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kingdom MERCY

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¹ Now they told David, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors.” ² Therefore David *inquired* of the Lord, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?” And the Lord said to David, “Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah.” ³ But David’s men said to him, “Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” ⁴ Then David *inquired* of the Lord again. And the Lord answered him, “Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.” ⁵ And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

⁶ When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand. ⁷ Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, “God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars.” ⁸ And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. ⁹ David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.” ¹⁰ Then David said, “O Lord, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. ¹¹ Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O Lord, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.” And the Lord said, “He will come down.” ¹² Then David said, “Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?” And the Lord said, “They will surrender you.” ¹³ Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. ¹⁴ And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.

¹⁵ David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. ¹⁶ And Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. ¹⁷ And he said to him, “Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Saul my father also knows this.” ¹⁸ And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

¹⁹ Then the *Ziphites* went up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, “Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon?” ²⁰ Now come down, O king, according to all your heart’s desire to come down, and our part shall be to surrender him into the king’s hand.” ²¹ And Saul said, “May you be blessed by the Lord, for you have had compassion on me. ²² Go, make yet more sure. Know and see the place where his foot is, and who has seen him there, for it is told me that he is very cunning. ²³ See therefore and take note of all the lurking places where he hides, and come back to me with sure information. Then I will go with you. And if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah.” ²⁴ And they arose and went to Ziph ahead of Saul.

Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon.²⁵ And Saul and his men went to seek him. And David was told, so he went down to the rock and lived in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon.²⁶ Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. And David was hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them,²⁷ a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land.”²⁸ So Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was called the Rock of Escape.²⁹ And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi.

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. 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.

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. 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.”

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 Samuel 23-24 (ESV)

¹Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by. ²I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. ³He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who tramples on me. Selah God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!

⁴My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts— the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. ⁵Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! ⁶They set a net for my steps; my soul was bowed down. They dug a pit in my way, but they have fallen into it themselves. Selah

⁷My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast! I will sing and make melody! ⁸Awake, my glory! Awake, O harp and lyre! I will awake the dawn! ⁹I will give thanks to you, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing praises to you among the nations. ¹⁰For your steadfast love is great to the heavens, your faithfulness to the clouds. ¹¹Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth!

Psalm 57:1–11 (ESV)

²¹ Then Peter came up and said to him, “Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times.” ²³ “Therefore the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began to settle, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. ²⁵ And since he could not pay, his master ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the master of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But when that same servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii, and seizing him, he began to choke him, saying, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹ So his fellow servant fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ He refused and went and put him in prison until he should pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their master all that had taken place. ³² Then his master summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ And should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his master delivered him to the jailers, until he should pay all his debt. ³⁵ So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.”

Matthew 18:21–35 (ESV)

³⁴ And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” And they cast lots to divide his garments.

Luke 23:34 (ESV)

¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”

Romans 12:19 (ESV)