

THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 26

A Moment of Truth

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Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

22:00

So I thought I'd do something a little different, open with a question. And here's the question, have you ever faced a moment of truth when you had to make a decision that would change your future?

22:18

In our passage today, David is going to encounter a moment like that and he's going to have to choose between the easy way and the hard way. Which way will David choose and why? We're going to find out after we pray together.

22:36

Let's pray. Father, thank you for giving us priceless treasure that we find. It's not buried, it's revealed in our Bible. Your words are not just printed on paper or on screens. Your words are your

22:53

living voice of direction and purpose in our lives. Your words are always true, abundant, and eternal. Please let us hear you and receive your truth into our hearts this morning. We pray in the name of Jesus.

23:08

Amen. Our passage today, 1 Samuel chapter 26. If you want to use the Bible under your chair or chair in front of you, we're gonna be on page 303, 303. Quick review to set us up for chapter 26 in case you missed any of the last few weeks.

23:27

In chapter 23, some people of Ziph came to Saul and told him where David was hiding. So Saul took his army and he went after David and would have captured him, except Saul had to abandon his search for David because Philistines had invaded the land and Saul needed to go fight Philistines.

23:48

That was 23. In chapter 24, Saul and his soldiers. came back and hunted for David again. But this time David got the drop on Saul, remember? And David could have taken Saul's life, but he chose to spare the king.

24:03

And Saul wept in gratitude and shame and proclaimed David as the next king of Israel. Then Saul went home and David remained in the wilderness. Then last week in chapter 25 we had sort of a side story where David almost went to war with a really rude dude named Nabal.

24:24

Remember? Nabal's wife though intervened. She was a really wise woman and she intervened and her husband didn't know about it, but she intervened and stopped David from the attack. He called off the attack.

24:36

And then the Lord struck Nabal with a fatal illness and David ended up marrying Abigail, Nabal's widow, and then David married another woman. And then meanwhile back home Saul had given Michal, who was David's first wife, also Saul's daughter, to another man.

24:54

That's the recap. And now the adventure of David continues. Sit back and enjoy chapter 26. It's really great. Okay, looking forward to reading this with you. Then the Ziphites came to Saul like Gibeah saying, Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the east side of Jeshimon?

25:15

So Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph with 3,000 chosen men of Israel to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul encamped on the hill of Hachilah, which is beside the road on the east of Jeshimon.

25:30

But David remained in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul had come after him into the wilderness, David sent out spies and learned that Saul had indeed come. Then David rose and came to the place where Saul had encamped.

25:44

And David saw the place where Saul lay with Abner the son of Ner, the commander of his army. Saul was laying within the encampment while the army was encamped around him. Then David said to Ahimelech the Hittite and to Joab's brother Abishai the son of Zeruiah, who will go down with me into the camp to Saul.

26:04

And Abishai said, I will go down with you. So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there lay Saul sleeping within the encampment with his spear stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay around him.

26:19

Then Abishai said to David, God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice. But David said to Abishai, do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?

26:39

And David said, as the Lord lives, the Lord will strike him, or his day will come to die, or he will go down into battle and perish. The Lord forbid that I should put out my hand against the Lord's anointed.

26:52

But take now the spear that is at his head, and the jar of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head, and they went away. No man saw it or knew it, nor did any awake, for they were all asleep, because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them.

27:11

Then David went over to the other side, and stood far off on the top of the hill, with a great space between them. And David called to the army and to Abner, the son of Ner, saying, Will you not answer, Abner?

27:25

Then Abner answered, Who are you who calls to the king? And David said to Abner, Are you not a man who was like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over your Lord the king? For one of the people came in to destroy the king your Lord.

27:40

This thing you have done is not good. As the Lord lives, you deserve to die because you have not kept watch over your Lord the Lord anointed. And now see where the king's spear is and the jar of water that was at his head.

27:54

Saul recognized David's voice and said, Is this your voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my Lord, O King. And David said, Why does my Lord pursue after his servant? For what have I done?

28:08

What evil is on my hands? Now therefore let my Lord the king hear the words of his servant. If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering. But if it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying, Go serve other gods.

28:30

Now therefore let not my blood fall to the earth away from the presence of the Lord, for the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains. Then Saul said, I have sinned.

28:46

Return my son David, for I will no more do you harm, because my life was precious in your eyes this day. Behold, I have acted foolishly and have made a great mistake. And David answered and said, Here is the Spirit, O King, let one of the young men come over and take it.

29:02

The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the Lord gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the Lord's anointed. Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the Lord, and may he deliver me out of all tribulation.

29:21

Then Saul said to David, Bless be you, my son David. You will do many things and will succeed in them. So David went his way, and Saul returned to his place. This chapter shows us how David spared Saul's life again, just like he did in chapter 4, and, and, it gives us another priceless opportunity to see with the clarity and strength. It comes into our lives when we obey God's voice, instead of obeying our own voice or the voice of other people.

30:00

Let's go through this amazing place in God's word. Verse 1, then the Ziphites came to Saul at Gibeah, saying, is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the east of just Simon?

30:13

Remember, we read about these treacherous tattle tales from Ziph in chapter 23. And now they came back to rat David out again. Let's look at a map together. It's kind of small, but hopefully you can see that David was hiding where the pen is on the hill of Hachilah, which was between Ziph and the Dead Sea over there in the eastern side of Jeshimon, which was another name for the wilderness of Judah.

30:44

Now, when Saul heard where David was hiding, this time he remembered. He remembered how David spared his life, so he no longer wanted to hunt and kill David. Is that what happened? No, let's read verse 2, painful verse 2.

31:04

So Saul arose and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, with 3,000 chosen men of Israel to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. What a guy. Saul forgot, completely forgot all about the mercy David had shown him.

31:24

Saul was a, he was a powder keg king that was just waiting to explode if his hatred, his fear and his jealousy of David and those pesky Ziphites, they provided that spark again. Now, before we judge Saul too harshly, like Saul, we have sin in our hearts too, don't we?

31:49

And we all have really strong emotions that sit just under the surface. That's a dangerous combination, isn't it? A sinful heart, raw emotions, that's a volatile mixture that we carry around inside us 24-7 everywhere we go.

32:09

So we can be relatively, like now, we can be relatively cool, calm, and collected most of the time, but let somebody say something, or do something that hits that certain nerve, and we can lose our cool, can't we?

32:26

And we can blow up just like Saul. Let's look at verse 3 and 4. And Saul encamped on the hill of Hachilah, which is beside the road on the east of Jeshimon, but David remained in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul had come after him into the wilderness, David sent out spies and learned that Saul had indeed come.

32:48

Okay, Saul and his 3,000 soldiers could not sneak into the wilderness without David knowing about it, right? But look, David sent spies to confirm Saul's arrival anyway. It was like David was probably thinking, is this really happening again?

33:07

Is this really going on again? Let's look at verse 5. And after David got the spies report, David rose and came to the place where Saul had encamped. And David saw the place where Saul lay with Abner, the son of Ner, the commander of his army.

33:21

Saul was laying within the encampment while the army was encamped around him. David probably approached the camp from the high country so he could be looking down into the camp and sure enough, he could look down, got close enough to see where Saul was sound asleep in the middle of the camp, sleeping next to his cousin, the commander of the entire army, Abner.

33:43

And all around Saul, he was surrounded by 3,000 soldiers with their horses, with their chariots, and their supplies. Can you picture that encampment? That's what David's looking at. So this verse not only describes for us Saul sleeping arrangement, but it gives us a vivid picture of what a false sense of security looks like, doesn't it?

34:08

Saul had to feel safe and sound in the middle of all those guys. He had a formidable encampment where no enemy could possibly get to him, or so he thought. No, we always sleep better when we think all is well.

34:25

Let's look at verse 6. Then David said to Ahimelech, the Hittite, and to Joab's brother Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, who will go down with me into the camp to Saul. And Abishai said, What? Are you nuts?

34:41

No, I'm sorry. That's what I would have said. Abishai said, I will go down with you. Here we meet two men that David trusted enough to take with him on this dangerous mission. But when he asked for volunteers to actually go down into the camp, do you notice only one of the two guys answered him?

35:03

Ahimelech didn't say a word. Apparently, maybe he acted like he didn't hear the question, like the crickets were really loud that night. No, I didn't hear anything. Was that the wind? No, I didn't hear what he said.

35:13

But Abishai was quick. Abishai is all like, I'm in, let's go. It's interesting that in Scripture Ahimelech the Hittite will not be mentioned again, but we will be meeting Abishai in later chapters. Let's look at verse 7.

35:28

So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there lay Saul, sleeping within the encampment with his spears stuck in the ground at his head, and Abner and the army lay around him. Okay, some people sleep with a soft animal, a little stuffed animal for comfort.

35:50

Saul slept with his spear, didn't he? And I wonder when David saw that spear stuck in the ground, I wonder if his mind flashed back to all the times he saw that spear flying his direction and sticking into the wall by his head.

36:03

Let's look at verse 8. Then Abishai said to David, God has given your enemy into your hand this day. Now please let me pin him to the earth with one stroke of the spear, and I will not strike him twice.

36:18

Verse 8 is like one of those scenes in a movie. You'll know what I'm talking about in a minute. It's like a scene from a movie where the heroes are in a precarious position where stealth and silence are absolutely required.

36:33

But the scriptwriters give the actors line of dialogue that they need to say, and you're watching the movie, and you're thinking no one in real life would talk at a time like this. But here we go. This is real life.

36:47

David and Abishai stood over the slumbering king who was right next to the commander of all the army with 3,000 snoozing soldiers around him, and Abishai could not keep his mouth shut. He said, David, God clearly wants you to kill your enemy tonight.

37:08

Please allow me to do it for you. I'm only going to need one shot. David's answer should have been shhh, but look at verse 9. But David said to Abishai, do not destroy him, for who can put out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?

37:26

So right here is where we come to David's moment of truth. He spared Saul's life in chapter 24, but now that could have looked like a big mistake to David because Saul

came right back to kill him. Obviously, obviously Saul was not going to stop until either David or Saul was dead.

37:52

David had a big decision to make. The easy choice, the obvious choice in Abishai's opinion, was to plunge that spear into Saul and end this ghastly game of hide-and-seek that had gone on for years.

38:11

When everyone, think about this, when everyone woke up the next morning it might even look like Abner killed the king or one of the other soldiers put the spear in Saul. No one would think David could have just waltzed into the middle of that camp and killed the king and walked right out again without someone seeing or hearing him.

38:29

So David would be home free. He'd be on the throne of Israel in the morning. But David chose the hard way. He spared Saul again. David chose to show mercy to Saul who now doubly did not deserve it. Abishai thought this was David's God-given opportunity to kill Saul.

38:54

But David saw things differently. Why did David see things differently? Because in this moment of truth, David chose to follow God's truth. David's mind was on the words of God, not the words of Abishai.

39:21

So we have to be careful, don't we, with who we listen to? And just not wanting to be offensive, but just wanting to be honest with you, if you and I are not reading our Bible, then we're not going to know what God has said, will we?

39:38

And that means if we don't know what God has said, we are going to go through life always confused and misdirected by our own thoughts and by the thoughts and words of other people. So, amen is right.

39:57

So we need to read our Bible. We need to study it. We need to meditate on it because then the word of God saturates every situation we face. And then regardless of the circumstances, His voice comes into our ears.

40:17

His voice comes into our mind. And His voice speaks to us, and His words guide us and direct us to the right decision, to the best decision. When we know the light of God's word, we're going to see things differently than those who are in the dark, right?

40:41

When we know the light of God's word, we're going to see things differently than others do that are in the dark. To Abishai, this looked like the perfect time to get rid of Saul once and for all. Done.

40:54

One shot of the spear. I guess you don't shoot a spear, you throw a spear. But to David, this was the time to trust the Lord with Saul. Let the Lord deal with Saul. David remembered that God placed Saul on the throne, so David knew only God had the right to remove him.

41:16

And this is the part that blows me away in this critical moment of truth. David chose to care more about what was right in the eyes of God than what would make life easier for him. What a way to live.

41:37

In a moment of truth, and the big decision came, David cared more about what was right in God's eyes than he cared about what's going to make life easier for me. Pastor Drew talked about this a couple of weeks ago when he covered chapter 24 and he asked us some questions that this passage is asking us.

41:57

Again, let me just repeat these questions for us to think about. So what do we do? What do you and I do when we have the choice to please God or please ourselves? Which person do we please? We please the Lord or do we please ourselves?

42:17

And the other question, which road do we take when we can see the wrong way is the quickest and the easiest? It really is. The wrong way is the quickest and the easiest and the right way is the longest and the hardest.

42:31

Which road do we take? Did you notice David did not hesitate with his decision? He knew the words of God so he just obeyed them. We see here a life-changing principle for our lives. Knowing and obeying the word of God is not a burden.

42:57

It is a blessing of immeasurable value. Opening your Bible, reading your Bible, studying your Bible, meditating on the word of God, it is not a burden. It isn't something you have to do. It is a blessing of incalculable value.

43:16

Why? Because our knowledge and obedience to the word of God gives our life clarity and it gives our life purpose. It shifts our perspective from the temporary things to the eternal things and it empowers us.

43:32

It frees us up to actually want God's way even when that's the hard way. We want that way. What a way to live. What a way to live. Let's look at verse 10. And David said, as the Lord lives, the Lord will strike him or his day will come to die or he will go down into battle and perish.

43:59

David just declared. God was in control of the situation. When we understand when we really get it, when it really sinks through our head that this is true for every situation you and I face, it changes how we look at everything.

44:18

It drastically dramatically changes how we look at everything when we know whatever that thing is. God's in control of it. As David stood in the middle of that camp surrounded by 3,000 people that wanted to kill him.

44:35

He stood in the center of camp and he was also standing in the center of God's will. This place, the center of God's will is where real peace, real patience, real power, and real true wisdom can be found.

44:53

Being in the center of God's will is the best place we can possibly be when our troubles have us around it. Best place to be. Best place to be. Verse 11, David said, The Lord forbid that I should put on my hand against the Lord's anointed, but take now the spear that is at his head in the jar of water and let us go.

45:18

Remember last time David was close enough to kill Saul in the cave? He just cut off a piece of Saul's garment. But then David deeply regretted doing that because he felt like touching his knife just even to the robe of Saul was like putting his blade on the king himself.

45:35

So he deeply regretted that. So this time David simply grabbed two handy souvenirs. Let's look at verse 12. David took the spear and the jar of water from Saul's head and they went away. No man saw it or knew it, nor did anyone awake, for they were all asleep because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them.

45:58

This finally explains why no one woke up. The Lord had put everyone into a deep sleep. Don't you wish God would do that for you on some restless nights? A good night's sleep is such a gift from God that I totally took for granted when I was younger, but not anymore.

46:20

Let's look at verse 13 and 14 together. Then David went over to the other side and stood far off on the top of the hill with a great space between them. And David called to the army and to Abner, the son of Ner, saying, Will you not answer, Abner?

46:35

Then Abner answered, Who are you who calls for the king? David put a lot of distance between him and all those guys, and then he shouted to Abner from the top of the hill." This is interesting, isn't it?

46:49

Abner did not wake up when David and Abishai had their conversation just standing right over the top of him, but now, the Lord allowed Abner to be wide awake. The incident David called from afar.

47:01

I think that's interesting. Verse 15, David's got a lot to say here, and David said to Abner, are you not a man? Who is like you in Israel? Why then have you not kept watch over the Lord, your Lord the King, for one of the people came in to destroy the King, your Lord?

47:19

You got to love David's bravado here. He just scolded the highest-ranking commander in Saul's army. He just said, Yo, Abner, aren't you supposed to be the man, the top dog? Why then did you let me just stroll right into the camp to kill the King if I wanted to?

47:42

That had to be an awkward moment for Abner. Let's read on, verse 16, then David goes on, this thing that you have done, it's not good. As the Lord lives, you deserve to die, because you have not kept watch over your Lord.

47:56

The Lord's anointed. Now see where the king's spear is and the jar of water that was at his head. David went on to say, Abner, you're not a general. You're a major, a major failure. As surely as God lives, you deserve to die for neglecting the most important part of your job, and that's to protect the king.

48:25

Then David said, have you noticed the king's spear and Yeti are missing? Maybe in the moonlight, maybe dawn's light was rising, and Abner could see David over there on the hilltop holding that spear, holding that water jar that was at Saul's head.

48:43

So he knew David had indeed stood right where the king and Abner had been sleeping like babies. Verse 17, Saul finally wakes up. When Saul recognized David's voice and said, is this your voice, my son David?

48:59

And David said, it is my voice, my Lord, O king. As we've seen with Saul, whenever he was angry at David, he called him the son of Jesse. But when he was all warm and fuzzy affection for David, he called him my son David.

49:17

Remember, David used to be his son-in-law, but in the last chapter Saul disowned David when he took his daughter, Michal, who was David's first wife, and he took her and gave her to another guy. Verse 18, and now David said, why does my Lord pursue after his servant?

49:39

What have I done? What evil is on my hands? David just said, asked Saul, the same question that David asked Saul's son Jonathan, remember in chapter 20, he said, what an evil thing have I done that I deserve to die?

50:00

Verse 19, now therefore let my Lord the King hear the words of his servant. If it is the Lord who has stirred you up against me, may he accept an offering, but if it is men, may they be cursed before the Lord, for they have driven me out this day that I should have no share in the heritage of the Lord, saying go serve other gods.

50:24

David said if I have sinned against God, tell me the sin and I will make a sacrifice of it for atonement, but if you're listening to the words of men, may God judge them because I've been banished from the heritage of the Lord.

50:39

What does that mean? David was in distress from being ostracized from the Promised Land of Israel, forced to leave. Can we hear the pain in David's words? He felt, of all the things to complain about, he didn't complain about the dirt or the weather or his rations or death even, his exile forced him to go serve other gods because he felt like he had to seek refuge in all these other nations around Israel that did not worship the living God.

51:11

They worshiped idols. There was no place for David to go to worship. He was in great distress because he could not worship God with his fellow countrymen. My brothers and sisters, when we get to gather together for worship and fellowship at Rock CC, it is a gift from God that we should always treasure and never, ever take for granted.

51:37

Verse 20, David said, Now therefore let not my blood fall to the Earth away from the presence of the Lord. For the king of Israel has come out to seek a single flea like one who hunts a partridge in the mountains. Now I think we can hear David's emotional and physical exhaustion in his words. He just told Saul, please don't let me die out here. You're the king of Israel. I'm just a flea. I'm nobody but you're hunting me like a partridge.

52:15

What does that mean? In those days, people hunted for partridge by literally chasing them from place to place so the birds would have to fly from place to place over and over and over again until the birds became so tired, they no longer could fly, and they would just lay on the ground where the hunter could walk up and kill them on the ground where they lay because they were too weary to escape anymore.

52:43

This is how David felt after years and years of relentless pursuit by Saul. Verse 21, then Saul said, I have sinned. Return my son David for I will no more do you harm because my life was precious in your eyes this day.

53:05

Behold I've acted foolishly and have made a great mistake. This last sentence of our verse I think should be the title of Saul's autobiography. I have acted foolishly and I've made a great mistake.

53:23

Can you think of a better title for Saul's book? David was Saul's greatest warrior, wasn't he? He was Saul's greatest commander and leader. He was Saul's most loyal servant but instead of keeping David close, Saul drove him away.

53:42

He acted foolishly. He made a big mistake. And Saul, of course, promised David, it's okay, it's safe to come home. But of course, David had heard that empty promise from Saul before, so David wisely kept his distance.

53:56

Let's look at verse 22. And David answered and said, Here is the spear, O king, let one of the young men come over and take it. This was David's polite way of saying, No, thank you to Saul's offer to come home.

54:08

I'm not coming, but you can have your spear back. Let's look at verse 23. The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and his faithfulness, for the Lord gave you into my hand today, and I would not put out my hand against the Lord's anointed.

54:25

Saul kept forgetting about David's faithfulness, didn't he? But David declared, David knew that the Lord always rewards faithfulness and righteousness, always. David wanted to be the next king of Israel, but he was willing to wait for God's will and timing.

54:47

Waiting is hard, isn't it? Always. Never easy to wait, especially when you want something badly. David was willing to wait on the Lord, even though that meant a lot of hard years. But the Lord used those tough years to train David, to grow David into the king, the successful king he would become.

55:11

The trials, the trials God allows in our lives are never wasted. They're always for our good, even when we don't understand and even when they hurt, always for our good, never in vain. Verse 24. Behold, as your life was precious this day in my sight, so may my life be precious in the sight of the Lord, and may he deliver me out of all.

55:44

tribulation. David's final words to Saul were a prayer. He prayed, may God save me from death like I saved you. Verse 25, then Saul said to David, bless be you my son, David, for you will do many things and succeed in them.

56:05

So David went his way and Saul returned to his place. Saul proclaimed that David would go on to great success, but as we've seen from Saul, this was not long-lasting good will from the king, was it?

56:19

This was just another temporary mood swing. Our passage ends right here with David and Saul saying goodbye for the last time. Did David think his troubles with Saul were over now? No, he did not. What's gonna happen next?

56:40

That's a good question. Thank you for asking. Come back next week and find out. We're going to summarize this entire passage with just one slide. It's just these simple words, but here is a summary of what we read today.

56:55

God is in control, always and forever. His will is right, always and forever. His timing is perfect, always and forever. Let's trust and obey Him, always and forever. Our prayer team is going to be over here to pray with you at the end of the service.

57:17

If you need prayer, don't be shy. Come talk with people that will pray with you. But if you are shy, that's okay too. You can just go out the door to the right. We have a prayer wall and you can write your request.

57:31

You don't have to sign it and you don't even have to spell the words right. Just get it close and we will be praying for you. Just leave it in the box by the prayer wall. I'd like it to close in prayer by reading for you portions of Psalm 40 that David wrote.

57:47

So let's all bow our heads and we'll make this our closing prayer as I read these words from David. I waited patiently for the Lord. He inclined to me and heard my cry. I delight to do your will, O my God.

58:03

Your law is written within my heart. Your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me. Evils have surrounded me beyond number. Please, O Lord, deliver me. O Lord, make haste to help me.

58:20

May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you. May those who love your salvation say continually, great is the Lord. Amen.