

"THAT UNEASY FEELING"

(1 Samuel 21)

Introduction: David wrote many songs. But he certainly didn't write the one Ali came in singing this morning. It is not that he didn't know and write about peacefulness. But it certainly would have been at a different time in his life than the time we are considering. There was nothing peaceful . . . or easy . . . about his circumstances in the **21st chapter of 1 Samuel**.

David is on the run. He had escaped from King Saul's palace through a window. He had run to the prophet Samuel but had no peace and no security there once Saul discovered his location. He had run back to Jonathan only to discover that it was every bit as bad as he thought. It was so bad in fact that Jonathan and David both realized that David had to flee for his life and that they might never see each other again.

David had done nothing wrong. However, this giant-killing hero had become a fugitive. He left with nothing but the clothes on his back.

Where would he run? Where would he hide? This was no easy task. In fact, David was so well known, because of his killing of the giant and his subsequent military success, that it was highly unlikely that he would be unnoticed in the streets of any city in Israel.

David was no more than 20 years old at this time. But he would live out a "Robin Hood" type of existence for nearly ten years before he would begin to rule over Judah after Saul's death. God would teach him many things in that decade of uncertainty. Let's look into the life of David and ask God to teach us from his life as well.

Stand with me as I read the first 7 verses of a Psalm that David composed during the time of his life that we are considering today. **Read Psalm 56:1-7. PRAY.**

All that would happen to David would be used of God to deepen his faith in God and prepare him to be the kind of leader who would glorify God and inspire His people. **May I say that is what God wants to do in your life through your present circumstances?**

I have entitled the message **"THAT UNEASY FEELING."** From time to time, I am sure that you experience it. Like David, your heart aches with fear and anxiety. David had to escape. To do so, he ran into the wilderness area of Judah. This was a logical place of escape because of his familiarity with the region from the days of his childhood, a time which must now have seemed like an eternity before.

You will also have times of great uneasiness about the circumstances of your life and the decisions you have to make. **How are you to deal with "THAT UNEASY FEELING"?** We can learn from David's wrong decisions at this time as well as his faith to face those times. Note--

I. THAT UNEASY FEELING MAY LEAD YOU TO RELY UPON LIES RATHER THAN THE TRUTH

¹ Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?"

I don't know exactly why Ahimelech was trembling when he met David. But it is obvious he had an uneasy feeling about all of this. I am sure he had heard about the on again, off again relationship of David with King Saul.

He would certainly have heard stories about David. And he knew King Saul. David's appearance before him caused him to wonder what David wanted and how King Saul would react. The simple fact that David was alone added to the priest's anxiety. **Why?** Because when David and Saul were on good terms, he would be leading a large band of men. Ahimelech immediately knew that this encounter would not be one for which his time as a priest had prepared him.

Obviously, Ahimelech had uneasy feelings about David. However, David is also uneasy. He is trying his best to put up a good front. But the priest's question forces him to make a decision. **"Why are you alone and no one with you?"** The truth would not seem to do him much good at this point, so he chooses to lie. **After all, what harm could**

it do? And it would seem to serve David well at that moment. He must have felt that this was a time when the end justified the means. David was hungry and tired, but mostly hungry. If he told the truth, the priest would most likely not help him. He would not want to anger the king.

² David said to Ahimelech the priest, "The king has commissioned me with a matter and has said to me, 'Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.'"

The lie was told. **Clever, right?** All of his bases seemed to be covered. He would now move to getting the priest to help him. ³ "Now therefore, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found." ⁴ The priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." ⁵ David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will their vessels *be holy?*" ⁶ So the priest gave him consecrated *bread*; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the Lord, in order to put hot bread *in its place when it was taken away*.

One of the duties of the priest was to take care of matters which might seem mundane but which were very important. On a table in the tabernacle 12 loaves of bread were placed. Those 12 loaves represented the 12 tribes of Israel. Their presence pictured the fellowship of God with His people. God had instructed that the bread be eaten by the priests after it was replaced with fresh bread. For this bread to be given to David would require that the Lord's instructions be set aside. That might not seem like a no-brainer to you but it certainly was not to Ahimelech.

David felt his need certainly should take precedence over the technical requirements of the law. The priest ultimately yielded and gave the bread to David under these false pretenses.

Jesus spoke of this incident in the gospels. **Mark 2:24–26,**²⁴ The Pharisees were saying to Him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" ²⁵ And He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and he and his companions became hungry; ²⁶ how he entered the house of God in the time of Abiathar the high priest, and ate the consecrated bread, which is not lawful for *anyone* to eat except the priests, and he also gave it to those who were with him?"

The point Jesus was making was that they praised David even though he had broken the law to satisfy his own needs while they condemned Jesus for what they considered to be a violation of the law when he met the needs of another.

Before we move on, note that verse 1 says that David came alone. Jesus said that **he also gave it to those who were with him**. Thus, we know that David came alone but had left his men in a safe place. He was not only concerned about himself but about them. That is noble. But it is not a reason to get someone else to violate God's directions.

What should David have done? He should have trusted God to meet his needs. The immediate result of his lie was that he got what he needed. But you will discover that there were far-reaching results that caused David's stomach to turn when he thought of his deception in securing that bread. **Do you not think that God could have fed him as he did the children of Israel in the wilderness? Do you not think that God could have met his need and the need of the men who had aligned themselves with him as he did for Elijah when he was fed by ravens in 1 Kings 17? Had God been trusted to do that, what testimony would have been given to his men?** How much greater would have been the glory that God would have received?

David was uneasy about trusting God to do that. You and I tend to be like David. We try to work out matters for ourselves rather than simply trusting God.

Ahimelech could have instructed David to do exactly that but he did not. And he ultimately paid the price for responding in fear rather than faith. That is a price that will be paid, for fear and faith are mutually exclusive.

II. THAT UNEASY FEELING MAY LEAD YOU TO RELY ON EARTHLY RATHER THAN HEAVENLY WEAPONS

⁷ Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds. ⁸ David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there not a spear or a sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent." ⁹ Then the priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take *it*. For there is no other except it here." And David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

Can you see how David might have felt uneasy by one of Saul's men being present? And, why was he there? **Verse 7** says that he was **detained before the Lord**. We do not know whether it was due to a vow he had taken or something else, but he was there because it was God's will that he be there.

We might prefer that some detail be different when we are facing a decision, but we have to accept the fact that God knew all the time what the circumstances would be. And He can show us what to do in that circumstance.

When it came to that sword, who had more of a right to it than David? Nobody! But David didn't need it. He had been promised by God, through the prophet Samuel, that he was to be king over Israel. In order for that to be true, he would have to remain alive. But he chose his own path rather than waiting to see what God

would do. Let me ask you a question . . . **Who is more capable of meeting our needs, us or God?**

David didn't need that sword. In fact, it was so large that it would be a great burden just to carry it around. It weighed about 15 pounds!

You don't need the weapons of the world. What you need to fight your battles is faith and the word of God. **Ephesians 6:16–17**, ¹⁶ in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one. ¹⁷ And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Self-help books are of little use as what we need is God's help. You can't rely on man's methods or man's wisdom. What you need to rely upon is God's Word and faith in God Himself!

III. THAT UNEASY FEELING MAY LEAD YOU TO RELY ON DECEPTION RATHER THAN FAITH

¹⁰ Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath.

This is not the first time we have heard of Gath. Gath was the hometown of Goliath! **Why in the world would David go to Gath, one of the five primary cities of Philistia?** Possibly he felt he would be safe there. After all, Saul would never look for him there. Maybe this was the smartest thing he could do. Maybe. But there was one problem. . . ¹¹ But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?" ¹² David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath.

Not only was David recognized but there was an obvious contempt for him among the people.

Had the Israelite women not bragged about his killing ten thousands? And who was this he had killed? Philistines! Notice that they describe him as "**king of the land**." If David hadn't been so full of fear at this point, he might have laughed at the thought.

Isn't it amazing that sometimes the unbeliever accepts the promises of God more quickly than the child of God to whom they have been given? For instance, somebody might say to you . . . *"I thought you were a Christian, aren't you supposed to have peace and joy? Aren't you able to trust God in every situation? Isn't you God a miracle-working God?"*

Maybe their references to the promises of God are more along the line of mocking, but they seem to know the promises of God. **How?** Probably because in good times we tell everybody about them. But in uneasy times we fail to rely upon them.

What would David do? Surely, he could get himself out of this. ¹³ So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. ¹⁴ Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me?" ¹⁵ "Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?"

It worked, didn't it? How clever! Pat him on the back. He was able to deceive the enemy and keep himself safe. **Isn't that what it's all about?** Don't forget that this same David had walked into the valley to face Goliath with only a sling, five smooth stones and faith in God.

But let me ask you . . . **In which case do you believe God was glorified among the Philistines?**

Are you clever enough to get yourself out of your difficult situations? Wouldn't God receive more glory if you simply stand fast upon the promises of God and give Him time and opportunity to work? Maybe you will be able to find a way out of your situation, but you will have bypassed God and robbed Him of the opportunity to show Himself strong on your behalf.

CONCLUSION: "THAT UNEASY FEELING." From time to time, I am sure that you experience it. Like David, your heart aches with fear and anxiety. **What are you to do?** Turn it over to God! Paul said in **Ephesians 3:20-21**, **Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, ²¹ to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen.**

If you believe that God is able to do it, take your fears and anxieties to the Lord and trust Him! If you will do that, He will keep His promise. And when He does, He will receive the glory!