

David's Wilderness Experiences (Part 5)

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[0 : 00] Tonight we're once again in 1 Samuel and if you want you can turn your Bibles to chapter 24.

! We'll make it through that chapter tonight, trying best I can to take a chapter at a time. 1 Samuel chapter 24. Although this time I'm not going to read the entire passage to begin with, I'm elected to kind of read it as we go along. It's one of my favorite stories in 1 Samuel and unless you've looked ahead, I'm not going to tell you what the story's about until we get there, okay? But just to remind you, we are working our way through a very large section of 1 Samuel as you kind of divide it up and this part is what I've called David's wilderness experience.

The thought occurred to me not only in the sense of our own personal experience, but we could see it very clearly in David's life, kind of exemplifying the fact that, you know, we learn a lot during the wilderness times. We really do. That is if we're open to it.

If we want to get all that God has for us in those times and we have wilderness experiences and we can clearly see that David learned a lot during his time in the wilderness. He was learning to be king, king of Israel. He was learning that. God was teaching him that, molding him in a special way. And as is usually the case with us, we learn from our experiences and all experiences, but it seems like we learn best through the tough experiences. And so David is in that kind of time in his life. And so he's learning to be king. You might remember last week as we were looking at chapter 23 that David responded to some information that he had received about the Philistines attacking, robbing, pillaging, plundering the small town of Kailah. And David responded very keenly.

[2 : 30] There. I made mention of that last week. I mean, that was a kingly thing to do. David is not yet king. He's been anointed as king in private. He has certain assurances from God that he's been chosen by him. He doesn't know when that's going to take place, when he will officially become king. And as we're going to learn tonight, he's not going to take unilateral steps to make himself king, officially king. So he knows these things. And here comes the word of a Israelite town in Judah, under distress, under attack. And so he rallies to do something about it. So he's acting very kingly.

This is something that he's learning in this wilderness time in his life. And by the way, again, it's something Saul should have done himself, right? I mean, I think it's mentioned here, it's as part of the story. It is meant to highlight not only God working in David's life and preparing him to be king, but at the same time revealing that Saul is anything but kingly. And so it's Saul who should have responded. But Saul, of course, too busy trying to destroy David. David called himself later in the chapter, he says, why, Lord King, do you go out after a dead dog, after a flea?

That was Saul's focus, right? And so he's too busy doing that, too filled with hate to focus on his duties as king. I got to think about that. I think we could say that actually, I think this shamed Saul. I think he's going to react to this. In fact, does react to this. David responds very kingly, Saul does not. And so he's shamed by that. And at the end of chapter 23, remember, what does Saul do when he gets word that the Philistines are invading a certain place in the land? What does he do? He leaves David and goes and responds as the king that he is. So it's kind of interesting. At first, he didn't do that. David did. And that shamed Saul. And so now Saul's going to be careful to respond to any news of the Philistines attacking. So that's what we have at the end of chapter 23.

[4 : 57] All right, so David is learning some valuable things during his wilderness experience. This is a time of character building. He's growing. He's being prepared. And so then when we get to chapter 24, we discover that David has yet another opportunity to grow in his character, to reveal a character quality that mirrors, actually mirrors the Lord Jesus Christ.

of whom David is a type. All right, so we're going to learn that here in this chapter in as we walk through chapter 24. Now, there are two main points to the story. It just kills me not to have a third. Yeah, it's just not even baptistic to have any kind of sermon or teaching doesn't have at least three. Well, no, I'm going to give you two points. It's usually three points in a poem. That's what you're taught in seminary.

Well, not really. But just two points, two main points. I do have a few sub points, so don't worry. And here are the two main points. David's unquestionable character or good character.

I mean, you can't have a bad character. He has good character. It's unquestionable. Now, that's the first part of the story, David's unquestionable character. And then second, Saul's questionable confession. Okay, those are the two main things you have here. You have David exemplifying a godly character, an amazing character for a young man. Then you have Saul making a confession. Really, a repentance. And it sounds, as you read it, it sounds really good.

[6 : 54] And to kind of jump ahead, I'll go ahead and say now, I think Saul wanted it to be real. But he just didn't have it in him to carry it out. So we have David's unquestionable character, Saul's questionable confession. So let's begin with David. David's unquestionable character. Again, you need to remember, at the close of the previous chapter, chapter 23, Saul took his armies and responded to an invasion of the Philistines into some, again, some unnamed territory in the land.

It says, you know, it just says, in the land. They invaded the land. We don't know where that is. But Saul responds immediately to that. And so chapter 24, verse 1, then begins, now it happened, when Saul had returned from following or pursuing the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, take note, David is in the wilderness of En Gedi. En Gedi, by the way, is an oasis area on the western part or shore of the Dead Sea. It's that region of Palestine.

And so here's how the chapter opens. So there's a little bit of a gap of time there. Chapter 23 ends. Saul's gathering up his army, and they're going after the Philistines to stop this invasion. Chapter 24 begins with him returning from that military engagement. And as a kind of a side note, I think the implication is that Saul and his armies had been successful, successful in repelling the Philistine invasion. So, you know, he didn't conquer the Philistines because he's going to continue to have problems with Philistines. Israel will continue to have problems with Philistines all the way through. And eventually, the conflicts between Israel and the Philistines are going to mark the or give the occasion for Saul's ultimate death, and Jonathan's as well. All right, so he didn't conquer all the Philistines, but he did repel this invasion. That, I think, is implied in the story. So he was successful. We could say that, couldn't we? Apparently. Successful because he was able to return from that. It was not some long engagement, no word of any kind of setback or defeat. We assume that he was successful, which I think brings up an important point, maybe a kind of a peripheral teaching that we might learn from this passage or principle. That is, Saul continued to experience success. Now, he's king of Israel, anointed by Samuel, became the king of Israel, but very shortly after he failed, he disobeyed God, and God literally, the Bible says, ripped the kingdom, tore the kingdom away from him to give it to another. Now, all that hasn't happened yet, but God, in his mind, it is a done deal. It's just a matter of the timing for it. So we understand that. Saul has rejected God, and thus been rejected by God, right? I mean, that's clear from the biblical account.

And he had himself departed from God, and he is actively pursuing the destruction of God's anointed, God's chosen king, the next king of Israel. David, who is the epitome of the Messiah, the Christ who would come. He is a man after God's own heart. Here's Saul, rejected by God. He's rejected God. He's being rejected by God. The kingdom is being ripped from him to give to another, and he is actively pursuing the destruction of one man, almost forgetting everything else. And yet, Saul continues to have some success. All right, you say, okay, what's the point? Well, did you know that you can be out in left field spiritually, doctrinally, biblically, and still sometimes prosper in this world?

It happens all the time. Now, certainly we know the Bible teaches, you know, the wicked do prosper, but I'm talking about even those who are believers, but they've gotten off track, and there needs to be repentance, but they've not yet repented, and maybe even start flirting with false doctrine and getting off in left field. And yet, sometimes those very people will still experience successes and prosper in a sense. On a larger scale, you know, many of the largest churches in this nation are teaching and preaching false doctrine, and yet they're experiencing huge growth in their congregations. And sometimes an individual would get off into sin, and because his life is still, or her life is still, you know, still seems to be prospering, and being blessed, quote, blessed, end

quote, end quote, because of that, a person may slip into a false sense of security, and rather than repent, continue in sin. That epitomizes Saul. I'm not sure if Saul was a bonafide believer, saved in the Old Testament sense of that. I'm not sure of that. I don't know. I could make an argument against that, and there are those who make arguments that he was truly a child of God, but he'd gotten off track. And, but rather than repent, he continues in his sin. And sometimes God has planned that and works that that way, bringing Saul eventually to a day of reckoning, allowing him to continue to prosper in some way, and allowing him to slip into a false sense of security. Remember something he said last week when David is kind of caught in this fortress in Kailah, and Saul says, the Lord has given him into my hand. Well, that's what he thought. And he had this mistaken notion that he was still, you know, in the right place before God. And he misinterpreted his successes with the blessing of God. That's what a lot of people will do. You see, don't always equate success with the blessing of

[14:26] God. Success is a poor indicator of your spiritual condition before God, your relationship with God. And I think Saul kind of exemplifies that. So we have this little blurb that he came back from, you know, dealing with the Philistines, and the implication he was very successful, and so he's just continuing on his way. He's, you know, firing his eyes, and he's wanting to destroy David, and all the while, you know, still being somewhat successful as a king and thinking, well, everything's okay.

Everything's okay. And so he's not brought to his knees, not brought to repentance, until we get to this chapter. And even then, it doesn't last for him. All right, so that's just kind of a lesson within a lesson. So let's get to David. Saul had returned from his success over the Philistines, but through, but though Saul had been temporarily focused on something else for a time, he had not forgotten David. All right, he hadn't forgotten about that. He had his intelligence network. They kept track of David, kept track of all of his activities, his movements, and so they informed Saul very quickly that David is, and his men are in the wilderness of En Gedi. All right, and so what does Saul do?

Musters an army together.

Army of 3,000. In fact, in verse 2 says, chosen men from all Israel. So these weren't just simply, you know, some soldiers he put together, or maybe his immediate armed forces.

He handpicked some special forces, you know, chosen men from all of Israel. Of course, it could mean, actually, not chosen in the sense of their ability as soldiers, but chosen in their like-mindedness with Saul.

You know, I mean, not everyone would want to do what Saul wants to do, to kill David. I mean, David had his admirers, and David certainly was an innocent man, and maybe he had Saul, in order to perpetrate what he desired to do, had to gather together those who were like-minded with him.

[16:46] But I think the, on the front, clear meaning is that these were chosen men, chosen soldiers, to be a part of this kind of elite group, 3,000 of them.

And they seek David and his men, and how many men did David have? 600 thereabouts, you know, around 600.

Of course, back in chapter 23, verse 13, it says, 600, but we go back to chapter 22, verse 2, how many men? 400. So I guess they gained a few there along the way.

Don't know how we got from 400 to 600, but according to chapter 23, the most current information, he has 600. 600. So, still though, 3,000 against 600.

That's a little bit uneven, isn't it? And so they seek David and his 600 men, verse 2 says, on the rocks of the wild goats. Now, if you notice in your version of the Bible, very likely, I think it's probably this way, regardless of your version, that rocks of the wild goats, you know, those words are capitalized, so this is the name of this place.

[18:08] How did it get the name? Who knows? Some notable thing happened there, or something that people observed. There are wild mountain goats in this place, but it also kind of describes the terrain.

Now, we don't know where this place is today. We know it's somewhere in the region of En Gedi, so it's near the Dead Sea, and judging from the name, rocks or crags, I think even it's translated in some versions, there's some rocky, craggy place that had lots of caves and lots of mountain goats, apparently, you know, the rocks of the wild goats.

And so verse 3 tells us that it was a good place to set up a camp for Saul's soldiers. That's implied also. It says, so he came to the sheepfolds by the roads.

So it was very likely a grassy area, an area that was level. I mean, you've got to have, you can't just have your camp of 3,000 soldiers, you know, setting up their tents and such, you know, on little cliffs and outcroppings of rock and craggy places.

So this was a good place here, maybe at the edge of this kind of craggy, rocky place where there are mountain goats and so forth. And so he set up the camp there and verse 3 reveals that the providence of God was working in David's favor here.

[19 : 42] And I say providence and I'm introducing that concept here because that's what this is all about. What's coming next? The providence of God. So look at verse 3.

So he, that's Saul, came to the sheepfolds by the road where there was a cave and Saul went in to attend to his needs. Now I don't have to explain that, do I?

What that means. The New American Standard Bible translates it, Saul went in to relieve himself and that's pretty crude, isn't it?

Said, enough said, right? Alright, so we understand that. We get that. Alright, so here's the providence of God. Verse 3, David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.

This is kind of amazing when you think about it. 600 men. This is a big cave. Ever been in big caves? I've been in some where, you know, one of the main rooms would easily hold that many or many, many more.

[20 : 47] But they were in the recesses so we can imagine that they were able to find, you know, little tunnels here and there and little offshoots from a part of the cave and so they could actually hide and no one would see them.

Alright, so they're hiding in there in this really big cave and so Saul goes into that very cave to take care of things. Now, what are the chances of that?

Think about it. The chances of that is Saul and his men, they know that David and his men are in this region here because that's been reported to him but they don't have any idea where he is and they set up their camp really, I guess we could say right at the mouth of the cave or somewhere near it anyway and Saul goes in there all by himself without any protection, you know, no bodyguards or anything like that.

It's not even entered his thoughts that David or his 600 men or that anyone who might harm him would be in there. You know, they say very likely there were many caves in this area so what are the chances that this would work out just like this?

All right? Well, you know, chance has nothing to do with it. This is the providence of God. There's no question about that.

[22 : 15] Even David's men interpreted it that way and by David's actions I think he too interpreted it that way. This is the providence of God that we would be here, no one would know we're here and Saul, my enemy, would just happen to go in this cave to take care of things, to relieve himself, the providence of God.

All right? So no question about that. But there is a question about how to interpret the providence of God at this point. That's really what we need to get here.

No question that this is the providence of God orchestrating this and working all these things that David, neither David or Saul, smart enough to be able to figure out on their own.

And so God is orchestrating this, bringing them together and then causing Saul to go into the very place and not only that but to be about a certain activity that would make him the most vulnerable he could ever be.

So it's the providence of God. But the question is how to interpret it. That is how David should interpret this set of circumstances and ultimately how he should act upon the providence of God.

[23 : 42] If you were David, how would you interpret the providence of God at this point? Well, we discover from the text that David is faced with two opportunities.

Two different ways to go with this. God has set it up. There's Saul, vulnerable, doesn't know I'm here. There's one opportunity.

So he faced those two opportunities and we could define it this way. They're very different opportunities. One, an opportunity to harm Saul.

Two, an opportunity to heal him. To seek his healing. And David's ultimate choice reveals something about his character.

Doesn't it? If you know the story. Because you know what he did. You know what he didn't do that he could have done. And we know what he ultimately did do.

[24 : 46] So two opportunities here. Here's the providence of God. Everything's set up. It's the stage is set. I have two choices to make because I have two opportunities that I could take advantage of.

The first one, here's how David reacts. First, David declines to act upon the opportunity to harm Saul.

He declines to do it. From the first part of verse four, it's pretty clear how David's men had interpreted this providence of God.

What does it say in verse four? Then the men of David said to him, this is the day of which the Lord said to you, behold, I will deliver your enemy.

That's Saul and their thinking. I will deliver your enemy into your hand that you may do to him as it seems good to you. By the way, there is no record of this promise.

[25 : 47] Okay. Now, I know you can go to the Psalms and you find this promise that David puts in his Psalms, but it's not specifically about Saul. All right. So there was no, prior to this time, any oracle of God that where God spoke and or thundered from heaven or whatever and said, I will deliver your enemy into your hand and you may do with him what seems good to you.

I don't know where they're getting this, but it's kind of fostered by their desire to take care of, get rid of David's enemy.

Nowhere did God specifically promise that Saul would die at David's hand. No promise like that was given to David. No set of instructions were given to him like that.

Now what happened next, I think, seems to indicate that David was at least toying with the idea of taking advantage of the opportunity because it says, and David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

Now I don't know if Saul was wearing it at the time. If he was doing what seems clearly he was doing, he probably took it off, laid it there on a rock or something and David's very near, maybe behind that rock and he just, not scissors, probably didn't carry scissors with him, but his, a knife, a sharp knife and he just cut off a corner of it without Saul knowing.

[27 : 17] It's really kind of, what an image we, you know, we can kind of see, see that happening. Alright? So that's what he did. Now we don't know if initially he is kind of agreeing with his men, his counselors, here's a prime opportunity God has brought Saul into, he's delivered him to me so that I can do with him what seems right and to them anyway, what seemed right was to kill him, take care of David's enemy.

So what an opportunity David had in the life of the hunter, and thereby end his life of being the hunted and then to be king, be king.

I mean isn't that what God wanted? As far as we know, I mean it's clear in scripture this is God's plan. So what an opportunity. But look at verse 5, now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe.

It seems like a pretty small thing to do. This was his kingly robe. So this was an assault upon his royalty to damage his robe.

Think about the sensitivity of David's spirit. I mean he hadn't cut Saul. He hadn't wounded him, certainly didn't kill him, all he did was cut off a piece of his robe, and David's heart was troubled.

[28 : 56] This is kind of the turning point for David. Perhaps prior to this he is thinking like his men are thinking that this is the providence of God and here's my enemy and I should kill him so that I can go on and be what God has called me to be.

I mean it's just the right thing to do. And so he starts by just cutting off a little piece of the robe. And then his heart troubles him and this is the turning point.

So why was his heart troubled? Well verse six tells us and he said to his men the Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master and the Lord's anointed to stretch out my hand against him seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.

And Saul was the anointed of the Lord. And until God at such time according to his plan and timing until King Saul would be removed as God said he would be one day until that time he is still God's anointed and to be respected and this was David's conviction in his heart.

It speaks to his character. And so David restrained his servants with these words, the words he just spoke, and did not allow them to rise against Saul and Saul got up from the cave and went on his way totally oblivious to anything that had happened.

[30 : 17] Now so yes God had rejected Saul as king, but for now under God's will he is still king, king of Israel.

Yes, Saul was wicked, wicked man, but for now under God's will he is still king of Israel. And yes, God had selected David to be the next king of Israel.

Clearly he had, but for now under God's will, Saul is still king of Israel. And David will not take it into his own hands to bring about what God has promised him.

He's not going to do that on his own. It's God's business. God will do it. And by the way, if David had taken it in his own hands, I think David would have ceased to be a man of faith.

Would have been a dramatic turning point in his life. To that point, he's not trusting God. He's taking it upon himself to make himself king.

[31 : 23] And we're sometimes tempted, I think, to help out God, to bring about his will for our lives, aren't we? You know, we've got to help God out. Sometimes, and maybe this is more timely of an application, sometimes we're tempted to wish evil upon those who hurt us.

or hurt our country. Be they people close to us, or government leaders, or potential leaders, or be they wicked world personalities that we could actually wish that they would die.

Something terrible would happen to them. And maybe we've never come to the place where, you know, we wish that we could do that, you know. But we just kind of sort of hope that this wicked person, or this person may be hurting me directly, would be taken out of here.

That harm would come to him or her. It's kind of the same scenario. I don't know how many of you are fans of Lord of the Rings.

And some of you have seen the movie, that I'm talking about the book, and yet this appears in the movie as well, and I'm glad that they brought this out, because it was a principle taught by Tolkien in his book.

[32 : 49] And some of you might remember at the point when Gandalf, the wizard, is having a conversation with Frodo, the hobbit, the bearer of the ring.

Okay, you with me? Some of you have never even seen it, never read it. And so I don't have time to tell you the whole story. I mean, the book is that thick, okay?

Read it sometimes, good reading. And there's some tremendous principles that you'll find, biblical principles that you'll find. I'm not saying that it's, you know, a companion to your Bible or anything like that.

But here the two are speaking, and Gandalf, the wise wizard, and Frodo, the bearer of the ring. Before Frodo, it was possessed by another hobbit by the name of Bilbo.

Bilbo got the ring from this gangly creature called what? Gollum. Or Smeagol. And, I mean, a creepy creature.

[33 : 59] And this ring of power, very evil, had absolutely poisoned his mind. And so Gandalf and Frodo are talking about, and he's kind of giving, Frodo, or rather, Gandalf giving some of the history of that, and Bilbo, and Gollum, and all of that.

And at one point, Frodo says, it's a pity Bilbo didn't kill him when he had the chance. That is, kill Gollum. This wicked little creature.

It's a pity that Bilbo didn't kill him. And Gandalf says, pity? It was pity that stayed Bilbo's hand.

That he didn't kill him. And he said, many that live deserve death. Some that died deserve life. Can you give it to them, Frodo?

And then he said, do not be too eager to deal out death and judgment. Only the very wise can see all ends.

[35 : 07] And that's very appropriate for this story here. Here's David. And it seems reasonable, I'm sure, to him. It did to his men. It even, at some point, seems reasonable to us.

And here's an opportunity to end Saul's life so that David's life would be preserved and he could stop being on the run.

And then he could be king. It just seems right. Maybe Saul did deserve to die. But can David give that to him? No.

That's God's business. All right, so David declines to act upon the opportunity to harm Saul. Luke chapter 6, and this is why I say that David is really exemplifying the very character of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the character that he is transforming us to have as well. Luke 6, 27, But I say to you who here love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who

spitefully use you.

[36 : 23] That's the teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ. All right, so David declines to act upon the opportunity to harm Saul. But David had another opportunity. And so second, the second sub point here, David determines to act upon the opportunity to heal Saul.

A desire to heal him. And this is really the beautiful part of the story. If you look there at verse 8 and following, you know, just kind of read through it here.

David also arose afterward, went out of the cave. All right, so Saul got up, left the cave, and we assume he's walked a little bit of a distance, not too far.

And so David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, my lord the king.

You get the respect that David had for the kingship of Saul. My lord the king, his respect, his loyalty, his submission to Saul as king, even though Saul had been the one trying to snuff out his life.

[37 : 38] I tell you, this is a tremendous testimony to his character. My lord the king, and when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth and bowed down.

Yet another statement to David's respect and honor for his enemy here. So he stooped with his face to the earth and bowed down, and David said to Saul, why do you listen to the words of men who say, indeed David seeks your harm?

And Saul no doubt had counselors like that. David's out to get your kingdom, out to get your throne. Well, David is being pretty gracious here, and he's not saying directly to Saul, why do you think that I am trying to take your throne?

Because it's not true. Was God going to take the throne from Saul and give it to David? Yes, but that's another matter. David's not Saul's enemy.

David is not actively pursuing his throne, throne, and he's going to give evidence of it as we go along here. And by the way, it's kind of amazing, this tells you this is a central theme of the book, very important part of the book, because this is the longest recorded dialogue between David and Saul.

[39 : 17] I think I wrote it down here, I think, 114 words, whereas before they're just little snippets here and there. In fact, when Saul speaks and responds here in just a moment, that's the longest recorded words of King Saul.

Like 67 words in the Hebrew text. You may think, well, big deal. But this tells you this is very important. This is very important. And so, as we go on, David said to Saul, why do you listen to the words of men who say, indeed, David seeks your life?

The implication being is not true. And then he offers some evidence, some profound evidence. He says in verse 10, look, this day your eyes have seen.

Here is eyewitness evidence. Your eyes, your own eyes, Saul, you've seen. Here, your eyes, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave.

It's indisputable. And someone urged me to kill you, but my eyes spared you. And I said, I will not stretch out my hand against my Lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.

[40 : 34] And that's exactly what David said to his men. So here's eyewitness evidence. And to back that up, he gives some material evidence. Moreover, my father, again, another just word of endearment and respect and honor.

My father, see, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For in that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand and I have not sinned against you, yet you hunt my life to take it.

He's offering indisputable evidence here. See, I had the opportunity to kill you. I was even told by my men, encouraged by my men to kill you, but I did not kill you.

And here's the material evidence. See this little piece of cloth. Look at your robe. It comes from your robe. I cut it off while you were in the cave. I could have killed you at that very moment and I did not. That's indisputable proof, Saul. And so let the Lord judge between you and me. And let the Lord avenge me on you, if that's his will.

[41 : 52] My hand shall not be against you. Now think about that statement. David, if it's the Lord's will for you to kill me, then so be it. So be it.

But my hand shall not be against you. As the proverb of the ancient says, wickedness proceeds from the wicked. So if I have not acted wickedly toward you, then that means I'm not wicked.

Because wickedness proceeds from the wicked. It would have been a well-known proverb. Now it's not a proverb in the Bible, but there were other proverbs. And so he's just quoting from that proverb. The wickedness proceeds from the wicked, but my hand shall not be against you. After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? And this is really an argument from, you know, from just what's rational.

I mean, pursuing a dead dog, how hard is that? Or a flea. It does say a flea, it's singular, one flea.

[43 : 01] Can you imagine? And I think there also may be some word here about kind of the activity of a flea. I read one commentary that said that fleas don't ever fly in any kind of pattern.

They're this very erratic. They just flit here and flit there. And that perfectly described David in his wilderness experience. He's going here and there, and first he's in this cave, and he's in this valley, and then another cave, and he's here and there and all over the place, all over the map, which makes sense if you're trying to flee someone who's hunting for your life.

But he says, who'd you come out to kill? Some dead dog? A flea? See? Therefore let the Lord be judge, and judge between you and me, and see, and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hands.

So he's making a case here. What does he desire? For Saul, come to grips with this, repent of what he's trying to do, because there's no cause, no reason, and he's seeking his healing.

He's taking this opportunity that, brought about by the providence of God, rather than an opportunity to harm him, he has the opportunity to seek his healing, and this is what David chooses, to bring healing to Saul.

[44 : 25] Abraham Lincoln was once criticized for his attitude toward his enemies. enemies. And so those who criticized him, some of his colleagues, they would ask, why do you try to make friends with your enemies?

He said, you should try to destroy them. He's talking in the context of the political, you know, the political context. You should try to destroy them. To which Lincoln wisely responded, am I not destroying my enemies when I make them my friends?

That's pretty wise, isn't it? All right, so to wrap this up tonight, David's unquestionable character, that's what we've seen, the first part of this. He declined to act upon the opportunity to harm Saul, and rather he determined to act upon the opportunity to heal Saul, bring healing to Saul, and did it work?

So then second, the second part of a two-part message, Saul's questionable confession, and this is really quite amazing, starting with verse 16. So it was when David had finished speaking these words to Saul that Saul said, Is this your voice, my son, David?

Kind of a counterpart to David calling him his father. It's a term of respect, and Saul is kind of returning that, my son, David. And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

[45 : 51] So the evidence that David offered there, incontrovertible evidence, hit home to Saul's heart. And he responded emotionally, he wept.

And then he said to David, you are more righteous than I, for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. True? True. I mean, this is true.

I mean, Saul's telling the truth here. And he goes on to tell the truth. And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me. For when the Lord delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me.

True. So he got it. David offered the evidence, see, the eyewitness evidence, the material evidence, the just rational evidence, and offered the only possible verdict that could be rendered here, that I am not trying to kill you, not trying to take your throne.

And so Saul got it. He got it. He's telling the truth here. Go on.

[47 : 05] Verse 19. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore, may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. And now I know, indeed, that you shall surely be king.

True. See, Saul has known this all along. In fact, remember, last time in chapter 23, that's what Jonathan said to David.

He said, my father knows. My father knows. And Saul is admitting that. He's telling the truth. I mean, boom, boom, boom. Truth is coming out of his mouth.

The truth. And it's important truth that you would hope that he really believes. And he does believe it. And that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand.

Therefore, swear now to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants after me. And that you will not destroy my name from my father's house. Which he really didn't need to ask David to do.

[48 : 12] Because David already promised to do that. In his covenant with Jonathan, his son. And so, verse 22, David swore to Saul, that is, he agreed.

I will not cut off your descendants. And David upheld that covenant, that promise, through Mephibosheth, which comes in to 2 Samuel chapter 9.

Alright, so, here's Saul, his confession. And the question is, is it real? I mean, is it real? You know, really, it's a confession and repentance.

I mean, he's very sorry. Emotionally. He's weeping. He knows he's been wrong and done wrong. And he's telling the truth now. So it's a confession and repentance time.

Is it real? That's what we want to know. And we do find a similar confession, though a very short one, but the implication is the same in chapter 19.

[49 : 18] Jonathan laid all those, many of those same things out to him about David. He's not trying to take your throne, not trying to kill you, and so forth. And Saul agreed. He said it was true.

So, already he has somewhat confessed these same things. But now, clearly going forward, and we'll see it in a couple of chapters, Saul does not cease from his efforts to destroy David.

So is it real confession, real repentance? Well, I don't think so. How could it be? Saul being very emotional.

I mean, he's deeply affected emotionally. emotionally. He's sad. He's sorry. He has feelings of guilt. Kind of reminds me of a New Testament character by the name of Judas.

He experienced some of these same things. He was very deeply affected. And yet, he was unchanged. And that's true of Saul.

[50 : 32] But David's no fool, and that's how it ends. In verse 22, it says, And Saul went home. And you would think that'd be a statement about, well, that's the end of it then.

No more problem with Saul. He went home. But where'd David go? David and his men went up to the stronghold. David's no fool.

2 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 10 says, and I'll close with this verse. For godly sorrow produces repentance, leading to salvation.

And then this little blurb here, not to be regretted. King James says, not to be repented of.

Repentance, godly sorrow produces repentance, leading to salvation.

That is, if that repentance is not regretted at some point. That you don't go back on it. If you go back on it, it's not true repentance. So let's put the whole verse together again.

[51 : 38] Let me give you the rest of it. For godly sorrow produces repentance, leading to salvation, not to be regretted, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

And that's exactly what Saul had. He didn't have true repentance, he just had sorrow. Just had sorrow. It leads to death. It's a worldly sorrow, not a godly repentance that leads to salvation.

Thank you.