

What Happened in the Cave Phillip Trask

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Date: 11 May 2017

[0 : 00] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. It is a joy to be with you tonight. It really is.

When Robert called me, or texted me, and used electronics and texted me and set up this meeting, I was excited to be able to come and share with you and to preach to you tonight.

And I look forward to this day. Do pray for us. We are in a very busy season. We have camp that starts on Monday. And so we're going to head back tonight.

And tomorrow morning, we're going to wash every dish in the dining hall. I mean, it's been sitting there since last summer. And so we're going to, and if any volunteers, we're going to start right after lunch.

But we're going to get all of those dishes washed up. And this year, the vision orientation is not going to be the first camp. So this group that's coming will scare off all the snakes and the bugs and the raccoon in the Carolina Hall.

[1 : 08] We'll scare all them off. And it'll be ready for y'all when y'all come for your week. And we're looking forward to your week. I told Tracy, I said, I am really thankful for the partnership that we have with Vision Missions and Vision Baptist Church.

You have been a blessing to the camp. You've been a blessing to me. And I sure do appreciate your pastor and his wife and his leadership and the staff and the missionaries.

We've been having camp long enough. The orientation where we've seen a whole round of missionaries go to the mission field. And we get their support letters back. And we enjoy having missionaries.

I try to have a missionary every month in our church, at least one missionary. Most of the time it works out two missionaries a month. We had a camp a couple years ago.

Brother Gardner took up an offering from the missionaries for the camp. And they gave right at \$20,000, a little over \$20,000 to the camp. That came from missionaries.

[2 : 13] So now, maybe I shouldn't tell this, but now, whenever a vision missionary calls me, I never tell them no. Because I don't know.

I don't know which missionary gave what. And I sure would hate to say no to a missionary that was so generous. And now, I may have to book you into, you know, 2020.

But at least we'll get you booked sometime. But I sure do appreciate Vision Baptist Missions. I do want to share with you something from my heart tonight.

You know, I find myself, you preach from your experiences. I mean, you preach from the Word of God. But God uses your experiences to touch hearts and lives. And something that I found in sharing our testimony, what God has done for us, that everywhere you go, there are people that are hurting.

There's people that have had hardships. They may not have had an automobile accident, but they may have received word from the doctor about cancer or some other disease or some other ailment.

[3 : 24] You know, everywhere I go, I find that people are suffering. And when I go to God's Word, I find there is great comfort and help and encouragement in God's Word. You know, oftentimes people will fail us.

People will disappoint us. But I'm glad that God never fails. And God never disappoints. He always has exactly what we need, when we need it.

And definitely how much that we need. I have two texts that I want you to turn to tonight. 1 Samuel chapter 21. 1 Samuel chapter 21.

We're going to read some verses of Scripture there. And then we're going to end up in Psalms 142. Psalms 142. Now, I guess the title of my message may be a little crazy, but I think you'll understand it here in just a moment.

I entitled the message tonight, Lessons from a Caveman. Lessons from a Caveman. I thought it was fitting that Brother Gardner fed me steak tonight.

[4 : 33] And so we got some good red meat in our system. And so now I can preach about cavemen tonight. With that, that'll help me out a little bit. 1 Samuel chapter 21.

Let's go to the Lord in a word of prayer and ask His blessings tonight. Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for Your Word. Thank You, Lord, for this great church. And Lord, for their beautiful facilities that You have given them.

And Lord, I pray that You might continue to bless this church. I pray that You might bless Brother Gardner as he leads this church and the staff that he has with them. I pray, Lord, that You just might continue to bless this church and use this church in a great and mighty way to reach the world for You.

Now, Lord, may You bless our time together as we look at Your Word. I pray that the message tonight might be an encouragement to someone who maybe came through the doors this evening discouraged.

Maybe they came through facing a trouble or a trial or a difficult time in their life. And I pray that it might be an encouragement to them tonight. In Thy name we pray. Amen.

[5 : 35] As we look at our text tonight in 1 Samuel chapter 21, we're going to see David. Now, David is one of my favorite kings of the nation of Israel. I did a series just a couple months ago in our church on the kings of Israel.

And out of all the kings, I think David is one of my favorite kings. But when we look at this text tonight and we look at David tonight, we're not going to see David the giant killer tonight.

We're not going to see David as the shepherd boy there in the wilderness. We're not going to see David playing his harp before Saul. We're not going to see David taking care of a lion or taking care of a bear.

We're not going to see the great exploits of David. In fact, it's almost embarrassing the way that we see David in this passage of Scripture. Notice, if you would, in verse number 10.

And David arose and fled that day of fear of Saul. Now, remember, Saul was the first king. He was the people's choice. And Samuel anointed him king. And then soon, God rejected Saul because of his disobedience.

[6 : 40] And God had anointed David. David was anointed king. And so now Saul is chasing David, trying to take the life of David.

And so that's what we find in verse number 10. He arose and fled that day in fear of Saul. And he went to Achish, the king of Gath. Now, remember Goliath? You remember where Goliath was from?

He was from Gath. Notice where David is headed. You can tell it's a desperate time in his life. And the servant of Achish said unto him, Is not this David, the king of the land?

Did they not sing one to another of him and dance, saying, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands? And David laid up these words in his heart and was sore afraid of Achish, the king of Gath.

And he changed his behavior before them and feigned himself mad in their hands and scrabbled on the doors of the gate and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

[7 : 41] Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, you see this man is mad. Wherefore then have ye brought him to me? Have I need of a madman that ye have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence?

Shall this fellow come unto my house? David therefore departed and escaped to the cave at Dulum. I will stop my reading right there, but you notice with me, isn't it somewhat embarrassing when we see great David?

I mean, the David, the hero of our childhood, the hero of the great stories that we find in the word of God. And here he is with spittle flowing down his beard and he's rolling around on the ground and he's scraping upon the gates of the city like a madman because he's in fear of his life.

That doesn't remind me of the David that is my hero. That doesn't remind me of the David of the great exploits of God's word. This has to be the lowest time in David's life.

It seems like it's the most depressing time, the most disappointing time in the life of David. And we find as he flees from King Achish, as he leaves Gath, he finds a cave.

[8 : 54] And verse number one says, David therefore departed thence and escaped to the cave at Dulum. Now I want you to turn over to Psalms 142. Psalms 142.

This Psalm is unique because the title that it has over this Psalm. Let me find it. You probably found it before I did. Psalms 142.

In my Bible, it says a prayer when he was in the cave. A prayer that when he was in the cave. So most people believe that this is a prayer that David prayed after he had feigned himself as a madman, after he left King Achish, and he crawled into this cave, and this is where he begins to pray.

Now when I look at this story, I see David as he crawls into this cave. He is weary. He is discouraged. He is defeated. There's spittle on his beard.

He's still drooling like a madman as he crawls into this cave at the lowest moment in his life. But when we see David come out of this cave, that's the difference I want you to see tonight.

[10 : 09] When David comes out of this cave, he is the captain of 400 mighty men. 400 mighty men that do great exploits. 400 mighty men that take him to the kingship and will stay with him as David is king.

And these men are willing to give their life for David. Here's a man that is discouraged as he crawls in the cave. He's defeated and at the lowest of his life when he crawls in the cave.

But when he comes out of the cave, there's a great change that has taken place in his life. So the question I have, what happened in that cave? What happened in that cave that made such a difference?

Now, when we talk about this cave tonight, we are talking about a physical cave that David was in. David was in a literal physical cave that he was in.

I don't know how large the cave was. I've been to Israel on several occasions and back up in the areas of En Gedi and saw some of the caves that David may have been in and some of them are large, but there's a lot of small caves that are up in that area.

[11 : 15] So I don't know what size the cave is, but here's what I want you to realize is that in our life, oftentimes we find ourself in the same place that David was in. Where the walls seem to be squeezing in around us.

When circumstances in our life seem to be so difficult that there's nowhere else to go to, there's nowhere else to turn. You are discouraged, you are defeated, you are in a cave of your circumstances.

But I'm glad that we can learn from a caveman tonight. We could take some lessons from David tonight, and find what David did in this cave that changed his life, that made such an impact upon his life so that he could come out a hero.

He went from zero to hero when he was in that cave. I want you to look at Psalms 142, if you would, and I want you to see five things quickly tonight. First of all, notice the discontentment of a caveman.

The discontentment of a caveman. Verses 1 and 2, David said, I cried unto the Lord with my voice. With my voice unto the Lord did I make my supplication.

[12 : 23] I poured out my complaint before him. I showed before him my trouble. Here David, he begins to cry out to the Lord. Now folks, it seems like the last thing we do, we try everything else, and then we pray.

Boy, it should be our first choice, shouldn't it? It's the best choice that we can make, is to go to the Lord in prayer. Everything else seemed to be going wrong in David's life. He had come to what he would think as the end of his life, all alone, suffering from loneliness, like he had never experienced before.

And then he says, I cried unto the Lord. When I see this discontentment in verses 1 and 2, I see that David is looking for answers. He's crying to the Lord because he wants some kind of answers.

Have you ever had questions because of circumstances in your life? God, what are you doing? I was talking with Mark Coffey just before the service a little bit, and I told him that in our life, we went through a series of trials in our life.

The tornado came and blew the camp away a week before the missionaries were supposed to be there at the camp, and we lost seven buildings and about 2,500 trees. And it's hard to be a camp director when your camp has been blown away by a tornado.

[13 : 41] And boy, we went through trials trying to build the camp back. And then we found out we were expecting a child. I told my wife, I said, Honey, I am 45. I'm going to have to have my son come visit me in the nursing home so I could maybe they'll check me out to go to graduation.

But anyway, I was 45, and we were excited especially when we found out that we were having a boy. I have four girls, and I love my girls, but we found out we were having a boy.

And then the doctor called us that day, and I'll never forget it. I was cleaning up some debris from the tabernacle. In fact, we cut up that metal and loaded it in a dumpster to haul it up, the big tabernacle we had.

And my phone rang. I looked at it. It was a Chattanooga number. And I realized, hey, this must be the doctor. And I answered the phone, and they said, Mr. Trask, the tests have come back.

Your son does have Down syndrome. Boy, we were shattered that day. I remember going home. I just cut off the machine. I went home. Tracy was already on the bed crying.

[14 : 45] I crawled up on that bed with Tracy and the girls, and we just wept, and we cried. Of course, when Ryan was born, we wondered why in the world were we crying. I mean, he is the greatest joy in our life.

But we faced that trial, and then the accident, and two years now of therapy, and surgeries, and doctor visits, and brick walls, and dead ends, and it just seems like trial after trial.

And I told Mark, I said, I don't know if I'm Job or if I'm Jonah. I don't know if you need to throw me overboard because these storms keep coming in my life, or if I just need to have patience and wait for the Lord to do something.

But trials come, and we want answers. Not only was he looking for answers, but I believe he was looking for help. David in another place says, I'll look into the hills, which cometh my help.

My help cometh from the Lord. David, I believe he was praying. He was seeking help from the Lord. Not only that, I believe he was looking for some compassion. Here he was, lonely, defeated, discouraged, and I believe he was looking for compassion as he pours out his heart to the Lord.

[15 : 58] Not only that, I think we could see that he's looking for strength. He says, I showed before him my trouble, and he knew that his strength would come from the Lord, that his help would come from the Lord, that God is able to give him answers.

We notice the discontentment of a caveman, but notice second of all, the discouragement of this caveman. Verse number three, When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knowest my path in the way wherein I walked.

Have they privately laid a snare for me? David said, I just was overwhelmed. Everywhere I look, they are out to get me. I mean, his father-in-law, his king, throwing spears at him, trying to take his life.

Everywhere he looked, trouble was dodging his path, and he cries out to the Lord. Here he's crying out, because everyone seemed to be out to get him. Look at verse four, I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me.

Refuge failed me. And then listen to these words, No man cared for my soul. Imagine many missionaries have gone to that text, as they heard the prayer of David, as he says, No man cares for my soul.

[17 : 11] I think of David, the failures of his relationships. Remember Jonathan? The Bible says that Jonathan and David, that their heart was knit together. What a friendship that David and Jonathan had had.

But now Jonathan is no longer able to be with David. And David is lonely by himself. His wife, Michael, has gone back to her father, and even married another man by now.

Samuel, who was his confidant, the man of God that led him. Now Samuel has gone, has died. And David looks around, and he says, There's no man.

There's no man that knows me. There's no man that cares for my soul. We find that relationships have failed. Refuge had failed. Notice what he said, that there was no refuge. Refuge had failed me.

There's no place. I tried even going to Gath. I tried hiding in Gath, and I couldn't find refuge there, until he finally crawls in a cave, and he's looking for refuge.

[18 : 09] Not only has refuge failed, but then the words, No man cares. Have you ever said that in the midst of your cave? The troubles that you may have surrounding you.

Have you ever said, Nobody cares. Nobody cares what I'm going through. Nobody cares what's happening to me. I mean, you may even come to church, and people will say hi, and people will shake your hand, and you'll put a smile on your face, and you might leave, and you might be discouraged, and you think, Well, nobody really cares.

Nobody understands. You may go to school, or you may go to work, and people will be kind to you, but you may say, Nobody truly cares for me. That's where David was, when he was in this cave.

But let me say this, and don't forget this, because I believe this is the key to our message tonight, is that when David was at his lowest, he looked up to the highest.

When David was at his lowest, when the walls of that cave were just squeezing in around David, David goes to the Lord in prayer. You know, I believe why David goes to the Lord in prayer is because it was something he was familiar with.

[19 : 20] The Bible says that David was a man after God's own heart. David and God were friends, and David had communicated with God, and fellowshiped with God, and had prayed with God before.

And so it wasn't a strange thing for David. He began to cry out to the Lord, and plead to the Lord. I want you to notice, number three, the discernment of this caveman.

Look, if you would, in verse number five, I cried to the Lord. I said, Thou art my refuge. You see, refuge had failed him, but notice in his discernment, as he begins to pray, he says, Lord, you are my refuge.

Weren't you glad that God is our refuge and strength? A very present help in time of trouble. He's a place where we could run to, a place where we could hide, when it seems like no one cares for our soul, when no one cares what we're going through.

I'm glad there's a heavenly father, and the Bible says that he cares for us. He knows exactly what we're going through. He knows the disappointment that we're facing, and God cares for us.

[20 : 27] Oh, David says, Thou art my refuge. I'm glad God's our refuge. I'm glad he's a place in which we could go. Not only does he learn or discern that God is his refuge, but he says, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of living.

In other words, David says, you know, no one seems to care. I can't find refuge anywhere else, but you're the refuge that I could go to. You're the portion that I need.

You know, what's great is there's so many missionaries that are here tonight. And I imagine, I haven't been there. Brother Mark could probably testify, and I know Brother Gardner could testify, and Brother Wayne and others who have been there could probably testify that oftentimes on the mission field, it gets lonely.

Oftentimes on the mission field, you're looking around and you are wondering, does anybody really even care? Well, I'm glad that our portion doesn't come from man, but our portion comes from God.

I'm glad God is the one that is able to supply our physical need. God is the one that is able to supply our financial need. God is the one who is able to supply our emotional need that we might have.

[21 : 39] I'm glad that God is our portion. Not only did he realize that God was his refuge and his portion, but he says, attend to my cry. God, hear my cry.

No one else was listening. It seemed like nobody else cared. But he said, God, you hear my prayer. You hear what I'm crying to you. You understand what I'm going through.

I'm glad the Bible tells us that when we bow our heads and begin to pray, that we could come boldly to the throne of grace. Folks, do you realize that opportunity that we have?

We're just not standing before a man. We're just not standing before someone that possibly could help us. But we are going before almighty God, who is our refuge and our portion.

And we complete our case to him. We could tell our troubles to him. And David said, you attended to my cry. You heard me. Not only did you hear me, but you care.

[22 : 37] And you understand what I'm going through. That's the discernment of the caveman. But notice now the desire of this caveman. This is number four.

And we just got one more to go. Number four. Look at verse number six, if you would. Attendant of my cry, for I am brought very low. Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name. The righteous shall come past me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me.

Now I would say verse number seven is a prayer of faith. He's saying, you're going to bring me out of this prison. You're going to bring me out of this cave, out of this place where I am.

And Lord, when you do, I want to be able to praise your name in the midst of the righteous. You know, oftentimes the reason why we go through trials is so that we could praise God's name, so that he could receive honor and glory.

[23 : 34] And David realizes, Lord, when you get me out of this, when you get me out of this prison, when you get me out of this cave, I want to be able to throw my hand up and I want to be able to praise the Lord so that others could hear what you have done for me.

Here, notice this. He desires a new start. He said, get me out of this prison. Let me have a brand new start. Let me start over, Lord. Let me begin again.

He desired a new start. Not only that, he desired a new song. He said, I'm going to praise your name. I'm going to praise you when you get out of here. I'm not going to be defeated.

I'm not going to roll around on the ground like a madman, but I'm going to stand and praise your name. And he prayed for that new song. Not only that, he prayed for that new hope. Oh, Lord, give me that hope, that blessing.

He says, so you have dealt bountifully with me, but the righteous will come past me and I'll praise your name if you bring my soul out of this prison. And then he's looking for new blessings in his life.

[24 : 37] Now, if you would turn back to 1 Samuel. 1 Samuel, because I want you to see this last point, and I believe this is very important. Here is a defeated, discouraged man as he crawls in this cave.

And God begins to deal with his heart as he goes to the Lord in prayer. When you are in your cave, when you are in your time of disappointment and discouragement, you better look to the highest.

You better look up because God is the only one that could be your refuge. God's the only one that will be your strength. Now, notice the fifth thing. I want you to see the delight of this caveman.

You know what he realized? He realized that God had him in a place. David therefore departed thence and escaped to the cave at Dula. Now, the Bible says that the steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord.

Do you believe that God led David to this cave? Do you? I believe that with all of my heart, that God led David to the cave. It's a place where God led.

[25 : 39] It's a place that God had appointed in the life of David. It was a place that I believe that God had prepared for David. Now, I remember telling Tracy, we were in the hospital, and I remember the darkest day in my life, laying in a hospital bed, my wife in a coma, and then they called me and they said, we have to take Ryan to the hospital because his heart rate has dropped really low.

And so here is my son. They're taken to the children's hospital, and they're doing tests on him because of his heart rate being so low. And there I am in the hospital, and I can't do anything, and I can't go anywhere, and there's no help that I could be.

I remember when Tracy woke up, and we spent a lot of time FaceTiming back and forth with our phones because we were in separate rooms. In fact, let me just throw this in that the therapist, they knew how to motivate me.

They said, Mr. Trask, if you'll stand up, we'll roll you down to see your wife. And I'd get on the edge of that bed, and I'd broken five ribs in my sternum.

My hip was shattered, and my jaw was broken. My teeth shoved down my throat. But I remember I'd take that walker, and I'd stand up, and I'd hear every rib pop all the way up.

[27 : 01] And every time I'd put weight, I could hear those ribs popping. And I'd stand up, sweating. Oh, sweating like nothing. And they'd put me in the chair and roll me down there. But I remember telling Tracy, I said, you know what?

This path that we're on was appointed by God. It's not an accident. We call it an accident. We were in a tragic accident. But you know, it was a divine appointment by God.

And knowing that it's a divine appointment by God, I know that God has a purpose, God has a reason, and God has a plan. Look at David. Not only was there a place, but there was partners.

And I stopped at the first part of verse number 22 because I didn't want to spoil the story for you. Look at the rest of the verse of Scripture. And when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.

Here's David in the cave. He's thinking that he's all alone. I looked on my right hand. This is my right. I looked on my right hand, and there was no one there. I looked and no one cared for my soul.

[28 : 07] David was in a discouragement. He was defeated. And yet, at the very time that he was saying this prayer, his family was on the way. He had some partners.

He had some encouragers that is on the way. Aren't you glad that God gives you help? That God gives you encouragers? You know, there's somebody probably sitting next to you or behind you or in front of you or somewhere around you that wants to be an encouragement to you, that wants to be a help to you, that wants to pray with you and wants to encourage and help you.

And here, David, he's not all alone. He's not the lone ranger tonight. There was help that was on the way. Even as he was praying, his family was on the way to partner with him.

And then we see that there was a purpose. God had a purpose for working all of this in David's life. Look at verse number two. And everyone that was in distress and everyone that was in debt and everyone that was discontented gathered themselves unto him and he became a captain over them and there were with him about 400 men.

Let me tell you who these 400 men are. David was there in that cave and he crawled in that cave with zero. But God sent partners, sent his family to him to encourage and to help him.

[29 : 26] And then God started sending people to David so that David could minister to them. Notice the kind of people that came. They were in distress. They were in debt.

They were discontented. What's funny, Brother Gardner, is that's the opposite of the people we look for to join our church. We don't look for the discontent. We don't look.

Boy, I've been to 10 churches and I'm looking for the perfect church. Well, don't come here. You know, we're not looking for those that are discontent. We're not looking for those in debt. I mean, we want to take up good offerings.

Amen. Amen. We should get a good amen there. We're not looking for those that are in debt. We're not looking for those that are in distress. But you know who God was sending David's way?

Those very people. Those very people. And David became a captain to them. God had a purpose and a plan in David's life. And you know, these men were great men.

[30 : 24] Later on in Samuel, you could read the stories of the exploits of these men who killed a thousand in one day. You'd find that one man killed a lion in a snowy pit.

I mean, in a pit on a snowy day, he killed a lion. I mean, that's a great man. You find a man that was guarding a lintel patch. I mean, I don't even like lintels. I mean, he was guarding a lintel patch and he defeated the Philistines.

There's great men of these mighty men. And God allowed David to be their leader. Well, you think of this. You may feel as if you're in a cave and the circumstances of life are just closing in around you.

I would say, look up. Pray to the Heavenly Father because He has a design for your cave. He has a purpose for your cave. And He wants to use you in a great way.

And this is just a process. It's just an opportunity for God to work in your life. David was able to walk out of that cave. He was able, surrounded by the righteous, he was able to say, let me tell you how good God is.

[31 : 36] And He says, great is thy faithfulness. I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever. Do you hear David praising the Lord?

Because he was defeated, he was discouraged, but yet the God in heaven lifted him up. Boy, you might be defeated, you might be discouraged, but I'm glad there's a God in heaven that cares for you.

There's a God in heaven that loves you. You may be discontent, you may be in debt, you may be distressed tonight, but I'm glad there's someone that cares for you tonight. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia.

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