

34. Identity crisis

8/22/2019

There was a cave bat whose name was 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 deer, 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 would 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 the air 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." An owl with a graduation hat and eyeglasses 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 looked 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 unbelievers to do whatever the world offers them, the Holy Spirit constantly convict them and even unbelievers mock at them when they find out they were once born-again Christians. So either way, they are miserable and convicted.

A. PREPARING A WAR AGAINST ISRAEL

1 Samuel 28:1-2 Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men." And David said to Achish, "Surely you know what your servant can do." And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever."

These v1 and 2 should be a part of chapter 29. When we live closer to our spiritual enemies, it costs us much more than we expect.

1 Samuel 29:1-5 Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel. 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. 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." 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? 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'?"

Please give me your interpretation of this portion.

The camera angle is changed from king Saul in chapter 28, back to David. I told you guys that there is always a big price for Christian backsliding. Here we see David and his men were told that they would go to war against their own people Israel.

The battle lines was drawn in the previous chapter when the Philistines made a deep invasion 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 was Saul? The night before, Saul sought the help of a medium, wanting to hear from God. Through a strange appearance of the late prophet Samuel, God told Saul that he would die the next day in battle. Instead of humbling himself in repentance before the Lord, Saul simply resigned himself to this fate. Not a good way to prepare for a major battle.

The anointed future king of Israel David, now living in the territory of his God's enemy and they 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 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 God, we may soon find ourselves in an awkward place and a difficult situation we never thought we would be.

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 might do. Unbelievers may not do what the Bible tells them to do, but they do know what Christians are supposed to do.

The leaders of the Philistines reasoned properly, 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 with king Achish.

Had he fought for the Philistines, he would have fought against God and his country, or had he in the battle gone over to the Israelis, he would have deceived and become a traitor to the hospitable Achish. God, therefore, delivered him from such disgrace. And at 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 the next chapter.

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 battlefield. 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 started Saul's threat to 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.

If someone chooses to be neutral – not for God and not for satan, it is the same thing as saying, "No" to God.

Matthew 12:30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

B. FALSE LOYALTY AND FALSE TRUST

1 Samuel 29:6-7 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. 7 Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

What kind of interpretation are you getting from this paragraph?

Achish was so thoroughly deceived by David's loyalty to him that he even compare David as one angel sent by his pagan 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 the meaning of God(s) in a plural sense. This is the same as the medium whom king Saul met in the previous chapter, it is not because he understood the true meaning of Trinity, but he was one of the worshippers of their polytheistic gods.

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

David's backsliding started when he went to Achish in Gath for the first time in chapter 21 and pretending to be a mad man instead of trusting the Lord; then he consulted himself in chapter 27 which led him and his followers to Achish again in the Philistine territory. He became a trusted chief of Achish by utilizing deceptions and murders. You see, David was heading to the pit one step at a time with his OWN choices.

Proverbs 25:26 If the godly compromise with the wicked, it is like polluting a fountain or muddying a spring.

Compromise starts with a series of steps down. I have known people who have walked with the Lord for some years and then fell to the most blatant and obvious sins. It was because they lowered their guard and said, "It won't happen to me." When Peter denied Jesus on the night of His arrest, his denial was not merely a spontaneous response to unexpected danger or embarrassment. He already had laid the groundwork for desertion. He already had taken clear steps toward denying Christ before he entered the courtyard of the high priest and warmed himself at the enemy's fire. Peter was a man who had walked with God. But he fell.

In the same way, no one suddenly backslides. We see someone who falls away from the Lord and we say, "How could that be? He seemed to be doing so well." Know this: The steps may have been taken in secret, but clearly they were being

taken. Every moment of every day, you are either building up your spiritual character or weakening it.

Christians must be on guard all the time, grow in grace and knowledge of Jesus through the Word of God. This requires diligence from us. It demands discipline and priorities. Oh, how we all need these desperately! Please remember this: nobody automatically drifts into spiritual growth and stability, but anybody can drift out of dedication and growth.

Today, take the necessary steps to build up your spiritual character to prevent a fall like Peter's.

C. GOD'S ARRANGEMENT FOR DAVID'S RETURN

1 Samuel 29:8-11 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?" 9 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.' 10 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." 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.

What is your interpretation of this?

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

This is where David's backsliding hit rock bottom. He was preparing to go to war against Israel. He was trying to go to war against God and God's people. And used these horrible words: "*that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king.*" David was calling Achish his lord and the people of God his enemies. That was the lowest. When we begin to backslide, we never think we will sink as low as we sometimes do.

You probably noticed that there are stages of backsliding. The believer who begins to "drift" from the Word of God will soon start to "doubt" the Word. That will lead him to become "dull" toward the Word. This will result in "despising" God's Word.

It is a fearful thing to fall into the Lord's hands for chastening, but it is a wonderful thing to fall into His hands for cleansing and restoration.

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

D. APPLICATIONS

1) In Christian life, there is no such thing as "Standing Still."

Either we are progressing or regressing. You show me 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 their approval, but we should seek God's approval with all of our hearts.

3) God's faithfulness for us still 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?