

MAY 19

1 Samuel 24-25

As we read about David on the run, we get very little sense of the difficulty this presented for David or his followers. Over the 10 years he lived on the run in virtual exile in Israel, and then in Ziklag, it had to have taken a toll on all of them, with their emotions and tempers running the gamut. I'm sure he had people "encouraging" him saying, "Don't worry, this will only last a few months. The people know what's going on. Maybe they'll do something. Maybe God will do something." Don't you hate it when people do that? God doesn't always pay on Friday, or this year, for that matter. In the meantime, this "chase" was becoming something of a cultural phenomenon. Everybody, even the Philistines, knew about it. The Lord will encourage David at the most unexpected times and by the most unexpected means. This will be a good lesson for us, too, to simply follow in the harvest and let God give us recognition and encouragement as He sees fit.

This map might be a help. "David's Flights From Saul," Bible Knowledge Commentary-OT, p. 452. It's located at the end of this document.

1 Samuel 24

Vs. 1-7 This was not only unexpected, but David's reaction was also unexpected. I'm sure David loved or respected Saul, but more than that, David respected the Lord's sovereign choice of anointing Saul. It looks like David himself was surprised at how the Spirit stung his conscience. David's men also got a good lesson in godliness and following the Lord.

V. 3 I have never heard a good explanation for the expression "covering your feet," (you should have a note saying what the literal words are), so here is my theory. When a guy stands and empties his bladder, depending on the target surface and wind direction, he usually gets his feet wet, but only notices it if he's barefooted or wearing sandals. They wore sandals in those days. Apparently someone came up with the idea of covering their feet and the phrase caught on and became an expression like "going to the john" or "going to the place where even the Kaiser has to go on foot" (i.e., without his horse...it's German...oh, forget it). You get the idea.

I can't imagine that David had all 600 men in the cave, but certainly a scouting party.

Vs. 4-7 You can imagine the pressure on David. All the discomfort and stress of running, and here, with one good slice and the battle is over. I don't know what good influences there might have been on David to develop his heart, but the Spirit was with David and, in this instance, He smote David's heart. Remember too, that David was also anointed. He could have done a lot of rationalizing. But here, the Spirit led him. The respect David shows here to God and Saul, and his willingness to stand against the voice of the people (unlike Saul) is what made him a leader and model to his men. In the German it says that David used hard words to steer his men away from this plan of action. And I wonder if Saul was deaf. I can't imagine David arguing with his men in a cave making no noise unless they were doing pantomime.

Vs. 8-22 To me, the most significant thing that comes out of this is Saul's sad confession that he knew David would become king. In other words, Saul knew he was fighting God. In v. 21, as he makes David swear not to kill his family, he all but admits that he knows God will prevail.

Notice that this was very public. In v. 2 we are told that Saul brought 3000 of his best men. They all heard him confess his guilt and declare that David would become king. What a funny thing for God to arrange. Yet, in spite of this public declaration, Saul will still irrationally pursue David, and so will the leaders and men who heard what had just been said.

Sin, this same kind of sin, is in us. Rationality and education can only go so far and these will always give way to the vicious sickness in our souls. Our problem is spiritual, so the cure must

be spiritual. We have been given a new spiritual life, but still we need our meds, the Word, daily. Until the Lord takes us and frees us completely from this body of death, we desperately need the Word, the Spirit, and following Christ in the harvest.

1 Samuel 25

This chapter is given entirely to the story of David and Abigail. So, what is this chapter really about? Is this a romance? If you ask me, and I know I'm hopeless, every year when I read this, I wish David would have just hung with Abigail. I know God is sovereign, so Solomon had to come, which meant Bathsheba would have been David's wife eventually (without David killing Uriah). So then, if this isn't a romance, what is the point of the story?

Vs. 1-8 We have no clue here as to the passage of time. It could have been days or years. David apparently attended Samuel's funeral. David must have been living a very public life, as we'll see in a few verses. If you use the map of David's Flight From Saul, follow line 14 up to Ramah. That would have been the funeral. Then follow line 15 down to Maon. As only a shepherd could, David guarded Nabal's (Nabal means fool) flocks and his shepherds. Wrongly, David felt that Nabal owed him something. Since the man was rich and David had rendered a service, he could have been generous. I think it is a little irrational that David demanded a payday and was willing to kill.

Vs. 9-13 I guess you could call this a tale of two hot-heads.

Vs. 14-17 This guy was the unsung hero of this story. I've never noticed him before. Notice his advice to Abigail. I had to smile when he called Nabal a worthless man.

Vs. 18-22 Abigail and Nabal apparently complemented each other. He was a fool and she was very wise. She was not only bringing a lot of stuff, but she sent servants on ahead so they could temper David's anger. David on the other hand was ready for war. His words show that he wasn't depending on God. He "served" Nabal to get something from Nabal.

Vs. 23-31 Besides all that may have been going on here culturally, God gave David a very unexpected encouragement. Notice what Abigail says in vs. 28-31. She is saying that everyone knows David is God's choice to be king and she has faith that God will exalt David. Wow. She even asks David to remember her when God brings him to the throne. Now, if Abigail and everyone knew this about David, so did Nabal.

Notice that she tells him twice that he shouldn't help himself by his own hand. It's hard not to fight.

Vs. 32-35 I think this is the point of the entire story. David would have been completely unjust in doing this. He would have been a murderer. God saved him. Abigail said what was obvious, that God was going to make David the king over Israel. In the bitterness of waiting, David had lost perspective.

Remember Balaam, no one could convince God to curse Israel, but they could bring a curse on themselves through sin. Then both justice and Satan would be storming God's throne to bring wrath and judgment. Later, in the case of Uriah the Hittite, David will become a murderer. God will judge him, and he and his entire family (not to mention the nation) will suffer as a result. Here, David is spared.

Do you ever wonder why God blocks you or why that slow driver pulls out in front of you to make you drive slower? In this way, and in a thousand other ways in all sorts of situations, the Spirit guiding us often blocks us, protecting us to keep us safe before God, so that we will remain focused and qualified to bear witness to our Lord in the harvest, and to make disciples.

Vs. 36-42 Almost a happy ending. God struck Nabal, and David learned the mercy of God in being blocked and the importance of waiting on God. And David married Abigail.

Vs. 43-44 This is what takes the edge off of the happy ending for me. There is no example of a man with multiple wives where there wasn't trouble. Abigail might have been that one woman of spiritual wisdom that David needed. Having multiple wives meant that his attention would never be fixed, and he would never be fulfilled and "one" with anyone. This abundance of women and lack of oneness will get both him and Solomon in a lot of trouble.

John 10:22-42

Today, "The Feast of Dedication is called Hanukkah or the Feast of Lights. It commemorates the re-consecration of the temple by Judas Maccabeus in 165 B.C. after its desecration in 168 B.C. by Antiochus IV (Epiphanes), who was the foreshadowing of the antichrist. The time for the eight-day feast was in December." (Bible Knowledge Commentary-NT, p. 311) This then is just four months before Jesus' death.

The link between what happened earlier in this chapter and now is the continued conflict with the leaders, the question of Jesus' identity, and the analogy of the sheep.

Vs. 22-24 *The Jews* means the Pharisees and leaders. Their request seems reasonable except that Jesus had already told them who He was. They wanted to argue with Him to satisfy their unbelief and catch Him saying something they could say was wrong.

Vs. 26-30 This is a great portion of Scripture and worth memorizing.

V. 27 If you break this verse down into parts, you get a good description of saving faith and discipleship. And you get a good devotional for a group.

V. 28 is a good text for eternal security.

V. 30 This started a fight. They asked Jesus and He told them.

Vs. 31-33 They understood exactly what Jesus was saying.

Vs. 34-42 In Psalm 82:6 the men God sent to judge and lead Israel were called *gods* or mighty ones simply because they had the Word of God. Jesus says here that if those guys were called gods and sons of God, how much more should He be called the Son of God since He was sent from the Father and was doing the Father's works? Jesus wasn't saying He wasn't God's Son, He was confirming He was the Son of God.

Vs. 37-38 Even with this level of anger and resistance, Jesus still appealed to them to believe by looking at the miracles instead of looking at Him.

Vs. 39-42 Jesus escaped again and went to Bethany beyond the Jordan, where John first bore witness to Jesus (John 1:28). The leaders of the people hated Jesus and would not believe, but the people believed. Notice that although the people were attracted by the signs, they believed in the person of Jesus as the Messiah. The Pharisees couldn't get beyond the person of Jesus.

In about four months, the Jewish leaders would get what they wanted.

For us as disciples, we have Jesus as our model and our Lord. His compassion in dealing with the Jewish leaders, putting Himself in harm's way to give them a chance to respond, is mercy and grace, and is an example to us. Also, He is the model of what it means to abide. Jesus saw each situation as staged by His Father and was alert and followed as the Spirit led. That is how we abide in our Lord in the harvest.

Psalm 116

What a great psalm. As you read it think of two things. First, the power of our love for the Lord is always connected to how we understand what He rescued us from. As Jesus said, *he who is forgiven little, loves little*. Second, in our ongoing journey following Christ, He teaches us to rest in Him, by leading us into situations where we can depend on only Him. Think of this psalm as being written by David after living through the two chapters we just read today.

Vs. 1-4 God's love was known from His deliverance and therefore the writer loves the Lord. But there was calling out and crying to the Lord before the deliverance came. David and his guys were hiding in a cave, praying, while 3000 men waited outside for Saul to return, and suddenly God delivered David and his men.

Vs. 5-11 In what David was suffering, there was not just the danger from Saul, but the shame of hearing lies and being treated with scorn by people like Nabal. Yet God saved and vindicated David. In fact, God protected David from himself. That is mercy.

Vs. 12-19 If this is David, he is saying that he will repay the Lord by public praise and testimony to God's deliverance. Notice that he calls himself God's servant and keeps repeating that he will praise God before the people. This is what David says often and what he did when God made him king.

The psalm begins with *I love the Lord*, and ends with *Praise the Lord*.

Proverbs 15:20-21

Apparently v. 21 is dependent on v. 20. Isn't it interesting that the foolish man despises his mother? Assuming this is a godly woman, women tend to think holistically, seeing many things connected that maybe no one else sees. Moms might see love for Jesus and eating peas as practically the same thing. Rejecting their motherly wisdom and living a life that despises their values by its contrasting values and actions (you don't have to eat peas), is what God calls being a fool for foolishness' sake. A wise man walks a straight path understanding all of this, respecting his mother's viewpoint, though he may not eat peas ever again once he leaves the house.