

## 32. Setting ourselves up for failure

8/1/2019

Many of us heard a phrase saying, "I am in the bottom of the valley of the shadow of death," or "having a mountain top experience with God." It seems that David is going from one valley to the mountain top and then down to the next valley again. Up and down, up and down. Does it sound familiar to your life?

In chapter 23, David saved the city of Keilah from the Philistines, but they were planning to turn him in to Saul. He had to run for his life. He was in the valley.

In chapter 24, David showed mercy on Saul even though he had a chance to eliminate his enemy once and for all. He was riding high on a mountain top.

In chapter 25, though David displayed tremendous patience and self-control the previous chapter, he went off in his revenge mode at a simple insult by a fool. Yet, God was gracious to stop him from revenging in his own hands through a quick-thinking, beautiful woman Abigail. David was at the mouth of the valley.

In chapter 26, we found David showing his courage, humility, and self-control against Saul and spared his life again. Yes, he was at the top of the mountain.

With all these up-and-downs, he was constant communion with his God. God protected him and kept him from doing anything wrong. But now we find David is listening to himself, instead of the Lord.

### A. THE ENEMY WITHIN

*1 Samuel 27:1 And David (1) said in his heart, "Now (2) I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. (3) There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand."*

What kind of interpretation are you getting from this paragraph?

#### **Problem 1) David's problem starts at "said in his heart."**

As we notice at the beginning of chapter 27, we find him talking to himself. Does it mean that we cannot talk to ourselves? Is it unbiblical? No, what I mean is that instead of asking for guidance from God, he was acting upon his own decision. We can all relate to his behavior because we all have done it.

You see, David has been in this wilderness being chased by Saul for quite some time. He is tired and weary. That is the precise time when the devil comes after us. It is important for us to be refreshed through the Word of God and close fellowship with godly people regularly.

#### **Problem 2) Forgetting God's promises and faithfulness**

If relying on his own ideas was not bad enough, David completely ignored the promise of God for him in chapter 16 that he would be a king of Israel after Saul someday.

Seeing his situation from his own limited and human point of view, David missed God's perspective and lost his trust in Him. All of sudden, Saul loomed larger than Goliath and twice as menacing.

That is how the devil operates. He wants us to ignore God's promises and faithfulness for us:

God promises us that He will never leave us, nor forsake us.

God promises us that He will provide all of our needs according to His riches in the glory.

God promises us that no one can snatch us out of His strong mighty hands.

God promises us that He would give us lives more abundantly.

And God's promises go on.

But the devil wants us to forget all of those wonderful promises, but turn our eyes upon the circumstances and our own strength. It doesn't take a whole lot for us to get depressed and become suicidal if we listen to the devil and ourselves.

### **Problem 3) Moving in with the enemy of God**

David not only following his idea and ignoring the promises of God, but also he decided that it would be safer for him to go into the enemy territory than staying with God.

Can we come up with the same kind of dumb logic? Yes, we can and we've done it before.

There was a born-again Christian woman whom I used to work with at the company 20 some years ago, she was a single mom with children. Instead of depending on God for her provisions. She thought it would be better for her to get involved with an unbelieving man with money to take care of them. What happened to her? Eventually, they got married – which is rare in many cases, because the most of them just live together – but she had a terrible marriage and went through a divorce.

Did you notice the progression?

**1) Beginning subtly, almost innocently, with a simple thought of consulting his ideas.**

**2) Ignoring God's promises and faithfulness.**

**3) Deciding to move into the enemy's territory to be with them.**

This happened to the disciple Peter at the courtyard of the high priest while Jesus was going through the kangaroo courts prior to His crucifixion, and it also happened to Abraham's nephew Lot in the city of Sodom. It means that it can happen to any of us. Let's be aware!

### **B. THE EXTENT OF OUR SIN**

*1 Samuel 27:2-3 Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow.*

What do you see here?

None of us lives only to ourselves, nor does our death only affect ourselves. Additionally, the result of our sins can reach to many people around us. Carried along in the wake of David's choice were the people, over two thousand of them, most dear to him.

Gath was Goliath's hometown, a center of pagan idolatry. Here, among some of God's vilest enemies in chapter 21, David and his followers made a home.

Previously, Achish despised David, but now he respected him as the commander of an impressive guerrilla army. He probably thought that any enemy of Saul's was a friend of his. Friendship with Achish, however, came with a price.

### C. THE DARK TIME OF DAVID

*1 Samuel 27:4-7 And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more. 5 Then David said to Achish, "If I have now found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?" 6 So Achish gave him Ziklag that day. Therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day. 7 Now the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months.*

Please give me your interpretation of this portion.

Even Saul knew that he is not supposed to be in the land of the Philistines.

When we do something wrong, it brings a reason for others to make fun or to blaspheme our God's name. As a matter of fact, that this should be the most fearful thing all of the Christians consider. Joshua Harris, author of the popular evangelical best-seller "I Kissed Dating Goodbye," which he has since denounced, declared last week he has said goodbye to his Christian faith. He even apologized for his former Christian views of the LGBTQ community.

Did you catch it in v5? David, the anointed future king of Israel, called himself the "servant" of Achish, his enemy. He began a period of compromise. Achish gave Ziklag to David, a city to the south that had been a part of Judah until taken over by the Philistines. The 16 long months David lived there would mark one of the darkest periods in his life. He would plunge himself and his followers into an unnecessary career of violence and deception. Spiritually, this time offers no psalms pouring from David's heart. We don't find any psalm or prayer from the lips of David during this period.

### D. LIVING DOUBLE LIFE

*1 Samuel 27: 8-12 And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites. For those nations were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. 9 Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel, and returned and came to Achish. 10 Then Achish would say, "Where have you made a raid today?" And David would say, "Against the southern area of Judah, or against the southern area of the Jerahmeelites, or against the southern area of the Kenites." 11 David would save neither man nor woman alive, to bring news to Gath, saying, "Lest they should inform on us, saying, 'Thus David did.'" And thus was his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. 12 So Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever."*

What is your interpretation of this?

To demonstrate his loyalty to the Hebrews, David and his men raided Judah's enemies in the south, "the Geshurites and the Girzites and the Amalekites." He took anything of value, "the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel." The people of Judah were pleased, but what would David say to Achish when it came time to make his report?

Christians typically think of falling away from the Lord as engaging in gross sin. If somebody sins terribly, we say they have fallen. Perhaps they used to come to church, but now they spend their time down at the bar. They have fallen. Then there's the person who used to be dedicated to their spouse, but now they are committing the sin of adultery. They have fallen.

*Revelation 2:2-5 I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; 3 and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. 4 Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.*

But we rarely think of someone who is still sitting in the pews on Sunday mornings as someone who has fallen. They must be right with the Lord, we think, because I still see them at church doing all the things that Christians are supposed to do. But don't be fooled. Look at Revelation 2, Jesus tells the church of Ephesus, "you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary. Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love," as in v3-4. Realize this: you can sit in the pew and be fallen, because you have withdrawn from the passion that you once had for God.

This is an important point to understand. Losing your first love is at the root of all sin. If you have fallen, repent and return to the passion you once had.

To protect himself, David skirted the truth. He told the king that he was raiding in the Negev of Judah, the south portion of the country, which led Achish to believe that David was fighting his own people.

Though he is attacking the enemies of Israel, David is nothing more than an armed robber and a murderer. He kills all the people of the village he attacks, takes all the spoil, and does all of this without the approval or guidance of God. He now fights wars for profit, instead of for God's honor.

David was lying to Achish. I am sure that David had to tell his men to either keep their mouths shut for his lies or play along with him. In other words, his compromise was making others sin with him and for him.

## **E. APPLICATIONS**

**1) When the devil reminds us about the current circumstances that surround us and scare us, let's remember God's faithfulness.**

*Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will be complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

**2) Let's remember that we have enemies within – ourselves, our sinful nature.**

Our sinful natures demand obedience from our spirits. It is a major battle. The devil cannot make us do wrong things. He can encourage us to do them. We need to listen to what God says through His Word, not ourselves.

**3) We need to remember that our sins don't just affect us only. The damage of our sins reaches to the people around us.**

It is one thing for us to pay for our own consequences. But why do we want to hurt those whom we love because of our own sins?

**4) We must deal with the roots of sin now, or they come back with greater strength.**

Much later in his life, David will have a far more notorious season of sin with Bathsheba, and end up killing Bathsheba's husband Uriah to cover his sin of adultery. Though that latter event is far more famous, the root of sin that nourished it began way back in here, 1 Samuel 27. Many years before David killed Uriah to cover his sin, he killed these men and women in his raids to cover his sin.