

Forged In The Cave - 1 Samuel 24:1-22

The Joy Of the Lord Is Your Strength!

Hardly anything beats a "radiant face"

I want people to experience the *significance of Jesus* and the *joy of His people!*

HIGH SCHOOL RETREAT. Prayer

FIRST STEP, NEXT STEP

1. Starting Point. (Next Sunday)
2. Baptism. (Next Sunday)

INTRO:

1. I love golf. And one of my favorite sets of irons I've ever owned is a set of Mizuno MP-14s.
2. They're beautiful clubs. Classic design. Thin top line. And there's something special about them.
3. They're forged.
4. Now, if you don't know much about golf clubs, there are two primary ways manufacturers make irons. Some are cast, and others are forged.
5. Casting involves pouring molten metal into a mold. But forging is different. Forging takes a solid piece of metal, subjects it to tremendous pressure, and shapes it into something useful.
6. And here's what I love about that process: It's in the forging that you find the forming.
7. *The pressure isn't pointless. The process has a purpose.*
8. And I think that's a beautiful picture of what God is doing in our lives.
9. *Here's why -*
God doesn't just care about where you're going. He cares about who you're becoming along the way.
10. And sometimes the very circumstances we're praying for God to remove are the circumstances He's using to shape us.
11. That's where we find David in 1 Samuel 24.
12. David has been anointed as the next king of Israel.
 - a. God has promised him the throne.
 - b. But instead of sitting in a palace, *he's hiding in a cave.*
13. He's been betrayed. He's been hunted. He's been misunderstood. And he's running for his life.
14. And yet, this cave becomes one of the most important classrooms of David's life.
15. Because - God is doing something in David that David could never accomplish on his own.
16. And in this cave, David learns *three lessons* that every one of us needs to learn.
17. Let's jump in... (1 Samuel 24:1)

When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." ² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. ³ And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. ^[b] Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. ⁴ And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'" Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁵ And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁶ He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed." ⁷ So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

1. Here's the scene.
2. Saul has been pursuing David with the full force of the Israelite army. He's taken three thousand chosen men to hunt down one guy.
3. And in the middle of the pursuit, Saul needs to use the bathroom.
4. I'm not making that up. It's in the Bible.
5. Saul walks into a cave to relieve himself. But what Saul doesn't know is that David and his men are hiding in the back of that very cave.
6. You couldn't script this any better.
7. The man who has been trying to kill David is now standing just a few feet away, completely venerable.
8. And David's men immediately recognize the opportunity.
9. Verse 4: "And the men of David said to him, 'Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'"

1. In other words: *David, this is it!*
2. God has delivered Saul into your hands. You don't have to run anymore. You don't have to hide anymore. You can end this whole thing right now.
3. And honestly, you can understand their reasoning.
4. David has already been anointed king. Saul has repeatedly tried to kill him. David has done nothing to deserve this treatment.
5. *And now the door is wide open.*
6. But here's the problem - God never actually said that. You don't find it anywhere in the previous chapters that God said this is how it would go.
7. Just because a door opens doesn't mean God was the one who opens it...
8. Sometimes we confuse opportunity with God's approval.
9. We think, "Well, if God didn't want me to do this, why would He make it possible?"

10. But that's dangerous thinking.
11. Because *Opportunity is not the same thing as permission.*
12. Sometimes it's a test.
13. Think about it.
14. David could have justified killing Saul a hundred different ways.
 - a. He could have said, "I'm just protecting myself."
 - b. He could have said, "God already promised me the throne."
 - c. He could have said, "Everybody around me thinks this is the right decision."
15. But David refuses to let his circumstances override his convictions.
16. BUT - David does something interesting...
17. He sneaks forward and cuts off the corner of Saul's robe.
18. *And even that bothers him.*
19. Verse 5 says:
"And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe."
20. Why?
21. Because David recognizes that Saul is still the Lord's anointed king.
22. Cutting the robe was more than a harmless prank. In that culture, the royal robe represented authority. *David's action was a symbolic challenge to Saul's kingship.*
23. And David realizes that even though God has promised him the throne, he doesn't have the right to seize it on his own terms.
24. *God's promises never give us permission to violate God's principles.*
25. That's a lesson we desperately need.
26. *Big compromises always starts with small cuts...*
 - a. You may have an opportunity to get ahead at work by compromising your integrity.
 - b. You may have an opportunity to retaliate against somebody who hurt you.
 - c. You may have an opportunity to enter a relationship that feels right but contradicts what God has said.
27. But listen: *An open door is not always a green light from God.*
 - a. Sometimes the question isn't as easy as: "Can I do this?"
 - b. The question is, "Would doing this honor God?"
28. And sometimes the greatest evidence of spiritual maturity isn't what you have the courage to do.
29. *It's what you have the conviction not to do.*
30. David could have taken the throne that day.
31. **But he would have become the kind of king he was running from.**
32. And God was forming something different in him.
33. So let me ask you:
34. Where in your life are you tempted to force something that God has asked you to trust Him with?

a. A relationship? A promotion? A financial decision? A conflict?

35. Don't sacrifice your character trying to accelerate God's timing.

36. If God has promised it, you don't have to sin to secure it.

37. Ok, let's look at how David responds....

⁸ Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. ⁹ And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm?' ¹⁰ Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. ^[c] I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.' ¹¹ See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. ¹² May the Lord judge between me and you, may the Lord avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. ¹³ As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.' But my hand shall not be against you. ¹⁴ After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! ¹⁵ May the Lord therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand."

1. After Saul leaves the cave, David does something remarkable.
2. *He follows him outside.*
3. Now remember, this is the same man who's been hunting David like an animal.
4. And David calls out: "My lord the king!"
5. Saul turns around, and David bows before him.
6. Then David begins to speak.
7. And what I love about this passage is that David doesn't pretend everything is okay.
 - a. He doesn't ignore what Saul has done.
 - b. He doesn't act like the abuse, the betrayal, and the injustice never happened.
8. He tells the truth.
9. Verse 11: "See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands."
10. David is saying, "Saul, I could have killed you. But I didn't. I'm not your enemy. I've done nothing to deserve what you're doing to me."
11. *That's not weakness. That's courage.*
12. And I think sometimes Christians misunderstand humility.
 - a. We think being humble means never speaking up.
 - b. Never confronting someone.
 - c. Never acknowledging when we've been wronged.

13. But that's not biblical humility.
14. Humility doesn't mean you surrender your voice. It means you surrender your right to vengeance.
15. Look at verse 12:
"May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you."
16. I love that.
17. You know that gavel that judges use? David hands that gavel back to God.
18. And that's the lesson.
19. **Humility isn't silence. It's surrendering the gavel.**
- a. ...You can **tell the truth** without seeking revenge.
 - b. ...You can **confront wrongdoing** without becoming cruel.
 - c. ...You can **establish boundaries** without becoming bitter.
 - d. ...You can **stand up for yourself** without tearing somebody else down.
20. Some of us need to hear that.
21. Because there's somebody in your life who has hurt you.
- a. Maybe they lied about you.
 - b. Maybe they betrayed your trust.
 - c. Maybe they took credit for something you did.
 - d. Maybe they treated you unfairly...
22. And you've been harboring this bitterness every since...
23. But here's the problem.
24. *The longer you hold that gavel, the heavier it gets.*
25. And eventually, the desire to see justice can turn into a desire to inflict pain.
26. David shows us another way.
27. *He speaks honestly, but he leaves judgment in God's hands.*
28. And this points us forward to Jesus.
29. First Peter 2:23 says:
"When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly."
30. *Jesus wasn't passive in the face of evil.*
31. He spoke truth. He confronted hypocrisy. He exposed injustice.
32. But when He was falsely accused, beaten, and crucified, He entrusted Himself to the Father.
33. Guys - *David doesn't become Saul in order to defeat Saul.*
34. *And neither should we.*
35. So here's a question worth asking: Who are you still trying to make pay?
36. Who are you still putting on trial in your mind?
- a. Maybe today is the day you surrender the gavel.

37. Not because what they did was okay.
38. But because God is a better judge than you are.
39. Now, here is a bit of wisdom from David.. Let's finish the passage..

¹⁶ As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷ He said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. ¹⁸ And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the Lord put me into your hands. ¹⁹ For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰ And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. ²¹ Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house." ²² And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

1. Now watch how Saul responds.
2. Verse 16: "As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' And Saul lifted up his voice and wept."
3. It's an emotional moment. Saul begins to cry.
4. And for a brief moment, *he actually acknowledges the truth.*
5. Verse 17:
"You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil."
6. That's an incredible confession.
7. Saul recognizes that David has acted with integrity.
 - a. He acknowledges his own wrongdoing.
 - b. He even admits that David will one day be king.
8. And then Saul asks David to promise that he won't destroy his descendants when he takes the throne.
9. What's interesting is David has already promised that to Jonathan - and now he says yes to Saul...
10. It sounds like a beautiful reconciliation.
11. *But notice how the chapter ends.*
12. Verse 22:
"And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."
13. Don't miss that.
14. Saul goes home.
15. *But David doesn't go home with him.*
16. David goes back - probably to a cave....
17. Why?

18. Because David understands something we often forget.
19. *Forgiveness and trust are not the same thing.*
20. *Forgiveness is free, but trust is rebuilt over time.*
21. David has released his right to retaliate against Saul.
 - a. ... He has chosen mercy over vengeance.
22. *But that doesn't mean Saul has suddenly become trustworthy.*
23. Remember, Saul has already made promises and broken them.
24. His emotions may be genuine in this moment, *but genuine emotion isn't the same as lasting transformation.*
25. And David is wise enough to recognize the difference.
26. This is so important because sometimes we put unnecessary pressure on people in the name of forgiveness.
 - a. We tell someone, "If you've really forgiven them, you need to let them back into your life."
 - b. Or, "If you've really forgiven them, you should trust them again."
27. But that's not what Scripture teaches.
28. *Forgiveness is an act of grace.*
29. *Trust is built through consistent faithfulness.*
30. *And reconciliation, when possible, requires more than one person's willingness.*
31. You can forgive someone today and still need time to rebuild trust tomorrow.
 - a. Think about a marriage where trust has been broken.
 - b. Forgiveness may begin with a decision to release bitterness and pursue healing.
 - c. But trust isn't restored simply because somebody says, "I'm sorry."
 - d. Trust is rebuilt through repentance, honesty, accountability, and consistent change over time.
32. Or think about a friendship where someone repeatedly betrayed your confidence.
 - a. You can forgive that person without immediately giving them access to every vulnerable part of your life.
33. That's not bitterness. *That's wisdom.*
34. And we see that wisdom in David.
 - a. He refuses to kill Saul.
 - b. He refuses to retaliate.
 - c. He honors his promise to Saul's family.
35. *But he also recognizes that Saul's words haven't yet been matched by a pattern of faithfulness.*
36. So he returns to the stronghold.
37. Now, there's another side to this.
38. Some of us aren't David in this story.
 - a. We're Saul.
 - b. We've hurt somebody.

- c. We've broken trust.
- 39. And we've apologized.
- 40. But we're frustrated because the relationship hasn't immediately returned to normal.
- 41. We think, "I said I was sorry. Why can't we just move on?"
- 42. Because apologies can happen in a moment. But rebuilding trust takes time.
- 43. Repentance isn't merely being sorry about what happened. It's demonstrating a new direction through changed behavior.
- 44. And if you've broken someone's trust, one of the most loving things you can do is give them the time and space to see that change.
- 45. Don't demand trust.
- 46. *Demonstrate trustworthiness.*
- 47. Now, here's where the gospel brings even greater hope.
- 48. Because every one of us has broken faith with God.
 - a. We've sinned against Him.
 - b. We've ignored His Word.
 - c. We've chosen our own way.
- 49. And yet, through Jesus Christ, God offers us forgiveness that we could never earn.
- 50. Ephesians 4:32 says:
"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."
- 51. **Our forgiveness of others is rooted in the forgiveness we've received from God.**
- 52. But here's the distinction: while human trust must often be rebuilt over time, our acceptance before God is secured through the finished work of Jesus Christ.
- 53. We don't earn His forgiveness by proving ourselves trustworthy.
- 54. We receive it by grace through faith.
- 55. And that grace transforms the way we treat other people.
- 56. We forgive because we've been forgiven.
- 57. We extend mercy because we've received mercy.
- 58. And we practice wisdom because God calls us to walk in truth.
- 59. So maybe today you need to forgive someone.
- 60. Or maybe you need to stop demanding that somebody trust you again before you've demonstrated genuine change.
- 61. Either way, David reminds us:
- 62. *Forgiveness can be offered freely, while trust is rebuilt faithfully.*
 - 1. I want to go back to those Mizuno irons...
 - 2. The reason they're special isn't just how they look. *It's how they're made.*
 - 3. They're forged under pretty significant pressure.

4. And that pressure isn't meant to destroy the metal. *It's meant to shape it into something useful.*
5. And that's exactly what God is doing in David's life.
6. David walked into that cave living like a fugitive, but God was forming the heart of a king.
7. *And here's what I want you to understand: God is doing more than changing your circumstances. He's shaping your character.*
8. So let me give you three practical takeaways from David's time in the cave.
9. **First, before you walk through an open door, ask if it honors God.**
10. Not every opportunity is from God.
11. Before you make that decision, take that promotion, enter that relationship, or send that text, ask yourself: *Does this align with God's Word?*
12. Don't compromise your character trying to get somewhere God hasn't taken you yet.
13. **Second, identify where you need to surrender the gavel.**
14. Who are you still trying to get even with?
15. Maybe it's someone who betrayed you, a family member who hurt you, or a coworker who treated you unfairly.
16. You don't have to pretend it didn't happen. You can tell the truth. You can establish boundaries.
17. But you can also say, "God, I'm going to trust You with justice instead of carrying this bitterness another day."
18. **Third, take one step toward forgiveness or rebuilding trust.**
19. Maybe there's someone you need to forgive.
20. Or maybe you're the one who broke trust, and it's time to stop making excuses and start demonstrating genuine repentance.
21. You don't have to fix everything today. But you can take one faithful step.
- 22.

THE GOSPEL: Jesus Christ is the ultimate hope for every person. Though we are all sinful and our sin separates us from God, God made a way for us to be in right relationship with him again. That way is Jesus. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice for our sins. God promises that all who place their faith in Jesus Christ will be saved. This is the good news of the Bible.

PRAYER TEAM

COMMUNION: 1 Corinthians 11

²³ For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread, ²⁴ and when he had given thanks, broke it, and said, ^[b] "This is my body, which is ^[c] for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

²⁵ In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." ²⁶ For as often as you eat this bread

and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

"May the Lord bless you and protect you;

may the Lord make his face shine on you

and be gracious to you;

may the Lord look with favor on you^[b]

and give you peace."