



1 Samuel 23:15-29

“A Rock & A Hard Place”

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Transcript

18:02

Hi, my name is Drew. Stop it, stop it. A couple of things I wanted to, I want to take a couple of minutes before we jump in to our passage. So we're gonna be in 1 Samuel, we'll get there, but I've been bottling up for three months.

18:22

So I've got a few things to say. First Service was so cool because it's just, it feels like I'm back with my family. You ever been away from your people for a while and you come home and there's just a, there's a comfort, right?

18:36

There's a, there's a, this is right, that kind of wells up inside of you. So it's, it's good to be home, to be back with you and I'm so thankful, I want to tell you, I'm so thankful for the time that I had this summer.

18:50

Super, super beneficial time for me to be able to kind of step back and think through some things to have that time to be able to focus on big-picture stuff, to be able to focus on some stuff that was going on in my own life and just kind of praying through where would God have us be as a church.

19:08

I'm thankful for many of you. I know you broke Pastor Dave's rule about not, not touching base too much and that's totally okay. So there are so many in our church that have checked in. I think most of you probably have heard, but I'm not sure who knows what.

19:23

So my dad, for those that haven't heard, about three weeks ago made the decision to go on hospice and so he was stronger than we realized three weeks ago. So he's still just hanging on. We're kind of in a waiting game.

19:36

So thank you to all who have prayed. Please continue to pray for my family and my mom and everybody else who's kind of impacted by that. So God's in control and it's not lost on me that the passage that God saw fit this was scheduled months ago, but the passage that I'm coming back and that I get to preach the first weekend that I'm back is about how God is in control, even when life feels out of control.

20:01

And so it just feels appropriate somehow. So lots of wonderful time with the Lord, lots of wonderful direction from the Lord. I've got a, I came back with a list and kind of dumped on our elders this week.

20:15

Here's all the things that I've heard from God this week and their suggestion was don't back the dump truck up on Sunday morning. We're gonna sprinkle those out over the next few months or years or whatever it ends up being.

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So I've got plenty to share about how God has kind of, we've been talking a little bit this summer and we're gonna look to how he wants to lead his church. This isn't my church, this isn't Pastor Dave or Pastor Mike or Pastor Bruce or anybody else.

20:42

This isn't your church, this is God's church. And so we wanna lead it the way that God has determined and plans to. So I also do just wanna say, I know you broke the rules a couple of times. I broke the rules a couple of times and I think that's okay.

20:57

I hope that's okay. But I've been kind of keeping an eye from a distance, watching the prayer letters as they've been coming out, praying for many of you. I know there's a lot of people in our church that have a lot of stuff going on, that this summer has been a little chaotic for some families in our church.

21:14

And so I'm thankful to those who stepped up over the summer. We've got our elders who stepped up and stepped in in really visible ways. We've also got deacons that I know were playing important roles.

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But there's many of you that I look around this room and I know, well, if Mike was doing this, that means somebody needs to do this. That means somebody needs to do, it's kind of the way the chain reaction works, right?

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So I wanna say thank you to all of you who have played an important role this summer in serving and stepping in and giving of your time and energy and such a wonderful opportunity for us to see the body of Christ come together and work together like we're supposed to.

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So thank you to all of you. I also getting my updates of just, hey, what did I miss this week as I came back into the chaos of life, right? I believe, I heard this week that the roof project is about done.

22:07

So that's exciting, right? So I think there were a couple little details still that they were finishing up this, the last couple of days, but I believe it's done. So I just wanted to say thank you to all of you who made that possible.

22:19

That's a big deal. And so I crawled up there. I made the mistake of crawling up there at about two in the afternoon when the sun was shining down on this pretty white surface that just about knocked

22:30

me off the roof but it looks great up there so we've got some photos we'll share with you guys in the email and the newsletter this week so make sure you sign up on Flocknote and make sure you get those. But wanted to thank all of you that participated in that.

22:45

I also wanted to thank those that I came back this week and heard you know this week a week from today our Awana program our new Awana program starts and so we're excited about that, everybody who's playing a role in that and are prepared to launch that. And then also with our fall studies that start, I believe the women start tomorrow, we've got studies that start on Wednesday we've got all kinds of stuff going on.

23:08

So thank you thank you thank you to all the hard work. All the volunteers everybody that's playing a role. This is it's beautiful because it's what the church is supposed to be it's what the church is supposed to do as we are plugging along together. So I know there's many in our church as I've been watching the the prayer letters and the things that have been going on this summer that are hurting and so I just wanted to take a moment before we dive too far into the message this morning to just take some time to pray for the church.

23:37

To pray for the people and the things that are going on, things that I've missed, things that are going on now and so I just wanna invite you, would you pray with me as we pray together for some of the big things that have been going on this summer.

23:51

God, we thank you for the opportunity to gather. It's such a joy to be in your house and to be, God to be home with my family. So I'm thankful for this morning, but God, we do have many in our church who are hurting.

24:07

God, this life has a way of just piling onto us sometimes and God, I know there are many in this room and God, in our family that are hurting right now and so I just wanted to pray for a few of those.

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God, as I was thinking about this this week, God, I know Craig Miller has just had such an incredibly difficult season as he's been dealing with cancer and now has some other complications that have kinda come up off of that.

24:32

God, we pray that you would give him a peace and an endurance to walk this path that you've set before him. God, we don't know what it looks like, but we know that you do and we pray that you would give him peace as he walks through whatever the coming weeks and months and years hold for him.

24:47

God, I also wanna thank you for this season of joy for Bill White and for the White family as they've got one grand baby that just entered into the world a couple of days ago and we also have another one that's supposed to be induced and show up any day now, I believe in the next couple of days and so I just wanna pray for a joyful time of celebration for their family and also I got a peace that sometimes changes in the status quo can cause anxiety,

25:18

can cause all kinds of different emotions. We just pray that you would give them an overwhelming sense of peace during this time, welcoming these young ones into the family. And God we also want to pray for those that are dealing with physical injury or recovery, rehab, things like that with various falls and surgeries.

25:37

God, I think of Joni Briggs as she has had surgery a couple of weeks ago that you would continue to heal and strengthen her from her surgery. God, I want to pray for Jack Mikey as he has had some spinal issues and God had a fall a couple of months ago, all kinds of rehabilitation and recovery necessary for him.

25:55

We pray that you would strengthen him as he walks this road. God, we want to pray for Doug Davies and for Teresa as well. As Doug has been dealing with some seizures and some different things, we pray that you would continue to just give the doctors wisdom as they try to discern and figure out what's going on and God, that you would give Doug and Teresa patience as they look to you and look to the doctors for solutions.

26:21

God, we also want to pray for Mary Phipps this morning. God, I know it's been a little while that she's had several different health issues that have kind of prevented her from being able to be up and out and going, but we pray that you would strengthen her, not only physically that you would strengthen her, although we do pray for that, but God, we pray that you would fill her spirit, help her to not be dealing with any sort of anxiety,

26:45

any loneliness, God, it can be so difficult when it seems like thing upon thing upon thing just continue to come. And God, we pray that you would help her to know that you love her and God that we love her and look forward to seeing her soon.

26:58

God, I know Pete Mejia has also been kind of waiting on some answers with some heart condition stuff and we pray for wisdom for the doctors and strength for him as well, that he would do the things that the doctors tell him to do, but God, that you would strengthen and heal his body in a unique way that only you can do.

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God, there are so many more. This was just what I was able to gather this week. I know there are many others that are sitting in this room and are in the orbit of our church that are hurting. God, we live in a sin broken world.

27:34

And God, we live in a world that just feels like thing upon thing upon thing just pile up sometimes. God, I know there are many in this room that are dealing with sickness, that are dealing with loss, that are dealing with relationships that are fractured or broken, that are dealing with overwhelming financial issues.

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God, there are so many areas in life that sometimes the waves get big. But God, we pray that you would give peace and that you would work and that as we're gonna look at this morning, that we would remember that you are bigger than whatever it is that we face.

28:12

God, that your plan is greater than whatever it seems like our circumstances are throwing upon us. And so God, we pray for your best. We wanna pray for our fall ministries that you had blessed and that you would work there.

28:24

God, there is nothing that we are able to accomplish in our own strength, in our own planning or detail work or programs or whatever that can accomplish anything apart from you. So God we pray that you would bless these ministries, that you would help people to come to know you, that you would help people to grow in their relationships with you, that we would grow into maturity like you call us to.

28:47

And God we pray that you would teach us to simply be fully formed, to be fully devoted followers of you, that you would help us to grow in obedience and to take the steps that

you have for us this morning and in the coming days, that we would follow you and love you to the best of our ability.

29:03

God we love you, we thank you for loving us, we thank you for this church body that you've given us to, that you've given one another to, that you have blessed us with people around us who care for us, and God that you blessed us with the opportunity to be the one that cares sometimes for those that are around us.

29:21

We pray all these things in Jesus's beautiful name, amen. All right. It's time, grab your Bibles, right? We're gonna make our way through the rest of 1 Samuel 23 this morning. So grab your Bible, make your way to 1 Samuel 23.

29:36

And while you're turning there, just to remind you a little bit of kind of what we were talking about last week as Pastor Dave was sharing the first half of this chapter, the first half of 1 Samuel 23, what we see is that David has been on the run.

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He's been on the run for an extended period of time at this point, but David kind of steps up and he does what seems like the right thing in the beginning of this chapter. He was hiding out in the woods on the run from King Saul who wanted his head.

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But David heard that the city, that the town of Keilah was under attack, that they needed help. And so David and his band of merry men come running out. And so they helped out this city and now Saul has heard word, David's out of his hole.

30:23

David's out of hiding and we know where he's at. And so Saul is now hot on David's trail again. But as I was reading and kind of catching up on what was going on, what I missed last week, I saw this and I can't help but realize or notice that David does what seems like the right thing and it seems to blow up in his face.

30:44

I know you never have that happen in your life. I certainly have never had it happen in my life. None of us deal with that. But it was interesting to me to see where it seems like David's trying to do the right thing and it just has a way of kind of extravagantly blowing up on him, right?

31:00

So we come to this week's passage and as we pick up the story, David's gonna find himself in a heap of trouble. So let's see how the story continues. We're gonna read all the way through our passage starting in verse 15 of our chapter and we'll continue all the way down through the bottom of the chapter together this morning.

31:17

So let me invite you to follow along as I read 1 Samuel 23 starting in verse 15. It says in verse 15, that David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life, and David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh.

31:31

And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be the king over Israel, and I shall be next to you.

31:45

Saul my father also knows this. And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord, and David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home. Then the Ziphites went up to

Saul at Gibeah, saying, Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon?

32:04

Now come down, O king, according to all your heart's desire to come down, and our part shall be to surrender him into the king's hand. And Saul said, May you be blessed by the Lord, for you have had compassion on me.

32:21

Go, yet make more sure. Know and see the place where his foot is and who has seen him there, for it is told to me that he's very cunning. See therefore and take note of all the lurking places where he hides and come back to me with sure information.

32:37

Then I will go out with you. And if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah. And they arose and they went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah, in the south of Jeshimon.

32:53

And Saul and his men went to seek him, and David was told so he went down to the rock and lived in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. Saul went to one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side of the mountain.

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And David was hurrying to get away from Saul, and as Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them, a messenger came to Saul, saying, Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land.

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And so Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. Therefore, that place was called the Rock of Escape. David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi. These are the words of the Lord.

33:37

Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word. We pray that you, that your spirit would speak to us this morning, and God, we pray that you would give us ears to hear what you have to say. Use this time for your glory.

33:48

And it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen. All right, well, this morning we're going to look at this passage just a little bit differently than I normally like to do. Normally I'm just, you know, we'll plug through it, but as we look at a narrative, a story like this, I see themes jumping out at me as we look at this passage.

34:06

So I want to focus kind of on three different themes that we see as the story progresses this morning. And so the first thing that we see right at the beginning of our passage is faithful friendship.

34:17

We see faithful friendship from Jonathan as he comes to David. So at this point when we pick up the story, Saul has been chasing David for years at this point. Now I'm sure it doesn't tell us in the passage but I have to imagine that there is some level of fatigue that is growing that is setting in for David as he has been on the run, month after month, year after year. Not just physically although I'm sure he's exhausted but also the emotional and the mental toll that is beginning to set in on him as he's being chased time and time and time again.

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You know it seems to me it would be entirely understandable if David was worn down and was just ready to throw his hands up and give up. Just sit back and wait for the forces to come. You know David was the object, was the target of a national manhunt.

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If they had an Israel's most wanted we've got number one right here right. King Saul is hunting for this man and is turning the kingdom upside down trying to find David. It's our passage that we looked at this week begins with Saul hot on David's trail but it also tells us that that Jonathan, King Saul's son, comes to visit David.

35:29

I think it's interesting, just a random thought that I had, but it's humorous to me that Saul, King Saul has been hunting for David for years at this point, unable to put his finger on where David is and to track him down.

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Meanwhile, Jonathan sitting at home goes, I think I'll go visit David. And you know what he does? I don't know, punches it in the GPS, whatever he's gotta do. All of a sudden he shows up, Jonathan goes to visit David.

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So we see in verse 16, it tells us that Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh and strengthened his hand in God. You know, Jonathan and David were a beautiful example of friendship. Many people talking about the relationship that these two men had have described it as the greatest example of friendship that we have in the Bible.

36:16

They loved one another, they were there for one another, walking with each other through all kinds of incredible challenges and difficulties, and they truly illustrate what friendship looks like for us.

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And so as we see Jonathan show up in the story, deciding to come and to spend some time with his friend, David, there's a couple of valuable lessons, a couple of things that are illustrated here that show us what true friendship looks like, that I think we should pause and reflect on for a few moments this morning.

36:46

The first thing that we see here as Jonathan is mentioned in this passage is simply that Jonathan showed up. Jonathan showed up for his friend. It tells us that Jonathan rose and went to David. It seems to require a couple things of Jonathan.

37:03

If he was going to go and he was going to do that, it tells me first and foremost that Jonathan was considering what his friend needed above what he needed in that moment. Because if you think about it, if you put two and two together, the hatred that we know that King Saul had for David, the fact that he wanted David's head, tells me that he wasn't probably

37:25

going to take very kindly to it if he heard that Jonathan had gone out to go and to help David. If he caught wind of the fact that Jonathan, his son, had gone to help his enemy, what's the saying? Something along the lines of, any friend of my enemy is my enemy, right?

37:43

Jonathan was likely to be number two on the most wanted list if he heard, if King Saul heard, what had happened. But Jonathan, Jonathan didn't, Jonathan didn't stop. Jonathan didn't pause to consider his own needs.

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He was more concerned about what his friend needed. You know, there's there's lots of times when doing the right thing, it's not convenient for us. It's not easy for us to go and do. If Jonathan was just looking out for himself, taking care of himself, he probably would have stayed in his comfortable, you know, I have to imagine he had a big room sitting there in the palace that he was just hanging out,

38:16

right? He could have just stayed in the comforts of home, sitting there as the as the prince of the country, especially knowing that if David somehow disappeared from the picture, he was going to be the next king.

38:30

Meanwhile, Jonathan jumps up even when it wasn't convenient, even when it wasn't easy. Being there for a friend in difficult times is the sign of a true friend, the sign of someone who truly understands what it means to love and to care for someone as a true friend.

38:47

I think this is the kind of attitude that that Paul, the apostle, may have had in mind when he wrote the words that he wrote in Philippians chapter 2. Philippians 2 verse 3 and 4, it tells us to do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, we should count others as more significant than ourselves.

39:07

Continues in verse 4, it tells us, let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. That sounds like what Jonathan's doing here, doesn't it? And Jonathan lays aside his comforts to go and consider David's needs as more important than his own.

39:24

So what does that look like for you today? Certainly hope everybody in this room has a friend or two, at least one, right? What does it look like to be a good friend? What does it look like to be there for someone when they need you?

39:37

Well, I started making a list and then I decided, no, I don't need to share a list with you because if we were to sit here and start calling things out, I'm sure there's plenty of ideas that would jump into your mind. Ways that you can be there for somebody, that you can love somebody, that you can help someone and simply be a friend when they have something going on that they need a friend, right?

39:59

Sometimes there's not words to say. I've been called in, people call the pastor, right? When life gets hard, when things get deep, when people get close to the end a lot of the time, people are sick.

40:13

I end up showing up there and, you know, one thing that I've realized is a lot of the times there's not a right thing to say. There aren't words to just fix whatever it is that there's facing, but the reality of being there, sometimes it makes all the difference.

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Sometimes simply being there, making time for someone, going in and visiting them at the hospital, making time in a busy schedule to go get lunch. Sometimes all you need to do is sit there. Sometimes you simply,

40:44

you need a friend to cry with. Sometimes you need somebody to just tell you that they love you. Jonathan was there for his friend. Next thing that I see as we look at Jonathan in this picture of faithful friendship that Jonathan is to David, I see that Jonathan reminded David of what God had previously said.

41:09

You know Jonathan in verse 16 it tells us that Jonathan strengthened David's hand in God. In verse 17 it tells us that he reminded David, you shall be king over Israel. What he's doing in these moments, I have to imagine as David has been on the run, as he has physically and mentally and emotionally just drained, you have to imagine he's a little weak in the knees, right?

41:34

You have to imagine that if anything, his hands are probably, metaphorically, if not physically, he's a little weary, he's a little shaken. What Jonathan does as a good friend is he comes along, he takes his friend's hand and he says, no, no, no, I can help, but I'm not the one that's truly going to help.

41:52

And he takes his friend David's hand and he places it in the hand of God and says, this is where you need to be. You know, there are a lot of times when we know something, we know it, we can say the right answers, but it's hard to believe it sometimes when life gets hard, all right?

42:21

I'll just tell you this. There have been times that I've looked at friends in the past few weeks, weird season for me, kind of waiting for my dad to die. There have been times that I've looked at friends and I've said, I know this to be true about God.

42:39

I know that God is in control. I know that this is perfectly planned, that God knows exactly what was going on and brought us exactly to this point, but I need you to remind me. I need you to be the one that encourages me with that, that tells me that, that carries me when I'm a little too weak to do it for myself.

42:59

We know things to be true sometimes, but sometimes we need to be reminded. Sometimes we need somebody to come along and to reinforce those things in our lives, to remind us and to reinvigorate our faith, even when we don't feel like it.

43:18

Oftentimes the best thing that a friend can do, it's good to be there. It's necessary to be there. I think the most important thing that a friend can do is to, to take you, whether it's walking alongside of you, sometimes you're just too spent and you can't walk for yourself.

43:33

And so a friend needs to come along and drag you or carry you, kicking and screaming sometimes, passed out other times, take you and lay you at the feet of Jesus. Jonathan shows up for David and he reminds him of the things that David knows to be true about God.

43:56

The words that God has spoken to David. Oftentimes the best thing we can do is remind someone of what God has said to us when we get off track. And so what is our response? How do we respond to the words and to the promises of God?

44:12

What do we do with it when someone comes along and says, hey, you know, God said, he's in control. You know, you don't have to worry about this. The Bible tells us that, that God holds tomorrow in His hand.

44:24

Why are you worrying about this? And sometimes we hear those things, but what do we do with those? When we hear those things, they serve to strengthen us, to reinforce us, to put but wind in our sails.

44:38

When we remember the promises of God, how faithful God has been to us in the past, He gives us strength to face the future. David, in this moment, I have to imagine, he's looking at his circumstances and the waves are getting really big around him, aren't they?

44:55

The difficulties of life are certainly overwhelming. At this point, as we see what's happening here, David is being overrun by Saul's forces. The end is here for David. But when David remembered the promises of God, as Jonathan reminded him of the promises of God, how God had been faithful in the past and gave him strength for the future, and David had a few things that he could look back on and remember,

45:28

didn't he? David, God had given David victory after victory, protection in countless battles. So we've proceeded through 1 Samuel. We've seen David fighting a lot. We've seen God protect him a lot.

45:43

And probably the most famous one was when God protected little tiny shepherd boy, David, running into battle against a giant Goliath with a few rocks in his pocket. And God carried him through. Jonathan reminded David that God had promised that David would be the next king of Israel.

46:05

And as Jonathan reminded him of these things, of these promises of God that he already knew to be true, David was encouraged. I wanna share with you a quote from William Blaikie talking about this idea.

46:16

He said, surely no act of friendship is so true friendship as this, to remind our Christian friends in their day of trouble of their relation to God. To encourage them to think of his interest in them and his promises to them. To drop in their ear some of his assurances.

46:34

That is surely the best of all ways to encourage the downcast. Somebody needs help. We might be a little help, but taking them to God, reminding them of who God is, that's a lot of help. The way that we truly help or encourage our friend is not to show up and do something in our strength, but is to offer them to the one who has the

46:56

strength to do whatever is needed. Sometimes, a little reminder is all they need. Sometimes you need to pick them up and carry them to Jesus. I'm reminded of

Ecclesiastes chapter 4. We studied Ecclesiastes last year, but in Ecclesiastes chapter 4 it tells us that two are better than one

47:20

because they have a good reward for their work. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow, but woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up. It's reminding us of the significance of having a good person by your side, because there's going to be times when I'm weak.

47:36

There's going to be times when you're weak. Reality is everybody in this room has been weak at least a time or two, probably a little more, right? There's times when we're strong. There's times when we need somebody to carry us to the feet of Jesus.

47:55

This was going to be the last time that David and Jonathan saw one another before Jonathan, his death is recorded in chapter 31 of 1 Samuel, which is sad in a way, but I think it's also indicative to us.

48:08

It teaches us what a good friendship looks like. Jonathan was there for his friend and was a beautiful example of what a friend should be. And I think it's probably a good reminder for us as we go out and have relationships at home and the workplace and school.

48:26

We need to be a good friend as well. Let's keep moving. The second thing that I see here, we actually are going to take a little bit of a detour. So I want to ask you to grab your Bible, hang a right.

48:37

We're going to go over to the book of Psalms and we're going to look at Psalm 54. Now, while you're turning there, we've seen David's spirit renewed by his friend, Jonathan, but now why are we turning to an entirely different book of the Bible?

48:53

Well, Psalm 54 provides some interesting insight for us into the mind of David, because the superscription at the top, the little note at the top of Psalm 54, it says, a maskil of David, when the Ziphites went and told Saul, is not David hiding among us?

49:09

It tells us that Psalm 54 was written while the events of 1 Samuel 23 were happening, right? We've got a connection here between these two things. So not only do we get to see the narrator kind of telling the story in 1 Samuel.

49:22

Now we get to look at Psalm 54 and we get to see what's going on inside of David. Seems like a cool little insight. So let's look at Psalm 54. Let me read for you real quick. Psalm 54 verse 1. It says, Oh God, save me by your name and vindicate me by your might.

49:39

Oh God, hear my prayer, give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers have risen against me. Ruthless men seek my life. They do not set God before themselves. Behold, God is my helper. The Lord is the upholder of my life.

49:57

He will return the evil to my enemies. In your faithfulness, put an end to them. With a free will offering, I will sacrifice to you. I will give thanks to your name, oh Lord, for it is good. For he has delivered me from every trouble and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

50:17

Knowing what David was thinking and praying during this passage is such a cool little insight that we have from Psalm 54. We see at the beginning of this Psalm that David is asking God for help. He's praying for salvation and for vindication from the circumstances that he finds himself in.

50:36

We also see in verse 3, it seems to me that David is afraid. He says that ruthless men seek my life. Strangers are rising against me. We also see in the last few verses of this passage that David is strengthened in his faith, that he perseveres, that he looks to God for his hope and for his strength.

50:58

You know, if David was going to continue in the circumstances that we find him in, in 1 Samuel 23, he was going to need a solution to the fear that he was experiencing, which is exactly what Jonathan gave him when he gave him the promises of God, reminded him of how God had promised to work, had promised all these things in the past.

51:20

David's response to the fear is what we see here in Psalm 54. I want you to think about this for a minute, because if David found himself in these difficult circumstances that we see him in, and if David had just given up and surrendered, if he had just given in to the fear, I think David's story would have ended entirely differently.

51:40

We certainly wouldn't be sitting here talking about it this morning, that David had gone, David becomes King David, right? Spoiler alert, sorry. But God's got a lot more to do with David. But if David had just given up and said, we're trapped, we're stuck, we're done.

52:00

Let's just sit here and wait for him to come. If David had given up, David would likely have been forgotten. But David's renewed faith and David's obedience and what God had told him to do made all the difference in the world.

52:16

The difference between, the reality is there's a lot of people who start well. There's a lot of people who at different points in their life at different periods of time have been obedient, have done some things that look like good things for God at one point or another.

52:32

But the difference between people who start well and the people who do well is that some of them finish. Some of them persevere to the end. What separates the many who start from the few who finish is perseverance.

52:48

It's the willingness to stand strong when life gets hard, when things get heavy. You know, listening to this story of David being chased by King Saul reminded me of another man who, much like David, persevered in his faith in the face of overwhelming attack.

53:11

There's a man named Dietrich Bonhoeffer. May sound familiar to some of you. Others may not have a clue who this guy is, so let me just give you the 10 second version of who Bonhoeffer was. Bonhoeffer was a German pastor who came up into life and ministry during the early rise of Nazi Germany.

53:30

Bonhoeffer came and sheltered in America during a window of his adolescence as he was coming here for seminary and some training, but he returned to Germany in 1935. For the final 10 years of Bonhoeffer's life, he spent his life training pastors in an

underground seminary, hiding from Nazi Germany and from the powers that would want nothing to do with what he was over there doing.

53:55

He ran a seminary for 10 years until he was hanged in April of 1945. Just weeks, I believe it was weeks, maybe days, before the concentration camp that he was being kept in was closed down at the end of the war.

54:13

Missed it by that much, right? But Bonhoeffer, talking about the significance of good Christian influences and this idea of perseverance, he wrote these words in one of the books that he penned. He said, the Christian needs another Christian who speaks God's word to him.

54:33

He needs him again and again when he becomes uncertain and discouraged. He needs his brother man as a bearer and proclaimer of the divine word of salvation. And that also clarifies the goal of all Christian community, that they meet one another as bringers of the message of salvation.

54:52

Bonhoeffer's admitting here openly saying, I wouldn't be able to do it if it wasn't for my brothers that stand on either side of me and hold me up when I get weak. I think we should be reminded of men like him, men like David when we find difficulties in the trials in our life.

55:11

Whenever we face trials of various kind, I think there's two important things that we need to remember. The first one is that we're not alone in facing difficulty. People like Bonhoeffer, people like David have walked through whatever it is that we're walking through, others have walked through similar if not worse circumstances.

55:28

We're not alone in the reality that this world is difficult. We're also not alone in the path as we walk it because God tells us that He will walk with us. The other thing that we need to remember is that perseverance is the mark of a true Christian.

55:43

Lots of people will say, I love Jesus and then life gets hard and the water gets deep and they're out. I think those are probably some of the people that the Bible tells us we'll stand before Him one day and we'll say, look at all the things I did for you and God will respond and say, no, no, depart from me for I never knew you.

56:04

The mark of a true Christian is the fact that we persevere to the end. The Puritan, Thomas Watson, great preacher, he said It is not the beginning of the Christian life that gets glory, but the end of it.

56:21

The excellence of a building is not in having the first stone laid, but when it is finished. The glory and excellence of a Christian is when he has finished the work of faith. David concludes Psalm 54 with words of trust, not focusing on his circumstances, not focusing on the problems, but trusting in God.

56:41

Verses 6 and 7, say, with a free will offering, I will sacrifice to you. I will give thanks to your name, O Lord, for it is good. For he has delivered me from every trouble, and my eye has looked in triumph on my enemies.

56:56

David is acknowledging that God was in control, that God was worthy of his obedience, even when his circumstances might tell a different story. David's faith had been strengthened by Jonathan, and he was going to stand strong.

57:09

He was going to persevere in the face of whatever it was that was coming, knowing that God was ultimately in control of everything that was going on. So we saw faithful friendship, we see this prayer and perseverance from David, but finally back in 1 Samuel 23, we see divine deliverance.

57:30

If we were to go back and pick through all the things that we see from verse 19 down through the rest of the chapter, we see a pretty ugly mess that's sitting here in front of David. David was betrayed by his countrymen, by the people of Ziph, where he was hiding out.

57:48

They weren't under any sort of threat. There was no threat to the people of Ziph. They simply said, hey, we've got an opportunity here, Saul, we got David. They were going to get rich, they were going to receive favor, they were going to do whatever it was that benefited them, and so they sold David out for no good reason, best as I can tell.

58:10

So David's being hunted down by Saul, and by the time we get to verse 26, it tells us that Saul's forces are coming around the mountain and David is on the other side of the mountain. The doors are about to slam shut.

58:23

If you imagine that the pinchers are about to close in and David's done, there is no way out. There is no more running. There is no escape for David. But before we close the

book for David, I want to ask you a couple of questions and I'm going to ask you questions, but I want you to remember that I used to be a youth pastor and so this is the part where I know you're good church people, that you sit quietly

58:50

you don't talk in church, all those things, but this is the part where you talk back, okay? This is the part where you actually verbally, I want you to respond to me and answer these questions that I've got.

58:59

So I've got a few questions. As we find David facing these insurmountable odds in this passage, I want you to answer a few things. First, is there any situation or is there any challenge in life that is out of God's control?

59:18

Are there ever long odds that are simply too overwhelming for God to deal with? What if there's a young shepherd who's facing off against a giant, terrifying soldier with a pocket full of rocks? Is there...

59:36

What do we do then? Was God still in control? What of the prince of Israel, the king's son and his sword bearer, enter into an enemy camp filled with thousands of trained soldiers by themselves? Was God still in control when that happened?

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Right now it's going to get a little more personal. I'm sorry. What if today your life isn't going the way that you want it to? Something blows up. Is God still in control? What if things blow up extravagantly in your life?

01:00:12

What if there's some diagnosis? What if there's some death in the family? What if there's some overwhelming issue that there is no way out of, much like David faced? Is God still in control? I'm going to make some of you mad with this one.

01:00:31

What if the person in a couple of months, what if the person that you vote for isn't placed into office? Is God still in control? We come to the end of this passage and we see what looks like just a...

01:00:48

It's a mess for David. This is the end for David. Saul is closing in. There is no more running. But I want you to look at what happens in verse 27 and verse 28. We see verse 27, it tells us that a messenger came to Saul.

01:01:02

Like the pinchers are going to close down around David and a messenger shows up, comes to Saul saying, hurry and come for the Philistines have made a raid against the land. And so Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines.

01:01:18

Therefore the place was called the Rock of Escape. There's any Star Wars fans in the room, right? The walls start closing in, there's no, there is no out. Saul's got him. Saul had him dead to rights and a messenger comes running up says, Saul we need you over here, like now.

01:01:41

And so they abandoned the hunt and they go and deal with the Philistines that have come. In the face of certain capture, face of certain death, God provided a way of escape for David and for those that were with him.

01:01:54

I want you to notice it had nothing to do with David's strength. It had nothing to do with David hatching some brilliant plan, some perfect business plan that was gonna help him get out of this problem that he found himself in. No, no, it wasn't by David's strength it was by God's strength he was rescued.

01:02:14

It was by God's hand that he was saved, not by David's. I look at this story, if I was to try to write an ending for David, he and David was gonna survive, so how are we gonna write this crazy story and explain the ending of this in a way that that we get David the hero out without certain death looming around him.

01:02:37

I don't think I come up with and a messenger shows up and says Saul we're at war you need to come home. But if God wants to act, God has millions of options that are available at His disposal. We look at it and we go that there is no way out and God goes watch this I got 47 choices.

01:02:58

Which one do you want? Let's make a deal. Pick your door, right? This week's passage we see that David is truly caught between a rock and a hard place, right? Literally it tells us that he was stuck at the rock, the rock of escape is what it was going to be called.

01:03:17

The Ziphites have betrayed him, Saul is closing in, surely he is feeling forsaken and certainly afraid. But God works in this circumstance. God worked through David's friend Jonathan who shows up, offers these encouragements, these reminders that David needed to hear.

01:03:40

David's faith is reinvigorated by his friend. I think it reminds us challenges are going to come, trials are going to come, life is going to just whack you and knock you off your feet. But when it does, challenges, trials are not the time for us to quit.

01:04:03

Challenges are the time for us to grow, right? Anybody in this room, I'm sure we could go around and we could have a few stories at storytime where you could tell me about a time where it just seemed like life was just hammering you.

01:04:17

There was just thing, after thing, after thing and you're looking at God going God why? What's the point? How are we gonna deal with this. And now where you stand you can look back and go oh I know why. Because hindsight is 20/20 right? We can look back and go let me tell you the 42 things that God was doing in that moment. We find ourselves in those moments and we go I don't know what to do. So I'm gonna give you a reassuring promise.

01:04:48

You're gonna have a moment in life in the future that you're not gonna know what to do. Yay, the waves are gonna get big again. Yay but you know what they're not bigger than God. God's got 400 options of how he can work everything exactly the way that he wants to. If God has promised something we can rest in that. The reason why we remember how God has been faithful in the past as it informs our obedience in the future.

01:05:22

It informs our perseverance the next time. We remember, oh, no, no, God's done this 8,000 times for me in the past. Why would he change on 8,001? Why would I expect anything different from him? Challenges are not the time for us to quit.

01:05:40

Challenges are the time for us to grow. Faithful perseverance is what the path looks like. For people who love God, for people who are God's children, faithful perseverance is what the path looks like no matter what the circumstances dictate.

01:05:57

No matter what the circumstances, no matter how big the problems are, faithfully walking, following what God tells us to do. That's the path. Two things for you and we're done. This is our takeaway, right?

01:06:14

If you remember all the way back, it's been a little while, but all the way back at the beginning, we were talking about a friendship. We were talking about how Jonathan was such an incredible friend for David.

01:06:23

So question number one for you as we wrap up. Who do you need to come alongside of like Jonathan did for David and offer a little encouragement for them? Who can you remind of the promises of God? And the second question, second application for you is how can you be encouraged to persevere today as a result of seeing David's example?

01:06:46

How are you gonna persevere and how can you help someone else to persevere? Because I'm telling you, someone around you, if you don't need this message, someone you know does. I'm sure you've heard it.

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The famous age old saying is that you're either going into a trial, you're in the middle of one or you're coming out. Life has a way of just wave on top of wave on top of wave. We all need this message.

01:07:21

Thankful that God gave it to me this week. I've got a mark on my forehead because God was just like, listen, because I needed this. I think many of us do. That we need to be reminded that, that even when we don't feel like it, even when we don't know how, even when we don't know what the path is gonna look like.

01:07:46

Follow God. Persevere. Help someone else to come along with you. Our prayer team is going to be down here after the service is over. They would love, if you are in a position that you feel weak and you need somebody to walk alongside of you.

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I got great news. We got some people that are going to be standing right down here. They would love to pray with you about whatever it is that you've got going on in life. We need each other, but we need the Lord.

01:08:13

So acknowledging our weakness and coming to him in prayer is the most significant thing we can do to face whatever the problem is. Maybe you don't have time or don't want to come down here and talk to our wonderful friends on the prayer team.

01:08:25

We got a wall for you introverts, right? You can go back there, go out the back doors, look to the right, there's a wall with all of our prayer requests back there. You can write your prayer requests down, roll it up and stick it in the wall or stick it in those boxes.

01:08:36

Our prayer team checks those and we pray for those as well. So let us pray for you, all right? So with that, I just want to invite you, would you pray with me now? God, we thank you for revealing yourself to us in this story.

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God, I love these stories. They're so illustrative of what it looks like to walk things out in our own lives. I feel myself in David's shoes so often, looking around at the problems, looking around at the things that are coming against me and going, I don't know how we're gonna get out of this one.

01:09:25

God, life gets hard sometimes. You never promised us anything different. We will encounter trials of various kinds, but your word tells us that those trials will produce steadfastness in us, will produce perseverance in us, will help us to stand strong the next time.

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God, use these trials like you did with David to strengthen our faith. God, use these moments when we don't know how we're gonna get through to tomorrow. Use them to make us stronger, to make us into the people that you would have us to be.

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God, help us to persevere and help us to be the type of friend that will come along and will carry a weak brother when they need it. We'll pray for someone when they need it, will simply be there. We'll remind them of what you have spoken.

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And if need be, we'll carry our friend to your feet and lay him at your feet. God, help us to be good friends. Help us to stand firm. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.