

At the Springs of Engedi

1 Samuel 24:1-22

December 6, 2009

Intro

As we continue our study through the life of David, we find that he has formed a small band of warriors. David's fame in Israel had become great and Saul had become jealous of his successes. Saul knew that God had chosen David to become king instead of him and so he was trying to thwart the will of God by putting David to death.

But by this time many people in Israel were getting wind of Saul's jealous and bitter soul and had to come over to join David. As we come to chapter 24, there were about 600 men who had joined David.

Saul had actually come quite close to capturing David. He and his men were in the wilderness of Ziph and the Ziphites decided to alert Saul of his whereabouts. So Saul and his men set out to capture David. At one point, David and his men were on one side of the mountain while Saul and his men were on the other side of the mountain in hot pursuit. They almost had David surrounded when news came to Saul that the Philistines had made a raid on the land. So Saul turned back from pursuing David and went to meet the Philistines.

David then went to the stronghold of Engedi which is where we find him as we begin our study in Chapter 24. Engedi is in southeast Israel just west of the Dead Sea. It's a perfect place for a stronghold because there aren't many caves in the mountains and freshwater runs through that area very powerfully. Many wild goats live there also so they would be food available as well. What happens next is very interesting. When Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told that David was in the wilderness of Engedi. So Saul took 3,000 of his special forces to seek David and his men.

Saul entered a cave to relieve himself and it happened to be the exact cave in which David and his men were hiding. Saul had literally been placed in David's hand. But now, David must make a decision. Does he take Saul's life or does he let him go free?

I. The End Does not Justify the Means

- 1 Clearly it would have been better for Israel if Saul was not the king over Israel. He was no longer filled with the Holy Spirit, his soul was greatly troubled within him, he was filled with jealousy and rage, he put his own personal desires over the needs of the country, and he was trying to kill an innocent man.
- 2 Of all the people in Israel, David could have felt justified in taking Saul's life since Saul was trying to take his life without cause.
- 3 That is the temptation that David faced. Should he execute justice?

A. God's ways are higher than man's ways

- 4 David had a decision to make and he was being counseled by the men around him to take matters into his own hands; to take Saul's life.
- 5 David was first going to have to decide how he was going to decide. On what basis would he make this decision?
- 6 The men around him were even using God's word that David had received earlier in their attempt to convince David to take Saul's life.
- 7 But God's Word must be correctly applied and David decided that there was a higher principle that applied to this situation; that Saul was the Lord's anointed and therefore it was up to the Lord to settle this matter.
- 8 David's heart troubled him. He was convicted in his soul even that he had cut off the edge of Saul's robe. And here is another principle that helps us in making godly decisions. If your soul is troubled, it may well be the Holy Spirit convicting your soul.

John 16:13, "But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak;"

- 9 David's heart was steadfast toward the Lord and he would not be moved.

Psalms 57:7, My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises!

- 10 David made decisions according to the principles of God's Word and his faith in God. The principle here that guided him was that Saul was over him. We see this in verses six when David said of King Saul, "he is my lord, the Lord's anointed."
- 11 Here we see David's faith become a great part of how he made decisions. He trusted that God's ways are better and that God had the power to bring about what God wanted.

Isaiah 55:8-9, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," declares the Lord. "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

B. A leader leads

- 1 It's important to see how David responds to his men that are encouraging him to take matters into his own hands and kill Saul.

- 2 At that point it was 600 to 1. They were all convinced that this was a "God thing." In their minds, this was far more than a coincidence. This was an opportunity that God had provided and surely David must take advantage of it.
- 3 But David is the leader and has the responsibility to make godly decisions and to convince them of the rightness of his decision.
- 4 In verse seven it tells us that David persuaded his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul. In other words, David was submitted to God's Word and then led others according to God's Word.
- 5 In our study of Deuteronomy we read what should happen when Israel received a king.

Deuteronomy 17:18-19, Now it shall come about when he sits on the throne of his kingdom, he shall write for himself a copy of this law on a scroll in the presence of the Levitical priests. It shall be with him and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, by carefully observing all the words of this law and these statutes,

- 6 David would not be led by the emotions of the moment or by the pressure of these men under him. He knew there were principles of God's Word that were higher.

1 Peter 2:17, Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

Proverbs 24:29, Do not say, "Thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work."

Romans 12:19, Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord.

C. Godly results require godly ways

- 7 Some people are convinced that having godly intent is enough to justify what they are trying to accomplish.
- 8 You commonly see this in relationships when one person is convinced that the other person needs to be changed, and maybe they do, but it's never good to use ungodly ways to bring about that change.

App – Criticism and harsh words are not a gift of the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 2:24-26 – “And the Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge

of the truth, and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.”

Ephesians 4:29, Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

- 9 Just think of what good David could have accomplished with just one stroke of his sword.
- 10 He could have gotten even. That sounds like justice. Isn't that a good thing?
- 11 He could have gotten this apostate king out of the way so they could start a national revival, isn't that good?
- 12 But here again we see David's faith. God allowed Saul to be king over Israel and God would have to remove him.
- 13 David did have the promise from God that he would become king over Israel. But this was God's promise and therefore God would have to be the one to bring it about.
- 14 So here is another principle for us to understand; don't fulfill God's promises for yourself. They are God's promises, not yours.

II. Risk Reconciliation

- 1 Not only did David not take matters into his hands by taking Saul's life, he decided to take the risk of reconciliation with Saul.
- 2 After Saul left the cave, David called out to him and held the piece of the robe that he had cut from Saul's robe to show his heart of mercy.

A. Don't give anyone cause to accuse you

- 1 In verse 11, David called out to Saul, "Know and perceive that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands, and I have not sinned against you, though you are lying in wait for my life to take it."
- 2 Here is another principle for us to understand. We are all going to have some kind of conflict in our lives. It's important that we understand that we must make sure that our part is for peace. If there is a conflict, make sure that you are not the cause of the conflict, but that you are the one who is working towards peace.

Romans 12:18, If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men.

- 3 For example, let it not be said that you and so-and-so are having a conflict. Rather, let it be said that so-and-so is having a conflict with you, and that your ways are different.
- 4 Just because someone raises their voice at you doesn't mean you have to raise your voice back. If someone is mean to you, you don't have to be mean back to them.

2 Corinthians 6:3-4, "giving no cause for offense in anything, so that the ministry will not be discredited, but in everything commending ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in hardships, in distresses..."

- 5 Twice David said a remarkable thing, "My hand will not be against you." That's the point exactly. Their hand may be against you, but be sure that your hand is not against them.
- 6 The result was that Saul was convicted. "You are more righteous than I." If David would have killed Saul, this could not have been said.
- 7 "Now I know you will be king over Israel," Saul said. He knew that God would bless this kind of godly character and faithfulness.
- 8 But here is also an important point. Everyone who was there that day learned a powerful lesson about the value of godly character.

B. You have the ministry of reconciliation

- 9 God comes to us with a heart of reconciliation. We are the unrighteous ones and do not deserve what God offers.
- 10 But then when we have been reconciled to God He gives to us the ministry of reconciliation so that others can also be reconciled to God.
- 11 The heart of God in humility toward us is so powerfully seen in these verses.

2 Corinthians 5:18-21 The ministry of reconciliation.