

Every mess comes with some bad options.

After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi." ² So Saul took three thousand able young men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats. He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave. ⁴ The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" 1 Samuel 24:1-4a

- If you ignore virtue, you will eventually make a mess.

David chooses to honor God and extend mercy to his enemy.

Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁵ Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe. ⁶ He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lay my hand on him; for he is the anointed of the Lord." With these words David sharply rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way. 1 Samuel 24:4b-7

Your response to the mess is the *real* story.

"...This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord's anointed.'" ... "May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you." 1 Samuel 24:10, 12

Q. What story do you want to tell?

Connect

- What is one thing in your life, large or small, you wish there was a quick fix for?

Word and Reflection

When you have a mess to address, first options aren't always the best options. Getting back at the person who wronged you, lashing out, taking risky gambles – first options often make messes *bigger*. Doing the right thing is more difficult. Doing the right thing doesn't offer quick, simple fixes. But it results in a story worth telling, a story that glorifies God. That's because doing the right thing begins with following Jesus.

1 Samuel 18:14-16, 28-29; 1 Samuel 24:1-12

- Which part of the message made an impact, caught your attention or challenged you?
- Talk about a time when you faced a mess and resisted the temptation of a quick fix. What happened? Why is a quick fix so attractive?
- Read 1 Samuel 24:1-12. In this passage, it would have been easy for David to assume that God delivered Saul into his hands, but he chose restraint. When you're addressing a mess, how do you tell the difference between your emotions and desires and God's will for you?
- Pastor Gregg talked about "*If you ignore virtue, you will eventually make a mess.*" Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Is it difficult for you to believe that when you choose virtue, God takes responsibility for the outcome of the journey? Why or why not?
- Is there a mess in your life in which you need to opt for virtue over vengeance? If so, what is one thing you can do this week to honor God and choose virtue? How can this group support you?

Action

- Taking matters into your own hands may seem like the quickest fix but remember to look at the bigger picture. What *future* story do you want to tell? How will considering that help you make a better decision *now*?

Prayer

- Pray for God to give you a bigger perspective on any current mess you're in.
- Pray for your group and for those whom you're reaching out to.