



21: Grateful & Gracious (1 Sam 28-30)

Today we discover the life-changing difference between Saul's self-destruction and David's God-dependent obedience - and how God still restores, strengthens, and uses His grateful & gracious people.

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* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

1 Samuel 28:1-2

At that time, **the Philistines gathered** their military units into one army **to fight against Israel**. So Achish said to David, "You know, of course, that you and your men must march out in the army with me." David replied to Achish, "Good, you will find out what your servant can do." So Achish said to David, "Very well, I will appoint you as my permanent bodyguard."

If you know the story, then you know that David's life will NOT end as a bodyguard for a pagan Philistine king. Now the author does a little bit of backtracking to set up what comes next.

1 Samuel 28:3

By this time Samuel had died, all Israel had mourned for him and buried him in Ramah, his city, and Saul had removed the mediums and spiritists from the land.

This will be a pivotal statement in the next few moments. Saul had, done away with those who practiced these wicked things, based on...

Deuteronomy 18:10-11 **No one among you** is to sacrifice his son or daughter in the fire, practice divination, tell fortunes, interpret omens, practice sorcery, cast spells, **consult a medium** or a spiritist, **or inquire of the dead.**

All of these practices are disobedient to the One True God.

1 Samuel 28:4-7

The Philistines gathered and camped at Shunem. So Saul gathered all Israel, and they camped at Gilboa. When Saul saw the Philistine camp, he was afraid and his heart pounded. He inquired of the LORD, but **the LORD did not answer him** in dreams or by the Urim or by the prophets.

Saul then said to his servants, "**Find me a woman who is a medium**, so I can go and consult her."

His servants replied, "There is a woman at En-dor who is a medium."

A **medium** is someone who claims to consult with the dead on behalf of the living. This is known as necromancy. Following the example of Samuel and the commands of Scripture, Saul had removed these people from public life - a practice of which Yahweh demanded DEATH for the medium (Lev 20:27) & banishment for those who consulted the medium (Lev 20:6).

Saul is told of a **medium** who lived in a place not far away - **En-dor**, but very, very close to the Philistine army.

1 Samuel 28:8-10

Saul disguised himself by putting on different clothes and set out with two of his men. They came to the woman at night, and Saul said, "**Consult a spirit for me. Bring up for me the one I tell you.**"

But the woman said to him, "You surely know what Saul has done, how he has cut off the mediums and spiritists from the land. Why are you setting a trap for me to get me killed?" Then Saul swore to her by the LORD: "As surely as the LORD lives, no punishment will come to you from this."

Think about the audacity of this vow. "**I swear by Yahweh**" (the God who demands that those who practice this act of contacting the dead should be killed) "that you won't be punished for disobeying Yahweh". Saul is disobeying Yahweh and telling others they can too - with no fear of consequences.

✗ We hear our culture make the same kinds of claims: "God won't punish those sexual sin, gossip, drunkenness, seeking other gods/spirits...after all, *He's a loving God!*"

Samuel 28:11-12

"Who is it that you want me to bring up for you?" the woman asked. "**Bring up Samuel for me,**" he answered. When **the woman saw Samuel**, she screamed, and then she asked Saul, "Why did you deceive me? You are Saul!"

This is no figment of her imagination. God actually allows this woman to see **Samuel, who has previously died**.

- This is evidence that people don't die and then lay in a state of soul sleep.
- Nor do they just cease to exist. Instead, they change addresses, while the body dies & decays, the spirit is very much alive. And now this woman realizes she is in the presence of **Saul**, the man who had put the ban on doing what she is doing. She has no need to fear Saul, because she has done all this on behalf of a HYPOCRITE (someone who tells others what to do without being willing to do the same).

1 Samuel 28:13-14

But the king said to her, "Don't be afraid. What do you see?" "**I see a spirit** form coming up out of the earth," the woman answered. Then Saul asked her, "What does he look like?" "An old man is coming up," she replied. "He's wearing a robe." Then Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he knelt low with his face to the ground and paid homage.

Samuel's old body has died and his spirit was currently separated from his body and he didn't take his old body nor clothing with him to the afterlife. So, while Samuel is 'seen' by this lady, this imagery of an **old man wearing a robe** helps Saul to know that it is Samuel.

Samuel was not down **in the earth**. There is no place inside our planet that we could drill down to be reunited with those who have died. This '**coming up out of the earth**' language is the imagery that only she can see - *describing the living spirit of Samuel*.

✗ This unlawful meeting *DESCRIBES* what *DID* happen, it does not *PRESCRIBE* what *SHOULD* happen, since we've already seen that consulting the dead is outlawed for those who follow God.

1 Samuel 28:15-20

"Why have you disturbed me by bringing me up?" Samuel asked Saul.

"I'm in serious trouble," replied Saul. "The Philistines are fighting against me and **God has turned away from me**.

He doesn't answer me anymore, either through the prophets or in dreams. So I've called on you to tell me what I should do."

Samuel answered, "Since **the LORD** has turned away from you and **has become your enemy**, why are you asking me? The LORD has done exactly what He said through me: The LORD has torn the kingship out of your hand and given it to your neighbor David.

You did not obey the LORD and did not carry out His burning anger against Amalek; therefore the LORD has done this to you today. The LORD will also hand Israel over to the Philistines along with you. Tomorrow you and your sons will be with me, and the LORD will hand Israel's army over to the Philistines."

Immediately, Saul fell flat on the ground. **He was terrified by Samuel's words** and was also weak because he had not eaten anything all day and all night.

It sure seems like it's too late for Saul. But it also seemed too late for the Assyrian enemies of Israel in Nineveh. *Remember the story of Jonah?* God gave them a warning about coming judgement, with no mention of the possibility of forgiveness. But Jonah detoured rather than go because he didn't want his enemies to be warned about Yahweh's wrath because...

Jonah 4:2b I knew that **You are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love**, and one **Who relents from sending disaster**.

✚ *It's NOT too late for YOU to turn from your sin and turn to Him.* He IS **gracious, compassionate, slow to anger**, and quick to **love** - willing to turn from judgment.

1 Samuel 28:21-24

The woman came over to **Saul**, and she saw that he **was terrified** and said to him, "Look, your servant has obeyed you. I took my life in my hands and did what you told me to do. Now please listen to your servant. Let me set some food in front of you. Eat and it will give you strength so you can go on your way." He refused, saying, "I won't eat," but when his servants and the woman urged him, he listened to them. He got up off the ground and sat on the bed. The woman had a fattened calf at her house, and she quickly slaughtered it. She also took flour, kneaded it, and baked unleavened bread.

This would be Saul's last supper.

☀ **John Woodhouse**: "It was a meal fit for a king. The trouble was, it was eaten by a man not fit to be king."¹ Once again, the author backs up in the story to tell us how we got to this place.

The Philistines were made up of 5 cities with 5 leaders, of which King Achish of Gath is one. And now...

1 Samuel 29:1

The **Philistines brought all their military units together** at Aphek while Israel was camped by the spring in Jezreel.

¹ John Woodhouse, 1 Samuel: Looking for a Leader, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2008), 518.

1 Samuel 29:2-10

As the Philistine leaders were passing in review with their units of hundreds and thousands, **David and his men** were passing in review behind them **with Achish**. Then the Philistine commanders asked, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" Achish answered the Philistine commanders, "That is David, servant of King Saul of Israel. He has been with me a considerable period of time. From the day he defected until today, I've found no fault with him."

The **Philistine commanders**, however, **were enraged** with Achish and told him, "Send that man back and let him return to the place you assigned him. He must not go down with us into battle only to become our adversary during the battle. What better way could he ingratiate himself with his master than with the heads of our men? **Isn't this the David they sing about** during their dances: Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands?"

So Achish summoned David and told him, "As the LORD lives, you are an honorable man. I think it is good to have you fighting in this unit with me, because I have found no fault in you from the day you came to me until today. But the leaders don't think you are reliable. Now go back quietly and you won't be doing anything the Philistine leaders think is wrong." **"But what have I done?"**

David replied to Achish. "From the first day I entered your service until today, what have you found against your servant to keep me from going to fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

Achish answered David, "I'm convinced that you are as reliable as an angel of God. But the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go into battle with us.' So get up early in the morning, you and your masters' servants who came with you. When you've all gotten up early, go as soon as it's light."

Would David have fought against the troops of Israel? We don't know, and thankfully don't get to find out. It's a good thing that David wasn't allowed to go, as we're about to find out.

1 Samuel 29:11-30:8 So **David** and his men got up early in the morning to **return to the land of the Philistines**. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel. David and his men arrived in Ziklag on the third day. The **Amalekites** had raided the Negev and attacked and **burned Ziklag**. They also had kidnapped the women and everyone in it from youngest to oldest. They had killed no one but had carried them off as they went on their way. When David and his men arrived at the town, they found it burned. Their wives, sons, and daughters had been kidnapped. David and the troops with him wept loudly until they had no strength left to weep. David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had also been kidnapped. David was in an extremely difficult position because the troops talked about stoning him, for they were all very bitter over the loss of their sons and daughters. But **David found strength in the LORD his God**.

David said to the priest Abiathar son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought it to him, and **David asked the LORD**, "Should I pursue these raiders? Will I overtake them?" **The LORD replied** to him, "Pursue them, for you will certainly overtake them and rescue the people."

Notice the difference between David & Saul.

- Saul seeks Yahweh when he is in trouble - and God doesn't answer, because Saul disobeyed Him multiple times in the past. When Yahweh doesn't answer, Saul disobeys the clear teachings of Yahweh to get some sort of answer.
- **David seeks Yahweh, receives God's response, and then does what God says.**

1 Samuel 30:9-12 So David and the six hundred men with him went. They came to the Wadi Besor, where some stayed behind. David and four hundred of the men continued the pursuit, while two hundred stopped because they were too exhausted to cross the Wadi Besor. **David's men found an Egyptian in the open country and brought him to David**. They gave him some bread to eat and water to drink. Then they gave him some pressed figs and two clusters of raisins. After he ate he revived, for he hadn't eaten food or drunk water for three days and three nights.

Then David said to him, "Who do you belong to? Where are you from?" "I'm an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite man," he said. "My master abandoned me when I got sick three days ago. We raided the south country of the Cherethites, the territory of Judah, and the south country of Caleb, and **we burned Ziklag**." David then asked him, "Will you lead me to these raiders?" He said, "Swear to me by God that you won't kill me or turn me over to my master, and I will lead you to them."

So he led him, and there were the Amalekites, spread out over the entire area, eating, drinking, and celebrating because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and the land of Judah. **David slaughtered them from twilight until the evening of the next day**. None of them escaped, except four hundred young men who got on camels and fled. **David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken**; he also rescued his two wives. Nothing of theirs was missing from the youngest to the oldest, including the sons and daughters, and all the plunder the Amalekites had taken. David got everything back. He took all the flocks and herds, which were driven ahead of the other livestock, and the people shouted, "This is David's plunder!"

*The **Amalekites** had a lot more stuff with them than just what they had raided from Ziklag. So, **David's plunder** amounted to much more than what had been taken from them.*

1 Samuel 30:21-22 When David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to go with him and had been left at the Wadi Besor, they came out to meet him and to meet the troops with him. When David approached the men, he greeted them, but **all the corrupt and worthless** men among those who had gone with David argued, "Because they didn't go with us, we will not give any of the plunder we recovered to them except for each man's wife and children. They may take them and go."

The author already noted the lack of character these particular men had - **corrupt and worthless**. Although *God had been gracious to them*, they refused to be gracious to others.

- 🕒 We receive more than we deserve, God has forgiven us much and blessed us in so many ways. And yet, rather than allowing that joy & thankfulness to overflow onto others, we selfishly keep it to ourselves.
- ✝ During this time of the year, a time when we GIVE THANKS to God our Provider, it is appropriate for us to ask God to give us opportunities to extend kindness and care for others.

1 Samuel 30:23-25 But David said, "My brothers, you must not do this with what **the LORD has given us. He protected us and handed over to us the raiders** who came against us. Who can agree to your proposal? The share of the one who goes into battle is to be the same as the share of the one who remains with the supplies. They will share equally." And it has been so from that day forward. David established this policy as a law and an ordinance for Israel and it still continues today.

Notice WHO David gives the credit to - not their incredible military might, but to Yahweh Who had given them more than what they lost, and certainly more than what they deserved.

1 Samuel 30:26-30 When **David** came to Ziklag, he **sent some of the plunder to his friends**, the elders of Judah, saying, "Here is a gift for you from the plunder of the LORD's enemies." He sent gifts to those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negev, and in Jattir; to those in Aroer, in Siphmoth, and in Eshtemoa; to those in Racal, in the towns of the Jerahmeelites, and in the towns of the Kenites; to those in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, and in Athach;

David is Grateful for God's provision & restoration, & Gracious with the extra He has given. **The life of King David points us to the Ultimate King of Creation**, who stepped into skin and came to rescue & restore captives.

Luke 4:17-19 The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him, and unrolling the scroll, he found the place where it was written: The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Then Jesus sat down and said, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled." (Lk 4:21) 2,000 years later, Jesus is still setting captured people free, and giving them more than they ever deserved. The Apostle Paul reminds us of this when he writes these words.

Ephesians 2:8-10

For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

God extended His **grace** to us, but He didn't do so that we could *SIT*, but that we would *SERVE* the Lord Jesus by good works towards others. We are GRATEFUL that God has given to us and forgiven us, and we should be GRACIOUS to give to others and extend God's forgiveness to them too.



▶ BE GRATEFUL to God every day of this week - not just on Thanksgiving.

Start your day by THANKING GOD for His provision & forgiveness. End your day the same way. In between, take moments to talk about God's goodness around others.

▶ BE GRACIOUS toward others every day of this week.

- Go out of your way to TELL people and SHOW people that they are VALUABLE.
- Pray for, look for, and TAKE the opportunities that follow, to tell people of God's graciousness to you and offer it to them.

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives**: **Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156).

Discussion questions

These discussion questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.

1. Where do you most see yourself in this story — like Saul, who only sought God when he was desperate, or like David, who consistently sought God and obeyed Him? Why?
2. **Read 1 Samuel 28:5-6 & 30:6-8.** Why do you think God did not answer Saul, yet clearly answered David? What warning or encouragement does that give you personally?
3. What are some blessings, provisions, or protections from God that you tend to take for granted? How can you *grow in gratefulness* this week?
4. When have you been tempted to respond like the "corrupt and worthless men," wanting to withhold grace or generosity from people who didn't "deserve it"?
5. **Read 1 Samuel 30:21-30.** David shared the plunder with those who didn't fight — what does that teach you about God's grace toward you? How might God be calling you to extend that same grace to someone else this week?
6. Which part of this story most clearly points you to Jesus — the One who gives grace, rescues the lost, and restores what the enemy has taken?