

IN DISTRESS AND IN DEBT AND DISCONTENTED

1 SAMUEL 20:4 – 22:2

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~ Our Spiritual Safari left David in deep anxiety in our previous report, and his last statement in that passage of Scripture was, “... *there is but a step between me and death!*” Saul has become completely possessed by Satan at this time in our account, and he wants to murder David at any, and all, cost. David would have been in real trouble if Jonathan, Saul’s son, hadn’t been a loyal man; and one who loved God and loved David. Without Jonathan’s protection, I think this would have been the end of David’s story. It’s wonderful to have a friend like Jonathan, because he will be closer than a brother of blood. A true friend will never let you down, friends. We’re told brothers are born for adversity; a man can really only prove they are your friend when you are in trouble and need something from them. Jonathan came through for David in all areas....

XX

4 Then said Jonathan unto David, Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee.

5 And David said unto Jonathan, Behold, to morrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat and play the harp for him: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field unto the third day at even.

6 If thy father at all miss me, then say, David earnestly asked leave of me that he might run to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.

7 If he say thus, It is well; thy servant shall have peace: but if he be very wroth, then be sure that evil is determined by him.

8 Therefore thou shalt deal kindly with thy servant; for thou hast brought thy servant into a covenant of the LORD with thee: notwithstanding, if

there be in me iniquity, slay me thyself; for why shouldest thou bring me to thy father?

9 And Jonathan said, Far be it from thee: for if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon thee, then would not I tell it thee?

10 Then said David to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? or what if thy father answer thee roughly?

11 And Jonathan said unto David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And they went out both of them into the field.

12 And Jonathan said unto David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about to morrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there be good toward David, and I then send not unto thee, and shew it thee;

13 The LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it thee, and send thee away, that thou mayest go in peace: and the LORD be with thee, as he hath been with my father.

14 And thou shalt not only while yet I live shew me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not:

15 But also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth.

16 So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies.

17 And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

18 Then Jonathan said to David, To morrow is the new moon: and thou shalt be missed, because thy seat will be empty.

19 And when thou hast stayed three days, then thou shalt go down quickly, and come to the place where thou didst hide thyself when the business was in hand, and shalt remain by the stone Ezel.

20 And I will shoot three arrows on the side thereof, as though I shot at a mark.

21 And, behold, I will send a lad, saying, Go, find out the arrows. If I expressly say unto the lad, Behold, the arrows are on this side of thee, take them; then come thou: for there is peace to thee, and no hurt; as the LORD liveth.

22 But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; go thy way: for the LORD hath sent thee away.

23 And as touching the matter which thou and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between thee and me for ever.

24 So David hid himself in the field: and when the new moon was come, the king sat him down to eat meat.

25 And the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: and Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty.

26 Nevertheless Saul spake not any thing that day: for he thought, Something hath befallen him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean.

27 And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore cometh not the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?

28 And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to Bethlehem:

29 And he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family hath a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, he hath commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in thine eyes, let me get away, I pray thee, and see my brethren. Therefore he cometh not unto the king's table.

30 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the perverse rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion, and unto the confusion of thy mother's nakedness?

31 For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be established, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.

32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he done ?

33 And Saul cast a javelin at him to smite him: whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined of his father to slay David.

34 So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and did eat no meat the second day of the month: for he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame.

35 And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him.

36 And he said unto his lad, Run, find out now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

37 And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee?

38 And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, haste, stay not. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and came to his master.

39 But the lad knew not any thing: only Jonathan and David knew the matter.

40 And Jonathan gave his artillery unto his lad, and said unto him, Go, carry them to the city.

41 And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David exceeded.

42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

~ Alright, this chapter is self-explanatory; but I should add Saul knew Jonathan would communicate with David – he just wasn't sure exactly how. Either way, the news isn't good – but David already knew that – and he now has to leave as quickly as possible to escape imminent danger. I think most people today believe they would have stayed and fought the evil forces of King Saul and all that nonsense. Not David. He wasn't stupid. He said "good-bye" to Jonathan! Anyways, our Spiritual Safari is going to follow David from here on. We need to note that Jonathan was faithful and true to David to the very end of his life; and David will also be true to this covenant that they made between them. Later, we will read about the Philistines slaying Jonathan and Saul both; and then David will finally assume the throne.

The proper thing for David to do at that time would have been to kill every remaining relative in the house of Saul. That would mean if Jonathan had a son, that son must needs be exterminated. Well, Jonathan did have a son; and we're going to meet that son; his name is Mephibosheth. He was crippled after Saul and Jonathan were slain. One of the servants knew what

should have happened to Mephibosheth, so they took him in a panic and hid him from David. David proves his loyalty later in a display of kindness that is truly stunning.

David will show kindness to Jonathan's son just as God has shown kindness to you and me, friends. Only because of Christ has that kindness been displayed. It's not because of who or what we are, or what we've done that brings God's mercy; no, friends, only because of Who Christ is and what He has done for us do we have mercy and salvation from God. If the Lord Jesus Christ hadn't died for us, we would likewise perish in our own sins and transgressions. Our salvation is, actually, a favor of kindness, performed out of pity and compassion God has for humanity....

XXI

1 Then came David to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee?

2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place.

3 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present.

4 And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

~ David is now very much alone as he flees from the murderous madman, King Saul. Ahimelech believes there are others with David; and that means David is not quite telling the truth. Well, the only bread available is the shewbread we learned all about in Exodus. Only the priests were to eat this bread; and only at a certain time and place, too – when the bread was replenished each Sabbath day. However, God is telling us that even the

bread set aside for religious use becomes common ordinary bread when we have a man of God who needs food. Naturally, this means that the Mosaic Law is being broken in a very definite way by David. When Jesus was accused by the Pharisees of breaking the law – which He had not done – Jesus referred to this incident in the life of David, you may recall. Even if Jesus had broken the Mosaic Law, He was much greater than David. In Jesus' case, we're talking about healing and doing good works on the Sabbath day. Well, as we read on, a Judas named Doeg will betray David and Ahimelech the high priest....

5 And David answered the priest, and said unto him, Of a truth women have been kept from us about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel.

6 So the priest gave him hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away.

7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

8 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.

~ This is another extremely important spiritual lesson. It involves one way in which Scripture is totally misquoted by modern theologians. Some people say the Lord's service should always be done quickly because the "king's business requires haste." They use David's lie to manufacture their truth! Friends, the Lord's business and your service to Him does not require haste in any way, shape or form. David is misrepresenting the facts to begin with! He may not have a sword or bread, but he isn't on some mission for King Saul, either.

To use this passage to say the Lord's business requires haste is a furtherance of a deception. This is mainly used in connection with taking up an offering, of course. Preachers will quote this ad nauseam when they need to fund some program or build a new building. Have you ever noticed how patient God really is, and how patiently He works in our lives? God is going to be very patient with David, too. David is getting ready to receive an education in the school of wilderness solitary in the caves, running from Saul and his army. Most Bible scholars estimate David ran from Saul for ten years, minimum. God is in no hurry with David.

Moses was in a hurry, you may remember; he thought he should deliver the children of Israel forty full years before God was ready. It turns out Moses was not ready. God left Moses on the backside of the desert of Midian for another forty years while Moses received his doctorate degree from the Lord. Haste *NEVER* marks the work of God, friends – you can just write that down. God works slowly and patiently, and it is *YOU* and *ME* who become impatient. I'll admit, I am not the one to give a sermon on patience. I am likely the world's *MOST* impatient man. The art of waiting before the Lord is not my forte; there's no sense trying to kid myself.

We all need these lessons, and David needed to learn them at this time, too; so, God teaches him. Any man God ever uses will learn a very definite lesson in waiting on Him with extreme patience; I promise you that. Even when God brought His Own Son into the world, it was thirty years before His ministry even started. If you want an earthly example of how slowly God moves, consider how long it takes God to make a diamond; or how long it takes a Redwood Tree to reach maturity. God never rushes anything, friends. David's impatience is causing him to make representations that are simply not true, but God is still patient with David....

9 And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.

10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.

11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?

12 And David laid up these words in his heart, and was sore afraid of Achish the king of Gath.

13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.

14 Then said Achish unto his servants, Lo, ye see the man is mad: wherefore then have ye brought him to me?

15 Have I need of mad men, that ye have brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house?

~ Apparently, David doesn't trust his slingshot abilities anymore and grabs that great big sword of Goliath's. It was probably bigger than David was; and he gets as far away from Israel as his feet will take him. When David arrived in the far country, he quickly discovered he was in just as much danger there as he had ever been. That leads to David acting insane. This is almost a scene from Hamlet – if you are familiar with Shakespeare....

XXII

1 David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.

2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

~ Our safari ends this report with the beginning of David hiding from King Saul in the caves, forests and dens of the earth. David is now driven out from amongst his own people; and he isn't welcome amongst foreigners, either. There is nowhere to go, and he will be hunted and hounded for the next many years. God is going to search David's heart from pillar to post, as they say. That searching involves David attempting to escape the unjust wrath of a king gone mad.

In the Psalms, David will say he was hunted like a partridge. This is that time. Unfortunately, David didn't even have a pear tree to hide in. David also calls himself a pelican of the wilderness and an owl of the desert! Neither one of those sound very good, do they? Well, that's what he is now. He also says his soul is among lions, and that men have prepared a net for his steps. I think David got very weary and discouraged during those years of running from Saul. Adullam is a rocky mountain pass in the south that is now a highway through a valley between Philistia and Hebron – it is a most inhospitable place.

We're entering an extremely marvelous section of the Word of God now. There is an awesome comparison we can make between David and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is comparable to the present state of our Lord, friends. The world has completely rejected Christ today. Satan is like a roaring lion in our enemies going up and down and all over the world right now as I type and as you read this report. Our souls today are precisely as David's was at the time in which we are studying – amongst lions. During this tumult, the Lord Jesus is calling out a people to His Name. Christ is calling those who are in distress – those who are in debt – those who are not content with their lives in this present evil world. Are you in any of those categories? Well, we're going to examine how the Word of God and the Lord Jesus Christ offers us hope - through salvation - in our extremely dark days; we'll look at that very carefully, and we'll see how God can bring peace to our minds and souls in the next leg of our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God ~