

David Protected by the Priest

by Chuck Smith

David's story of hiding, fear, and flight serves as a lesson in trusting in God and not resorting to the flesh.

Duration: 25:05

Scripture: 1 Samuel 20:24, 1 Samuel 21:1-6, 1 Samuel 21:10-15, Proverbs 29:25, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "David"

Description

In this sermon, Pastor Chuck Smith discusses the story of David and his interactions with Saul and Jonathan. David is hiding from Saul, who is seeking to kill him, and seeks refuge with the priest Ahimelech. Saul becomes suspicious of David's absence and confronts Jonathan about it. Jonathan defends David, questioning why he should be killed. Eventually, David and Jonathan have a tearful farewell, as they know they may never see each other again.

Transcript

Oh, let the Son of God enfold you With His Spirit and His love Let Him fill your heart and satisfy your soul
Oh, let Him have the things that hold you And His Spirit like a dove Will descend upon your life And make you whole
Welcome to the Word for Today. The broadcast ministry of Pastor Chuck Smith of Calvary Chapel, Costa Mesa, California. Pastor Chuck is currently leading us on a verse-by-verse venture through the entire Bible.

And on today's edition of the Word for Today, we find David being protected by the priest. As we pick up in 1 Samuel, chapter 20, verse 24. And now, with today's message, here's Pastor Chuck Smith.

So David hid himself in the field. When the new moon was come, the king sat down to eat meat. And as the king sat upon his seat at other times, even upon a seat by the wall, the place of prominence, Jonathan arose, and Amner, the general, sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

Nevertheless, Saul did not speak anything that day, for he thought something's happened to him. He's not clean. Surely he's not clean.

Now, you had to go through a ceremonial kind of a cleansing in order to come and eat at the feast. And he figured, oh, you know, he didn't have a chance to go through the ceremony of cleansing himself to eat. And so, surely, you know, that's the problem.

He'll be here tomorrow. It came to pass on the next day, the second day of the month, that David's place was still empty. Saul said to Jonathan, his son, why has not the son of Jesse come to eat meat, yesterday or today? And Jonathan answered Saul and said, David earnestly asked me the permission to go to Bethlehem.

And he said, let me go, I pray thee, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, let me go away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore, he did not come to the king's table.

Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan. And he said unto him, you son of a perverse, rebellious woman. Isn't that interesting? The dad wants to blame the wife, you know, if there's problems with the kids.

Do not I know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own confusion, to the confusion of your mother's nakedness or to her shame? For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the ground, you shall not be established nor your kingdom. In other words, Jonathan, you're a fool. Don't you know I want to kill him for your sake? You know, if that guy lives, you're not going to be king, Jonathan.

You'll never come to the throne. Don't you understand that? And to Saul, it was a thing of hanging on to the kingdom, though he had been told by the prophet that God had taken the kingdom from him, but yet trying to hold on. Now he said, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die.

And Jonathan answered his dad and said, why should he be killed? What has he done? And Saul cast the javelin at him to smite him, whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger. He didn't eat the meat on the second day of the month.

He was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame. And it came to pass in the morning that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David and a little lad with him. And he said to his lad, run and find now the arrows which I shoot.

And as the lad ran, he shot the arrow beyond him. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad and said, is not the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan cried after the lad, make speed, hurry up, don't tarry. Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and he came to his master, but the lad did not know anything.

Only Jonathan David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his artillery to the lad and said to him, go and carry them to the city. And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times.

And they kissed one another and wept one with another until David just was overcome. Here is, of course, unfortunately, the last time these two fellows meet together. This tremendous camaraderie, this tremendous love that they had, and this is their final and last meeting.

Weeping together, Jonathan said to David, go in peace. For as much as we have sworn, both of us in the name of the Lord, saying the Lord be between me and thee and between my seed and your seed forever. And he arose and departed, and Jonathan went to the city.

So this was the final time, and certainly a lot of pathos and emotion here. Then David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, said to him, why are you alone

and no man is with you? He's sort of suspicious that David is there alone.

David said to Ahimelech the priest, the king, and here's a lie, has commanded me a business, and has said unto me, let no man know anything of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee, and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. Now therefore, what do you have? Give me some bread in my hand, or what you have here as a present. So David tells an outright lie to Ahimelech, and asks for something to eat.

The priest answered David and said, there is no common bread in my hand. All I have here is the hallowed bread. And if the young men, that is those that were gathering with David, have kept themselves at least from women, they can eat it.

And David answered the priest and said to him, of a truth, women have been kept from us for about three days since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy. The bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. So the priest gave him the hallowed bread, for there was no bread there, but the show bread that was taken from before the Lord, to put hot bread in the day in which it was taken away.

Now, according to the law, there in the tabernacle, as you would enter into the tent of the tabernacle, well it was called the holy place, it wasn't the holy of holies, but this holy place, on the right hand side, there was this little golden table, and on this little golden table, there were set twelve loaves of bread. Each loaf representing one of the tribes of Israel. And each week, these loaves of bread were changed.

They would take the twelve loaves of bread that had been sitting out there all week, and they would put fresh bread on the table. That was part of the weekly ritual. And again, representing the twelve tribes before the Lord.

Now, according to the law, this show bread, which it was called, could not be eaten by anybody but the priest. However, David is hungry, and David asked the priest to give him this show bread, because we're hungry. And so the priest gave to David and to the men this bread that was forbidden under the law for them to eat, but yet because of their need, the law of hunger actually superseded the ceremonial law of God.

In the New Testament, Matthew's Gospel, chapter 12, Jesus and his disciples were going through the wheat fields, and his disciples began to pick the wheat, the corn of wheat, they call it the top with the seeds and all the corn, and they were rubbing it in their hands to thresh the wheat. You know, the wheat has a little rough kernel around it. It's a husk, and it's sticky, and it gets caught in your throat.

So you rub it in your hands, and then you blow, and you blow the chaff or the husk away, and then you can just eat the wheat raw. It's soft enough that you can chew it, and if you chew it long enough, it turns into sort of a gum. It's very interesting.

We were kids, used to get into the chicken feed and pull out all the wheat and make our own gum. And when I was growing up, you didn't always have a penny for bubble gum, and so we had to improvise, and so we would get into the chicken feed and chew our wheat gum. But it is actually edible, and I like it.

I think it's delicious. But they were doing this on the Sabbath day. Now, it was not lawful to harvest on the Sabbath day.

And the Pharisee said to Jesus, Why do you allow your disciples to do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day? And Jesus said, Don't you remember what David did when he was hungry? How he went to the house of God, and he ate the bread which was not lawful to eat. In other words, a man's hunger supersedes these things. I mean, you've got to use good judgment.

And if a guy is starving to death, you don't say, Well, I'm sorry, you can't eat that. You know, it's sanctified. But the need, the hunger, superseded.

So the disciples were doing that, which technically, according to the technical aspects of the law, what they were doing was unlawful. But their hunger brought it into a lawful action. The need.

So Jesus uses this situation with David to show that need supersedes the ceremonial aspects of the law. Now, a certain man was there, who was a servant of Saul, and he was detained before the Lord. He had probably going through a cleansing ritual, or it's possible that they thought he had leprosy, but he was under detention before the Lord to fulfill some kind of a spiritual vow or some spiritual problem.

His name was Doeg. He was an Edomite. And he was the chief of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

And David said to Ahimelech, Do you have any spear or sword around here? For I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, who you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. And if you will take it, go ahead.

For there is no other besides that here. So David said, There is none like that one. Give it to me.

And David arose and fled that day for fear of Saul, and he went to Achish the king of Gath, also called Abimelech. But Abimelech is the Philistine title for the king, like the Turkish title was Sultan, the Russian title is Tsar, the Egyptian title is Pharaoh, the Assyrian title was Shennakereb. So the title for the king, in Assyrian, Shennakereb was not the king, but the king's high messenger.

The title for the king was Abimelech. And so you remember Abraham went to Abimelech, and the actual name of this king was Achish, but he was also called Abimelech, because that was the king's title among the people. And so when you get into the psalm of David, and there was a psalm that was written concerning this time, and it was addressed concerning Abimelech.

So David fled to their enemies, the Philistines. He came to Achish, the king of Gath. And the servants of Achish said unto him, he probably thought that the king, it had been several years since he wiped out Goliath.

He was just a kid then, he's now in his 20s, probably has grown a beard, and he's no longer the little stripling, he probably figured, hey, they won't recognize me. And the servants of Achish said to him, is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing one to another of him in the dances, saying Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands? And David heard these words, he laid them up in his heart, and he was afraid of Achish, the king of Gath. And so he changed his behavior before them.

He feigned himself to be insane in their hands. He began to scabble on the doors of the gate. He let his spit fall down on his beard.

And then Achish said to his servants, lo, the man is crazy. Why have you brought him to me? I don't need any madmen that you have brought this fellow to play the madman in my presence. So this fellow come into my house, and so get rid of him.

So David escaped out of the hand of the king by feigning insanity. In Proverbs 29-31, there is a scripture that declares, the fear of man bringeth a snare. Now, David was afraid of Achish.

And the fear of Achish led David, this man that God had ordained to be king, led him into this behavior of acting like a madman, scrabbling at the walls, letting his spit run down over his beard, and just babbling, insane babblings. The fear of man will bring even a great noble man into the actions of a fool. The fear of man brings a snare.

Contrast, but whoso puts his trust in the Lord shall be saved. Now, about the only good thing you can say about this is that it worked. David did escape.

However, it shows again David's lack of real trust in God. But David is quite ambivalent at this time. I mean, he is under extreme pressure.

He knows that Saul is out to kill him. And he knows that there's just a step between him and death. And so he is reacting under this kind of pressure.

But on the flip side, there is still that trust in God. There is still that awareness and consciousness of God. And that seeking of God.

Turn to Psalm 34. Notice the heading of this psalm. It is a psalm of David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech.

And I told you Abimelech is the title for the king whose name was Achish. This is a psalm of David when he changed his behavior before Abimelech who drove him away and he departed. When he escaped from Abimelech by this little ruse of pretending to be mad.

What does David say? I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the Lord.

The humble shall hear thereof and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me. Let us exalt his name together for I sought the Lord.

And he heard me and delivered me out of all of my fears. David was afraid. And yet he attributes the Lord as the one who delivered him.

They looked unto him and were light and their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him out of all of his troubles. The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivers them.

O taste and see that the Lord is good. Blessed is the man that trusts in him. O fear the Lord, ye his saints.

For there is no want to them that fear him. And so this psalm, and again, I want you to do it in your meditations. Go ahead and read Psalm 34.

Then also in Psalm 52 was written at this very same time of David's history actually several psalms were born out of these experiences. Psalm 56 to the chief musician a prayer of David when the Philistines took him in Gath. And so Psalm 56 along with Psalm 34 has to do with the experience in Gath.

Psalm 52 is again a prayer of David when this guy Doeg the Edomite came to Saul and said to him, David went to the house of Ahimelech. So we'll get that as Doeg reports to Saul Ahimelech helping David and we see Saul's fierce and ungodly vengeance that he took out against Ahimelech for helping David. Though Ahimelech was actually innocent of it.

So these psalms were born out of this particular history of David's life and thus they become more interesting to read with the background as you understand the circumstances that David was experiencing that caused him to write these particular psalms. It puts the psalms in a little it focuses a little brighter light upon them and brings you a clearer understanding of them. We'll return with more of our verse-by-verse study of 1 Samuel in our next lesson as we find David fleeing to Adullam and we do hope you'll make plans to join us.

But right now I'd like to remind you that if you missed any part of today's message or perhaps you'd like to order a copy for that special friend or loved one you can do so by simply contacting one of our customer service representatives and they'd be more than happy to assist you with the ordering details. Simply call 1-800-272-WORD and phone orders can be taken Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific Time. Once again our toll-free number is 1-800-272-9673 and for your added convenience you can order online anytime when you go to thewordfortoday.org and while you're there be sure to browse through the additional resources that include Bible studies, commentaries, CDs, DVDs and so much more.

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And now once again here's Pastor Chuck Smith with today's closing comments. I would encourage you to learn from David's mistakes. Here he is as we so often do resorting to the flesh calling upon the Lord seeking the Lord resorting to the flesh Oh that we would just trust in the Lord at all times and lean not to our own understanding but just commit our ways completely unto Him knowing that God will work things out for His glory.

And thus may you experience the hand and the help of God in your life this week in Jesus' name. Men, let me ask you a question. If you were standing in a court of law accused for the crime of being a Christian would there be enough evidence to convict you? Would there be any witnesses who could testify that you are indeed a devoted and committed Christian standing up in today's fallen world? Or are you just one of those guys that blends into the crowd? The Word for Today would like to encourage all men to watch this year's men's conference entitled A Passion for God.

Hear Pastor Chuck and guest speakers like Ryan Reese, John Randall, Ray Bentley and Greg Laurie as they teach and edify men to have a passion for their faith. To order your copy of this year's men's conference A Passion for Jesus with worship by Scott Cunningham Band call The Word for Today at

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