

1 Samuel 26:13–25 ESV

¹³ Then David went over to the other side and stood far off on the top of the hill, with a great space between them. ¹⁴ And David called to the army, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, “Will you not answer, Abner?” Then Abner answered, “Who are you who calls to the king?” ¹⁵ And David said to Abner, “Are you not a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the king your lord. ¹⁶ This thing that you have done is not good. As the Lord lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your lord, the Lord’s anointed. And now see where the king’s spear is and the jar of water that was at his head.”

¹⁷ Saul recognized David’s voice and said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And David said, “It is my voice, my lord, O king.” ¹⁸ And he said, “Why does my lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done? What evil is on my hands? ¹⁹ Now therefore let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering, but if it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’ ²⁰ Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the Lord, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains.”

²¹ Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Return, my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have acted foolishly, and have made a great mistake.” ²² And David answered and said, “Here is the spear, O king! Let one of the young men come over and take it. ²³ The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the Lord gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the Lord’s anointed. ²⁴ Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the Lord, and may he deliver me out of all tribulation.” ²⁵ Then Saul said to David, “Blessed be you, my son David! You will do many things and will succeed in them.” So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place.

Introduction

Over the last couple weeks in [1 Samuel 25](#) and [1 Samuel 26](#) I’ve drawn several connects between David’s conflicts with Nabal and Saul and the story of Adam’s fall in the Garden in [Genesis 3](#).

This morning’s passage continues to build and expand on these themes from Genesis.

It is worth saying here that this should never surprise you.

The Bible is constantly referring back to Genesis, especially [Genesis 1-11](#).

This morning’s passage specifically hones in on the idea of being driven from the Garden due to sin and what is necessary to return to the Garden.

Verse 19 stands at the heart of this morning’s sermon text and it is there that these themes are most present.

There David asks Saul why he is pursuing him.

Is it because God has stirred up Saul to chase him? Or...

Is it because men have stirred up Saul to chase him?

In either case, David says that two things are clear:

He has been driven from the heritage of the LORD. And...

If it is God who has stirred up Saul, then he will give an offering.

This morning I will organize my sermon around these two themes from v. 19:

1. First, I will David's claim about being driven from the Lord's heritage.
2. Second, I will speak about the necessity of sacrifice to return to God's heritage.

Being Driven From the Lord's Heritage

Garden themes continue in our passage this morning as they have in the last two chapters.

In v. 13 David accuses Abner from atop a hill "Why then have you not kept watch over the lord the king?"

We are still in the Garden setting I described in last week's sermon.

But now Abner is like Adam in the Garden, who failed to "keep" the Garden as God commanded in [Genesis 2:15](#).

As I alluded to last week, David's questions show that Abner is not a suitable keeper of the garden-like sanctuary of Saul's war camp.

David has proven that he is a suitable man for that position, but Saul has driven David away.

This is our first theme: David has been driven from where he should be.

But rather than Abner responding to David, in verse 17, Saul responds as he in chapter 24 saying, "Is this your voice, my son David?"

With Saul entering the scene, David asks why he is pursuing him in v. 18, "For what have I done? What evil is on my hands?"

What Evil is On My Hands?

David asks the question but, based on what we've learned from chapter 25, we know the answer:

The evil on David's hands is the taking of multiple wives.

We are following the pattern from Genesis: Sin in the Garden leads to expulsion from the Garden.

This will guide us as we consider David's words in verse 19:

David says to Saul,

"If it is the LORD who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering, but if it is men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'"

God or Man?

David provides two options for understanding why Saul would be pursuing him.

The first option is that God has stirred up Saul to pursue David due to some sin in David.

The second option is that men have wrongfully persuaded Saul to pursue David and drive him away from the Lord's heritage.

What the text reveals to us is that both of these things are true.

We know that the LORD who has stirred up Saul to pursue David for his sin.

But the way that the LORD has stirred up Saul is by the men who have persuaded him to pursue David.

You find this throughout the Bible: God accomplishes his purposes through the actions of men.

Driven From God's Heritage

But notice David's main concern in being chased by Saul.

Saul's pursuit means that David has "***no share in the heritage of the LORD***".

And, those stirring up Saul to pursue David want David to "***Go, [and] serve other gods.***"

David's sin has had the ultimate result of driving him from the heritage of the Lord.

Here we have a simple biblical pattern on display:

Sin drives you away from God and from the place where God dwells.

In a sense, that is what sin is.

Sin is turning from God.

The consequence that sin drives you from God is simply the fruition of sin's trajectory.

Driven From the Land, Driven From the Church

In David's context, the place where the Lord could be found was with God's people in the Promised Land.

But David was being driven from this heritage.

Adam sinned in the Garden and he was driven out of the Garden.

This is the result of sin, it drives you from fellowship and communion with God.

In our context, the place where the Lord is found is in the Church, where His word is preached and His sacraments are duly administered.

What happens all the time is that people in sin run away from the Church, the very place where their sins could be forgiven.

Driven From Others

But that isn't the only consequence of sin.

Sin also drives you away from Godly fellowship and communion with others.

Take note of what happens in vv. 21-25.

Saul calls for David to return to him.

Saul repents for his actions of driving David away.

He confesses to being a fool, a Nabal.

But David won't return.

Both men are in sin:

David's sin drives him God's heritage.

And Saul's sin has destroyed any chance of a relationship with David.

David doesn't trust Saul and won't return to him.

David proclaims that he is innocent of the crimes that Saul has pursued him for and the two men part ways and never speak again in 1 Samuel.

This is what leads us to the second point of this morning's sermon.

The Necessity of Sacrifice

The part of v. 19 that I have yet to talk about is what David says to Saul regarding an offering.

David says that if the Lord had stirred up Saul against him then let the Lord accept and an offering.

What David acknowledges here is that if the issue at hand is a matter of his sin, then there is a way to deal with it.

Namely and offering. A sacrifice.

You see, David is both right and wrong in his words to Saul.

David is right when he says that Saul is unjustly pursuing him because men have stirred him up to do so.

But where he is wrong, in a sense, is that he disregards the idea of making an offering.

But an offering, a sacrifice, is exactly what is needed for both David and Saul and this situation.

Both men need a sacrifice to restore them to God and to one another.

Cain and Abel

In fact, the need for sacrifice takes us again back to the beginning of Genesis.

This conflict between Saul and David relates to the story of Cain and Abel from [Genesis 4](#).

There is a sense in which we are following the pattern of the first chapters of Genesis:

After Adam was cast out of the Garden in [Genesis 3](#), there is immediately the story of the conflict between his sons Cain and Abel.

Here, David has been cast out of the garden-like “Carmel” for his sin and now he is in conflict with a brother-like figure.

When you read the account of Cain and Abel, sacrifice is a central theme.

Abel's sacrifice was accepted before the LORD and Cain's was not.

Cain needed to learn from Abel's sacrifice, but instead he killed his brother.

Sacrifice was needed to restore Cain to God and to his brother.

Instead, Cain sacrificed his own brother, the seed of the woman whose blood cried out from the ground for vengeance.

Aspects of that story are in the background in the conflict between David and Saul.

Saul and David both need a sacrifice, an offering, to be restored to God and to one another.

No Sacrifice

But there is no sacrifice offered here.

Indeed, there is little opportunity to make an offering.

Remember, Samuel has just died back at the beginning of chapter 25.

Remember also that the Tabernacle that was a shiloh was destroyed.

One of the problems at this point in Samuel is that there is no prophet to mediate and there is no Tabernacle to perform sacrifice.

And this is where Christ becomes so clearly present in our passage.

But he is present by his absence.

What is needed is missing, there isn't a sacrifice available that can restore David to the Lord's heritage or the relationship between Saul and David.

But as we read the Bible from our vantage point we know that there is such a sacrifice.

Indeed this is one of the most prominent themes throughout the New Testament:

In [1 Peter 3:18](#), Peter wrote, “For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God.”

The sacrifice of Christ is what restores us to our relationship with God.

But the New Testament also speaks of the way Christ's sacrifice is the grounds for restoring relations between people.

[1 John 4:9-11](#) states:

1 John 4:9–11 **ESV**

⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved

us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

What is tragically absent from our passage this morning is gloriously proclaimed in the Gospel and available for you this Lord's Day and every day.

Christ Jesus died in order that you may live.

And through His death you can live at peace with God and with one another.

This we proclaim and rejoice in, even as we come to the table this morning which proclaims the same thing.

In the body and blood of Christ that is given for us we have peace with God and with one another!

Thanks be to God!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit! AMEN!