

“Lessons from the Life of David” – Pastor Jim Ruddy

Study # 12 – “I Have Played The Fool.” 1 Samuel 26

I. SAUL’S RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF DAVID 26:1-4

A. SAUL’S COMPARISON TO NABAL

- Chapters 24, 25 & 26 of 1 Samuel are “three facing panels” that feature three powerful “revenge stories.”
- Chapter 24 and 26 mirror each other, with Saul being the main subject. These were surely two different incidents.
- Chapter 25 relates the story of Nabal, the fool, and by the end of Chapter 26, Saul will fill these same shoes.

B. SAUL’S CAPTIVATION WITH DAVID

- Of all the weightier matters concerning the King, Saul continues his senseless search for David.
 - Remember: Satan is the author of extremes.
- Saul’s consuming jealousy was the result of his failure to rightly judge his sin. *Remorse vs. repentance!* cf. Rom. 8:13

II. DAVID’S ENDLESS PATIENCE WITH SAUL 26:5-12

A. THE FAILURE OF ABNER

- Abner, the captain of the host, son of Ner, the brother of Kish. Abner was, therefore, Saul’s cousin. cf. 1 Sam. 14:50-51 NIV
 - At Saul’s death, Abner will support Ishbosheth, Saul’s son, in his attempt to inherit the throne. cf. 2 Sam. 2:8-10

B. THE FAITHFULNESS OF ABISHAI

- Once David confirms that Saul is in his vicinity, he seeks a brave volunteer to go with him into the camp.
 - Abishai, along with Joab and Asahel, were the sons of Zeruiah, David’s sister. cf. 1 Chr. 2:16
 - Abishai was always ready to strike the crucial blow.
 - cf. 2 Sam. 3:30; 16:5-11; 21:16-17
- The troops are anesthetized by the Lord. cf. Gen. 2:21; 15:12
- David prevents a willing Abishai from slaying Saul, noting that since it was the Lord who had placed Saul in office, it was not their job to remove him - *“the LORD’S anointed!”*
- Because vengeance belongs to the Lord (Deut. 32:35-43), David is sure that God will bring about Saul’s demise. v10
 - *“the LORD shall strike him”* - reminiscent of Nabal? - 25:38
 - *“or his day shall come to die”* i.e. “natural death” cf. Ps. 37:13
 - *“or he shall go out to battle and perish.”* 31:1-6 ☠
- David orders Abishai to take Saul’s spear and water jug.
 - The spear was Saul’s trademark. cf. 18:10; 19:9-10; 20:33; 22:6

III. ABNER'S CARELESS PROTECTION OF SAUL 26:13-16

A. ABNER REBUKED BY DAVID

- The distance between David and Saul was not only physical, for these two men were worlds apart!
- David holds up the King's possessions proving that he had broken the army's security but refused to take advantage of the King's unguarded moment.
- Abner is humiliated before his King. cf. 2 Sam. 18:30

B. ABNER REWARDED BY JOAB Note: 2 Sam. 3:27

- David's declaration that Abner is deserving of death for his dereliction of duty somewhat mitigates Joab's actions.

IV. SAUL'S WORTHLESS PROMISE TO DAVID 26:17-21

A. DAVID LEAVES ROOM FOR GOD

- David allowed for the fact that the Lord might be behind the scenes, testing David as to his faithfulness to covenant.
 - David has made solemn oaths concerning Saul.
 - cf. 24:6; 26:10-11
- In sparing Saul from death, David spared himself from sin!

B. DAVID LISTENS TO THE REMORSE OF SAUL

- Although Saul invites David to return (back to the land and to the Royal Court?), David refuses. cf. Jn. 2:24
- Saul admits his foolishness, a charge leveled against him by Samuel (1 Sam. 13:13) and pictured in Nabal (1 Sam. 25:25).

V. DAVID'S SELFLESS POSTURE BEFORE GOD 26:22-25

A. DAVID'S CONFESSION

- David returns Saul's spear (war) as evidence that he means no evil against the King. The water jug (life) is not returned.
- While David committed his life into God's hands as precious, he did not entrust his soul to Saul. David rests in the fact that God will value his life as highly as he has valued Saul's.

B. SAUL'S CONFIRMATION

- Saul declares blessing and ultimate triumph for David. The one he called three times, "my son" (v17, 21, 25), would in fact be his successor on Israel's throne! cf. 24:19-20
- This is the final exchange of words between Saul and David, they each depart and never to see one another again.