

“Despair!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. Interesting, next Sunday I’m starting a 4-part series on **Hope** for our *Christmas Season*.
1. Know the **antonym** of Hope? It is **Despair** (L) [de=down from + sperare=to hope]
 - a) “To come down from hope!” :(
- B. Ever feel the Lord has forsaken or forgotten you? Asked, does God really care about me?
1. Maybe you feel Gods forgotten all about you?
 2. **Story:** A visiting city dweller was amazed when the farmer gave a whistle and his dog herded the cattle into the corral, then latched the gate with her paw. "Wow, that's some dog. What's her name?" The forgetful farmer thought a minute, then asked "What do you call that red flower that smells good and has thorns on the stem?" "a rose." "That's it!" The farmer turned to his wife. "Hey Rose, what do we call this dog?" :)
 3. Maybe this morning you feel Gods forgotten all about **you**?
 4. That's how **David** felt in our text today.
 - a) **From** a victory over taking revenge on Nabal in ch.25; **Then** a victory over Saul in ch.26; **To** being *overwhelmed by despair* in ch.27.
 - b) *"I'm gonna die. Saul's going to get me & kill me eventually. I need an escape."*
 5. **These feelings are not unusual.** You can't have mountaintops w/o valleys!
 - a) However, when you are feeling low, it is a dangerous thing to “talk to yourself” & make important decisions.
 - b) David, should have talked to **the Lord**. I’m sure **Abiathar** the priest or **Gad** the prophet would have been happy to have sought the mind of God together w/David.
 6. This foolish decision, turned into more foolish decisions, because he **did not pause** to inquire of the Lord.
 7. He stopped serving God & focused more on **survival!** (safety is overrated!)
 - a) Mrk 8:35 **For whoever desires to save his life will lose it.**
 8. He trusted the enemy for protection instead of trusting the Lord for it...& as a result, he had to **scheme, kill, & lie** to survive.
- C. Alan Redpath said of this portion of Scripture it is - “the **anvil** upon which *the character of a man of God* is hammered out, the **fiery furnace** through which he is *melted & poured as steel* for the glory of his Lord.”

II. **DESPAIR!**

A. (1) **Contrast** Davids's words in 27:1 & 17:37.

1. James 4:4 **Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God?**
2. **If we could hear David's soul...it would be a chord in the *minor key* of depression & sadness. It might sound like...**
 - a) Ps.10:1 **Why, O Lord, do you stand far away? Why do you hide yourself in times of trouble?**
 - b) Ps.13:1 **How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?**
 - c) Ps.22:1 **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?**

B. (2,3) 600 men (+ prob 2500 w/women & children) that he had to provide for now.

1. Unending demands. Constant tension. Increasing danger. **How long was God going to keep David on the run?**
2. Ps.13:1,2NLT **O Lord, how long will you forget me? Forever? How long will you look the other way? How long must I struggle with anguish in my soul, with sorrow in my heart every day? How long will my enemy have the upper hand?**
3. There's nothing **ethically, morally, or spiritually** wrong with those feelings of despair that chill us like a winter storm.
 - a) **It's when** we take matters into our own hands & flee to a cover of our own choosing that **disobedience** begins!¹
 - b) Seeking to solve his own problems by his own wits, David only complicated them.
 - (1) **And David said in his heart(said to himself)**
4. **So what happened?** Seems that Saul grew larger than Goliath & twice as menacing. [David missed **God's perspective & lost his confidence**]
 - a) **It's when** we focus more on our **dire straits** than on our **divine Savior**.
 - b) **Remember** God had already **promised** him the **kingship**...which was confirmed by Samuel, Jonathan, Abigail, & Saul himself.

C. **So, what would Jesus have done?** (WWJHD)

1. Well, He found Himself in a similar situation when He faced the cross. He said, **now is my soul troubled, & what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name.**^{Jn12:20-33}
2. **Moses** was discouraged over his heavy workload & wanted to die(Num11:15); **Elijah** ran from the place of duty because of fear & discouragement(1Kings19).

¹ Warren Wiersbe: David; pg.79

- a) When we start to look at God through circumstances **instead of looking at our circumstances** through God's eyes, **we will lose faith, patience, & courage**, & the enemy will triumph.

D. (5) Maybe shouldn't live in the royal city also because its Goliath's hometown!

E. (6) **King Achish** - now recognized David as an enemy of Saul & therefore a potentially valuable **ally** for the philistines.²

1. Of course friendship w/Achish came with a price!

2. *Friendship with the world always comes with a price!*

3. Didn't James say, "**don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God?**" (4:4)

F. (10-12) He claimed he was attacking Israelite settlements.

1. Remember, *Faith is living w/o scheming!*

G. (1) **There is nothing better for me than...REALLY?**

1. **You couldn't remain** in Judah where God has protected you for 7 years now?

2. **You couldn't wait to ask & hear** from the Lord for direction?

a) How easy it is for us to **justify our actions** by saying, "*But I had no other choice!*"

H. This reminded me of **Jacob** back in Genesis.

1. Gen.43:36 He thought **lil Joe** was dead; **Simeon** was left in Egypt as collateral; & now they wanted his fav lil **Benji**? *All these things are against me!*

2. Now lets look at Paul's perspective in Rom.8:37. *Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors (how?) through Him who loved us.*

3. Ps.61:1 **When my heart is overwhelmed**; lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

4. "When the **outlook** is discouraging, try the uplook!"

I. **Initially, David felt Relief!**

1. Saul called off the search party!(4b) **The plan worked. David was "safe"!**

2. **But this relief is only temporary!** It always is. Note: **escape** twice in vs.2.

a) **Yes** there's a sense of "**relief/escape**" to move out of a difficult situation & live on your own; **of course** there is a temporary euphoric feeling to get drunk or get high; **of course** there is a mental vegetative state Television can bring you as you lose yourself in someone else's life during a 30 minute show.

b) It's what the bible calls, **the peace that the world gives**. You can **rent or own** peace!

² Shepherd's Notes; 1&2 Samuel; pg.46.

c) **Caution:** Temp relief, might just be a false sense of security!

(1) Don't exchange the **smile** of God for the **grin** of the enemy!³

J. This **16 months**(7) that David lived there would mark one of the darkest periods in his life

1. He plunges himself & his followers into an unseemly career of **violence & deception**; **duplicity**(*Achish, I'm a Philistine, really! - Israel look, I'm not a traitor*); **vagueness**(skirting the truth, "white" lies); **secrecy**(to protect his lies).

K. So, what do we do when you are discouraged?

1. **Ask** a trusted friend to pray w/you & seek the Lord's direction.
2. **Talk** about your feelings with a friend who can help you gain a clearer perspective.
3. **Make** no impulsive decisions about significant matters.
4. **Follow** this advice: *Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, & He shall strengthen your heart.* Ps.27:14

L. Mrs. **Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy**, who was 93 years old on July 22, 1983, was quoted in *Parade magazine* addressed to and about her grandchildren:

*I hope they will have the strength to bear the inevitable difficulties and disappointments and griefs of life. Bear them with dignity and without self-pity. Knowing that tragedies befall everyone, and that, although one may seem singled out for special sorrows, worse things have happened many times to others in the world, and it is not tears, but determination that makes pain bearable.*⁴

M. We have had **dark nights**, but *the star of love* has shone forth amid the blackness!

1. Our God saves, our God saves
There is hope in Your Name
Mourning turns to **songs of praise**
Our God saves, our God saves

³ Alan Redpath: The Making of the Man of God; pg.118.

⁴ Parade, July 3, 1983, "When Faith is Triumphant," by Cleveland Amory, p.4.

Jones, G. C. (1986). *1000 illustrations for preaching and teaching* (168). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.