throat before it slit in his head severed from his body and thrown across the sand.

the sand. What can explain that sort of confidence? I think it's this.

[34 : 28] That there was yet another anointed one after David. There was another one against whom the kings of this world spent all of their rage.

this one did not flee the spears of the kings of the world as David did but allowed them to pierce his side. This one did not run when kings and demons conspired against him.

Saul could not nail David to a wall but David's offspring, Saul's offspring, got their vengeance on David's offspring when they nailed our Jesus to a cross and watched him bleed out and die.

And where is the laughter of the Lord now? Perhaps it was silent. Then for a few days, low in the grave he lay, Jesus my Savior, waiting the coming day, Jesus my Lord.

Do dead lords laugh as this psalm suggests they do? Perhaps not. But our Jesus has risen from the dead.

[35 : 47] And there is no laughter like resurrection laughter. Up from the grave he arose with a mighty triumph over his foes.

He arose a victor from the dark domain and he lives forever with his saints to reign. He arose he arose. Hallelujah.

Christ arose. Back in Psalm 2, if you have the ESV, you'll see that Psalm 2 too has anointed capitalized. Why? Because later on in the book of Acts, the apostles, when trying to explain what happened to Jesus, will use this very psalm.

The kings of this world conspired against him to put him to death, but God vindicated him, preserved him. this anointed one humbled himself by becoming obedient at the point of death, even death on a cross, and in response, God highly exalted him.

And he gave him a name above all the name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

[36 : 58] this, I think, is the good word the Lord has spoken to us. This is the word of love that must be the foundation of our lives, lest when the storms come, they ruin us.

This, I think, this word of love in the person of Jesus is the motivation, is the passion of those martyrs on the beach in Libya, of King David himself.

If you look at your bulletins, I've inserted two pictures into the handout in the middle, and both have to do with this event in the beach last month in Libya.

The top one you see is essentially a reenactment of the video itself, but in the front, in the orange jumpsuit, is the Lord himself carrying a cross.

The Lord never asks us to suffer something that he did not suffer first, and does not suffer with us. And below that you see the men once again, now with halos around their heads, signifying that they have attained their goal in heaven, and they are receiving the crowns that the Lord has given to them.

[38 : 17] I give this to you so that you can both pray for our brothers and sisters throughout the world, against whom the kings of this world are continually raging even these days. And I give them to you so that you can remember that there is for us laid up a crown of righteousness.

David trusted the Lord and received a crown. There is hope that we shall do the same. Because when the Lord works his salvation over his people, the Lord makes worshipers of his enemies.

enemies. He will receive the worship of both his loyal followers and also of his enemies. One willingly, another one forced. But this is the conviction that this passage in 1 Samuel gives us.

That there is no tyrant that has ever put a knife to the neck of a Christian who will not one day, either in the fires of hell or beyond the gates of splendor, bow the knee to the rightful king of heaven and earth.

There is not one who will not do that. There is not one assassin who has ever held the gun to the head of one of God's beloved who will not either willingly or unwillingly confess that Jesus is king of kings and lord of lords.

- [39 : 33] David did not see this in his lifetime. David did not see this sort of lord of lords and king of kings held out before him, but we do. We have the good word of love that God has spoken to us in Jesus.

Do you remember earlier I asked what would become of us if we like Saul set our minds and our wills against the plan of God? Is there hope for us?

The word of the cross is that there is yet hope for us. That though we are dead in our trespasses and sins and though we bear the rightful curse, that curse and the guilt of sin can be taken away by one look at the cross of repentance and believing that Jesus, his sacrifice is enough for us.

If you have not done that tonight, I encourage you to do so. Do not be like Saul and rage against the plan of the Lord. Why would you die? Why would you die like Saul died?

And if it is your confidence, hold fast to that confidence as David held fast to that confidence.

- [40 : 45] In the middle of the raging of your enemies and the uncertainties of your life, hold fast. Know, as David knew, that the glory held out for us is greater than the trials we face now.

And though we will not see the plan of God unfolding around us, one day we have the hope of seeing God's face. So sing the wondrous love of Jesus.

Sing his mercy and his grace in the mansions bright and blessed. He'll prepare for us a place. When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be.

When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory. So let us then be true and faithful, trusting, serving every day, just one glimpse of him in glory.

Will the toils of life repay? When we all get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be. When we all see Jesus, as King David and those martyrs on the beach in Libya now see him.

- [41 : 48] When we all see Jesus, the name at which every knee will bow and tongue confess to be King of Kings and Lord of Lords. When we all see Jesus, we'll sing and shout the victory.

Let's pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Lord, thank you that though you have appointed us to bear the rage and the schemes of evil men, we can bear those with confidence, knowing that you are stronger than them.

Your appointed plan will not fail. You have it in your heart to do good for us. You've proven it in Jesus. I pray now you've given us the faith and the trust to believe that you love us and you are glad with us.

You have a plan for us. You will protect us. Be with us this week as we go about our business. Help us to preach this gospel to others and to believe it ourselves. In the name of Jesus, I pray.

Amen. Amen. Questions? Yeah, let's do it. Five minutes. Five minutes of questions. Ask them quick, I'll answer them quick. There are too many good things in this passage, Justin, didn't I? There are weird things in there too.

- [42 : 58] Questions? Works for me. Why did Saul get naked to prophesy?

Sorry? Why did Saul get naked and prophesy? Why did Saul get naked and prophesy? It's not clear. The immediate answer is that the spirit of the Lord overtook him and it seems like it was an attempt to foil the assassination attempt against David.

The other, I think, sort of bigger sign was it was a mark of humiliation. That Saul is on his way toward being basically very deranged in this passage.

And here's a sort of public weird example of that. He's stripped naked and that's not the sort of thing that a nice civilized king should do. Therefore, perhaps, Saul's not a nice civilized king.

I'm just sure. In the back, yeah. Yeah. Yeah. What I want to know is, well, Saul's saying, like, he, well, you know, the evil spirit started, but he had control of it after that.

[44 : 13] Like David, the Lord would have done it, and he would have made it right. So why did God do it? Good question. Yeah. So the question, it seems like, is about the evil spirit from the Lord thing that goes on.

Is that right? Yeah. Good. So, yeah. Thank you. It seems like, so the question, I think, has to do with chapter 18, verse 10.

The next day, a harmful spirit from God rushed upon Saul, and he raved within his house while David was playing, and then he threw the spear. Why the harmful spirit from the Lord? It happened already to him, to Saul, in chapter 16, when the spirit of the Lord was upon him that signaled his anointing as king, and he rebelled against it, and the spirit withdrew, and that seemed to open up some sort of space for this other spirit to come in.

Now, it doesn't seem like it's sort of God's evil spirit in the sense of it's like a part of God, that sort of thing. I think the analogy could be that in the book of Job, you see that God sort of has a roll call with his cabinet, and among them are Satan, or is Satan, and Satan wants to go and do all these nasty things to Job, but the Lord, he can't do it without the Lord's permission.

So what seems to be happening here is the Lord gives permission to this evil spirit. Interestingly, in the earlier parts of the book, the music that David plays seems to work against the evil spirit, and then Saul increases in his anger toward David, and then it seems like this spirit increasingly has control over him, following his own anger.

[45 : 55] Meanwhile, Saul never repents of all of it, all the way along. So it doesn't seem like this spirit is leading him without his own will. It seems like Saul is going right along with it, willingly scheming against the Lord.

Does that answer your question? Yeah, thank you for that. Yes, sir. Do you hear if Saul had a choice about the need to be given that the Lord would be going to?

Yeah, weird question. I think he did. I think that he had, more than anything else, a chance to obey. And then, even if this major event, I think it's fairly significant of trying to arrogate to himself power over Israel's religious practices, even if that sort of terrible thing happens to him, I think he has the opportunity to repent there, but he doesn't.

So even when he responds to Samuel as a condemnation, he says, will you come back with me because I don't want to lose the esteem of the people. He doesn't say, woe is me, against you alone have I sinned, the way David does.

So I think he does have the choice to repent, and he continually habituates himself toward not repenting. Yeah, good question. Way in the back.

[47 : 19] Good question. Was he justified including 200 people? I think it's probably safe to assume that these are men of war, and the Philistines in Israel have these constant battles going on back and forth.

So it would not be sort of like, he just sort of moseys into this nice village and just start attacking people to the part. They have a constant state of war together, and you see frequently Philistine incursions up into Israel, Israeli incursions down into the Philistine area.

So I think this is an act of war. It's weird. I think that God doesn't approve of mutilating the bodies of your enemies, but it was a fairly typical practice in the ancient areas to do this sort of thing.

I think here the Bible isn't commending this, you know, you go and do likewise. I think it's more of like, it was really messed up back then, and God is accommodating himself to these sort of situations.

He's going to save David through this trial that Saul puts out for him. Good question as well. Yes, sir. Ma'am. Sorry. Sorry. Sorry. Yeah.

[48 : 30] Oh, good question. So Michael, his wife, deceives Saul in order to help David escape. I'm not sure. Again, I think it's one of those things where the Bible just doesn't comment on the legitimacy of it.

Although, interestingly, the thing that they put into the bed has to do with the household gods. So it could also be symbolic of this deeper thing. Sort of like Michael would be like, oh, you like those gods, huh?

Well, you just cut their heads off in bed. So it might be sort of like tricking Saul and his assassins into doing damage against this thing that he loves. So in general, I don't think the Bible comments on it.

It's sort of legitimacy. I think the Bible just says that's the way it worked. Yeah. If there were a better way to do it, I think that that could have been done. But I also don't think, so this is, okay, I'll say this.

I also don't think it's always wrong to lie against illegitimate rulers who are doing unjust things. So I have this belief that like all of these medievals and classical Christians do that when a law ceases to be just, it ceases to be a legitimate law and therefore you can't participate in it.

[49 : 41] So essentially, if what Saul doing is going to Michael and say, help me be an accessory in this guy's murder, she has no obligation to obey him if he's innocent in that way.

So there's a contentious one. I'll throw that out there. You can fight with me afterwards on that one. Thank you.