

# THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

**1 Samuel 16:14-23**

**“God’s Providence Over David’s Ascension”**

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20:01

Good morning, church. It is such a privilege to be with you. The Laffy Taffys are still making their appearance in my life. If you guys don't know that joke a little bit ago, I shared with 180 how Banana Laffy Taffys are disgusting.

20:25

Well, Drew and Mia then hid Laffy Taffys just in random places in my office, in my car, for six months. Oh, is this Aubrey? They're throwing Aubrey under the bus right now. Now they're all denying it.

20:43

Oh, yep. So, there you go. You guys ready? Working with the 180 crew. Didn't they do an amazing job up here? Such an honor to pour the gospel out to the hearts of these young ones. Will you join me as we read 1 Samuel chapter 16.

21:11

1 Samuel chapter 16. I'm going to start in verse 13. This is God's holy inspired word. Let's read together. Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward, and Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

21:37

Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him. And Saul's servant said, Behold, now a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you. Let our Lord now command your servant, servants who are before you, to seek out a man who is skilled in playing the lyre, and when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it and you will be well.

22:05

So Saul said to the servant, provide for me a man whom can play well and bring him to me. One of the young men answered, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the Lord is with him.

22:29

Therefore Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, send me David, your son, who is with the sheep. And Jesse took a donkey, laden with bread, and a skin of wine, and a young goat, and sent them by David, his son Saul.

22:51

And David came and saw and David came to Saul and entered his service, and Saul loved him greatly, and he became his armor bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David remain in my service, for he has found favor in my sight.

23:07

And whenever the harmful spirit from the Lord was upon Saul, David took the lyre and played it with his hand. So Saul was refreshed and was well, and the harmful spirit departed from him. This is God's Word.

23:24

Pray with me. Lord, we're so, once again, grateful in all that we get to come and even sing those songs to you, that we get to come and open your word and hear what you've communicated to us. I pray that you would edify your people here this morning.

23:48

Lord, that your spirit would come down and move in our awaken our affections, open our eyes where we might be blind to areas in our life that are needing correction, needing repentance. Help us see Christ clearly today and fall in love with Him more over this next, over these next few moments.

24:16

It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen. I've titled my message, God's providence over David's ascent, right? Because we look at the characters in here and we see David, we see Saul, we see Samuel, and we think they're the main players, but they're not.

24:35

God is. God is the one at work. He's been at work this whole time. He is the one in His providence moving all things according to His will, and we're gonna see that today. And so my first point I want to highlight right now is the Holy Spirit and God's providence over evil spirits, right?

25:01

We come to a very interesting portion of text. As you come to verse 13 to verse 14, it says, then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers, and the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward.

25:21

And then Samuel, he departs. He rose up and he went to Ramah. So the Spirit of the Lord comes upon David, Samuel now departs, right? The prophet now goes home, leaving David in good hands, right? As the Holy Spirit has anointed him.

25:41

Now we have an ABBA kind of instruction. So then now the Spirit of the Lord then departs from Saul, and then an evil spirit from the Lord, He comes and He torments Saul. So the Holy Spirit rushes upon David, Samuel leaves.

26:04

Holy Spirit leaves Saul, evil spirit from the Lord comes upon Saul. Strange text. It's a transition. Now remember, the whole emphasis that we've been talking about is David is the better Saul, right?

26:21

Because back a few chapters ago it says, Samuel said to Saul that the Lord's going to raise up one who is better than you. And so we see here now where Saul had the spirit, but not permanently. David, the spirit rushes upon him from that day forward, right?

26:41

There's a permanence to the Holy Spirit coming upon David. So I have seven kind of points that I want to go through quickly, points and questions. As we think through these two verses, verse 13, the Holy Spirit rushing upon David.

27:01

And the first point is that the Holy Spirit here is intended to empower for service. The Holy Spirit empowers for service. The Spirit of the Lord came upon David from that day forward. And the point is, David now received extraordinary gifts from God.

27:18

He had natural abilities, but now the Holy Spirit empowers him with supernatural gifts of strength and courage and wisdom and other excellent qualities, equipping him for the service that he was to provide.

27:35

Right, so the Holy Spirit comes upon David now to equip him, to empower him for service. Point two, the Holy Spirit in the Old Testament empowers select individuals. Right, as we read the Old Testament, we can easily think that such empowerment was more common than it was.

27:57

But in fact, very few Old Testament figures received any significant power for ministry from the Holy Spirit. We see individuals like David and Elijah and Moses, right? But it wasn't a common thing. It was the Holy Spirit came upon individuals to empower them for ministry.

28:23

Point three, this empowerment was separate, was separate from regeneration and salvation. Okay, that's an important point. This empowerment to the Holy Spirit when the Spirit rushes upon David, this is not speaking of salvation and regeneration.

28:45

Old Testament saints, here's the question, how were Old Testament saints saved? A lot of people ask that because they see a discontinuity between the two testaments. They think Old Testament, well, they were saved through law keeping.

28:59

No, nobody was ever saved through law keeping. How were Old Testament saints saved? By grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, right? Salvation has always been resting in the promises of God, and the Spirit regenerated them.

29:20

They were born again just as we are born again, right? The message might not have been as clear as we can articulate today, but they looked forward. Galatians, it says, God preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, in you all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, right?

29:39

These, Hebrews 11, these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but seeing them afar off, right? Salvation has always been the same. So, this empowerment of the Holy Spirit is not speaking about regeneration.

29:56

The people who lived under the Old Covenant administration had no capacity to make God-pleasing decisions of repentance and faith apart from the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit. The same is true of today, Romans 8:8.

30:12

Ask any of our teens, please ask any of our teens because they're memorizing Romans 8 over the next couple of months, so hold them accountable and ask them to talk to you about Romans 8:8. That's your guys' homework.

30:24

Yeah, it seems from the reading of the Old Testament, some of those who the Holy Spirit regenerated, the Holy Spirit also empowered for the work of the ministry. Point four, the Old Testament predicts a day.

30:41

It foreshadows a day where all God's people will be empowered by the Holy Spirit. You see, when we read this text, we look at this and we think, we don't think of this as an abstract, oh, that was a cool event that happened in David's life, and it's removed.

30:59

This is echoing theological points. This is pointing forward to a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon God's people. So the Old Testament predicted a time when the Holy Spirit would empower all of God's people.

31:15

You remember back to Numbers 11, Joshua comes to Moses and says, hey, dudes are out there prophesying in the Spirit. You got to put a stop to this nonsense. Moses, your God's anointed, right? You should be the only one who has the authority to speak nonsense.

31:31

What does Moses do? Numbers 11:29, would that the Lord's people were all prophets, right? And that the Lord would pour out His Spirit on them, right? Moses kind of recognized this is a heavy burden, right, in this Old Testament administration that He bore

31:51

and he longed for the day where the Holy Spirit would be poured out. Mind you, John the Baptist, commenting on Jesus in Luke chapter 3, verse 16, John answers and says, oh, I'm baptizing you with water, but he who is mightier than I is coming.

32:09

The straps of whose sandals I'm not worthy to untie, he will baptize you in the Holy Spirit and in fire. And so we get to point five. So the Old Testament, it's looking forward to that. So we're back here in 1 Samuel chapter 16 and the Spirit of God rushes upon David, but there's this longing for Acts chapter 2, right?

32:33

There's this longing for the day of Pentecost and the universal empowerment of God's people for the work of the ministry. And we New Testament believers not only receive regeneration, we receive sanctification, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit like Old Testament believers, but from the day of Pentecost onwards, we also received the empowerment of God to carry out gospel-centered purpose, the gospel-centered purposes of our lives.

33:05

In the Old Testament, that power was restricted to a handful of people. In the New Testament, it's a universal reality empowering all of the body of Christ. If you are born again today, the Holy Spirit has given you all things you need for life and godliness.

33:25

That isn't merely for pastors or evangelists. You'll have false teachers and false churches that stand up here and say, well, I'm the pastor, I'm the man of God, I'm the one who receives the Holy Spirit and the vision, and you must submit and follow me, right?

33:45

You hear a pastor say that, caution, because Acts, the Holy Spirit, empowers. Now, He still calls individuals to unique offices in the church, but I don't have a special unique anointing of the Holy Spirit just because I have a pastor title.



34:09

I'm in the same boat as you are. You have the same Holy Spirit, I have. You have the same salvation, I have. This is universal for all of us, right? And so when we read the Old Testament, we remember the prophet of Joel, and he astute hearers heard point five and you went, wait, Joel, the prophet Joel, he foretold of a day when the Holy Spirit was going to pour out upon all believers.

34:38

He prophesied that God in the future of redemptive history would pour His Holy Spirit out, not just on a select few, but upon all of God's people. That's actually what Peter picks up in Acts chapter 2.

34:53

This isn't in the slides, I'm just going to be-bopping in here. But Acts chapter 2, if you've got your Bible, you're going to have to turn there with me, because I don't have it on the slide. Acts chapter 2, Peter verse 14, but Peter standing with the 11, lifted up his voice and addressed them.

35:12

This is after the Holy Spirit pours out. People are hearing these disciples speaking in known languages. They're like, we're hearing them from our village dialect, 200 miles away, how are they? They must be drunk.

35:27

This is crazy. Peter standing with the 11, lifted up his voice and addressed them. Men of Judah and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give ear to my word. For these people are not drunk as you suppose, since it's only the third hour of the day.

35:42

But this was uttered through the prophet Joel. I love what the apostles did. What Bible did the apostles stand upon? The Old Testament. And so many people want to get unhitched from the Old Testament as if the foundation wasn't the Old Testament.

36:04

When the apostles, when they want to refer to the gospel, where do they go? They're not going to John chapter 3. They're going to the Old Testament because this isn't new, right? So he says, this is what Joel said, and in the last days, it shall be, God declares that I will pour out my spirit in all flesh.

36:24

Right? This isn't new. So what does this mean to us? Well, the same Holy Spirit that anointed David, that rushed upon David, the same Holy Spirit that came upon Christ, the same Holy Spirit that came upon the apostles and the end of John.

36:42

And in Acts chapter 2 is the same Holy Spirit that if you're born again today, dwells in you and empowers you. Right? Listen to this. He empowers you with the Holy Spirit to do what God has called you to do and commanded you to do through His Word.

37:02

Do you believe that? I hear so many excuses often. Well, I'm not gifted in that. Hold on. Time out. If God has commanded you, He is empowering you. The problem isn't gifting. The problem is trust. The problem is you're not relying on God.

37:25

You're putting confidence in your flesh. I don't stand up here dependent upon my natural abilities. If Pastor Mike stands up here and gives you Pastor Mike, I failed. But I stand up here in the confidence of God saying, this is what God says, trusting that the Holy Spirit does His work and gets me out of the way.

37:45

He's empowered you for gospel-centered ministry. That's our purpose as believers. It's not abstract, right? It's gospel-centered. It's heaven-focused. Seek first the kingdom of heaven and His right, and all these things will be added to you, right?

38:03

What was the confession? We talked about these all died in faith in Hebrews 11, and they confessed. I love that. This was the confession of their mouth, that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, and they sought a better country, a better city.

38:19

That is a heavenly one. And then it says, and because of that, because of that confession, God was not ashamed to be called their God. Why? Because they sought Him. That's the same power. So when we read David here, this isn't abstract for us.

38:40

This is, that's what happened to me. When I got born again, that's what happened to me. The Holy Spirit came upon me, empowered me, equipped me, gave me gifts for service. I like to, I'm not removed from this.

38:59

I wanna recommend two books, right? Because I like doing this. I wanna be a part of a well-read church. Books by Costi Hinn, called Knowing the Spirit. Costi was actually at this pulpit a month or two ago.

39:11

We were blessed to host a conference from our friends Kindred across the street, and Costi was here. He wrote this book, Knowing the Spirit. Excellent book, excellent, excellent book. Very easy read.

39:23

My favorite, this is church. Must, must, must be on your shelf. The Holy Spirit by Sinclair Ferguson, right? You want a good, thank you, Malachi, right? The Ferg, that's what we call them, right? You want a good, simple, it's very simple.

39:41

It's not complicated read, but it's thoroughly biblical. He will get you in the Bible. Fantastic book to help you develop your understanding of what this whole Holy Spirit business is about. Verse 14, now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful Spirit of the Lord tormented him.

40:04

Uh-oh. How should we understand the Spirit departing from Saul? Well, I point back to the first point, that the context of this was empowerment for service, for the work that he was called to. The work of the Holy Spirit was very important to the Old Testament.

40:25

The empowering from God enabled an individual to perform a task or an office. In the case of Saul, the Spirit departs from him is the empowerment of God that had been given to him was now removed to fulfill his function as king, right?

40:46

He now lacked the ability and what he needed, the empowerment from God. And that's the context, because some people get confused when they get to Psalm 51 and David says, take not thy Holy Spirit from me.

41:02

This is also the Psalm where David's repenting of his sin. And people think of it in the context of salvation. And that's not the context that it's in. When David says, after sinning, he goes, here's what I pray, I'm not like Saul, forgive me.

41:22

I've sinned and David sinned many cases, much greater than Saul and his prayer was, please don't remove this power from me, this ability, this position to serve. Now point seven, this is where many people have a struggle.

41:42

God's providence over all spirits. And a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented Saul. Who in here struggles with that verse, right? That's OK to admit. Like, we should struggle with this verse because we sometimes just need to wrestle with God, and he needs to pop our hip out of joint.

42:09

And we need to go walking out limping on the edge of our cane, right? The exact, I'm not referring to anybody specifically, right? The exact nature of the spirit that tormented Saul, it's unclear. Some commentators will say this is simply a bad mood, right?

42:31

A depressed condition. I don't think that's at all what is clear in the text. Others suggest it's a demonic spirit. I would probably lean towards that. Others would suggest it's an angel that was sent to torment him.

42:48

I think both of those two are legitimate interpretations, understanding of the text, whether it's a demonic spirit or an angel coming to torment Saul, inflict Saul. But whatever the case is, here's the point.

43:05

The spirit operates according to the sovereign command of the Lord. That's the point. This spirit, whether demonic or angelic, operates under the sovereign command of the Lord. The Lord cannot commit, hear this, the Lord cannot commit moral evil, but he remains sovereign over it.

43:30

He can and does inflict pain as part of his holy judgment. That's a piece of theology we have to wrestle with. And many Christians don't like this idea of God's sovereign control over evil. And his sovereign control over when bad things happen, even though the Lord doesn't do the evil himself.

43:55

We want to try to give God an escape mechanism, but God is sovereign. I had a friend, a girl from high school that went off to college and years later we had connected and when she was in college she went to a party that she shouldn't have been at and guys slipped her drugs that she was unaware of, that knocked her out and a group of guys had their way with her.

44:25

And she was weeping. And what do you say in that? Like pastorally, what do you say? Do I ever say, you know what, God just forgot about you. God wasn't there. Well, that's no hope. This isn't a yin and yang type battle that, well, the evil just runs rampant and hopefully God one day will,

44:47

will fix everything. No, the hope is, I don't know why. I can't give you that answer, but I do know God was there. He was there. And He was sovereign, and His holy righteous anger burned against those guys.

45:07

And one day they will stand before Him and give an account for their sins. I can't give you the why, but I cannot deny God's sovereignty over every, everything. There's no hope. If God is not sovereign, even over the demonic realm, and when bad things happen, there's no hope in that.

45:27

It's just cold, blind, murderous, evil. But that's not what the Bible presents. God is sovereign, and that's good news, because He controls even the things that can harm us. Therefore, He can bring beauty out of ashes.

45:48

He can be victorious, right? He's not moved. He's not breaking a sweat. He is sovereign. These are not easy things for us to understand. I don't stand up here to say, this is just a simple thing to grasp.

46:03

This is God's providence over all things. And we can't limit that. We can't limit that, because the moment we limit that, He ceases from being God, He ceases from being sovereign, and that's the truly terrifying reality.

46:21

God is sovereign over this situation. Piper writes in his book, Providence, Jesus spoke to them one little word, go, and they came out of the man. This is obviously referring to the demon-possessed man.

46:39

There is no question who is sovereign in the battle. Readers from the New Testament have seen this before in Mark chapter one verse 27. When the people were amazed and said, he commands even the unclean spirits and they obey him.

46:57

Praise God, they obey him. He is sovereign. That's good news. They obey him. Yes, they do not. Yes, they do. No exceptions. As for Satan, now he's quoting Martin Luther here. That's why there's quotes.

47:13

We tremble not for him. His rage cannot endure. But as for Christ, even though they slay him, even that was planned. The greatest act of evil, of Christ hanging upon the cross was in God's sovereign providence, in his plan.

47:34

He was not, the disciples scattered because they're like this, a crucified Messiah. This doesn't make sense. They scattered. They ran. But God was in absolute control of those nails, of those evil men that punched Him in the face and pulled His beard out and pounded a crown of thorns in His head.

47:56

He was in control of the crowd, of the guards there. He was in absolute control. And I always say I would just would have loved to have been a fly on the wall of heaven at that moment. Because in the physical world, we're seeing Christ upon the throne in heaven.

48:14

We're seeing angels bending the gates of heaven, just saying, pleading for Jesus to say, go, take Him out, done. And He didn't, because He's in sovereign control. That's good news. Though they slayed Him, even that is by plan.



48:42

Though demons disobey the written command in Scripture, they do not disobey when addressed, when He addressed them directly with His decisive command, with the decisive command of His power. He commands the unclean spirits and they obey Him.

48:59

God's providence holds sway over Satan's angels. This is as true today as it was when Jesus walked upon the earth. We should wrestle with that. We should wrestle with these realities. But at the end of the day, we find our comfort and our confidence that God is absolutely sovereign and He is not out of control, right?

49:24

He is not thinking like, oh, wait, they sinned? Okay, now what do we do? I didn't see that coming. That's not how God operates. We talked about that last week. He's decisive. He's never a passive observer.

49:43

He's providential in all of it. And so God, in His sovereignty, commissioned an evil spirit or an angel to torment Saul for his purpose of establishing David's throne. Right? You gotta remember, that was the purpose.

49:58

He was removing Saul and putting David upon the throne, and he sends this spirit to torment him. This isn't new. The Old Testament, I'll remind you of Judges chapter 9, verse 23, says, and God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the leaders of Shechem, right?

50:16

I remind you of Job, the whole story of Job, right? It's true of the New Testament. Let's do what Paul writes in 1 Timothy chapter 1, verse 18. This I charge, this charge I entrust

to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage a good warfare, holding faith, and a good conscience.

50:41

By rejecting this, some have made shipwrecked of their faith, among who are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan that they may learn not to blaspheme. Jesus says to Simon Peter in Luke chapter 22, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan has demanded you that he might sift you as wheat.

51:05

And if you're Peter, aren't you gonna look at Jesus and be like, but you told him no, right? Like you told him no. Look at what Jesus says, but I've prayed for you that your faith may not fail. Where was Peter's confidence at?

51:22

Is he gonna fail? He's gonna deny him. But I love that you see sovereignty, you see providence in Jesus's tone here. Peter, I've prayed for you that your faith will not fail. Therefore, therefore, therefore it will not fail, Peter.

51:49

And he says, and when you are, when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers. Like that's such a sigh of relief to Peter, because his faith doesn't depend upon him. It's a gift. If Paul says in Ephesians chapter two, eight, it's a gift from God, right?

52:11

And Jesus says, I've prayed for your faith, Peter, and it is secure, right? That's hope. So here's the problem. Verse 15, here's the problem. And Saul's servant said to him, behold now, a harmful spirit from God is tormenting you.

52:34

Nails it, right? He's absolutely correct. The servant gets it. This, whatever's happening to Saul, there's a visual reality of, okay, something changed. And the Spirit says there's a tormenting Spirit from, or the servant says there's a tormenting Spirit from God.

52:56

I want you to note, this isn't a psychological issue. This is a theological issue. And the servant gets it correct. Okay, this isn't a psychological issue. This is a theological issue. And listen to the solution.

53:12

So that's the problem. Our king is now being tormented from a Spirit from God. He gets it correct because theology is on point. So this is the solution. Verse 16, let our Lord now command your servants who are before you to seek out a man.

53:32

Those are the words we heard last week, right? I've seen to provide. He looked upon the outward appearance. God looks upon the heart. That was all last week. Seek out a man. Provide for me a man who is skillful in playing the lyre.

53:49

And when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, He will play it and you will be well. So Saul said to his servants, provide for me. Same language when God says, I've provided for myself a king amongst the sons of Jesse.

54:06

Now here's the irony. We should laugh at this because what is God doing? Providence. Who is God going to put in the king's palace? This shepherd boy from Bethlehem. Like how does that happen? Provide for me a young man who can play well and bring him to me.

54:30

One of the young men answered, behold, I have seen, there's that there's that verb again, behold, I have seen a son of Jesse, the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence.

54:47

And the Lord is with him. The Lord is with him. Therefore, Saul sent messengers to Jesse and said, send me David, your son, who is with the sheep. And Jesse took a donkey laden with bread and a skin of wine and young goat and sent them by David, his son to Saul.

55:10

And David came to Saul and entered his service. And Saul loved him greatly. And he became his armor bearer. And Saul sent to Jesse saying, let David remain in my service for he has found favor in my sight.

55:27

Saul, without knowing, invited the true king to come. The primary importance of this center point consists in the irony that the rejected king unknowingly seeks and obtains relief from the newly appointed king.

55:46

That's God's providence. That's how God rolls. I remind you Proverbs 21, verse 1, the king's heart is a stream of water in the Lord, in the hand of the Lord. He turns it wherever he wills. Side note, that wasn't just true of kings in Israel.

56:07

That's true just as much today as it was then. God is not moved by who's in the Oval Office. God is not moved by who's in the UN or whatever other governing body. He is not moved at all. He is absolutely providential over all.

56:30

So God places these two events from verses 1 through 13 and 14 through 23 back to He's saying, look David is not only my choice, but he's also Saul's choice in God's providence. The chosen king is not a threat to Saul.

56:49

Hear this, he's a means of grace to Saul. He's a means of grace. God provided David, skilled him to go and play to provide relief for Saul. Verse 16, let the Lord now command your servant who is before you to seek out a man who is skillful in playing the lyre.

57:10

And when the harmful spirit from God is upon you, he will play it and you will be well. Now I see a problem echoed in the servant's solution and Saul's acceptance of it. And there is, first and foremost, I want you to write, there's a sin problem.

57:27

Saul continually disobeyed God. Sin was the springboard that led to God's judgment and rejection of him and the sending of this spirit to torment him. There is a sin problem at the core of this event.

57:45

And there is a spiritual reality, not merely a physical one. And instead of the servants calling for repentance and calling for Samuel to seek the prophet's advice, call for, sorry, commanding Saul to seek Samuel's advice, they go, hey, let's get somebody to play some music.

58:07

And it helps, but he needed heart surgery and they provided an Advil, right? That's what's going on. They should have said, Saul, you need to pray. You need to get right with the Lord. You haven't been the king you were supposed to be.

58:28

You failed to obey God. You've rebelled against him. You need to plead for mercy. And they merely say, let's get somebody to play music. That's a tragedy. Saul's sin led him into depression and anxiety and torment of the spirit sent from God, compounded that those issues he was having.

58:58

Sometimes, sometimes, hear this, sometimes anxiety and depression are symptoms of sin and sometimes there are legitimate medical reasons for anxiety and depression that require medical intervention. Both realities are true.

59:15

We need doctors to speak to medical reasons and we need pastors to speak to spiritual ones. We hold to the sufficiency of the Word of God over all things and the Word of God is able to speak into anxiety and depression and provide the freedom.

59:37

So you may need to seek to medical help and you may need to seek pastoral help. Let me share a personal story from myself. In my early 20s, I was a missionary in Uganda, Africa, and I lived in a Sudanese refugee camp.

59:52

And at that time, if you guys have been around, you guys remember the stories of, they were called the Invisible Children. The Lord's Resistance Army, they were getting child soldiers, they were murdering people all over the place.

01:00:04

That was like 45 minutes north of where I lived. And we were with refugees that fled the war in South Sudan who had the craziest stories that you could ever imagine of death and murder. At the time, there was war, there was death.

01:00:25

The mortality rate among children before I think there were 15 was 50%. So 50% of your kids will die. And that was the reality. And I was right in the midst of it as a young 20 year old and death was a reality.

01:00:40

I was bringing and delivering dead babies, not delivering them, but taking the dead bodies to, they called it a dispensary, the little local clinic. Now, when you think of clinic, you probably conjure up images of a building, and that's not what it was.

01:00:58

And one event, they would go to the moms when their babies were teething. They get fevers often. They would go to the witch doctors. And the witch doctors would say some sort of, well, it's the spirit of some ancestor that's cursed you and blah, blah, blah.

01:01:16

So what you need to do is you need to take this rusty nail and you need to dig out your child's teeth. And they would listen to them. And we would get these babies that are infected beyond the point, there's nothing we can do.

01:01:33

There was a time I was going, I was teaching, I was running a Bible college there. We were training at pastors and there was this tribe behind us that, a lady was in labor, and so she was walking to the clinic, and she started some 10 miles that way, and she collapsed in front of our compound.

01:01:59

And so I found her just laying on the side of the road, and so I pick her up, I put her on my little moped scooter, and I could tell she's in dire straits, blood everywhere, baby not alive, and she's barely hanging on, and she passed away before I got to the clinic.

01:02:22

And so when I came home, a week later, I was in a conference in Vegas. So I went from refugee camp, no electricity, you know, no running water, testing myself for malaria, which I had malaria, right?

01:02:35

All of those things, death all around to Las Vegas. And I found myself, I didn't understand what was going on in me. And so I numbed my emotions. And a week or two later, Erin and I were dating, and we were driving to a friend's house in Riverside, and I had my first ever anxiety attack.

01:02:53

And I had no idea what was happening to me. Right, I just, I thought I was having a heart attack, I just lost control. Now I wasn't dealing with a sin problem, but I needed help. I needed my pastors, I needed other missionaries to sit down and help me process in a healthy way and those things that I saw, the tragedies and the horrific things.



01:03:19

I didn't need medical intervention, but I needed help. I needed Bible, I needed friends, I needed my pastors. I had a friend who suffered from some rather severe medical, psychological issues that required a lot of medical medicine.

01:03:41

And he received counsel from a word of faith prosperity guy that said, the fact that you're taking your medicine shows that you lack faith. And the day you stop taking the medicine is the day God will heal you.

01:03:57

And him and I, he was a Marine and built like a brick house, and we went nose to nose. Cause I was telling him, you need to take your meds. And he said, don't you ever tell me again that I need to take my meds.

01:04:11

And sometime later he stepped in front of a train and killed himself. He needed medication and he needed pastoral help. Right, this isn't a black and white issue. Sadly, a lot of modern medicine doesn't, deals with physical realities and often doesn't deal with sin realities as a possible cause of our depression and anxiety.

01:04:38

Also, there are many churches today who refuse to acknowledge there are legitimate treatments that need to be had and we need to respect those. However, if, if, if, like Saul, you're living in sin, you're living in rebellion to God, depression and anxiety is a natural outcome.

01:05:03

That's just a reality. If that is you, medication might not be what's needed but repentance might be, right? And I'm not standing up here trying to pretend to be a doctor, I'm just

saying there are cases where, like me, I didn't, there was always sin in my life so I could say I needed repentance because that's true always.

01:05:21

But I wasn't dealing with a sin issue, I was dealing with trauma, right? My friend who committed suicide was dealing with medical issues and he needed intervention. But a lot of times we're dealing and we're struggling with those anxieties and those depressions because we're not doing what we're supposed to be doing.

01:05:41

And I know this is a delicate topic. But look at what David, what he does, this man of faith, this man after God's own heart, he sinned greater than Saul and he writes in Psalm 32. Listen to his words.

01:05:57

Blessed is the one whose transgressions is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man against whom the Lord counts no iniquity and whose spirit there is no deceit. Listen to this, verse 3. For when I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groanings all day long.

01:06:20

For day and night, your hand was heavy upon me. My strength was dried up as by the heat of summer. That's pretty, that's some emotional stuff, right? The conviction of God was upon him when he was in his hard-hearted state.

01:06:37

And David says, and I spun into depth, it was heavy. And here's what I did. I acknowledged my sin to you and I did not cover my iniquity. How pointless is it to try to hide things from God? I didn't cover my iniquity.

01:06:57

I said, I will confess my transgressions to the Lord and you forgave me of my sins. Therefore, let everyone who is godly offer prayers to you at a time when you may be found. Surely in the rush of great waters, they shall not reach him.

01:07:20

You are a hiding place for me. You preserve me from trouble. You surround me with shouts of deliverance. Sin is an enemy. Sin consumes. Sin affects our spiritual, physical, emotional states. Charles Spurgeon said, sin is a thief.

01:07:41

It will rob your soul of its life. It will rob God. of His glory. Sin is a murderer. It stabbed our father Abraham. It slew our purity. Sin is a traitor. It rebels against the King of heaven and earth.

01:07:57

Matthew Henry writes, no marvel that our sorrows are multiplied when our sins are. Nailed it. Martin Luther says, the devil seduces us at first by the allurements of sin and ordered it from him. This is means of grace.

01:08:19

I see grace, God's grace in this passage. God's providence provided David, the true king, as a means of grace for Saul. You see, he provides means of grace for all of us. He provides means of grace for all of us.

01:08:35

We all hear this. We all struggle with the same things. As men, oftentimes we try to pretend like we don't, but we all struggle. I mean, I remember when I had that anxiety attack, I'm like, do I just lack faith?

01:08:54

Like, what is wrong with me? Am I like pull myself up by my own boots? Like, no, I needed God's means of grace. I needed his word. I needed worship. I needed fellowship. I needed my church. I needed to serve in ministry and so on.

01:09:10

Those function as medicine to the soul, right? Paul writes of Jesus saying it is more blessed to give than to receive, right? As we pour out our lives, as the Holy Spirit anoints us for the service, gospel-centered service, as we pour out our lives, God breathes life into us.

01:09:31

Those are means of grace to provide for our spiritual, mental, physical health. When we ignore those, we're in danger. Now, we might ponder David's ministry of comfort to Saul, and we know it will not be long before Saul hates David and seeks David's life, right?

01:10:00

Saul loves him right now, but soon he's going to try to pin him to a wall. He's going to hunt him down, and this is instructive for Christ's disciples. Our call fits the same pattern. Saul will hate David, and as he was rejected by God yet sustained by David's service, so the world hates Christ's people, yet we function as a means of grace in our world.

01:10:33

We function as a church, as salt and light, as a preserving agent to those around us. As we live out the Christian life, as we proclaim truth, we find function as a means of grace in our community, in our society, in our workplaces, right, so that the sin that corrupts everybody doesn't spiral completely out of control.

01:10:59

We are divinely granted restraints upon the earth's purification. The church is a means of grace by God to restrain society's evils, right, as David was in the courts of Saul. He provided that comfort.

01:11:16

The outcome, Saul is going to eventually hate him for it, right, and he's going to seek to pin him to the wall. But as we live this Christian life empowered by the Holy Spirit and we do what we're supposed to do, the world likewise might love us for a season, for a moment, but the world will turn.

01:11:33

The world will try to pin Christians to the wall because we speak truth. We proclaim the gospel. We call sin, sin. And they're going to hate us for that. But we never change that message. And we recognize, no, we exist here as God's means of grace upon our society and community.

01:11:55

And so we have what an amazing portion of text here this morning. I mean, there's some issues in this text. There's some deep things that we need to wrestle with. And that's OK, church. We need to wrestle with them.

01:12:09

We need to learn to trust God's providence, even when we don't understand all the details. We don't have an answer to why. But what we do trust is God is on His throne. He dwells in heaven, and He does whatever He pleases.

01:12:26

He moves the hearts of kings like rivers of water. He raises up. He puts down. He alone is God. And we can trust Him. We can rely on Him. Because He's in control of all things. We find our comfort and our only hope.

01:12:44

Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much for this text, for these passages. I pray that your spirit does its work in our midst as we talked about some very deep and complicated things. We wanna recognize that you alone are God.

01:13:09

Help us when we don't understand, when we don't see clearly, as we're gonna see David. He's the king, but He's not on the throne. And He's gonna go through just chaos, hell on earth. He's gonna be pursued.

01:13:27

They're gonna try to kill Him time and time again. I pray that we would be like David, a man who trusts and leans and throws himself on the providence of God, even when we don't understand. I pray as all of us struggle in this world, in this side of heaven, with the realities of this world. This sinful, corrupt world, and it affects us. I pray that we would be people who utilize the means of grace you provide in our lives.

01:14:04

That we would seek you in all things. We would walk rightly before you. Help us be the church we're supposed to be. In Jesus name, Amen.