

25. Cave dwellers

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From being Israel's hero, who used to stride through a crowded market and feel pats on the back, David was now Israel's most wanted, ducking down back alleys and fearing stabs in the back.

Where could he go? His home was under surveillance; many in Israel knew him by sight; even the Philistines recognized him. Lonely and disillusioned, David crawled into the only hiding place he could find. A cave near Bethlehem.

After the Operation Spiritual Crutch Removal from David's life by God, David started his life in the wilderness. This is where he received the training he needed as the king of Israel from the Lord.

A. THE CAVE

1 Sam 22:1 David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him.

With all the crutches in his life pulled away, David havened himself within the walls of a dark, rocky cavern. At the end of his resources, with no one else to turn to, he composed this mournful song to God.

Ps 142:1-4 A Contemplation of David. A Prayer when he was in the cave. I cry out to the Lord with my voice; With my voice to the Lord I make my supplication. I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare before Him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path. In the way in which I walk They have secretly set a snare for me. Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me; Refuge has failed me; No one cares for my soul.

This is the start of Flinstone "Ya-ba-da-doo" cave community living.

By the way, the cave name Adullam means refuge. What an appropriate name for David's situation!

Ps 57:1-11 To the Chief Musician. Set to 'Do Not Destroy.' A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into the cave. Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by. I will cry out to God Most High, To God who performs all things for me. He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah God shall send forth His mercy and His truth. My soul is among lions; I lie among the sons of men Who are set on fire, Whose teeth are spears and arrows, And their tongue a sharp sword. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They have dug a pit before me; Into the midst of it they themselves have fallen. Selah My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise. Awake, my glory! Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations. For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the earth.

This psalm shows David with a humble heart in v1, a prayful heart in v2, a realistic heart in v4 & 6, and a heart of trusting praise to the Lord in 5, 9 and 11.

God brought his family who didn't think much of him at the beginning to him. David became a leader of the family now.

B. THE CHALLENGE

1 Sam 22:2 And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.

As David sought refuge within the cleft of the Lord's mighty mountain, God brought people to him. And with these people came a challenge and renewed courage.

What a group! They are a bunch of social outcasts. The Lord brought many people around him who were malcontents, trouble makers, and the ones whom nobody wants. They are the type of people you would find on the walls of the post offices with front views and side views of their faces. In the later days, they turned out to be the poster boys of the Israel military. They became mighty men of valor under the leadership of David.

These men were in distress like we were without Christ, because we had no hope. These men were in debt like we were without Christ, because we were under the debt of guilt, unholiness and unrighteousness.

These men were in discontented like we were without Christ, because we could not find satisfaction in anything around us.

David became a type of Christ, the Captain of our salvation.

Jesus took us in and wrote our names in His Book of Life. We now have hope in Christ, we are content in Christ and we are called to be holy and righteous in Christ by His blood.

Matthew 11:28-30 Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

1 Sam 22:3-4 Then David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother come here with you, till I know what God will do for me." So he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.

The region of Moab was located east of the Dead Sea. David's family connection with the Moabites is related in the story of Ruth who was a great-grandmother and was a Moabite.

1 Sam 22:5 Now the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go to the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

Gad counsels David to leave his own stronghold, and to go back to the very stronghold of Saul. This probably wasn't what David really wanted to hear, but he obeyed anyway. David had to learn to trust God in the midst of the danger, not from the other side of the danger!

C. WHINE AND MURDER - SAUL'S FAVORITE COMBINATION PLATE

1 Sam 22:6 When Saul heard that David and the men who were with him had been discovered--now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him-

When it was just David hiding out from Saul, he could remain hidden for a long time. But you can't hide 400 men plus their families. When David came back into Judah, Saul's network of informants quickly discovered where he was.

We've seen Saul like this before! When Saul has a spear in his hand, it usually means that he is going to try to hurt someone. He usually throws a spear to someone to cross his point.

1 Sam 22:7-8 then Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, you Benjamites! Will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds? All of you have conspired against me, and there is no one who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and there is not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day."

Now Saul is going to start to play the world's smallest violin. "Whine, whine, nobody loves me!" He becomes paranoid and whines, and he leads through guilt and accusation because of his own self righteousness and conspiracy theory against David and Jonathan.

1 Sam 22:9-10 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who was set over the servants of Saul, and said, "I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the Lord for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

Doeg the Edomite was last seen in 1 Samuel 21:7, where he was in Nob, at the tabernacle at the same time David came there.

Doeg implicates the priest Ahimelech as David's partner-in-crime. Doeg was more than an ambitious man looking for any opportunity to promote himself. He also knew how to divert Saul's anger and suspicion from his own staff to the priests.

1 Sam 22:11-15 So the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were in Nob. And they all came to the king. And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahitub!" And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." Then Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day?" So Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And who among all your servants is as faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, who goes at your bidding, and is honorable in your house? Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? Far be it from me! Let not the king impute anything to his servant, or to any in the house of my father. For your servant knew nothing of all this, little or much."

Saul thinks of himself as the victim! In his mind, David and Ahimelech are out to get him. A typical self-made victim's mentality.

1 Sam 22:16-17 And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house!" Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me." But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the Lord.

Any man in the place of sin and rebellion Saul is in can't stand to see an innocent, guileless man like Ahimelech who is not in agreement with him. So, he commands him to be murdered. Saul's murderous order was an effort to eliminate his guilty conscience.

This command shows Saul is going faster and faster down from the Lord. Saul was reluctant to kill the enemies of the Lord when he was commanded to (1 Samuel 15:9). But here he is willing to murder the priests of the Lord in cold blood. Saul is clearly going off the deep end.

His anger was bent against the Lord Himself, for taking away his kingdom, and giving it to another. And because he could not come at the Lord, therefore he would murder God's priests instead.

1 Sam 22:18-19 And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and kill the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod. Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep--with the edge of the sword.

Doeg, who was not a Jew, but an Edomite, didn't hesitate to murder the priests and their families for his own selfish motive to be known to Saul, he also went on a killing spree in Nob.

D. INTO THE ARMS OF PROTECTION

1 Sam 22:20-22 Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the Lord's priests. So David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have caused the death of all the persons of your father's house.

David showed how he felt about this in Psalm 52, which says in its title 'A Contemplation of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told Saul, and said to him, "David has gone to the house of Ahimelech."'

In Psalm Psalm 52:1a, 2-4, David shows his outrage against Doeg.

In Psalm 52:5, David shows his confidence in God's judgments.

In Psalm 52:8-9, David shows his focus on the Lord.

David realizes that his presence and lie to Ahimelech costed them their lives.

Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, a descendent of the high priest Eli, who escaped the slaughter of the priests of Nob and joined David's outlaw band, where he served as private chaplain. He was rewarded by David for his loyalty with a monarchic appointment as chief priest, but he was later banished by king Solomon to the family estate in Anathoth for his part in supporting Adonijah, Solomon's rival to the throne. God warned Eli that because of his disobedience of not controlling his rebellious children, God would stop his priesthood from his family. And He did. God means when He says.

1 Sam 22:23 Stay with me; do not fear. For he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you shall be safe."

David takes Abiathar into his renegade group.

Jesus took us into His protection, we would be safe in His hands.

John 10:28 And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) Hiding places are valuable and can provide a short rest we need to face the world again. However, we complicate our troubles when we become cave dwellers, barricading the entrance to our lives and not letting anyone inside.

2) The things God tells us to do may not make sense to us for now, but we need to trust him and follow Him.

Because God knows the best. That is a part of faith in Him.

3) Along with his family, God gave David a mission-ministering to a group of fugitives like himself. Counselors say that helping people in our same situation is one of the most healing therapies.

Cancer patients find a new reason to live by reaching out to other cancer patients; alcoholics, the strength to stay sober by helping other recovering alcoholics; victims of abuse, the hope to endure by ministering to other victims of abuse.

2 Cor 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.