

1 Samuel 26-27

Good morning and thank you for joining us! Would you please turn in your bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 26. We're closing in on the completion of this incredible book as we hurtle towards the tragic conclusion of King Saul's life.

When we finish 1 Samuel, which only has 31 chapters, we'll then move back to the NT and begin our study of 2nd Corinthians

This morning we're going to be studying chapters 26 and 27.

The title of this morning's message is Defying Expectations.

Let's pray.

1 Now the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding in the hill of Hachilah, opposite Jeshimon?" We saw a couple weeks ago how the residents of the area of Ziph colluded with Saul to try and catch David. It almost worked-David was surrounded when Saul received news that the philistines had invaded the land- it was an act of God's deliverance to save David. Now the Ziphites are back at it telling Saul where David is.

2-3

2 Then Saul arose and went down to the Wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the Wilderness of Ziph. 3 And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which is opposite Jeshimon, by the road. But David stayed in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. Last week we saw that David had an easy opportunity to kill Saul, but David didn't take it. When David proved to Saul that he showed mercy, Saul was greatly moved, he was emotionally stirred. Saul even publicly repented for his murderous intentions toward David.

Saul's repentance was deep and emotional — but it didn't last very long.

Lot's of folks say they're sorry, they'll say they're repentant. But time reveals the truth.

4 David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul had indeed come. As a military commander, David was no dummy. He constantly monitored Saul's movements so he could stay one step ahead of him.

5 So David arose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Now Saul lay within the camp, with the people encamped all around him. At the center of 3000 soldiers – armed for battle, lay King Saul. And Abner was Saul's commander, essentially acting as Saul's bodyguard.

6-7

6 Then David answered, and said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, brother of Joab, saying, "Who will go down with me to Saul in the camp?"

And Abishai said, "I will go down with you." Abishai volunteers to go with David-obviously he's a brave dude.

7 So David and Abishai came to the people by night; and there Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head. And Abner and the people lay all around him. You can picture the scene...

8 Then Abishai said to David, "God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear, right to the earth; and I will not have to strike him a second time!" You can almost feel the intensity of Abishai's words can't you? 'David, that's the spear Saul threw at you and

tried to pin you to the wall. Let me be the one to throw it back. With one thrust I can make a Saul shish-kobab.'

Sounded like a good plan, but it wasn't God's plan.

9 But David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be **guiltless**?" This is what set David apart, and why God could trust him with leadership. David knew spiritual authority is used for God's glory, not our own gain. Even though this looks like the perfect opportunity to take Saul's life, David is going to show his enemy mercy and grace.

10 David said furthermore, "As the LORD lives, the LORD shall strike him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall go out to battle and perish.. David had learned he didn't have to help God exact vengeance. **Romans 12:19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"**[fn] says the Lord.

Therefore

"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;

If he is thirsty, give him a drink;

For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head."[fn]

Think of your biggest enemy right now-the one who causes you to stress, to fret, to lose sleep, who just grinds your gears. Is this how you treat them?

Matthew 5:44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,[fn]

Since vengeance belongs to God, it doesn't belong to us, so we are to love our enemies and never repay evil with evil.

11 The LORD forbid that I should stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed. But please, take now the spear and the jug of water that are by his head, and let us go." David won't kill Saul, but he takes the spear and the jug of water as evidence that he again had the opportunity to easily slay Saul.

12-15

12 So David took the spear and the jug of water by Saul's head, and they got away; and no man saw or knew it or awoke. For they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the LORD had fallen on them.

13 Now David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off, a great distance being between them. 14 And David called out to the people and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, "Do you not answer, Abner?"

Then Abner answered and said, "Who are you, calling out to the king?"

15 So David said to Abner, "Are you not a man? And who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy your lord the king. David calls out Abner. Abner was the commander, and Saul's bodyguard. And as David yells out over the valley in between them, David basically says that he cared more for Saul's life than Abner did. Look what David says...

16 This thing that you have done is not good. As the LORD lives, you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master, the LORD's anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the jug of water that was by his head." Abner and the others spin around... only to see that Saul's spear and waterjug are gone. You can imagine the shock on their faces!

17 Then Saul knew David's voice, and said, "Is that your voice, my son David?"

David said, "It is my voice, my lord, O king." Look how David addresses the man who hunted David's life—he says to Saul, my lord, o king.

In v 18-19 look how many times David uses a term of respect for the man who's trying to murder him—

18 And he said, "Why does my lord thus pursue his servant? For what have I done, or what evil is in my hand?"

19 Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if it is the children of men, may they be cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'

David's words show a deep, genuine humility. David was righteous, Saul the wicked, unrepentant sinner. David could've easily projected a superior attitude, and looked down his nose towards Saul, but he didn't.

Now there's an insight here we can't miss—look at the end of verse 19 for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, 'Go, serve other gods.'

What's David talking about here? What hurt David the most wasn't that he was like a fugitive on the run. What bothered David the most isn't that he lost his place in the king's court. No, what troubled David is that he couldn't go to the house of God and openly be with the people to worship God. David was most upset that Saul's actions meant David couldn't go to church!

The pressure of it all tempted David to consider leaving Israel altogether and to go among those who worshipped other gods.

David continues...

20 So now, do not let my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as when one hunts a partridge in the mountains.” David compares himself to a flea, harmless, but annoying to Saul.

David concluded his appeal to Saul with a pretty simple ask: “Saul, please don’t kill me!”

The description of hunting partridges is interesting. The partridge darts from one bush to another when it’s hunted, but soon become so tired they can’t fly, then because of fatigue they’re like sitting ducks and the hunters would knock ‘em down and club them to death.

21 Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Indeed I have played the fool and erred exceedingly.”

Sounds exactly like what we saw last week in chapter 24 right?

It's very rare that a man writes his life story in 1 sentence. Saul does just that. He played the fool and erred exceedingly.

This is the exact opposite of Paul’s testimony in 2 Timothy 4:7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Maybe this morning you’re looking back and seeing how you’ve played the fool. It’s not too late to change!...

U-turn for Christ story?

22-24

22 And David answered and said, “Here is the king’s spear. Let one of the young men come over and get it. 23 May the LORD repay every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD’s anointed. 24 And indeed, as your life was valued much this day in my eyes, so let my life be valued much in the eyes of the LORD, and let Him deliver me out of all tribulation.” David understood the principal Jesus spoke of in **Matthew 7:2: For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you.**

David wanted God to pour out His mercy for himself, so David showed Saul incredible mercy.

25 Then Saul said to David, “May you be blessed, my son David! You shall both do great things and also still prevail.”

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place. And these two men, Saul and David – whose lives were so entangled and intertwined - never saw each other again

Chapter 27 is a shockingly sad chapter that begins with something David said in his heart.

1 And David said in his heart, “Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand.” David loved God, he talked to the Lord, wrote incredible psalms about the Lord. But here in verse 1 it says David said to his heart-not that the Lord said.

The Hebrew phrase translated “in his heart” literally means David talked to himself. And by just talking to himself David is going to make painfully wrong conclusions, and then fall into depression.

If you don't know how this chapter plays out, here's a spoiler alert- David is about to end up living in enemy territory for almost a year and a half, all because he talked to himself rather than talking to the Lord.

Have you ever found yourself talking to yourself about a problem instead of the Lord? I know I have! Silent conversations!

And here's the problem, when we talk to ourselves, we persuade ourselves. We build up an airtight case, then we convince ourselves of our being right, or the justification for our actions with each passing moment.

But there's a very real danger with talking to ourselves, with talking to our heart instead of the Lord: **Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful above all things,**

And desperately wicked;

Who can know it?

This means that when we're having a good "heart to heart" talk with ourselves, we're giving ourselves wicked counsel.

Have you ever had the Lord reveal things that were hidden in your heart that you didn't know were there?

What are we to do instead? **Philippians 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to (who?) God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.**

AND

Isaiah 26:3 You will keep him in perfect peace,

Whose mind is stayed on You,

Because he trusts in You.

Think about this past week, and imagine for a moment that you had a timer in each of your hands. One timer started every time you talked to yourself about a problem. The other timer started every time you talked to your Heavenly Father about the issue in prayer.

If you looked at those timers at the end of the week, what would they have looked like? How much time would've been spent talking to ourselves compared to how much time was spent talking to our Father?

The only way to have true peace is to pray. If we talk to ourselves more than we talk to our Father, we're gonna make big mistakes. But when we choose to talk to our Father, there will be a genuine peace.

But shockingly, David, the writer of the psalms, doesn't talk to God here. And because he just holds these things in his heart, we're about to see the rise of a new enemy, a new force who's more powerful and persuasive than Saul, as discouragement and despair will drive David to do the unthinkable.

2-3

2 Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. 3 So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow. A few weeks ago in chapter 21 we saw the same thing didn't we? This is David's second try at hiding out in the city of Gath, Goliath's hometown.

But this is much more than just déjà vu. David's discouraged and despairing heart didn't only affect himself; he led six hundred men and their families out of the promise land of Israel to live with the ungodly.

It's frightening where the lies of discouragement and despair can lead us.

4 And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more. David accomplished his immediate goal, Saul stopped chasing after him. But now David is in a place of compromise that will leave him worse off than ever before.

David is about to submit his life to a Philistine master.

And through the rest of this chapter, we see that David is going to become a master of deception.

You'll notice that during this time that David is in Gath we have no record of any Psalms written, in fact there's no record of praying, and no mention of God in this chapter.

5 Then David said to Achish, "If I have now found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?" Before this moment, there was never even a hint that David cared about finding favor in the eyes of a Philistine ruler. Remember Philistines were the enemy of Israel which meant they were the enemies of God! This is a shocking, catastrophic change in David.

And this brings up the question-why would David have been welcome in Philistia? We can't say for sure, many theologians believe Achish and the other Philistine rulers celebrated the rift that existed between David and Saul, thinking that without David

Saul lacked military leadership to eliminate the Philistines. The enemy of my enemy is my friend type of deal.

So David says to Achish, I don't want to crowd you," "I have six hundred men with me—along with their families. So we'll just live in one of your other cities."

6 So Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. Now if you do a study of the city of Ziklag, you'll find it was originally given to Judah back in Joshua 15. The problem was, the people of Judah never possessed it, so the Philistines gained control of it. Here, David makes Ziklag his base of operation.

7 Now the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months. Nearly a year and a half in enemy territory, and David must've thought, 'hey things are going pretty well. Saul isn't chasing me. The enemy isn't hounding me. Things are good!'

This same tempting trap can happen to us too can't it. We can get tired of the battle, and stop going to church, pull away from fellowship, and isolate from other Christians.

Things will be easier initially, you won't have to wake up early, try to stay awake as the pastor talks on and on...

But although it may start out easier, it will ultimately become disastrous.

V 8-9 describe David's new occupation: a roving bandit.

8 And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites,[fn] and the Amalekites. For those nations were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. David and his men launched guerrilla raids on these Canaanite tribes—tribes that were never rooted out by

the Jews the way they were supposed to when they first took possession of the land.

9 Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish. The Hebrew word raided comes from the verb to strip, with the idea of stripping the dead for loot. David attacked these villages, killed all the people, stripped them for treasure or armor, and robbed them. David was now fighting wars for profit instead of for God's honor.

It's a reminder that success is not necessarily an indication of true spirituality. David was highly successful, but he wasn't doing what was right in God's sight.

10 Then Achish would say, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David would say, "Against the southern area of Judah, or against the southern area of the Jerahmeelites, or against the southern area of the Kenites." This is critical-by saying he was in the area of Judah, David falsely implied that he was waging war against his fellow Israelites. And to make sure his lies weren't found out...

11 David would save neither man nor woman alive, to bring news to Gath, saying, "Lest they should inform on us, saying, 'Thus David did.'" And thus was his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines.

12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever." This is nothing short of shocking is it? David put on a show to make Achish believe that had alienated himself from the Israelites and would therefore be loyal to the philistine king from now on.

Much later in his life, David will have a far more notorious season of sin with Bathsheba and he ends up killing her husband Uriah to cover his sin.

Though that event with Bathsheba and Uriah is far more famous, the root of sin that nourished it began way back here in 1 Samuel 27. Here, many years before David killed Uriah to cover his sin, David killed these men and women in his raids to cover his sin.

The roots of sin must be dealt with or they come back with greater strength. Folks we're not to rehabilitate the flesh, we're to crucify the flesh.

Notice too what we've seen of David's propensity to lie. At Saul's table, we saw David telling Jonathan to lie for him back in chapter 20. David lied to the priest Ahimelech that he was on a secret mission for Saul in chapter 21. He's of course lying here. He will lie to Uriah to cover his sin with Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11.

And this brings us to the question-how could a man after God's own heart lie?

Because God uses imperfect people—aren't you glad?

David will eventually come to the point where he will cry, **Psalm 120:2 Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips**

And from a deceitful tongue.

God doesn't give up on David!

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;