

Faithless and Faithful

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[0 : 00] Take your Bibles tonight. We're going to be in 1 Samuel, as I hope you would have expected.

We make our way through this book, and if you'll find chapter 29, our text for tonight will include the 11 verses of chapter 29, relatively short chapter, really.

And then also on into chapter 30, the first six verses. So I'm going to go ahead and read chapter 29 all the way to the sixth verse of chapter 30.

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

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.

[1 : 14] 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. 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?

Is this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands?

Then Achish called David and said to him, Surely as the Lord lives you have been upright and you are going out and you are coming in with me and the army is good in my sight.

[2 : 28] For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me.

Nevertheless, the Lord do not favor you, therefore return now and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines.

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. 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.

Now it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day that the Amalekites had invaded the south and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and those who were there from small to great.

[3 : 51] They did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. So David and his men came to the city, and there it was burned with fire, and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive.

Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives, Ahinoam and the Jezreelitists, and Abigail, the widow of Nabal, the Carmelite, had been taken captive.

Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in

the Lord his God.

Okay. Well, there you have it. Interesting part of the story, though it really is, as you recall, continuation of a story that we kind of, you know, very abruptly, or the author of 1 Samuel very abruptly ended.

We'll talk about that here in a minute. But one of my favorite Bible verses in the New Testament is 2 Samuel 2, verse 13, which says, If we are faithless, he remains faithful.

[5 : 15] He cannot deny himself. Marvelous, wonderful passage. Think about that. What a great truth. If we are faithless, and not really if, when, we are, because we often are.

We're more apt to be faithless than faithful. And if we are faithful, faithless, when we're faithless, he, that's God, remains faithful, always faithful, because that's who he is.

Cannot deny himself. Can't deny who he is, and what he is. And what a great truth that is. And it is a truth, I think, that we've all experienced, right? Because we've all been faithless, and we have all experienced God's unwavering faithfulness.

We have. Many, many, many times. And we've experienced that in spite of our faithlessness. Now, I bring that verse up because it's interesting that we have here in this passage a very profound illustration of this truth that's taught in 2 Timothy.

David's faithlessness. God's faithfulness. And you see both of those things very clearly in the passage. All right, so let's see three things in our story.

[6 : 31] The first one will be David's dilemma. And I'll go ahead and give you all three here. David's dilemma, followed by David's deliverance, and then followed by David's discipline.

David's discipline. All right, so let's begin with David's dilemma. You surely remember, I've already mentioned it in my introduction, but you remember the cliffhanger that we were left with way back there in chapter 28 in verse 2.

You might remember that. It's been a few weeks ago. If you were here, you remember it, I'm sure. So let me just kind of set the stage for this dilemma of David's.

David, you remember, had become weary. He'd become weary. I mean, he's always running from Saul. He'd escaped death a couple of times, more than a couple of times.

And he's weary of it, weary of this life as a fugitive in Israel, living in caves and holes and wherever he can find a place of refuge, and he's just tired of it.

[7 : 39] And so, in a moment of despair, and I would add to that, faithlessness, he decides to flee into, of all places, the land of the arch enemies of Israel, the Philistines, which really, from our perspective, makes no sense whatsoever.

And you might even remember what David said in chapter 27, verse 1. He said, I shall perish someday at the hand of Saul. What an indicator of David's faithlessness at this point.

He stopped trusting God. And so, instead of trusting God for his safety, who does he trust? The Philistines of all people.

And so he, I think you can safely say, forms an alliance. Albeit it's a bit of a facade. But it's an alliance, nevertheless, with the Philistine king, Achish, one of the lords of the Philistines, the king of Philistia.

And so he has this alliance with him, and, you know, Achish doesn't want him living there in Gath. Too much trouble with that. David and his 600 men and their families, and it's just too much burden on the city.

[8 : 56] And so, being king, he gives him a city of his own, in a sense. Though there are Philistines living in it. And it's the city of Ziklag. So you just take Ziklag, take all your men over there.

And this served David's purposes very well. Because it was so remote, Ziklag, and so really, so far from the, kind of the seat of government government for the Philistines, that David could pretty much do what he wanted to do.

And that's what he did. So from that location, remember, David and his 600 men staged a number of raids upon, not upon Israelites, but upon the enemies of the Israelites.

But, he deceives Achish, remember, he deceives him by telling Achish that he's been attacking the cities of the Israelites.

Israelites. And, and he even gives a portion of his plunder to Achish, remembering the story.

[10 : 00] This is all deception. And, I mean, it begins with David's faithlessness. He's not trusting God anymore. You know, he, he, he, he thinks that, you know, he's going to perish by the hand of Saul, even though David knows he is God's anointed.

And, so he's faithless, and now he's deceiving, lying. And, and all, and all of that, but he, to make sure that no one finds out the truth, what does he do?

He destroys every living person in these cities that he and his men have attacked. so that, word cannot be returned to Achish.

Well, David certainly seems to be getting away with his deception, doesn't he? I mean, everything seems to be going all right. We're just assuming this has been going on for well over a year now, and so it's a pretty neat situation.

You know, plundering these cities, annihilating the enemies of Israel, and no one being the wiser for, of it, and certainly not the king, and Achish, quite the opposite.

[11 : 07] He's so impressed with David's supposed loyalty to the Philistines that he decides to make David his permanent and his personal bodyguard, which is something David didn't figure into his plans.

And so that's really kind of how our story ends. You know, we have the armies of the Philistines amassing to go up against Israel, and we have Achish complimenting David, praising his valor and his works, and then saying, you're going to be my right-hand man from now on.

From now on. That's not part of David's plan. And so, you know, that's how the story ended there in chapter 28 and verse 2. And if I might just recall a few verses there, the first two verses of that chapter, it begins, now it happened.

And I just love that. Now it happened. Well, of course it did. Now it happened. In those days, what days? The days of David's deception and faithlessness.

Now it happened that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war to fight with Israel. Oh, no. What am I going to do?

[12 : 25] David has got to be thinking here. But it gets worse. And Achish said to David, you assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle you and your men. Oh, no.

What am I going to do? And it gets even worse than that. Perhaps David thought, I think, maybe David thought that he would just sort of go along with this, you know, at least verbally. Continue on his little deception.

And then, you know, in the heat of battle, perhaps Achish would notice that David and his men have kind of slipped out the back door, you know, and they're not involved in the battle even though Achish thinks that he is.

Or perhaps they would even secretly, unknown to Achish, actually serve Israel and fight against the Philistines out there. And so maybe David is thinking, that's what I'm going to do.

And so David says, well, surely you know what your servant can do. Which, it translates, well, you can count on me, Achish. You can count on me. And so what does Achish say?

[13 : 25] He says, okay, great. And I'll make you one of my chief guardians forever. That is, David, you're going to be fighting right alongside of me. Oh, no. What am I going to do?

Curses foiled again. David is caught. He's caught. And then, then we have the cliffhanger. And the author just kind of stops, the story right there.

It doesn't give us the rest of it, at least not at that time. It's a cliffhanger. Kind of reminds me of the old TV shows, you know, that we used to have a long time ago, like Batman.

Have you ever watched Batman, the TV show, years ago? You wouldn't admit it if you did. Wes admits it. I knew he would. Well, I watched it. You know, and how the kind of the episode ends, you know, you have Batman robbing, and they're about to be killed, caught in some crazy contraption devised by these evil people, the Joker, whoever.

And then the announcer, and I hated this, the announcer would come on and say, what will happen to the dynamic duo? You know, will they die?

[14 : 38] Will Joker do? Whatever. Tune in next week. same bat time, same bat channel. I hated that.

You know, years later when... So it's a cliffhanger, but I'm sure that some of you more sophisticated TV viewers would rather remember the primetime soap opera Dallas, Who Shot J.R.?

Remember that one? I knew I'd get you. You'd watch that stupid show, right? And, you know, you'd have to wait not only next week, you'd have to wait for the next season, find out who shot J.R.

And I remember it really wasn't all that great when we did find that out. Anyway, so we're well acquainted with cliffhangers, and apparently the author of 1 Samuel used that.

We're not really told why. Probably he had no real intent of putting you on the edge of your seat. And obviously you can just flip ahead and see, find out what the rest of the story is.

[15:46] You don't have to wait until next week or next season. But it is a cliffhanger. That's what our author has done. He suddenly shifts from David to Saul, doesn't he?

And we studied chapter 28 last week. So he shifts to Saul, leaves us hanging with David there. He's on the battlefield.

He's about to have to go against and fight with the Philistines. And so we're left there. And then, you know, he inserts this story about King Saul consulting mediums.

Okay? And so he takes up where he left off then here. In our passage for tonight, David's dilemma. David's dilemma. He and his men, we are told here in the story, are marching in review with the thousands of Philistines all in their ranks.

[16:53] It kind of reminds, maybe takes you back to the last chapter where Saul was up on a hill and he was looking out and he's totally devastated by what he sees.

A Philistine army. There are thousands upon thousands of them. And Saul doesn't even know that David's, he's out there, he and his 600 men are part of that.

In the rear ranks, they're marching in review with Achish, the king. king. And, you know, I think you can almost imagine seeing David's face, you know, the dilemma that's written all over his face.

I mean, how did I get here? He perhaps is thinking. And more importantly, what am I going to do here? What a dilemma. But this did not happen overnight, did it?

These things never do happen overnight. And it's not on the spur of the moment, not out of the clear blue. This is something that's been building for some time, and it's because David first started walking down a certain path, a path of faithlessness, a path of doubt, a path of deception.

[18:06] And that's why for the last pretty much close to three chapters, we hardly have David, in fact, we don't have David even mentioning God.

In fact, God is all but completely absent from these three chapters. Certainly, the part about Saul, Saul certainly is not trusting God, and neither was David.

So he's thinking, how did I get here? And you know, the same is true, it's always true of us when we get to that point. We find ourselves caught in a dilemma, the dilemma of sin.

but God is faithful, and that's why I opened with that passage in 2 Timothy. Even though we're faithless, God is always faithful. He cannot deny himself.

That is, he cannot do anything other than to be in line with who he is and what he is, and he is faithful, and so then I want you to notice David's deliverance. David's deliverance.

[19:08] All right, so here is David and his 600 marching men, his men marching in the rear ranks of this vast Philistine army.

He's marching there with King Achish, and I think he's probably riding side by side with him because Achish has put him as his personal bodyguard forever.

And the other four lords of the Philistines, they can hardly believe what they see. When they look and they see David and his 600 men marching with him.

And so what do they do? Very naturally they issue a very strong protest. How can this be? And I would say rightfully so. They issue this protest for a number of reasons.

And in the first place, and as we read verses 3, 4, and 5, and I'm not going to read it again, but we pick up some things there that clue us in to their thinking, their mentality, what they're thinking, how they're evaluating this, and why they would protest against David and his men being a part of the Philistine army.

[20:19] In the first place, they no doubt remembered the last time Hebrews were numbered among their ranks. Do you remember that? Way back in chapter 14, and you might remember it's when Jonathan and his armor bearer decided to do something bold, and they went into the camp of the Philistines, and they slew a bunch of them.

And though we're not really told specifically, we're given a little bit of information, but also among the ranks of the Philistines were some Hebrew people who were fighting with the Philistines. And when Jonathan and his armor bearer did what they did, they were emboldened to switch their allegiance back to Israel, and so they're going to fight for Israel.

But they're suited up in the armor and suited up in the uniform of a Philistine soldier, and so this whole thing just causes this absolute pandemonium taking place within the Philistine army, and so much so that the Bible says every man's sword was against his neighbor.

They were killing each other. They couldn't tell the difference between the Hebrews and the Philistines. Philistines, and there's no way that any of these people here, these lords of the Philistines, no way that they would have forgotten about that.

So it's just like a *deja vu*, this history repeating itself. How could we have these Hebrews fighting with us? I mean, they're going to turn against us. They're going to suddenly become our adversaries.

[21 : 54] And they had every reason to think that that would happen. So it was a strong protest. But in the second place, they certainly remembered some other things about David, about David specifically, not just that he was a Hebrew and his men were Hebrews, but they remembered some other things about David personally.

And even Achish mentions it in verse 3. He's a servant of Saul, king of Israel. I mean, this is not just simply an Israelite. This is a man who was part of Saul's inner circle.

one of his closest servants, soldiers, one of his captains. This is the man that is now marching with our Philistine army.

They certainly noticed that. And only that, but they had personally, they remembered, they knew that he, David, had personally killed many, many Philistines over the years.

They even knew the song. That was some. You know, it was famous. Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.

[23 : 08] That's what it says in verse 5. And they mentioned here about the heads. What was that a reference to? David and Goliath.

They remember that David had killed their champion, Goliath, and they had not forgotten that David mutilated Goliath's body by cutting his head off as a trophy, taking it as a trophy of conquest.

And so they're thinking, and they even allude to this, they're thinking that perhaps David will do the same with some of them. And why would David want to do that with them, to cut their heads off and take their heads?

Well, so that he can take the heads to Saul and make peace with him. And so all this is going through their head and they're all very valid points and they were angry then with Achish that he would allow this and even though he is king, Achish is king, they ordered him to make David return, go home, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him.

That would be Ziklag. Which, you know, and I don't really know this for sure but I think Achish was more than glad to do that. And why?

[24 : 28] I mean he had a really pretty good thing going with David. David was plundering all these cities and bringing him a certain portion of it and that was a pretty good deal for him and so I don't think he really argued very much with the point.

Let him go back to Ziklag. So you have David's dilemma. Which was of his own making because he's faithless and we can see his journey to this point.

We know how he got here. David had maybe not realized it until it was too late so he's caught but he should have looked back and said well I know how I got here. So it's his dilemma.

But God is faithful even though we don't have God mentioned here. We know that God is working behind the scenes here. David certainly is not going to go out and do battle against his own people. He's not going to do that. He's going to be king one day. This would absolutely squash any hopes whatsoever that David could be king of Israel.

[25 : 29] He can't serve in the armies of the Philistines and go out against his own people and kill them and expect to be made king. But God's plan was that David would be king.

God is faithful in that and even though David is unfaithful God is faithful and so he delivers him. I can imagine David's relief.

I mean can't you? I mean there he is he's riding beside Achish. This is a pagan Philistine king and he's riding alongside of him and as they're coming closer to the battle lines David has to be thinking about his people Israel who are on the other side.

God's chosen people of which he's won and he's got to be thinking about his family on the other side. He's going to be doing battle against family members cousins uncles brothers perhaps.

Most likely. Got to be thinking about that. Got to be thinking about friends and one in particular Jonathan.

[26 : 49] It kind of reminds me of the movie Gettysburg. You ever seen it? And you know like was true in the Civil War there were friends fighting against friends family family and some of these

generals and colonels from the southern army they knew some of the generals on the other side. They were close friends of theirs. They had gone to West Point together and other things. And at one point in the movie you know there's one of them who is really mourning the fact that you know he knows he's over there somewhere and he's going to be doing battle against him the next day. Will he be killed? Will I kill him? You know all this dilemma this is going through David's mind. Would he actually be the one to kill his best friend Jonathan? And I think he's even thinking about Saul God's anointed God's anointed king. Now how could David raise his sword against any of these? He couldn't. And so did David pray at this time? Well there's no record of it. But perhaps I would like to think that he did.

[28 : 07] You know God save me from this terrible situation in which I have put myself. Deliver me. I've put myself here through faithlessness.

Forgive me. Through deception. Forgive me. Did he pray? Do we pray? We get caught. We're caught between a rock and a hard place and it's not because of outside influences because we've chosen a certain way and it's come home to roost and what do we do at that point?

Say well just take it. Take it like a man or woman. We need to pray. God I'm such a fool.

Forgive me. And I know you don't have to deliver me but please deliver me. And perhaps David prayed that way. I don't know. But now God has delivered David.

So we have his dilemma and his deliverance. God has delivered David. And actually perhaps David wrote many of his psalms based upon experiences that he had in life as king.

[29 : 21] Even before that as a shepherd boy and some of the experiences that he had. He wrote words to songs to sing about those events. And it's kind of interesting.

Psalms 124 and verse 7 particularly let me read it to you. Our soul has escaped as a bird from the snare of the fowlers.

The snare is broken and we have escaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord who made heaven and earth. Alright so God did deliver David.

But that's not the end of the story. That does not mean that God was through with David.

That is through with this whole situation. David is going to learn a terrible yet valuable lesson. And so third, David's discipline.

[30 : 17] David's discipline. And so here we have that phrase again in chapter 30 verse 1 now it happened. So here's something about to happen again. That almost always introduces something not good.

And so what happened? The Amalekites happened. I find this interesting. I mentioned you know that David was in his dilemma, his predicament because of his faithlessness.

faithlessness. I would say to you that the Amalekites were the poster children for Israel's faithlessness.

Do you remember the Amalekites? I'm not sure if this is where we are first introduced to them. I think it is, but all the way back to the Exodus. Jesus. And God's people have been delivered out of Egypt.

They've been delivered from the Egyptian army there at the Red Sea, got part of the Red Sea, and they walked across on dry ground. And they are now kind of in the wilderness.

[31 : 33] And they are making their way slowly, but eventually to the promised land. And the Bible says, I think it was right after God had refreshed them at Rephidim, that right after that it says, and then Amalek came.

The Amalekites. And if you remember the story, the Amalekites didn't, their tactic, their strategy was not a frontal assault. They attacked from the rear where the older people were and children and the sick and lame.

They attacked at the very weakest part of Israel. Ultimately, God said that the Amalekites were to be destroyed from the face of the earth forever and ever.

But were they? No, they weren't. They still survived. God had commanded Israel to take care of them, to annihilate them, but they didn't.

In fact, even Saul, remember, was commanded to annihilate every man, woman, and child, and did Saul completely obey that?

[32 : 49] No, he didn't. And that was the reason why God said, the kingdom has been torn from you. Amalek, the Amalekites, and so here they are again.

If they'd been dealt with as God commanded, this would have never happened. So, you know, David, it would have been somebody else. David is being disciplined, but it's interesting that the two come together, that David certainly is an illustration of faithlessness, and the Amalekites, an illustration of Israel's faithlessness to allow them to survive.

And so the Amalekites happened, that's what happened next, and so while the Philistine leaders, their lords and armies are all engaged elsewhere, and at the same time while David and his mighty men were engaged in something they should have never been engaged in, the Amalekites took advantage of it.

And what did they do? Well, they invaded Ziklag, in fact, that whole southern territory, they invaded it, they invaded Ziklag, that's David's home away from home, his families, their families are there, and they burn it to the ground, and they take every man, woman, child captive.

It's interesting, it says, deliberately says they didn't kill anyone, which is difficult to believe, but God preserved them. And perhaps we could say on the other side, the Amalekites had plans to perhaps sell them into slavery, so they kept them unsullied, and, you know, I'm sure they abused them in some way, but they didn't kill them, so they invaded, they burned it to the ground, they took everyone captive.

[34 : 45] And so, you know, I think the lesson here is sin always has its consequences, it does. Even though God is still faithful, and God delivered, and you know, God blessed David in this whole situation, and yet still his sin, the choices he made, had a consequence.

Can you imagine this scene, you know, David and his men returning from the battlefield, they didn't even have to go to battle, and they're thinking that's great.

And on their way to Ziklag, they're elated that God has mercifully allowed them to escape what they most assuredly deserved, because of David's deception, and his men were in on it.

And they may have even, I think, even shared their feelings with one another. Boy, that was a close call. You know, you can imagine, say, can you believe this? I mean, I thought we were going to have to go fight against our own people.

I wasn't going to do it, so they were going to kill me on the battlefield anyway. Boy, we dodged a big bullet there. It could have been so much worse. And, you know, as they're talking, they're looking at the horizon, and they say, I wonder what that smoke is up ahead.

[36 : 03] And they kind of come over the last rise before Ziklag, and they look down upon the city, and it's burning ruins, smoldering ruins. And verse three says, so David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire, and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive.

And it's interesting, verse four says, these men of war, these mighty men of war, lifted up their voices and wept, and they kept weeping until they had no more power to weep.

Bitter. And actually, it did turn to bitterness. Bitterness set into their hearts, the hearts of these men, and that was followed by anger because anger and wrath always follows, bitterness if left unchecked, and that wrath was focused, at least for a time, upon David, their king.

they were going to stone him to death. And I love the closing remark in verse six.

David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. So, really, the story has a great ending, doesn't it? I mean, it really does.

[37 : 27] And then as we go on into the chapter and find out how David deals with the Amalekites and God is, leading him in all of that, permitting him in all of that, it's really a good story.

But this is the best part of it. David strengthened himself. That is, he really took charge of the situation. I mean, they're about to stone him. And he stood strong before the people and brought it under control, not because of his personality, though I'm sure he had that kind of personality, born leader.

God's discipline, but it doesn't give credit to David, it gives credit to the Lord, the Lord his God.

God's discipline, you know, always has that as an objective, that we would turn back to him.

And I think this is where David does. He turns back to God. In fact, in verse 8, verse 8 is going to tell us something, going to mention something we have not heard for several chapters.

David inquired of the Lord. That's good news. And kind of the way I started this thing tonight, that ends really a stretch of godless chapters, really.

[38 : 44] And God's mentioned a few times, kind of in passing, and it's interesting, in chapter 29, God is mentioned there, not by David, but by a pagan king named Achish.

He even calls him by his sacred name, Yahweh. And now, all that has changed. And so, you know, we've got to get past that dry time, that desert time, that godless time, in David's life, but also in Saul's life.

In fact, Saul very shortly is going to meet his Lord, meet his Maker. But David is going to go on and be the greatest king that Israel has ever, ever known.

I won't say, or will ever know, because it'll be King Jesus one day, of the lineage of David. .