



1 Samuel 24

“Closing an Open Door”

9_15_2024

Speaker: Pastor Drew Hunsley

Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

22:32

All right, well you guys grab a seat. Everybody grab your Bibles. I wanna invite you to make your way to 1 Samuel 24. 1 Samuel 24 this morning, and as you're turning to 1 Samuel 24, we have an exciting passage this morning.

22:47

It's a great passage because just like any good movie, we kinda check all the boxes, right? There's some funny stuff in here. There's some drama in here. There's a few tense moments. We don't know how the protagonist is gonna, how he's gonna respond, what's gonna happen in some of these circumstances.

23:04

But most importantly, I believe, there's some guidance in here for us this morning. Some instruction that we need to receive for us to learn and to grow a little bit this morning. So we're gonna see David illustrate how to overcome a common pitfall

23:20

that many of us fall into. I believe many of us fall into. I certainly do. So let's just jump right in and let's consider what 1 Samuel 24 has to say. We're going to read the entire chapter and then go back and and pick it apart a little bit.

23:33

1 Samuel 24. Let's start in verse 1 together. When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all of Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the wild goat's rocks.

23:52

And he came to the sheepfolds, by the way, and there was a cave and Saul went in to relieve himself. And now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. And the men of David said to him, Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.

24:12

And then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. And afterward David's heart struck him because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. And he said to his men, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my Lord.

24:28

The Lord's anointed to put out my hand against him, seeing that he is the Lord's anointed. So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

24:42

Afterward, David also arose and went out of the cave and called after Saul, My Lord, the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid

homage. David said to Saul, Why do you listen to the words of men who say, Behold, David seeks your harm.

25:00

Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you today into my hand in the cave. Some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, I will not put out my hand against the Lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.

25:16

See my father, the corner of your robe hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it.

25:34

May the Lord judge between me and you. May the Lord avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. As the Proverbs of the ancients says, out of the wicked comes wickedness, but my hand shall not be against you.

25:48

After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog? After a flea? May the Lord therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you. And see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.

26:04

And as soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, is this your voice, my son David? Saul lifted up his voice and wept. And he said to David, you are more righteous than I for you have repaid me good whereas I repaid you evil. And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me and that you did not kill me when the Lord put me into your hands.

26:28

For if a man finds his enemy will he let him go away safe? So may the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. And now behold, I know that you shall surely be king. That the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand but swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my offspring after me.

26:49

That you will not destroy my name out of my father's house and David swore this to Saul. And then Saul went home but David and his men went up to the stronghold. These are the words of the Lord would you pray with me?

27:02

God we thank you for this opportunity, we thank you for your word and we pray that you would give us ears to hear what you have to say this morning. Speak as we give this time to you. It's in Jesus name we pray, amen.

27:12

Alright, well as we start to proceed through this story quite a gripping tale as we look at some drama that we see here, but as we get started the first thing that we see, we we're seeing the Philistines show up in the story again. If you were with us last week you remember David was saved by the presence of the Philistines coming. As Saul had David and his men surrounded, as it seemed like the door was about to close on David's life and David's story.

27:12

A messenger shows up and says King Saul the Philistines are attacking we need you at the front line now and so Saul and his men took off to go and to deal with the Philistines. Now the Philistines seem like they've played an important role throughout 1 Samuel up to this point we keep seeing them show up time and time again but you know at this point they seem to be little more than a footnote. Tells us in the beginning of our passage now Saul dealt with the Philistines and now he's back chasing after David again. Shows us that not all human success is a sign of God's favor. Saul it seems to me that he quickly dispatched the Philistines here.

28:18

God gave him success for some reason. But that doesn't necessarily mean that God's favor is upon Saul. It's simply sometimes, bad people have good things happen for them. God allowed Israel to quickly defeat the Philistines, and now Saul is back on the hunt.

28:34

As Saul is hunting for David, God's chosen man, the one that God has chosen, will be the next king of Israel. Both David and Saul know it at this point, but we see that Saul runs off to hunt down David, seeking his life again.

28:49

It tells us that 3,000 men went along with Saul. Out of the best fighters in all of Israel, Saul takes 3,000 of the best. Meanwhile, David is hiding in the caves and in Engedi with about 600 of the leftovers, right?

29:05

We saw them show up as they came into the story a few weeks ago, a few chapters ago, and so David has this ragtag group of 600 men with him, but Saul has a five to one advantage, not to mention the skill level of the soldiers that were with him.

29:21

This isn't going to be a fair fight if they come face to face with one another. There is no struggle that's going to happen if they come face to face with one another and David were to try to fight his way out of this circumstance.

29:34

But as Saul is out hunting for David, we see a note in the story here that doesn't often show up. We know that certainly footnotes like what we see in verse 3 could show up in lots of Bible stories, right?

29:47

Sometimes things happen, natural bodily processes have to happen, but it tells us here in verse 3, because it's relevant to the story. Tells us that Saul is out and he realizes that it's time to answer the call of duty, right?

30:02

He needs to step away from the camp. He needs to go into the cave and deal with some business. And so he finds himself a nice quiet cave. He takes his newspaper along and he goes in to relieve himself.

30:13

But what Saul doesn't realize is he comes out of the daylight and into the dark cave. He probably can't see a whole lot. He thinks he's going in in peace into this quiet, empty cave to go deal with his business.

30:27

But meanwhile, there's David and probably some portion of 600 men hiding in the back of the cave that see this guy come walking in. Is that David? Is that Saul comes walking in? You picture the scene, right?

30:40

We've got David hiding at the back of the cave. We've got 3,000 soldiers that are outside hunting for David and these men that are hiding in the cave. And meanwhile, in between the two of them, we see King Saul come wandering into the cave with his pants down, right?

30:56

What an honorable position for the king to be in as he is caught in between these two forces. So David's men start whispering. David's men are determined. They have decided that this was an opportunity.

31:11

This was a sign from God that God had given King Saul into David's hand. David, David, David. David, David, this is our chance. He's been hunting for you for years at this point. They've been on the run year after year as Saul has wanted David dead.

31:26

And so the men determined that this was a sign that God had said enough is enough and had given Saul into David's hand. We see it in verse 4 in our passage. It says, the men of David said to him, here is the day of which the Lord said to you, behold, I will give your enemy into your hand and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.

31:46

That sounds good, doesn't it? Sounds right, it sounds reasonable, certainly. But here's the thing though, we have no record of God actually saying those things to David. Maybe David's men are falsely inferring some of this blessing.

32:01

They're falsely kind of putting words into God's mouth as they look at the circumstances. They say, obviously, David is the next one to be king. Obviously, God has brought Saul here because God wants us to

32:16

expedite the process, to see David step into the throne. Maybe they just decided that David's men falsely inferred that God has said, David, you're the one. We don't know what it was that was going through their mind but we know that there's no evidence that

God has actually said the things that they come to David and say, David, David, David, David.

32:39

God told you I will give your enemies to you. Go do to him as it seems good to you. Sounds reasonable. It sounds like something that God would say, right? We've seen things like that in the past in 1 Samuel and other places in the Bible.

32:53

So David takes off to go sneak over to Saul. He sneaks over to Saul undetected, the amount of skill that goes into this I don't want to imagine, but certainly David is ready. He sneaks over, he's got his sword in hand and as he comes over to Saul, as he raises the knife, he raises the knife and he cuts off a corner of his robe.

33:15

Not the thing that I thought we would have finished that sentence with, right? We would think that David was going to put an end to Saul but instead of killing Saul, he simply cuts off a corner of his robe.

33:27

What we see here is a beautiful illustration of the difference between David and Saul, right? We see a beautiful picture because Saul was an opportunistic man. We've seen Saul time and time and time again throughout 1 Samuel.

33:42

He rushes, he makes decisions on his own and then he occasionally will glance over his shoulder and say, God, that's cool, right? Not actually stop to listen to what God has to say and usually just run off to go and do what he thinks is right.

33:57

Usually just run off to go and do whatever he has decided he's going to do whether or not God has decided to bless it. Meanwhile, David was the one who was willing to lay aside his own desires as we see so clearly right here.

34:12

He's willing to lay aside what he wants. Certainly he didn't enjoy being chased through the wilderness. Certainly he didn't enjoy fearing for his life, but he was willing to lay aside what he wanted in his own flesh.

34:26

He was willing to lay aside what those around him were saying, whispering into his ears, telling him, David, David, this is your chance. He laid all of those things aside because to David, the most important thing was what God had said.

34:41

To David, the most important thing was following God's instructions in his life, not just what he wanted. You see, there are many times in life where we can make the argument, right? Anybody in this room, do you ever have those conversations with yourself and you start kinda talking through a circumstance and you start with a clear idea of what you should do, but by the time you think it over, by the time you have this argument in your own head,

35:05

you start to make excuses or reasons or whatever you wanna call them, and all of a sudden we can talk ourselves into just about anything if we try hard enough, right? We can talk ourselves into something.

35:17

We can make the argument for something that is not from God, but if we try hard enough, we can make it sound pretty good, can't we? Well, God wants me to take this

opportunity. I know it's a little dishonest, but he wants me to do this so that I can go over here and do this as well.

35:32

And we can fill that in. We can play that game a million different ways, but David's men telling David that God was going to deliver David's enemies into his hands. Sounds like a good argument, doesn't it?

35:46

They were able to make the argument for something that was not from God, but it sounded good. Meanwhile, to do the right thing can often go against what is easy for us. Can often go against what is expedient for us in our immediate context, because we often have opportunities, don't we, to choose between doing what is right and doing what we can make sound right.

36:09

There's a difference between those two, right? How can we tell the difference? How did David tell the difference between the two? Because there were people that were saying something that sounded good, he probably could have gone back to the men and made the argument, no, yeah, I did what I thought God wanted me to.

36:27

But how did David know the difference between this circumstance and that circumstance, this option and that option? See the difference is David knew what God had said. The men came to him and said, didn't God tell you that he was going to give your enemies into your hand?

36:43

David's sitting there going, no, I don't remember that. Anybody else have, no, I don't have any record of that. David knew what God had said, and we can have the same

success in our own lives if we are careful to remember and to consider what God has said.

37:00

If we consider what God says in his word, we are far more capable of making the right decision than if we just look at a circumstance and go, you know, what sounds right to me? Because I don't know about you, but I think most circumstances, unless it's just the most black and white of circumstances.

37:17

I can make an argument either direction a lot of the time. How do I determine which way is right and which way is wrong? Well we have to consider what God's Word says, but sometimes that's easier to say than it is to do in practice, isn't it?

37:32

If you don't know God's Word with brilliant accuracy, well then sometimes there are things that sound right that aren't necessarily what God would say. So quiz time for you, all right? What I want you to do, grab a piece of paper or maybe you can just keep it in your mind for a minute, but what we're gonna do, we're gonna have a little bit of fun, right?

37:50

I've done this a few different times with groups. It's always a fun little thing. I've got five simple statements that we're gonna put on the screen here in just a minute. There's three on the first slide and then we're gonna put two more up there and what you need to do is you need to decide if each of these statements are in the Bible or if they're not in the Bible.

38:08

There's a few that are in there maybe that may or may not be in the Bible. So you need to look at each one of these phrases, each one of these verses, and you need to tell me, is it in the Bible or is it not in the Bible?

38:21

Alright, so you're gonna sit here and kind of determine in your own mind, you're gonna grade yourself in just a minute, and then you're gonna brag or hide your paper from your person next to you after you're embarrassed about how many you got right or wrong.

38:34

So the first one, first thing is God works in mysterious ways. Is that in the Bible or is that not in the Bible? God works in mysterious ways. Second one, in all things God works for the good of those who love Him.

38:48

Is that in the Bible or is it not? The third one that we put on there says, spare the rod, spoil the child. Is that in the Bible? Let's put the second slide up. Number four, my God will supply all of your needs.

39:03

Is that in the Bible or is that not in the Bible? Last one, God helps those who help themselves. Is that in the Bible or is that not in the Bible? Alright, we're gonna go through. It's time, it's grading time.

39:16

Get your red pens out, right? We've got a few teachers in the room. They can come around and grade for you if you need them to. The first one, God works in mysterious ways. That is not in the Bible, right?

39:26

It was written by William Calper. It was in a poem that was written. The second one, in all things God works for the good of those who love Him. That is in the Bible. Romans chapter 8 verse 28. The third one, spare the rod, spoil the child.

39:41

Is that one in the Bible? No, it's not. That was written by Samuel Butler in a poem that he penned. My God will supply all of your needs. That is in the Bible. Philippians chapter 4 verse 19. Lastly, God helps those who help themselves.

39:59

Is that one in the Bible or not in the Bible? It is not in the Bible. That was written by Benjamin Franklin in poor Richard's almanac, right? Anybody get a hundred percent in the room? You can be prideful and raise your hand for a second.

40:13

We won't ask if anybody got all of them wrong, right? We don't want to put you under the bus, but the reason we did this, it's a fun little couple of minutes activity, but it's a fun way to illustrate why it's so important for us to be careful to discern what God's word truly says, what God has instructed of us versus things that just sound right sometimes.

40:38

I think many of us would probably listen to all five of those things and go, yeah, that sounds about right. We may vote with those thoughts in mind. We may live our lives with those votes in mind. We may even teach some of those things to our kids.

40:50

Of course, we can agree with many of these things, but that doesn't mean that they're necessarily from God. We have to be careful to discern what is from God and what is pop culture Christianity, for lack of a better term.

41:04

You know, not every Christian sounding quote that you find on a coffee mug in a store is actually something that God says. There's a lot of things that are out there that are painted on pretty signs that you could hang on your wall that aren't actually from God.

41:17

They're just interesting things that people have said. David was careful to follow the instructions of God and not just what people around him said that sounded good. It's important for us to ask, what does God actually say on whatever the matter is that we're facing?

41:37

Not just what sounds right to me. In verse 6 we see David returned to his men with this piece of Saul's robe in his hand instead of the king's head like they were expecting him to come back with. In verse 6 he tells us that David returns and he says to his men, the Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my Lord that the king, Saul, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing that he is the Lord's anointed.

42:05

With those words David convinced the men to put away their weapons and Saul gets up and walks out of the cave, unscathed, unaware of what had happened, completely unharmed because David returns to the men and says, it's not my place to overthrow God's plan.

42:23

David returns and he tells them, you know, God has put this man on the throne for this time and if God put him there, it's God's job to keep him there until God wants to remove him from there. It wasn't David's place to overthrow God's plan and it wasn't David's place to overthrow the king that God had put on the throne.

42:42

And so now in verses 8 through 15 we see David's humble approach. As Saul has walked out of the cave, has exited safely, completely unaware of what had just happened, David's conscience was in turmoil within him.

42:57

See this seemingly innocent act of going over and cutting off a corner of Saul's robe may have seemed like a small thing to us but it was no small thing to David. Because in David's mind reaching out and acting against the king any form of aggression against the king of Israel who God had placed there was equivalent to rebelling against God.

43:18

This felt very similar in David's mind to actually going and killing King Saul. And so David follows Saul out of the cave and it seems to me they were probably at a distance from one another, right? He didn't immediately follow him out.

43:31

Maybe give a little bit of space there just in case. But David follows Saul out of the cave and David calls out and addresses him. As David calls out to Saul, Saul, Saul, he humbles himself as Saul turns around by bowing down to pay homage.

43:46

He begins this critical conversation with King Saul. And so we see that David addresses Saul. He does so in a manner consistent with how he intended to treat Saul. He responds or he reaches out to Saul with humility, with respect, giving deference to King Saul.

44:06

Saul had surrounded himself with men who agreed with his assessment of David, that David was a threat that needed to be wiped out. David needed to be removed from

Israel, removed from earth. David was being viewed as a rival who was seeking to do harm to Saul.

44:24

And so now David comes walking out of the cave with tangible proof in his hand saying, Saul, you keep telling people that that I'm out to get you, that I'm out to do you harm, but I have proof that that's not the case.

44:39

He raises up the corner of Saul's robe. Saul certainly probably looked down and went, oh there's a hole in my robe about the size of that piece of material that's in David's hand. And he realizes what's happened.

44:52

David comes out with tangible proof of the fact that he had no intention of ever harming Saul. Saul's life had been in David's hands. David had every opportunity to put an end to Saul's manhunt, but he chose not to take Saul's life.

45:09

Can you imagine all of the emotions that are running through King Saul as he looks up, as he looks down at his robe and realizes what has happened as he sees David standing there with a part of his robe in his hand.

45:22

When he realizes that this man that he has been hunting for years was close enough to cut off part of his robe, gulp, right? Uh-oh. David proved to be a man of godly principles. David chose to offer mercy rather than vengeance and retribution.

45:46

David had demonstrated that he was going to leave it to the Lord. He was going to leave it in God's hands, that God was going to be the one who decided whether Saul whether Saul continued to be king or not.

45:58

That was God's to decide, but David demonstrated the differences between himself and Saul. He demonstrated the fact that that he wasn't out for blood in the same way that Saul was, but now he calls on Saul to to respond in the same way that he just had.

46:13

Verse 12, he says, "May the Lord judge between me and you. "May the Lord avenge me against you, "but my hand shall not be against you." He's calling out to Saul. He's saying, Saul, do the right thing.

46:27

Saul, I have proof that I could have ended you if I wanted to, but I chose not to. So Saul, why do we need to keep having this fight? Let's put an end to this and be done. Do the right thing. David then argues that it's crazy for the king of Israel to mount such an aggressive manhunt for such an insignificant person as David.

46:49

He aligns himself with a dead dog or a flea on a dead dog saying, why would a dead dog be worthy of the king of Israel's attention? In the same way, why little me? Why are you taking your time to chase after me, to want me dead so desperately?

47:08

David lays all this out. He says. Saul, I mention no harm, but David, ultimately, he leaves the results of this feud with Saul, and he leaves them in God's hands. It wasn't his to decide. Saul's life wasn't his to take, and David is reflecting an attitude here similar to the words that Paul penned in Romans chapter 12 verse 19.

47:29

Write this down next to our verses here. Romans 12:19, Paul says, beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.

47:45

David's speech was designed to subdue all the emotions, not to ignite Saul's hostility. He doesn't come out with war cries saying, I'm coming to get you, Saul. Look what God did. He gave you to me once, and he's gonna give you to me again.

48:03

David illustrated that he had no intention of ever hurting Saul. David was seeking peace, and he extended mercy to a man that had extended no mercy to him. A man who, by all worldly standards, didn't deserve the mercy that David extended to him.

48:19

It made me just, it made me ask the question this week, how many disputes have we seen that have escalated instead of calming down that could have been dissolved by a generous spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation the same way that we see this situation with David?

48:35

See, David offered forgiveness to Saul even when Saul didn't deserve it. David offered mercy to Saul even when Saul had offered no mercy to him. David is an illustration of the way that we are supposed to respond in conflicts as believers, as people who belong to Jesus Christ.

48:51

We are to respond in the same way. God told us to turn the other cheek, right? He told us to offer forgiveness, but how many times should we forgive? Should we forgive seven times? No, we should forgive 70 times 7.

49:06

We continue to offer mercy. We continue to assume the best people, and how many disputes have we been in that if instead of offering a harsh word in response, if we had offered a word of kindness instead, if we had offered and responded with the same attitude that we see here in David, how many of our disputes could have been dissolved instead of being escalated?

49:32

Finally, we see Saul's emotional appeal back to David in verses 16 through 22. You know, we can only imagine what terrible consequences would have come upon David and his men if Saul had decided, you know what?

49:47

I've hated that man up to this point. I still hate that man and told the soldiers, let's go, and up the hill they went. They were trapped. They were in a cave, right? They're not going to get far as David comes out of the cave and calls out to Saul.

50:01

If Saul had decided this was the place where they take their stand, this story doesn't end well for David and his men. But instead of that, what we see is Saul call out, is that my son, David? It appears that Saul is crushed under the realization of what he has been doing.

50:20

Now we know that David wasn't Saul's biological son, but that statement, my son, it refers to a close relationship. This was someone who had been in Saul's house. This was someone who had been Saul's son-in-law.

50:35

He had married Saul's daughter, David had. Saul calls out, he says, is that my son, David? And it tells us that Saul wept at the realization of what had happened. Saul responded with gratitude, with shame for what had happened, for what he had done.

50:54

And it appears at first glance that David's appeal has moved Saul. It appears as best we can tell at first glance that David has changed Saul's mind and that Saul is softening on his stance towards David.

51:09

I encourage you to keep coming. The time will tell if Saul was truly moved by David's benevolence that he showed in this moment. We've got a little more story to tell here with David and Saul. But perhaps more surprisingly, what we see is that Saul acknowledges that the kingdom is soon going to pass from his hands into David's, into King David's hands.

51:32

In verse 20, we see Saul's words. It says, behold, I now know that you shall surely be the king and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. Saul's acknowledgement that David will one day sit on the throne.

51:46

It comes as a welcome glimpse of sanity in Saul's insane actions. Saul, as a madman, convinced that David's life needed to end and nothing else mattered. Okay, I'll go deal with the Philistines for a minute.

52:00

And then he comes rushing right back to hunt David some more. This is a welcome glimpse of sanity in Saul's actions because it seems to me that that Saul's request seems to stem from the fact that he realizes David is going to be king.

52:18

Verse 21, he acknowledged that that God was going to put David in his place on the throne, but now verse 21 Saul has a request for David. He says, swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my offspring after me, that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house.

52:37

If someone were to come in and to take over a country during that day by hostility, one of the first things that people would often do is they would eliminate the king, but they would also eliminate the king's line just to make sure that there was no coup that started to rise up among the people.

52:54

Just to make sure that no one tried to come along and take the throne to place claim to the throne that dad or granddad or great granddad or whoever had had sat in before. Saul is asking David, have mercy on me.

53:09

I know, I know that you're going to be the king one day, but have mercy on me. Have mercy on my children, on my grandchildren, on my family, due to the attitude that we've seen in David throughout this story, throughout this book, throughout the entire saga that we've looked at so far in 1 Samuel.

53:29

It's not surprising to us that David is willing to show mercy to Saul. We've seen it already up to this point, the fact that Saul is even asking this question. When he had Saul's life in his hands in the cave just moments earlier, it's not surprising to hear that David willingly agrees to be gracious to Saul's family as he rises to the throne in Israel.

53:51

But what we see here, I don't want to spoil too much of the story, but what we see here is not reconciliation between Saul and David. So we're going to continue to see in the coming weeks, what we see here, it's more of a temporary truce.

54:04

It's more of an emotional moment for Saul, as Saul has seen that his life was in David's hands. And so in this, in the emotion of the moment, there's a temporary truce, as David has shown mercy to Saul in refusing to take the life of his oppressor.

54:22

As we look at this entire story of 1 Samuel 24, what we see in this episode between Saul and David, it illustrates why the story continues through several more winding chapters as we see Saul and David back and forth, back and forth, before David is crowned king of Israel.

54:42

But killing Saul in that cave, taking the opportunity that was placed in front of him, it would have been a faster and an easier path to the crown for David than the one that he ends up taking. I think regretfully, I know just speaking from my own experience, there have been many times that I have taken the easy path instead of the better path.

55:05

I see a few nods in the room, I imagine that at least a few of us are guilty of that from time to time, aren't we? We look at our circumstances and rather doing the thing that we know is right or we believe is right, we take the easier path because, well, it's easier.

55:21

Why would we want to choose harder? The reality is that the easy path is not always the right one for us to walk. Regretfully, I think many of us choose the easy path because it's easy. Quick and easy is the way in which we like most things in life, right?

55:39

You can push a button on your phone and food shows up at your door. You can talk to a device in your house and have all kinds of things just taken care of. The lights turn on, the washing machine runs, all kinds of things.

55:50

We do them because they're easy, right? We do lots of things because they're easy, but quick and easy is not always best. David's mercy and patience that we see here in this story reminds us of an important truth.

56:08

That is God's plan and God's timing. Both of those things have to be true because David knew he was going to be the next king of Israel. If he had just come along, killed Saul, and seized the throne, it would have in some way been God's plan, but it wasn't God's plan and God's timing.

56:27

God's kingdom was not David's to give or to take. It wasn't for David to seize the throne away from Saul because God had appointed David as the next leader, but that was God's to decide, not David's.

56:42

David determined in his heart not to take any shortcuts. I think we would benefit from learning that lesson from David sometimes. Not only that, but it was important for David to discern God's direction in his circumstances because relying on an open door was not the best way for David to decide what he should or shouldn't do, right?

57:05

There's many people in life that will look at things and go, well, we'll just pray, and if God opens the door, then that means that's what God wants us to do. Not necessarily. There are opportunities for us every day to do wrong things, to do sinful things, to do things that are opposed to what God would have us do that are available to us.

57:24

We have open doors all around us. An open door is not an indication that God has said, go do this. We have opportunities to go places we shouldn't go. We have opportunities to look at things we shouldn't look at.

57:39

We have opportunities to do things that we shouldn't do. Relying on an open door to guide us is not accurate, really, in any way, shape, or form. It shows us what God has allowed. It doesn't tell us anything about what God prefers, what God has commanded of us, because chains of events can often be explained in a variety of ways.

58:00

Four people, you get four witnesses, stick them on four street corners, and have an accident happen in the middle of the intersection. What happens, right? You get four different perspectives. You get four different people telling you four different stories of who went through and what they did and how it all came to pass.

58:18

We have different perspectives on lots of different things. We can look at events that happen in life, and there are a variety of interpretations that we can look at them and say, well, God meant this for this reason.

58:30

Well, no, no, God meant this for that reason. No, no, let me tell you what really happened. We can play that game, quote my southern friends, we can play that game until the cows come home, right? But that doesn't mean anything. God allowing events to play out in a certain way does not mean that it is his desire for you to walk in those things.

58:53

So how do we decide what God wants for us? Well, God's word is where we find instruction for our actions, not simply our circumstances. We don't just look at our circumstances, we look at God's absolute word.

59:06

God has spoken, that's what we look to. That's where we walk things out. That's how we figure out, what does God have for me in this moment? Gordon Keddie, a pastor, commented on this topic. He said that an open door is not, in itself, proof of God's will.

59:25

Circumstances in God's providence are not a substitute for the principle that he has revealed in his word, the Bible. We need to know what God's word says. We need to consider what God has told us so that when we come to these moments, when we come to these forks in the road, we can choose to obey what God has instructed and what we know him to be telling us instead of just what we think our circumstances are telling us.

59:51

In times when God opens a door for us to walk through, there are also times that our character is being tested, aren't there? There are opportunities where we're being refined by our circumstances. James tells us that we face trials of many kinds and that in these difficulties, in these circumstances that we find ourselves in, God is creating, he's developing perseverance in us.

01:00:15

He's using those things to strengthen us. Maybe the thing that you're facing is not God saying, here's an open door, please walk through it. Maybe he's saying, here's an open door, please grow in your character, please grow in your faith enough to not walk through it.

01:00:32

Just like David, the only way for us to know the difference between those two options is for us to carefully recall what the words of God have given us, what they've told us, how they instruct our actions.

01:00:45

So simple takeaways for us this morning. Couple of questions for you to consider this morning and they're easy questions for me to ask, they're not easy questions for you to answer, so I'm sorry about that, but I like it, right?

01:00:58

First takeaway. So you're going to choose the easy way or are you gonna choose God's way? In whatever circumstance you find yourself in, are you gonna choose the easy way or are you going to choose God's way that may be easy but it may be hard?

01:01:15

Second question is will you just follow the flow of what you see in your circumstances? Or will you put in the work? Will you seek God's wisdom, seek to discern his plan through carefully considering what God's word has to say?

01:01:35

You know, the program that we just prayed about, I shared with you that we're gonna start in a few hours here, the Awana program that's gonna be starting this afternoon at our church. Awana stands for approved workmen are not ashamed.

01:01:49

Points back to a verse in Timothy that says, study to show yourself approved to God, a workman who does not need to be ashamed but who rightly handles the word of truth. What Paul's making that argument for in that letter to Timothy, he's telling Timothy, Timothy, put in the work so that you know what God has said and not just grasping in the dark, hoping that you find a few right answers.

01:02:14

Put in the work. Do what it takes. That's what we want our children to be able to do, is to put in the work so that they'll know how to follow God as they grow up, as they face things, all the things that they're going to face in life.

01:02:28

But the good news for us, grown-ups in the room, is that those same things that are good for them are good for us, aren't they? They need to work hard so that they can study, so that they can prove themselves to be a worker who does not need to be ashamed when we stand before God one day and say, God, this is how I handled all the circumstances you put in front of me.

01:02:51

You know what? Same desire that we have for them is the same desire that I have for me and that I have for you. Let's be careful to know what God says so that we can be careful to do what God says. Our prayer team is going to be down here at the end of the service.

01:03:08

They would love to pray with you about whatever it is that you've got going on in life. Please feel free to exercise your dependence on God by coming down here, having the prayer team pray with you. If you don't come down here, down front, but you still want prayer, we've got a prayer wall, so you go out the back doors.

01:03:25

If you look to the right, the big wall that you're going to see is our prayer wall. We've got space there that you can write your prayer requests down and drop them in the box or stick them in the wall.

01:03:34

Our prayer team would love to pray about those, even if you don't have time or maybe you're too shy to come down front and pray with the team. But I just want to invite you at this point. Would you pray with me now as we close out?

01:03:46

God, we thank you for your word. God, we thank you that you have given us everything that we need for life and for godliness. God, that your word is sufficient. That means that it gives us what we need, that you give us everything that we need, that we're not left to look at circumstances and try to figure it out for ourselves, that we're not left to try to read the tea leaves and try to figure out how this circumstance should play out in one way or another in our lives.

01:04:15

But God, you have given us your word, perfect, inspired, breathed out by you and giving us everything that we need for training, for proof, for correction, for walking this life out the way that you give us, call us to.

01:04:35

God, help us to be people who will look to your word. God, help us to be people who will take the road less traveled. Who will walk the narrow path instead of the wide road that leads to destruction.

01:04:50

God, help us to not just be easy way people, but God, for us to be your way people. God, we love you. Give us the strength to follow you day in, day out, moment by moment. Help us to live it out in the ways that we act, that we take every opportunity.

01:05:13

Help us to be obedient like David was. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.