

## 32. Identity crisis

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There was a cave bat of whose name is Betty in a forest. She was all alone without any friend. She wanted to be around other animals or birds.

One day, she went to a group of animals in the forest. There were deers, tigers, squirrels, rabbits, wolves and so on. Betty the bat said, "Hey, I am one of you guys. See my ears, my nose and mouth. I can be your friend." One of the wolves glared at her and snarled at her, "No, you are not one of us, because you have wings like birds. Go away." Before they grab her, Betty thought it would be best for her to go away from this grumpy group.

Betty flapped her wings and looked for a group of birds to hang around. Finally, she found them in the middle of air a way above the forest. She got excited and exclaimed, "Hey friends, here I am. I am one of you guys. For I have wings just like you guys." One of an owl with a graduation hat and eye glasses replied, "By no means, you are not one of us. You are not a bird. Because you have ears, mouth, nose like an animal. Stay away from us."

Betty the bat didn't like the way the big brown eagle looking at her and got scared and flew away from them too. So she decided to fly around all alone at night without any other birds or animals.

Backslidden Christians are like that. They don't feel that they fit into any one of the categories: when they try to hang around believers, they don't want to follow God's ways like the rest of the believers. They are uncomfortable. If they choose to hang around with non believers to do whatever the world offers them, the Holy Spirit constantly convict them and even non believers mock at them when they find out they were once born-again Christians. So either way, they are miserable and convicted.

### A. WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?

*1 Sam 29:1 Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel.*

Remember v1-2 of chapter 28? I told you guys that there is always big price for backsliding? Here we see David and his men were told that they have to go to war against their own people Israel.

The battle lines were drawn in the previous chapter, when the Philistines made a deep incursion into Israelite territory. The Philistines were intent on delivering a death-blow to Israel, and the two armies square off in anticipation of battle.

Where is Saul? The night before, Saul sought the help of a medium, wanting to hear from God. Through a strange appearance of the prophet Samuel, God told Saul he would die the next day in battle. Instead of humbling himself in repentance before the Lord, Saul simply resigned himself to this fate.

*1 Sam 29:2 And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish.*

The anointed future king of Israel David, now living in the territory of his God's enemy, were in the group of the army that is about to attack his own land Israel. The Philistines didn't think much of his group, so that they put them at the end of the marching column.

If that is not enough other leaders of the Philistine army demand an explanation of David's men's presence in the marching column.

When we turn away from the things of God, we may soon find ourselves in a place we never thought we would be.

*1 Sam 29:3 Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him since he defected to me."*

Achish came quickly to David's defense, because he didn't know the truth about David's loyalty for the Philistines.

However, the Philistine leaders could see what David was blinded to. Non believers may not do what the Bible tell them to do, but they do know what Christians are supposed to do.

*1 Sam 29:4 But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these men?"*

The leaders of the Philistines reasoned wisely, according to the common practice of mankind. Actually it was good for David that they were such good politicians. It was ordered by a gracious providence of God that they refused to let David go with them to this battle, in which he must have been either an enemy to his country, or false to his newly pledged alliance and to his trust. Had he fought for the Philistines, he would have fought against God and his country; and had he in the battle gone over to the Israelites, he would have deceived and become a traitor to the hospitable Achish. God therefore delivered him from such disgrace. And the same time, this providence of God gave him a chance to rescue his wives, and his men's wives and their children from captivity. We are going to study this in next chapter.

*1 Sam 29:5 Is this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?"*

After all these years, the Philistine leaders still remember No.1 song from the Israel Pop Chart, the song about David. In Chapter 18, the Israel women sang this song to greet king Saul and David coming from the battle field. When insecure Saul heard this song, he was jealous and started his completely unnecessary chase against David. In other words, this is the song that starts Saul's threat for David's life. But now God is using this very song to prevent David from the regrettable action that is fighting against his own people.

## **B. FALSE LOYALTY AND FALSE TRUST**

*1 Sam 29:6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, as the Lord lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you.*

Achish was so thoroughly deceived by David's loyalty to him that he even compare David as one angel sent by his gods.

Achish here swears by the God (YHWH) of Israel, presumably because he was addressing an Israelite. However his reference in v 9 to an angel of God is less specific. Because Achish is using the word "Elohim" which has meaning of God(s) in plural sense. It is not because he understood the true meaning of Trinity, but he is one of the worshipper of their gods (polytheistic).

*1 Sam 29:7 Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."*

God is using Achish to stop David from sinning against Himself and Israel.

### **C. GOD'S ARRANGEMENT FOR DAVID'S RETURN**

*1 Sam 29:8-10 So David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you. And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart."*

I don't know if David was really ready to fight against the Israel people at this point. But at least he seems like wanting to do so.

*1 Sam 29:11 So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.*

We will find David coming back to God in next chapter.

### **D. APPLICATIONS**

#### **1) In Christian life, there is no such a thing is "Standing Still."**

Either we are progressing or regressing. You show me to a person who is not growing in the Lord, I will show you that the same person is in the process of falling away from God.

Backsliding is not only for falling into sin and staying in it, but also is a failure to moving forward to God.

#### **2) We are no longer welcome in the world with our identity, the children of God.**

We don't need to seek for their approval, but we should seek God's approval with all of our hearts.

#### **3) God's faithfulness for us displays in the midst of our sins.**

God is faithful no matter what. Wouldn't He be more pleased, if we love Him and serve Him with all of our hearts?