

MAY 16

1 Samuel 18:5-19:24

1 Samuel 18:5-30

Vs. 5-9 This fighting lasted weeks, if not months. During this time Saul promoted David. The kid was a natural and apparently people followed him. When the fighting was over they came back to Gibeah, the birthplace of Saul and now his royal residence. You also know of Gibeah from the last chapters of Judges. Very ironic that this rebellious king, from the tribe of Benjamin, made this the capital, or royal city, of Israel.

On the way back from the battle, they would have gone near Jerusalem, David with Goliath's head in hand, and then up to Gibeah. In this procession, with crowds lining the road along the way, the women broke out in song. The fact that this was their song indicates that there were weeks between Goliath and this victory march. News had circulated; the new hero's name was known and now it had become part of an irritating little song.

V. 9 From this day on Saul began to hate David and the evil spirit began to return. It is possible that 4-5 years pass by from the killing of Goliath to David fleeing for his life from Saul.

This is the grungy history of Israel. It is also the grungy history of redemption. You would think that since the world and its people are going to hell, we Christians could all be friends, be of the same spirit and get the job done. Not so. Growing as a mature disciple means witnessing this kind of "in fighting," but still keeping your passion for Christ and His/our mission burning brightly. There can be a lot of jealousy and ego in the church and in the harvest. Paul, himself, mentioned the jealousy aimed at him in Philippians 1.

Vs. 10-11 Apparently, during the time of the fighting, Saul and David became reacquainted. When they returned, Saul was having more difficulty with that evil spirit; and David took up his old job of playing the harp as he had done years earlier. I'm not sure if it means that David evaded him twice on this occasion, or if it means that in all of David's dealings with Saul there were two times he tried to kill David. There will be one more narrow escape just around the corner.

Vs. 12-16 It is interesting that Saul got to the place of not being able to stand David's presence. As an ordinary commander, David would fall into obscurity; but unlike Saul, the Spirit was with David and David was bold, taking the initiative. Notice the mention in v. 16 of *Israel and Judah*. This will become more important later.

Vs. 17-19 One of Saul's daughters had been promised to the man who killed Goliath. Saul was making David wait, hoping the Philistines would kill David. When that didn't work, Saul broke his own vow and didn't give Merab to David.

This vow put Saul in a hard situation. Saul knew that God's hand was on David, so he wanted David dead. Plus, if David married one of Saul's daughters, David would be in the family and would have some right to the throne. That would be horrible.

Vs. 20-29 Michal was not a consolation prize. She loved David and was probably closer to David's age. With Merab, it would have been like making your 30-year-old daughter marry a 19-year-old. David would have been her "Boy Toy." In the case with Michal, it would have looked better. But the same problem existed here; David had to die and he couldn't become part of the family.

V. 27 It's good that this story doesn't make it into children's Sunday school lessons. It is interesting to wonder if they took the time to really circumcise the dead soldiers. Some think that David just castrated them, but it says he brought the foreskins. Circumcision would have been less macabre, and it would have added a psychological fear factor to fighting Israel. Of course,

death was bad enough, especially the real reality of death - stepping before a judge you're not ready to meet.

Because of Saul's insane jealousy and bitterness, I'm sure this ruined every day of his life. It finally drove him to very violent and insane acts.

V. 30 This is giving us the passage of time. In this verse David goes from a 15-year-old to an 18- or 19-year-old.

1 Samuel 19

Vs. 1-7 Apparently Saul resolved to kill David and goodhearted Jonathan tried to help David. There may not have been any big battles, so that David's achievements were a minor but constant irritant. Jonathan wasn't yet aware how deeply his father's ego and insecurity had been roused. It often happens with us. We try to speak peace to someone and it seems to work, only to discover that the issue is much deeper than we realized.

Vs. 8-10 Another battle with the Philistines, another victory for David, and incurable brooding and jealousy for Saul. Oh yeah, David, "Watch out for that spear."

Vs. 11-24 From this point on, David will be running from Saul. It will be about 17 years before David becomes king of the entire nation. During these next ten years, for eight and a half of them he'll be on the run, living in caves, living in the open country, hiding from Saul. Things will settle down, and then David will simply be hiding from Saul. Finally Saul will make another run at David and David will keep from killing Saul. David will realize that Saul will never change and never give up. Then he'll go to the territory of the Philistines and live in Ziklag for a year and a half. After these ten years Saul will die in battle and David will be made king of Judah in Hebron while a seven-year civil war rages with the followers of Saul. Finally, when David is 37 he will become king of the entire nation. David is now about 20 years old. This will be a very intense time in David's life, and God will develop his heart in this trial. We've seen God do this with Joseph and Moses. David will become great and we'll get some good psalms.

V. 13 Some translations say, "idol," but this was just some decorative statue, like a replica of that statue by Michelangelo, "David." Apparently they had "yard art" back in those days too.

V. 17 This lie was unnecessary and who knows how it was used to spread a false report about David. Eventually, Saul would give Michal to another man. Why didn't she just say she loved David and that her father was wrong?

Vs. 18-24 This was a strange way to stop Saul, but really, it was an attempt to give Saul another chance to repent. It was a sign to show that God would never allow Saul to kill David. The insanity here is that even though Saul knew he was powerless, he persisted even when he knew that God was opposing him.

As disciples, we should realize that we are reading redemptive history. It is sad and tragic, but it is God's working to save and redeem lost people. So, we shouldn't feel too badly if our journey looks something like this. Paul said to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:12-13, *Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil people and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*

Even in Paul's day there was a certain amount of resistance from Jerusalem and there were pharisaical Christians who followed him, disrupted his work, persecuted him, confused those new to faith and who tore churches apart. Paul had to deal with a lot of "friendly fire." Following the Lord in the harvest and making disciples for Him is worth it all.

John 8:31-59

Vs. 31-33 So what does it mean that these Jews (Jewish leaders) believed in Jesus? Satan believes in Jesus, too. Judas Iscariot must have believed in Jesus to have stayed with Him. John

2:23-25 says, *Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.*

This is a good question to ask, because it is obvious that belief doesn't mean you are saved. After Jesus reigns 1000 years on earth, people will still reject Him. It's insane, but true. King Saul knew and believed a lot. He believed in God and he knew David would be the next king, but he fought against it and became a madman. Belief doesn't mean saving faith. Submission, following, obeying, and doing are in the true definition of what it means to be saved. "He who hears my word and does it," is the real formula. Jesus said many would come to Him on seeing Him in heaven and claim they belonged to Him, but He will say that HE NEVER knew them. In Matthew 9, Jesus healed two blind men, saying, *Do you believe I am able to do this?* They said, *Yes Lord.* Then He sternly charged them, *See that no one knows about it. But they went away and spread His fame through all that district.* They believed, but didn't obey.

In v. 31 Jesus said it, *If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free.*

V. 33 And they not only argued with Jesus, but they were wrong. In reality, Israel belonged to Rome. But what they didn't grasp was their bondage to sin. The leaders knew of Isaiah 53. If they hadn't had an irrational hatred for Jesus, they might have been able to think this through.

Vs. 34-38 This is a very important passage of Scripture. Like Paul in Romans 7, Jesus is describing sin as a force within us. Only the Son can make a person free. There are no exceptions.

The allusion to the slave and the son in v. 35 could be looking at the difference between Ishmael and Isaac, or between the law and grace. One was the son of the promise and the other was the son of the slave woman. Apparently this symbol must have been a part of Jewish teaching, because Paul will pick up on it in Galatians.

V. 38 But Jesus picks up on the idea of *father* and presses the point home.

Vs. 39-40 If Abraham were their father, they would have received the truth as Abraham had. This is very interesting. Jesus was the angel of the Lord who visited Abraham and told him that he and Sarah would have a child. Abraham received that truth. So here is Jesus, who had talked with Abraham, being treated like a liar for telling the truth. This is a very ironic moment. When Jesus presented Abraham with the truth, Abe listened.

They still hadn't figured out who their father was.

Vs. 41-43 The irony only went deeper. In claiming God was their Father they were sadly wrong. I'll bet Jesus smiled sadly when He said this. If they had loved God, they would have been in love with Jesus.

V. 43 This verse is not only an explanation of the rebellion of man and result of sin, but it makes you wonder if Satan can bear to hear God's Word.

V. 44 This is an amazing description of the leaders who hated Jesus. They never thought that their desire to kill Jesus and lie about Him came from the devil. They proved they were his followers and children by so completely imitating and obeying his desires.

Vs. 45-47 Anyone who does not hear and follow Jesus is not of God, regardless of how moral he acts or how much "god speak" he utters. Jesus is the one and only.

Vs. 48-51 Now *the Jews*, usually meaning the Pharisees and leaders, take the lead in the confrontation. Notice the contrast in what is said here. They accuse Jesus of being demon-

possessed and He still offers them eternal life. Verse 51 is discipleship, true belief and saving faith all rolled into one sentence.

Vs. 52-59 Now we are back to Abraham. It really is amazing, that when these leaders wanted to be perceptive, they could do it. They understood the logic of what Jesus just said. They thought they had trapped Him, but they were about to get their hearts challenged.

V. 58 Jesus called Himself "Yahweh," when He said, *I AM*. We miss this because of the language construction, but they got the point. This will be revisited in chapter 10 where they say they wanted to kill Jesus; because, He, being a man, made Himself (declared that He was) God.

Psalm 112

A wonderful psalm.

Vs. 1-4 In keeping with both the OT and NT readings, note that this blessed person *fears the Lord* and *greatly delights in His commandments*. Loving/fearing the Lord and following His Word are connected. This man is known or blessed with what follows in vs. 2-4.

Vs. 5-9 Verse 5 describes the outward life of this person who loves the Lord as mentioned in v. 1. It is his relationship with God that allows him to be generous with others. He has stability and a firm foundation in the affairs of life because of his trust in the Lord.

V. 10 Doesn't this remind you of Saul or even the Pharisees? If you are for yourself, then seeing God blessing others and removing His blessing from you makes you mad. It can even ruin your teeth.

Proverbs 15:12-14

So apparently a wise person accepts reproof, takes courage in all things because of God's love which makes him glad, and then he seeks even more to understand God and to follow Him better.

There are many things that the Lord uses to reprove or humble us, but if our hearts belong to Jesus and we are following Him in the harvest, we would call that "pruning." That sorrow doesn't last long since we are living for the Father's glory, to bear much fruit. We know why we're here and what this life is about. The sorrow of life doesn't affect us the same way if we are abiding in our Lord.