

(1 Samuel) How to Be Free From Bitterness

by David Guzik

The sermon explores the tragic end of King Saul and the consequences of his rebellion against God, highlighting the importance of trusting in God's power and authority.

Duration: 37:14

Scripture: 2 Samuel 1:17-27, Mark 14:27

Topics: "Overcoming Bitterness", "Faithful Suffering"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker uses the analogy of river rafting to illustrate the journey of walking with God. He emphasizes the importance of suffering courageously for the Lord in whatever circumstances we find ourselves in. The speaker also highlights the need to choose to think the best of others and to remember that God has forgiven us. Additionally, he shares the story of the valiant men of Jabesh Gilead who, despite the disgrace and tragedy surrounding Saul's death, took it upon themselves to give him a proper burial, demonstrating that God always has his valiant men to do his work.

Transcript

But this last chapter of this book of 1 Samuel brings together so many of the strands that have been developing through the book. And we come to the end of King Saul here in 1 Samuel chapter 31. So let's take a look at verse 1. So the Philistines fought against Israel and the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gilboa.

The Philistines, of course, are the traditional enemies of God's people during this time of Israel's history. For centuries, Israel had struggled against the Philistines and it was no different during this time. This whole battle is occasioned by an attack that the Philistines had made deep within Israelite territory.

This wasn't just a little border skirmish. They were trying to go in and cut through and really do damage to the land of Israel. And as the Philistines had made this deep attack into Israeli territory, the army of Israel, led by King Saul, assembled and prepared for battle at a place called Mount Gilboa.

But because King Saul was in deep rebellion against God, Saul wasn't ready for battle. We read back in 1 Samuel chapter 28 that when Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid and his heart trembled greatly. I don't think it's a sin to be afraid going into battle.

I don't think it's a sin to hurt when you're in a time of trial. But Saul didn't do the right things with his fears. He didn't do the right thing with his hurt.

Saul, instead of taking his fears to the Lord, Saul made things worse by seeking God's voice through an occultic spirit medium. And strangely, God spoke to Saul. But he spoke words of judgment to Saul through a very unusual appearance of the prophet Samuel.

And Samuel told Saul that he and his sons would die the next day. And as we come to 1 Samuel chapter 31, it's the next day. Today's the day.

Saul and his armies go out and he's heard from the prophet Samuel that on this day, he and his sons are going to die. That they're going to pass from this world to the next. I think it's also significant there that we read that the Philistines fought against Israel.

And we remember back that David and his 600 men, this man David who killed Goliath and was being raised up by God to be Saul's successor, to be the next king of Israel, this man David actually was trying to fight with the Philistines against Israel. He tried to join his 600 men to the Philistine army. But God in his wonderful hand prevented that and sent David home and wouldn't allow David to join up with the Philistines to fight against Israel.

The battle isn't going well. If you look at verse 1, it says that the men of Israel fled from before the Philistines and fell slain on Mount Gerboa. Now, Mount Gerboa was where the camp of the Israelite army was.

And if the camp of the Israelite army is on Mount Gerboa, they fight the battle at some place distant. Which means if you're being forced back onto your camp, your army's in full retreat. Your army's being routed.

Things are so badly working for the Israelite army that they're forced back to their own camp and it's going very badly. Look at verse 2, then the Philistines followed hard after Saul and his sons. And the Philistines killed Jonathan, Abinadab and Malkishua, Saul's sons.

Isn't it tragic to read there that Saul's sons are affected in the judgment of God against their father Saul? One that really strikes our heart is to hear of Jonathan. This very brave and worthy man. This man who's a shining star like a comet in the pages of 1 Samuel.

This man who is such a man of God who walked next as a brother with David. This brave and worthy man, he dies as we might expect him to. He's loyally fighting for his God, for his country, and for his father the king to the very end.

But he has to die. And so the two of his brothers here, Abinadab and Malkishua, Saul's son, and we sort of scratch our heads and say, Lord, this doesn't seem fair. If you're going to judge Saul, judge Saul.

Why do his sons have to die as well? God always has a purpose. God always has a plan. God had a purpose in taking these sons of Saul home at this time, because what God was doing was He was removing some of the logical heirs to Saul's throne.

Saul was a king. You know, when a king dies, you don't have an election for a new king. It's one of the sons of the king that come and take the throne.

Well, three of Saul's sons died in battle right next to him. Everybody knew that they weren't going to take the throne. God cleared the way for David to become the next king of Israel.

Now, we know that if Jonathan would have survived, he would have gladly yielded the throne to David because Jonathan said so. But the same could not be said of Saul's other sons. You wonder about this fellow Abinadab and Malchusheum.

Maybe they had eyes, maybe they had the prospects of stepping into the throne after their father passed away. They didn't care about the promises that God made to David, perhaps. And so, God was merciful to Israel, merciful to David by eliminating these heirs to the throne.

And might I say that God was also merciful to Jonathan, sparing him the ordeal of having to side with David against his own brothers. Don't weep for Jonathan, he went on to a better place. But I don't think he could say the same thing about Saul.

Look at Saul's tragic end in verse 3. Now, the battle became intense against Saul and the archers hit him and he was severely wounded by the archers. Then Saul said to his armor bearer, Draw your sword and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me. But his armor bearer would not, for he was greatly afraid.

Therefore, Saul took a sword and fell on it. And when his armor bearer saw that Saul was dead, he also fell on his sword and died with him. So Saul, his three sons, his armor bearer and all his men died together that same day.

What a tragedy for the land of Israel. You can see the scene in your mind, can't you? The battle's turning badly and they're in full retreat. Not that Saul was out on the front lines, right? Kings usually don't do that.

Captains stay away from the front lines. You know, they're yelling out commands by messenger from behind. But the army's in such full retreat that suddenly Saul sees his whole army passing him by and all of a sudden he's in the midst of the battle.

And the Philistines, they're looking and they see the man with the distinctive perhaps headdress on or the especially shiny armor, right? When you're the king, you get the nicest armor and the nicest things, but it also identifies you to the Philistines, doesn't it? And they train their arrows and they train their spears on Saul. And Saul's valiantly fighting and maybe one Philistine and another falls down before him. But the archers can get him from afar.

And an arrow perhaps bounces one or two of them off of his armor and he's being preserved for the time being. But then one finds its way through a little crack in the armor and it pierces through into his chest. And then another one comes from another side and all of a sudden there's arrows in him.

Saul knows he can't just pull the arrows out. The damage bringing the arrow out would be worse than the damage going in. And so he breaks the arrow off to lessen some of the weight.

Saul was a man of war. Saul had seen the field of battle many times. He had bent over a dying soldier on the field of battle more than once.

He knew what wounds looked like. And he could look at where he was struck and how deep the arrow had gone. And he said, I'm a goner.

This is a mortal wound. You don't recover from something like this. My life will linger on for a bit, but there's no help for me now.

I'm going to die. And so Saul's saying, no, I don't want to be captured by the Philistines. I don't want my body to be tortured and abused.

I don't want to be made a mockery by the Philistines. And he pleads to his armor bearer, take my life. And his armor bearer, wiser than Saul, refuses to.

So what does Saul do? Saul extends his sword out in front of his body and he falls down in front of it. And something much larger than an arrowhead pierces through his body. And he has a gut wound from the sword going through his body.

A lot of people are very troubled by this because Saul killed himself. And certainly we can say that in a sense this was suicide. Probably not suicide as we commonly think of it.

Because Saul had a mortal wound. Saul knew he was going to die. At the same time, we know that Saul didn't face his own death heroically.

There's nothing noble or heroic in what Saul did here, my friends. It's true that he might have faced for a few hours torture or mocking at the hands of the Philistines. But other men of God before him endured that.

Saul could have as well by the power of God. Tragedy, Saul wasn't relying on the power of God. What Saul did right here to take his life in his own hands is a picture of what he had been doing for decades before that.

His life was not in the hands of God. His life was in his own hands. I mean, you might be wondering how God feels about suicide.

Can I tell you plainly and simply that it's sin? It's sin. You and I don't have the authority over our own lives. Jesus Christ does.

You gave your life to Jesus Christ. He's your Lord. He's your master.

He holds the keys to life and death, not yourself. You gave that over to him, remember? Hey, he can take you home anytime he wants to. Every breath you breathe, every beat of your heart is dependent on his good pleasure.

He can take you home anytime it pleases him. It's nothing to take in your own hands. And my heart goes out to that despairing believer.

That person filled with fear and doubt and confusion. No doubt their mind virtually tortured by attacks of the enemy whom Jesus says came only to steal and to kill and to destroy. That believer who finds himself burdened by thoughts of taking their own life.

My friends, that's the coward's way out. You're not trusting the Lord. And if you think somehow that God would be pleased with it, well, I wouldn't be a burden to others.

It's a great escape. It's a deception from the enemy. I think every one of us looking into our own soul knows that we've battled with struggles like that from time to time.

But some people battle with them with great intensity. You wonder, who can I reach out to at a time like that? Friends, if you've got nobody else to call, call me. Call someone.

Talk to somebody. Talk to somebody who will pray with you and love you. And tell you, I understand.

Sometimes I felt like that too. But the power of Jesus Christ is greater than that. There's strength and courage and blessing in the Lord.

Let's get together and pray. But it wasn't that way for Saul. You know, as sad as anything is in this account, sad is the absence of any kind of sorrow or repentance or crying out to God at all on Saul's part.

I mean, he was told the previous day that he would die. Yet he doesn't seem to have prepared his soul to meet God in any way. He's not repenting.

He's not crying out to God. Now, the events of this chapter happened some 20 years after Saul first heard the announcement of judgment that was going to be fulfilled in this chapter. Almost 20 years before this, the prophet Samuel spoke to Saul and he said, God's going to take the kingdom away from you.

God's going to take you away from being king. He's going to raise up a man after his own heart, a better man than you. And Saul probably went away that day terrified.

Oh, Lord, is it going to be today? Looking over his shoulder. Who's going to kill me? Who's going to? It didn't happen that day. It didn't happen that year.

It didn't happen in five years. It didn't happen in 10 years. But now, some 20 years later, the announced judgment finally comes to pass.

You know, I wonder if Saul didn't think that maybe because it didn't happen right away. Maybe Saul thought that time was on his side. You know what? Didn't happen in the first year, five years.

I guess maybe God's forgotten all about that. Maybe it's water under the bridge with God. My friends, no, no.

Those 20 years were not good for Saul. Time was not on his side. Time was against him.

Every day that you harden your heart against God, every day that you stay unrepentant, unyielded before God, time's not on your side. Time's making you more hard. Time was against Saul.

And now at the end of his life, Saul had become so hardened in sin that he did not want to repent. You don't see anything of it in here. Nothing.

Many times people will put off getting right with God until a later time, assuming that they'll still want to get right with God. Then you know the feeling. Yeah, you know, yeah, I'll have that time off later.

Yeah, I'll do that. You know, that full on commitment later, later, later, another time, another day. You assume that you're going to want it later.

You don't really seem to want it today. What's going to change for later? Friends, when you feel the stirrings in your heart, when you feel God loving you, drawing you to himself, respond to it. Don't resist.

Come to him. You don't know if you're going to feel that way tomorrow or a year from now. It's very tragic to see Saul in this sad place.

But it wasn't just tragic for Saul. It wasn't just tragic for his sons. Look at the effect it had on the whole nation.

Verse 7, And when the men of Israel who were on the other side of the valley and those who were on the other side of the Jordan saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, they forsook the cities and fled and the Philistines came and dwelt in them. Well, the news of this incredible Israelite defeat and battle from the hand of the Philistines gets spread about and all of a sudden people are fleeing. You know, this business of people fleeing their homes and refugees.

It's nothing new. It's happening right here. And the Philistines come in and they move in and they're taking over and they're happy that the people of God had fled from their homes.

The victory of the Philistines is so complete that even people on the other side of the Jordan River, on the eastern bank of the Jordan River, even they fled. And you know what the Philistines have done? They've effectively drawn a line in Israel, separating Israel with a sweep from the west to the east. So now they divided the country into two parts and now they can conquer one and conquer the other.

This looks pretty bad, my friends. The nation of Israel is a people that's hanging precariously in the balance right now. If you see how it happened, it happened.

Look at verse seven again. When they saw that the men of Israel had fled and that Saul and his sons were dead, when they saw Saul down, everything went to pieces. When the leader, when King Saul was struck, it spread panic among God's people.

You know, Jesus knew that this same principle would be used against his own disciples. Jesus said, and this is in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 14, Jesus said to them, All of you will be made to stumble because of me this night, for it is written, I will strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered. Isn't that a principle in so much of Satan's working? Strike the shepherd, the sheep will be scattered.

That's what he tried to do to Jesus' disciples. But in Jesus' case, Jesus knew that the glory of his triumph on the cross, the glory of his victory over death in the empty tomb, that after that, the disciples would once again be gathered to him. Friends, this isn't always the case today when a leader falls.

Ideally, people would look to the Lord and look beyond a stumbling leader. But it doesn't always happen, and it didn't happen in the days of Israel. You see, Saul's sin, his hardened rebellion, his eventual ruin, it affected far more than himself or his immediate family.

It literally endangered the entire nation of Israel. That's why, my friends, why leaders have a higher responsibility. Their fall can endanger more people than the fall of someone who's not a leader.

This is why the New Testament openly preaches a higher standard for leaders. Even saying that leaders should be blameless for just cause before the world, before God's people. Tragic, and it continues on.

If it could get worse, it does get worse here in verse 8. So it came to pass the next day when the Philistines came to strip the slain that they found Saul and his three sons fallen on Mount Gerboa. And they cut off his head and stripped off his armor and sent word throughout the land of the Philistines to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people. Then they put the armor in the temple of Ashtaroah and they fastened his body to the wall of Beth-shan.

Saul's tragic death gave opportunity for the enemies of the Lord to disgrace the name of the Lord. First, they gave the ultimate insult to Saul. Now, this isn't something that we readily relate to in our culture because the way we usually think, or the most people think in our culture today, is once you're dead, you're dead.

Who cares what happens to your body, right? That's not the way they thought in ancient Hebrew culture. In that culture, they thought that this was almost a fate worse than death. To not just be dead, but to have your corpse mocked and desecrated and abused like this was a torture worse than death.

That's what happened to Saul. Secondly, you see that Saul's death was used to glorify pagan gods and to mock the living God. It doesn't hurt, when you read it there at the end of verse 9, to proclaim it in the temple of their idols and among the people.

Saul's severed head carried about from temple to temple to be a trophy for the ungodly. It's ghastly to think about. And then they take his body and they chain it to the walls of Beth-shan.

So there it is, hanging out over the walls. Now, today, you can go to Israel and visit Beth-shan. A remarkable place.

First of all, you have the old Roman ruins of Beth-shan, which come much later than the time of 1 Samuel, of course. But in the lower part of the city, you have the most spectacular Roman ruins. It's a city that was destroyed in the moment by an earthquake.

And the pillars toppled over and the houses crushed. And they've started to set stuff back up again and retrace the outlines. It's like walking in a Roman city from 2,000 years ago.

It's amazing. That's the Roman part of it. Up on the hill is the Hebrew city of Beth-shan, the old Hebrew ruins.

And you can go there and see the foundation of the walls from which Saul's corpse hung. And it's up on a hill and it's overlooking a great valley. And you could see how people from miles and miles around could see the desecrated corpse of King Saul there.

It would be a mockery to him and to his memory. And it doesn't seem like it can get any lower than that. Whenever things get that bad, God always, always flashes out a glimmer of hope.

Don't you love that about the Lord? I mean, whenever it gets dark, God knows how to light a candle in the midst of the darkness. And before long, that candle's like a searchlight. As bad as it is right now, in only a few years, King David will be at the height of his reign.

But God wants something immediate, to be a glimmer of hope for Israel. So look at verse 11. It says, And when the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead heard what the Philistines had done to Saul, then all the valiant men arose and traveled all night and took the body of Saul and the bodies of his sons from the wall of

Beth-shem.

And they came to Jabesh and burned them with fire. Then they took their bones and buried them under the tamarisk tree at Jabesh and fasted seven days. Isn't that beautiful? In this time of disgrace and loss and tragedy, God still has His valiant men to do His work.

The men of Jabesh-Gilead say, hey, let's get together. We're going to make a commando raid here on the city of Beth-shem. We're going to go there and we're going to cut down Saul's body and the bodies of his sons from that wall.

And we're going to give him a proper burial. Glory to God, He always has His valiant men. When one servant passes the scene, another rises to take his place.

If Saul is gone, then God will raise up a David. If the army of Israel is utterly routed, God still has His valiant men. God's work is bigger than any man or any group of people.

I think the men of Jabesh-Gilead are also notable, too, for their gratitude. You know, some 20 years before this time, and one of the first great things that Saul ever did as king, the city of Jabesh-Gilead was threatened by a man named Nahash the Ammonite. And as this man came, he wanted to just conquer the city of Jabesh-Gilead and subject them all to slavery.

And Saul said, hey, no way, I had enough of this. And Saul got together an army and went and they took on Nahash the Ammonite and they just whooped them and they delivered the city of Jabesh-Gilead. And now the men of Jabesh-Gilead say, we remember this from 20 years ago.

We want to show our gratitude and we're going to go out there and help King Saul. You know, when David heard about that, when he became king and heard about what the men of Jabesh-Gilead did, he thanked them. He thanked them for honoring the memory of King Saul.

Which kind of brings us to an interesting topic. How do you think David reacted when he heard the news of Saul's death? Here's a man who's been making your life pretty much a living hell for about 15 years. And now you hear he's dead.

And you had the opportunity to kill him a few times before, but you wouldn't do it. Touch not the Lord's anointed God. He's your business.

If you're going to take Saul from the scene, you're going to have to do it. I'm not going to mess with it. But how do you think David feels when the Lord finally does take Saul from the scene? You're doing that victory dance.

Yee-haw! Thank you, Lord. Ding dong. The witch is dead.

Man, it's just beautiful. Thank you, Lord. No.

You know, when David heard of Saul's death, he did not rejoice. In fact, he mourned and he composed a song in honor of Saul and Jonathan. It's called the Song of the Bow.

Now, if I turn a page over to Second Samuel, chapter one, let's read this. The Song of the Bow, Second Samuel, chapter one. Let's begin at verse 17.

It says, Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan, his son. And he told them to teach the children of Judah the Song of the Bow. Indeed, it's written in the book of Jasher.

Now, here's the song. The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places. How the mighty have fallen.

Tell it not in Gath. Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon. Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.

Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Oh, mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, nor let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings. For the shield of the mighty is cast away there.

The shield of Saul not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan did not turn back and the sword of Saul did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives and in their death.

They were not divided. They were swifter than eagles. They were stronger than lions.

Oh, daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, you who clothed him in scarlet with luxury, who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle. Jonathan was slain in your high places.

I'm distressed for you, my brother, Jonathan. You've been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was wonderful, surpassing the love of women.

How the mighty have fallen and the weapons of war perished. We can understand David saying all these wonderful things about his wonderful friend and close brother, Jonathan, in this, right? What about what he says about Saul? I mean, just taking what David says about Saul here in this spontaneous song of the bow. Would you ever think there was anything wrong between David and Saul? You'd never know it.

David was able to speak this well of Saul after his death. David calls Saul the beauty of Israel. Can you imagine that someone who's done this to you for 15 years? He finally dies and you call him the beauty of Israel.

David didn't want anyone to rejoice in Saul's death. David wanted everyone to mourn. He even wanted the mountains and the fields to mourn for Saul.

Matter of fact, he says there in verse 21, Oh, mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, nor let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings. You go today to Israel and you look at Mount Gilboa and it's barren. I think God put a curse on that mountain in honor of David's prayer.

David even wanted that hill to mourn for Saul. David praised Saul as a mighty warrior. He complimented the personality and the loyalty of Saul.

And he called Israel to mourning and he called on others to praise Saul for the good that Saul did for Israel. I look at that and I'm just like, wow. How did David keep his heart free from bitterness and keep himself in a place where he could speak so wonderfully about a man who had hurt him so much? Let me suggest to you four, well, maybe five things that I think helped David to do this.

First of all, David chose to trust in the power and the authority of God. You know, when Saul was attacking him, when Saul was making his life so miserable, David understood that God was in control and God must have a purpose even for the terrible things that he allows to happen. Many, many times we can only see

God's good in retrospect as we look back.

And if you can't see God's good in something terrible that has happened to you, you simply trust that it's there and that it'll be revealed in time. David could see that. You know, I think it's a wonderful example of that in the pages of scriptures, Joseph.

If there's anybody who got the shaft more than David, maybe it was Joseph. Sold as a slave by his own brothers and lived for decades in terrible conditions as a slave in Egypt. But God promoted him.

God brought him to a high place. And one day, well, the shoe was on the other foot, wasn't it? And Joseph had the authority over his brothers and could do anything he wanted to him. And the brothers were afraid.

They come kind of sniveling to Joseph. Joseph says, look, I know you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. You know, David could say that.

You could put those words in the mouth of David. David wasn't kidding himself. He didn't think that Saul was out on some noble pursuit to educate David.

Not at all. No, you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good. You know, God is greater than even the people who might be making life tough for you.

God's greater than them. So David chose to trust in the power and the authority of God. Let me suggest to you a second way that David was able to deal with this.

David chose to let it go. He chose not to hold on to the bitterness and hurt. I think it's amazing that twice David had beautiful opportunities to kill Saul.

Right. And each time he let him go and he said, I'm not going to kill him. That's God's business.

I'm not going to kill Saul. But David's song of the bow and second Samuel, chapter one, shows that this attitude was in his heart, not just in his actions. You know, David wouldn't murder Saul with the sword.

But he could have murdered Saul a thousand times over in his heart. Right. We have a way of doing that, don't we? We might never say a crossword to this person, but we'll murder them in our heart a million times.

That's David was letting it go in his heart to the song of the bow shows that he didn't even murder Saul in his heart. He let him go there probably hundreds of times. David had Saul in a vulnerable position in his heart.

But he said, no, I'm not going to touch the Lord's anointed. I wouldn't do it with the sword and I'm not going to do it with my heart. David kept a short account of the wrongs that Saul had done to David, chose to trust in the power and the authority of God.

David chose to let it go. I think it's also amazing that David chose to think the best about Saul. Now, let's say you're in this position where your mind is filled with angry, bitter thoughts towards somebody, angry, bitter thoughts all the time.

And then suddenly they die. Are you going to be able to just spontaneously like that compel is a beautiful song in their honor? No, no. David could say these nice things about Saul because they were on his heart

beforehand.

They would say, you know what? He may have treated me badly, but boy, he was a good soldier. While he led Israel well in a lot of ways, what David did was he chose to think the best about Saul. That's a hard thing to do, isn't it? We're kind of up in the high altitude here, aren't we? The air is kind of thin up here.

It's hard to breathe. Friends, this is what walking with God is like. It's choosing to think the best of others.

First Corinthians 13 says that love thinks no evil. Love looks for the best, and if you look at a person and there's there's five good things and five bad things, you think about the five good things. That's what Saul did to David, excuse me, did to Saul.

I think also a fourth way that David was able to overcome this bitterness, that David chose to remember that God had forgiven him. Do you know where David was when he heard this news? Where was David when he heard the news of Saul's death and where he sang the song of the bow? He was in the city of Ziklag, where he had been living as a backslidden sinner for more than a year until God woke him up. The city was probably still a burned out rubble when David heard this news.

And David looked around at all his sin, at all his backsliding and how God had forgiven him in the midst of it. And when he considered how God had forgiven him, God had to forgive the other person, right? David said, listen, Saul treated me bad. He didn't treat me worse than I treated the Lord.

And the Lord forgave me. I'm going to forgive Saul. Now, if David did these four things, he chose to trust in the power and the authority of God.

He chose to let it go. He chose to think the best about Saul and he chose to remember that God had forgiven him. He did one fifth thing that I think is pivotal.

David chose to keep doing those things. Isn't that the battleground for a lot of us? You know, we get our hearts set in the right place or something like that and we're going in the right. Oh, great.

Praise the Lord. Isn't that wonderful? You know, we're all set in the right direction. Good.

Glory to God. Then all of a sudden something else will come up and we're off of it right away. And David could keep himself in that place.

Whenever David was threatened to get his heart off of that place, he put himself in the right place. You know, choosing this kind of heart showed David to be a true man after God's own heart. It showed that the years in the wilderness escaping Saul really were years when God trained him to be a king and a king after his own heart.

David would never follow in the same tragic footsteps of Saul. No. He reigned as Israel's greatest king.

So as we come to the end of First Samuel, the time of Saul is over. The day of David has now begun. God's training and work in him has passed into another phase.

And now David is facing something else in his life, no longer the threat from Saul, but now new things. Might I say that's how it's always going to be in our Christian life. Right now, you may be going through some kind of issue or some kind of thing in your own walk with the Lord.

And you're just thinking, oh, I can't wait till this is over. Well, when it's over, you know, it's going to be something else. Please, I don't say that to discourage you.

No, great. Praise the Lord. No, it's not to discourage you.

It's just to say the facts, the matter that look, this is how it is. And so we go home to be with the Lord. Right now, we've been given the privilege of enduring trials.

You're not going to have that privilege in heaven. So we suffer courageously for the Lord right now in whatever place he's given us and whatever trial he's put before us. Just these last couple of days, I went with my boys river rafting.

It was a lot of fun. You know, you get to go down these spots where there's wonderful rapids. And it's kind of scary, you know, and everybody's hollering and people fall out of the boat.

And it's great fun. And nobody gets hurt. It's just a fun time.

You know how it is. As you go through and you have a rapid and then you have a calm stretch and you have another rapid. Well, you make it through a rapid.

Oh, great. Isn't it wonderful? You know, you've got another one just down the way. Coming up another one.

Now, you know, you can scream and yell and all. It's so horrible. We had one little kid in our boat and he kept, you know, oh, we're going to crash.

We're going to die. Now, you know what? He got to the destination just the same as all of us in the boat. He got the same place.

Difference was we enjoyed it. He was miserable. You know what, friends, the Lord's got his hooks in you, doesn't he? And you're going to go through the rapids, you know, you can set your focus on the Lord and have a bold trust in God like David and enjoy some of the ride.

Or you can just kick and scream, I'm going to die. You'll make it to the port just the same. You won't have the confidence and the joy of the Lord and the bold trust in him that the Lord wants you to have.

So praise the Lord as we pass from one thing to another. So did David. And that's how the Lord's always going to be working in our lives.

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