

THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 18:17-30

“The God of Outcomes”

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Speaker: Pastor Dave Briggs

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19:52

Good morning. Do you ever make plans that turn out differently than you expected? All the time, right? May I share with you a favorite verse from the Old Testament, Proverbs 16:9.

20:17

It says, the heart of man plans his way. But the Lord, the Lord directs his steps. Her steps too. This verse, like others in the Bible, tell us how much we matter to God, how much we matter to God. We are loved and cared for by our Heavenly Father.

20:49

We plan but the Lord establishes. The Hebrew word established can also be translated to mean to guide, to direct, and to make reliable. It means we can make our plans, the little ones and the great big ones, we can make those plans and know with confidence that our God is in complete control of the outcomes.

21:18

The Lord will lead us not always where we think we want to go but always where He knows we need to go according to His perfect, flawless, mistake-free plan for our lives. That's a plan we can all trust and rejoice in. This blessed reality should just take some weight off our shoulders, shouldn't it?

21:45

Ease our minds and give our feet sure footing in this otherwise confusing and chaotic world. I wanted to begin with this biblical view of human planning and the Lord's sovereignty over the outcomes to prepare us for our passage today.

22:06

We're going to see King Saul make a series of plans and we're going to see how God, not Saul, is in complete control of the results of those plans. Will you pray with me please? Father, on this beautiful, beautiful day, end of July, looking forward to August, looking forward to every day with you, we just thank you that your words are trustworthy words.

22:36

Thank you for our passage today as we read it, as we study it, and as we think about it in the week ahead. Father, please let it penetrate deeply into our hearts. And we ask this in the name of Jesus our Lord, Amen.

22:55

Our passage is 1 Samuel chapter 18 verses 17 to 30. If you want to use the Bible under your chair or chair in front of you, it's on page 294. In chapter 17 you'll remember we saw David kill Goliath and David became the biggest hero in all of Israel and Judah.

23:18

Then last week, Pastor Bruce led us into the beginning of chapter 18 where Saul's son Jonathan and David bonded together like the closest brothers. Remember Jonathan was

the crown prince of Israel. He was next in line for the throne, but he took off his royal robe and gave it to David along with his armor and weapons because Jonathan recognized David as the next king of Israel.

23:47

David was a young man, probably a teenager. And after his victory with Goliath, Saul kept David with him full time. David's shepherding days were over because now David was a soldier and a leader in Saul's army.

24:03

And wherever Saul sent him, David had the victory because the Lord was with him. When Saul, David, and the victorious army came marching home, the women came out of all the cities they passed to sing and dance as they met them.

24:23

Saul loved it until the women introduced a new song they had written for the occasion. Do you remember the words to that song? Do you remember those words? I'll remind you. They sang, Saul has struck down his thousands and David his 10 thousands.

24:40

Saul did not dig their ditty. But instead of directing his rage at the women, Saul focused all his fury on David from that day forward. In fact, the very next day, Saul tried to kill David twice with a spear while David sat there playing the harp to try to soothe the king's tormented mind and soul.

25:03

King Saul saw David as the biggest threat to his throne. So what did he do? He made David a commander over a thousand in the army. And this looked like quite a promotion. But as Pastor Bruce showed us, this was not a promotion at all.

25:20

This was a setup. Saul wanted David to become a dead hero on the battlefield. But God foiled Saul's plan by protecting David and giving him great success in all of his military missions so that David became even more and more loved and revered by all the people in Israel and Judah, except for King Saul, who feared and dreaded him.

25:46

So that's where we left last week. Let's read on to see what King has in store for David this morning. All right, we're gonna read 1 Samuel chapter 18 verses 17 to 30. Then Saul said to David, Here is my elder daughter Merab.

26:05

I will give her to you for a wife. Only be valiant for me and fight the Lord's battles. For Saul thought, Let not my hand be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him. And David said to Saul, Who am I, and who are my relatives, my father's clan in Israel, that I should be son-in-law to the king?

26:23

But at the time when Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel, the Meholathite, for a wife. Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David, and they told Saul the thing pleased him.

26:38

Saul thought, Let me give her to him that she may be a snare for him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Therefore, Saul said to David a second time, you shall now be my son-in-law.

26:50

And Saul commanded his servants, speak to David in private and say, behold, the king has the light in you and all his servants love you. Now then become the king's son-in-law. And Saul's servant spoke those words in the ears of David.

27:05

And David said, does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law since I am a poor man and have no reputation? And the servants of Saul told him, thus and so did David speak. Then Saul said, thus shall you say to David, the king desires no bride price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines that he may be avenged of the king's enemies.

27:28

Now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired, David arose and went along with his men and killed 200 of the Philistines.

27:45

And David brought their foreskins which were given in full number to the king that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter, Michal, for a wife. But when Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David and that Michal, Saul's daughter loved him, Saul was even more afraid of David.

28:04

So Saul was David's enemy continually. Then the commanders of the Philistines came out to battle and as often as they came out, David had more success than all the servants of Saul, so that his name was highly esteemed.

28:20

Wow, Saul is quite a schemer, isn't he? I have to confess to you, the entire time I was studying this passage, a song from my teenage years kept popping into my mind. It was recorded by the Temptations in 1971 and the song is entitled, Smiling Faces Sometimes.

28:45

I'm seeing some heads nodding and smiling. Let me just tell you how the song begins with these words. Smiling faces sometimes pretend to be your friend. Smiling faces show no traces of the evil that lurks within.

29:05

Smiling faces, smiling faces sometimes they don't tell the truth. Smiling faces, smiling faces tell lies and I got proof. Song perfectly describes King Saul who probably wore a big old warm smile for David while plotting his murder.

29:27

Let's read verse 17. Then Saul said to David, Here is my elder daughter Merab, I will give her to you for a wife. Only be valiant for me and fight the Lord's battles for Saul thought, let not my hand be against him but let the hand

29:45

of the Philistines be against him. Saul, who always wanted to look good on social media, made good on his promise to give his daughter marriage to David to reward him for killing Goliath. But did you notice?

30:05

Did you notice how Saul slightly modified his offer? Saul's original promise was to give his daughter to any man who fought and killed Goliath, period. That was the whole promise. Kill the giant, you win the princess.

30:26

That was the promise. But now Saul added a proviso. That's a condition attached to an agreement. Saul told David he will give his daughter to him in marriage, but David must continue to lead Saul's army into battle after battle.

30:44

We should also note how Saul carefully chose his words to manipulate David. Here we see that Saul knew how to play David's heartstrings like a harp. Saul said, David, be valiant for me. In other words, be brave and heroic for your king and country.

31:03

Then Saul added, and fight whose battles? Saul's battles? Israel's battles? Ah, no. Fight the Lord's battles. How could David refuse to be a patriotic warrior for the Lord? From ancient times to today, when people sprinkle or flood their conversations with godly words and phrases, sometimes those words are sincere, and sometimes those words are meant to misdirect, maneuver, and manipulate others,

31:43

as was often the case with Saul. The text tells us exactly what Saul was thinking. He offered his daughter in marriage as a cover for a murder plot. Saul wanted David to keep fighting on the front lines where he would surely die at the hands of the Philistines.

32:03

What a dark, dark and wicked plan, isn't it? But sadly, tragically, David will use this same plan in the future to make sure that Bathsheba's husband Uriah will get killed in battle. We'll get to that in 2nd Samuel.

32:24

Let's look at verse 18 of our passage. And David said to Saul, here's David's answer to the king's offer of his daughter. David said, Who am I? And who are my relatives? My father's clan in Israel that I should be son-in-law to the king.

32:39

David's answer must have shocked Saul. Instead of jumping at the chance to become the king's son like just probably every other man in Israel would, David humbly said, no, I'm not worthy. This was not fake humility on David's part.

32:59

He was sincere. In those days, family lineage meant everything. David loved his family, but he knew he came from unimpressive stock and he felt truly unworthy to marry into Saul's royal family. But we need to think about this for a minute.

33:19

David knew God had chosen him and Samuel had already anointed him to be the next king of Israel, right? David knew that Jonathan, the prince of Israel, already recognized him to be the next king. David was fully aware of his fame and adoration throughout Israel.

33:40

David heard the songs the women were singing. I would think David would have lots of reasons to be figuring he's kind of a big deal and Saul would be lucky to have him for a son-in-law. Yet a humble heart beat strongly inside David's chest, so he still saw himself as the son of a farmer, not a son-in-law of the king.

34:11

This unassuming attitude of David might remind us of a parable that Jesus taught. Let me share it with you. It's one of my favorites. Luke chapter 14 verses 8 to 11. Jesus said, When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the place of honor lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him.

34:35

And he who invited you both will come and say to you, give your place to this person, and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place so that when your host comes he may say to you, friend move up higher.

34:50

Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. And then verse 11 is the key. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. Saul exalted himself and his rule crumbled.

35:11

David humbled himself continually and God continued to bless him. Let's look at David's answer again in verse 18. David said to Saul, Who am I and who are my relatives? My father's clan in Israel that I should be son-in-law to the king.

35:32

David's answer to Saul shows us something else. David did not kill Goliath in order to win the princess in marriage. David killed Goliath because a big giant Philistine brazenly defied the living God.

35:49

David's heart was for the Lord. It wasn't for reward. David also had a practical reason why he could not marry Merab. He could not afford her. In those days in ancient Israel, the groom paid the father of the bride a price for the daughter's hand in marriage.

36:12

I kind of wish we had that practice still today. You know, when I gave my two daughters to be married, all I got in return were two wonderful son-in-laws that I love like sons but no cash. Thank you for laughing.

36:36

The social rule of David's day was the more prestigious the bride the higher the price. So David's hardworking family just did not have the kind of wealth it took to cover the price of a princess bride.

36:53

Let's look at a surprise verse. Verse 19 has a surprise. But at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, she was given to Adriel the Meholathite for a wife. A Meholathite is probably an inhabit of the city of Abel-Meholah, which is along the Jordan River and the Jordan Valley about 40 miles east of Jerusalem.

37:17

The city of Abel-Meholah is mentioned several times in the Old Testament, but it's probably best known as the hometown of the prophet Elijah. Now verse 19 jumps forward in time from verse 18 to the wedding of the same bride but a different groom all of a sudden.

37:36

On the day when Merab should have married David, Saul gave his daughter to some dude named Adriel. What's up with that? Our text does not tell us why Saul did this. Some commentary suggested Saul hoped to make David jealous and angry so David might retaliate and then Saul could accuse David of treason.

38:00

Maybe that was Saul's thinking, but Saul just cared so much about his public opinion, it seems unlikely he would want to preside over the trial and execution of the nation's biggest hero, doesn't it?

38:12

I think it's much more likely that Adriel came from a very wealthy and influential family that Saul wanted to align himself with for selfish reasons. That sounds a lot more like Saul's M.O. or his pattern of behavior.

38:27

So we can't know for sure why Saul gave his daughter to someone else, but let's keep reading because Saul had two daughters. So that means he got a second chance to employ his plan of murder by marriage.

38:43

Let's look at it in verse 20 and 21. Now Saul's daughter Michal loved David and they told Saul and the thing pleased him. Saul thought let me give her to him that she may be a snare for him and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him.

38:59

Therefore Saul said to David a second time you shall now be my son-in-law. Saul's youngest daughter Michal truly loved David and when she and David told Saul about it the king was happy to hear the news.

39:14

Why did that please Saul? Why was he excited about that news? Did the king finally have one of those hallmark movie moments where he just couldn't help himself? His heart just filled with joy at the sight of seeing his baby girl marry the man she loved?

39:29

Not so much. Our text again tells us exactly what Saul was thinking. He thought good I can use the love of my second daughter as the trap to keep David obligated to fight to the death against the Philistines.

39:46

Let's look at the wording at the end of verse 21. Saul said to David a second time you shall now be my son-in-law. The king here seemed to admit that he faked David out the first time but that Adrial switcheroo that was in the past this time by golly he's gonna keep his promise right?

40:09

Saul is being all nice now, isn't he? We need to keep remembering he he tried to skewer David with a spear twice not too long ago. Here he is being all warm and friendly. I have to wonder if David thought about this much later when he wrote Psalm 55.

40:29

It's a great Psalm. Let me just read one verse and see if this sounds like King Saul to you when David wrote Psalm 55 verse 21. David wrote his speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart. His words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. That's good writing.

40:51

Wow. Sounds like Saul in our passage. You shall now be my son-in-law. When David, when Saul told David the second time that he wanted him to become his son-in-law, David must have hesitated again because look at Saul's unusual command in the next verse.

41:10

Verse 22, Saul commanded his servants, speak to David in private and say, Behold, the king has delight in you and all his servants love you. Now then become the king's son-in-law. It seems David needed a little convincing.

41:29

So Saul ordered his servants to go butter David up like a Sunday biscuit. Saul said, and I'm going to paraphrase a lot. Saul said, Okay, guys, come here. Go to David privately as if it's your own idea, okay?

41:46

Say to him, hey, look, look. You don't need to be afraid of being Saul's son-in-law. He won't be throwing any more spears in your direction, okay? In fact, the king doesn't like to admit it, but you're one of his favorite people.

41:58

And you know how much we all love you too, so come on, David, come on. Become Saul's son-in-law so we can all be one big happy family together. Let's look at David's response, verse 23. And Saul's servant spoke those words in the ears of David, and David said, oh, gee, thanks, guys, I think I'll do it.

42:20

Is that what he said? Let me read it a little more carefully. David said, does it seem to you a little thing to become the king's son-in-law since I am a poor man and have no reputation? When the servants spoke to David, their words did not encourage him, like Saul thought they would.

42:42

Instead, David felt discouraged and frustrated by their lack of understanding of his situation. You know, when David talked to these servants, David saw himself more on their level. David related with being just a working-class guy, just a servant.

43:00

So David said, do you think a man like me can ever be a king's son-in-law? Kings arrange marriages for their daughters with wealthy, important, and prominent families, probably like Adriel. My family is not like that.

43:20

I come from the opposite of that. I'm just a poor man with nothing to offer at the king. The servants reported David's answer to King Saul. Let's look at that, verses 24 and 25. And the servants of Saul told him, thus and so did

43:41

David speak then Saul said thus shall you say to David the king desires no bride price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines that he may be avenged of the king's enemies now Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines. Okay, Saul finally understood what was troubling David Saul was like, ah I get it. I get it. So Saul, always quick with a comeback always the schemer dictated a new strategy he knew would seal the deal with David. Saul told his servants okay, okay don't worry just go back to him and give him this message from me. And here's the message tell him the king desires no bride price except a hundred foreskins of the Philistines that he may be avenged of the king's enemies. Saul commanded his servants to tell David relax.

44:42

The king does not want any money. All the king wants you to do, David, is just go kill a hundred Philistines. I sure wish Saul had said it like that instead of phrasing it the way he did. However, Saul was a crafty schemer.

45:02

He chose his words carefully. He remembered how often David referred to Goliath as the uncircumcised Philistine. So a request for a hundred foreskins would be the perfect way for Saul to manipulate David some more.

45:23

Of course, we know because the scripture tells us Saul didn't really want David to deliver those trophies. All Saul wanted David to do was try to get what he asked for and die in the attempt. Saul was hoping he was sending David on a suicide mission.

45:44

Let's read on verses 26 to 27. And when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to be the king's son-in-law. Before the time had expired, David arose and went along with his men and killed two hundred of the Philistines.

46:01

And David brought their foreskins, which were given to him in full number to the king, that he might become the king's son-in-law. And Saul gave him his daughter, Michal, for a wife. David was a man of honor and courage, so he was happy to go earn the right to become Saul's son-in-law on Saul's terms, just like Saul knew he would.

46:30

David didn't know, like we do, because we have the text in front of us. David didn't know that Saul wanted him to be his deceased, almost son-in-law. In this whole situation, don't you marvel at how gracious David was towards Saul?

46:51

Remember David already won the right to become his son-in-law when he killed Goliath. David could have confronted Saul and said, Yo king, enough already with this dowry nonsense. I slayed the giant Philistine.

47:11

I am not going to risk my life again to become your son-in-law. You want a bride price for your daughter? Fine. You can find it in a 9-foot, 6-inch grave in the Valley of Elah. Now, you want to give me your daughter's hand in marriage like you promised?

47:27

Or do you want me to go tell the people you can't be trusted? I have to admit, that strategy would come to my mind in David's place. But David humbly accepted Saul's terms because David trusted the Lord, so he submitted himself to serve and obey God's anointed king.

47:51

David went right out and did exactly what Saul asked him to do, ahead of whatever schedule Saul gave for him. David took his group of loyal men, and they attacked the Philistines. And David knew the requirement was 100 foreskins, and David delivered 200.

48:14

As one commentary noted, there are many times in Scripture where we wish the Bible had pictures of exactly what happened, but in this passage we can be happy the Bible is not illustrated. The Lord was with David every step of the way, so David not only survived that suicide mission, he thrived and he overachieved.

48:43

Saul had no choice but to keep his word and give his daughter Michal to be David's wife, but the father of the bride was surely not happy about it. Let's look at the next two verses. But when Saul, Saul saw and knew that the Lord was with David and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, Saul was even more afraid of David, so Saul was David's enemy continually.

49:11

For all of Saul's clever planning, nothing worked out the way he wanted because Saul's plans were in opposition to God's plans. God controls the outcome of plans, not kings and not you and me. God controls the outcome of plans.

49:38

Instead of going to David's funeral, Saul had to throw a big royal wedding for David, and by now we see that Saul understood beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Lord God was with David. Saul could have, should have, wised up and surrendered himself to the will of God, right?

50:06

But Saul did not do that. He just became more afraid and more jealous, so he became David's enemy continually, every waking moment. By making David his constant enemy, Saul made God his constant enemy too.

50:26

You know, sometimes you and I, we can make plans and we can make choices that turn out badly because they were ungodly choices, ungodly plans. And when they turn out badly, we can blame others for the mess we're in.

50:47

Instead of recognizing our own sin is the cause of our chaos and that we need to go to the Lord and seek his forgiveness, seek and repent. But Saul, Saul would not surrender to God's will. He devoted himself for the rest of his life to fight against God's will.

51:10

That's a fight nobody can ever win. Nobody can ever fight the will of God. Let's look at our last verse. Then the commanders of the Philistines came out to battle, and as often as they came out, David had more success than all the servants of Saul so that his name was highly esteemed.

51:31

The Philistines likely wanted revenge for the mutilation of their troops, but the more they attacked, the more David shined as the greatest warrior and leader Saul had. David's reputation among the nation just kept glowing and growing.

51:49

Saul planned nothing but evil against David, but God directed every outcome for David's good. Hundreds of years before David was born, there was a man named Joseph. Remember him with a many colored coat?

52:06

Joseph was the 11th of 12 sons of Jacob. Joseph was also his father's favorite. When Joseph was a teenager like David, his jealous older brothers sold him into slavery to a caravan of Ishmaelites who took Joseph far, far away in Egypt, and then they told the father he was dead.

52:27

But the Lord was with Joseph. So Joseph found favor with Pharaoh, and Joseph became second in command of all of Egypt. This position allowed Joseph to ultimately save his brothers and his people from a terrible family.

52:43

When Joseph finally confronted his treacherous brothers about 20 years after they sold him into slavery, do you remember what he said to them? Let's look at these words, Genesis 50:20. Here's what Joseph said to his brothers, as for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good. But God meant it for good.

53:13

Joseph's brothers planned evil against him just like Saul planned evil against David, but God was in control of those outcomes, and God is still in control of all outcomes today, tomorrow, and forever.

53:35

That is the best possible news. Let's close with the words of Jesus from the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 6:31 to 33. Jesus said, therefore, do not be anxious saying, what shall we eat or what shall we drink or what shall we wear?

53:59

For the Gentiles seek after all these things and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you. This, this is the earth-shaking, game-changing recipe for the abundant life that Jesus promised is possible when we trust in him.

54:30

We need to shift our daily focus away from all the things we worry about having in this world and focus instead on all the things God has for us. His salvation, his righteousness, his faithfulness, his loving care, his word of truth, his sovereignty and so, so much more.

54:59

Our heavenly Father knows everything we need and he will take care of all our needs. Of course, it is true that God's idea of what we need is often different than our idea of what we need. However, we can always trust that his ideas are better than ours.

55:22

That's why, that's why my dear brothers and sisters, that's why we can make all kinds of plans. We can make small ones, we can make great ones, we can make short ones, we can make long ones and we can rest that God is in total

55:42

control of every single outcome for our good and for His glory. I hope, I hope this truth from God's Word gives you comfort. Our prayer team will be here to to pray with you at the end of the service if you would love to have a man or woman of God lift you high in prayer.

56:08

We also have a prayer wall. Just go out the door to the right. There's a little slip of paper. You can write it. You don't have to sign it. Put it in the box and we will pray for you. Let's pray together.

56:22

Father, I'm, I'm thinking about, it's from the song we sang at the beginning. I'm thinking about Romans 8:31. What shall we say then to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? Lord God, you are for us and you are with us every second of every day. Let that reality sink deeply into our hearts and minds. So that when we make our plans, and when our plans work out differently than we expected, and even when it looks like even when it feels like things are against us, we have peace because we trust you to guide our steps to the outcomes you have planned for us. In your perfect love, your wisdom and your faithfulness. We love you father, we trust you, may your will be done in our lives as it is in heaven. We pray in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.