



1 Samuel 29

“Go Home”

10_20_2024

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18:09

So I want to invite you to grab your Bibles and make your way to 1 Samuel 29. 1 Samuel 29, we're going to look at the entire chapter this morning.

18:18

And while you're making your way there, I want to kind of remind you that as we look at this end of the book of 1 Samuel, there are things that are a little bit out of order as we go through the chapters and as we go through the chronology of what's going on over the past few weeks.

18:34

So we're kind of flashing back and forth between two storylines. If you've ever watched a good movie, there's there's always the different plots that are kind of running through the movie. And then you get to the end and you go, oh, I see how this all fits together now, right?

18:46

I always enjoy those movies. And so we've got different storylines that are kind of running simultaneously leading us towards conclusion. And so we're flashing back and forth between the two. Last week, you may remember, we were looking at Saul's storyline, King Saul, and King Saul was in Endor where he had approached Samuel from beyond the grave by consulting a medium and this whole seance thing that happened last week.

19:12

Kind of a strange picture last week and Samuel pronounced some final statements of demise towards Saul, promising that Saul and several of his sons were going to be killed in the upcoming battle that we see that we're moving towards at the end of the book.

19:30

A couple of weeks ago, you may remember David's story. As David was in Philistia, he was serving the Philistine cause and he had sought out Philistine protection as he had been running from Saul for years and years.

19:44

And at this point, he has been in Philistia for over a year at this point. And so David was serving the Philistine cause as he was there. He had endeared himself to Achish, the king of a certain region in Philistia.

19:59

And he had been going out and kind of doing these raids, serving the Philistine cause. David seemingly was having his cake and eating it too. He was in this weird space where it seems like he was looking to God for spiritual salvation, but he, instead of looking to God for physical salvation, he had turned to the Philistines.

20:19

He had turned to these enemies of God to hope that they would provide physical protection for him from King Saul and these attacks that had come against him over the past several years. This week in 1 Samuel 29, what we're going to see is a kind of a rubber-meets-the-road moment where the Philistines have determined to march against Israel.

20:42

They're marching against the armies of Saul. And so David has successfully played both sides up to this point. He's been in Philistine territory for over a year, but he hasn't directly engaged Israel.

20:54

He hasn't directly gone against God's people in any way, shape or form, but that opportunity was coming to an end for him as the Philistines and the Israelites were going to go to war with one another.

21:06

So how was David going to get himself out of this mess? That was the question that we asked a few weeks ago. And so we're going to look at 1 Samuel 29 and see how David finds his way out of the chaos that he's put himself into at this point in the story.

21:21

1 Samuel 29, we're gonna read the entire chapter together, then we'll go back and kind of pick it apart a little bit. But I invite you to follow along in your copy or you can follow along on the screens as well.

21:32

1 Samuel 29, verse 1, it tells us; Now the Philistines had gathered all their forces at Aphek, and the Israelites were encamped by the spring that is in Jezreel. And as the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and

his men were passing on in the rear with Achish, the commanders of the Philistines said, what are these Hebrews doing here?

21:55

Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, Is this not David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and for years? And since he deserted to me, I have found no fault in him to this day.

22:08

But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, with Achish. And the commanders of the Philistines said to him, Send the man back. That he may return to the place to which you have assigned him.

22:18

He shall not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his Lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here? Is not this David of whom they sing to one another in dances?

22:34

Saul has struck down his thousands and David his ten thousands. So then Achish called David and said to him, as the Lord lives, you have been honest. And to me it seems right that you should go and you should march out and in with me in the campaign.

22:49

For I have found nothing wrong in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, the Lords do not approve of you. So go back now, go peaceably, that you may not displease the Lords of the Philistines.

23:03

David said to Achish, but what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now that I may not go and fight against the enemies of the Lord the King? Achish answered David and said, I know that you are blameless in my sight.

23:20

As an angel of God, nevertheless, the commanders of the Philistines have said he shall not go up with us to battle. Now then, rise early in the morning with the servants of your Lord who came with you and start early in the morning and depart as soon as you have light.

23:36

So David set out with his men early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines, but the Philistines went up to Jezreel. These are the words of the Lord. Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word.

23:47

We thank you for the opportunity this morning to come and to consider another chunk of this beautiful narrative that we see as you are working in the lives of your people, as you are working in David's life here, even in these moments, as we consider the Philistines heading to war and God, how you resolve this conflict for David.

24:09

We pray that you would teach us this morning, teach us to be obedient to you, teach us to look to you as we consider our own circumstances. So we pray this morning as you use this time that you would speak and that we would listen.

24:21

It's in Jesus name we pray. Amen. All right, well as we look at the passage we see kind of two main sections in this chapter. The first thing that we see in the first 5 verses is simply the Philistine disapproval of David.

24:37

Chapter 29, you remember 28 we had this weird little kind of side thing going on with King Saul, but chapter 29 not only shifts the action back to David from King Saul but it also takes us several days back in the timeline before the Philistines had mobilized that we saw last week.

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The last time that we saw David he had unexpectedly been promoted to the position of bodyguard of this of this Lord of one of these Philistine kings Achish. But the writer left us hanging a chapter or two ago wondering how David was going to get himself out of this situation.

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We had this pause in the story and then we last week we kind of took off from the story and so now we've been sitting here waiting for a couple of weeks. I'm sure you've been anxiously wondering what happens to David.

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How does David get himself out of this? It was one of those season finale type moments, right? Where you come to the end and how will our heroes escape? And now we see David picking up the story here this week.

25:39

This mention, as we pick up at the beginning of our passage in chapter 29, the mention of the Philistines gathering at Aphek is an ominous statement. That may not ring any

bells for you immediately, but once I start to describe things that have happened at Aphek, I think you're going to go, wait, no, no, I remember that.

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This was the location where the Philistines camped out about 25 chapters ago back in 1 Samuel 4 when the Philistines defeated Israel. They came against Israel once and Israel suffered losses of several thousand men.

26:11

You remember the Israelites went, man, the Philistines really cleaned us out that time. I'll tell you what, let's go back and get the Ark of the Covenant and we'll have God come out before the army and then we'll attack the Philistines again.

26:23

And in that moment, Israel suffered even more losses where the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistines, where 30,000 Israelites died. And after that battle, where Eli the high priest heard about the news, his sons being some of the men that were killed in that battle, and Eli the high priest also died earlier in the chapter.

26:44

That was all happening outside of Aphek, the same location where the Philistines are gathering again now. Israel had suffered great losses at Aphek years ago and it was about to happen again. As Saul is looking at the Philistine army, the Philistines are gathering here together and they're preparing for an onslaught.

27:04

For the last year or so, about 16 months, David has been navigating this precarious position in Philistine territory. Achish, the king of the area where David had been living, and the rest of the Philistines, they thought David was working for them.

27:20

Meanwhile, David was kind of taking his men and going out and doing these little side quests on his own. He would go over here and he would attack this group that was an enemy of the Philistines, but it was also an enemy of Israel in most of those instances.

27:34

David never did any direct harm to to Israel's cause while he was hiding out in Philistia. In fact, he often was helping the Israelite cause by attacking it and pushing back these enemies of both Israel and the Philistines.

27:49

But as often happens in circumstances in life, we think we're in control. We think that we've got everything taken care of and all of a sudden the circumstances start to change around David. David finds himself in a spot where the circumstances had kind of devolved around him where he was unable to control the variables any longer in his situation.

28:13

David finds himself in trouble because the Philistines were going to war against Israel. So while David had been able to kind of just live over here in the corner and and do his own thing by coming over here and attacking this little group and and coming over here and attacking this little group and then going over here and doing this little raid, now David wasn't free to just run around and do his own thing anymore.

28:35

Achish and the Philistines are ready to attack Israel and Achish tells him, David you're coming with me. So David was going to be forced into action. He was going to be forced into Philistine service, into war against his people, against his God, against Israel.

28:53

David would be forced to make a decisive decision that was going to determine his fate for really to tell the rest of his story. If David turns against Israel and fights with the Philistines, he was he was going to become an enemy of God.

29:09

He showed loyalty to Achish and said, all right Philistines I'm yours now. He was going to be wholly opposed to his own people, to God's people. He was going to be an enemy of God and an enemy of his people.

29:22

And so the problem with David's plan that he's been simultaneously aligning himself, looking to God for salvation and looking to the Philistines for physical salvation, his problem with aligning himself with both God and the world with the Philistine simultaneously, is that you can only do that for so long.

29:43

You can only walk that road. You can only try to balance on top of the fence for so long and eventually you end up falling off one side or the other. We can't straddle the fence any longer. The two, God and the world, they're at war with one another.

29:59

The Bible tells us in James chapter 4, James says, you adulterous people, do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? That you are an enemy of God? Therefore, whoever wishes to to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

30:17

David is in this place and he's now kinda put himself in the position of being a fairly stereotypical wayward son of God. He had made the classic mistake that many of us are

also prone to make when we are prone to wander off of God's course, when we're prone to take things into our own hands and think, no, no, God, I've got this one.

30:38

I'll let you know when I need you. Well, David is making that same mistake. He's attempting to walk the line or straddle the fence between God and the world. David had sought physical salvation, looking to the Philistines saying, no, no, Saul won't enter into Philistine territory.

30:56

And so he ran off hoping for physical salvation, that God would protect him by just letting him go over here and hang out with God's enemies for a while. He had sought physical salvation from the Philistines, but tried to continue

31:11

to walk the line and look to God for spiritual salvation. David was like a person today who wants to go to heaven, but also wants to kind of have their cake and eat it too in this life. David was similar to a person today who might say, no, no, I trust God.

31:30

I believe in Jesus for salvation, but I also want my financial security. And so I'm gonna treasure my treasure. I'm gonna keep an eye on the markets. I'm gonna hoard my resources and say, no, that's mine.

31:42

And everything that I have is because I earned it. And that worldly attitude where we hoard our money. David was like a person today who wants to go to heaven, but wants also to have a successful career and is willing to compromise their integrity to make that next step on the corporate ladder.

32:03

David was like someone today who wants to go to heaven and profess his faith in Christ, but also just wants to have some fun on the side as well. And so they compromised their morals to seek outlets of temporary, sinful amusement and pleasure.

32:20

David was trying to walk this line. He wanted an eternity in heaven. And so he presented himself in this position like someone today who might want to go to heaven when they die, but they just show up on Sunday and pay their respects to Jesus and then go out and live however they want to.

32:40

David's trying to walk this balance, but the reality is there is no balance like that. There is no world where we are friends with the world and friends with God simultaneously. James chapter 4 tells us, if you are a friend of the world, you are an enemy of God.

32:57

And if you are an enemy of God, you are a friend of the world. So what was the difference between Saul's situation and David's situation? We see David here getting himself into trouble. He's making all kinds of stupid decisions.

33:11

So what's the difference between what's going on with Saul, which got Saul in so much trouble, which got Saul rejected by God that God last week in kind of a final statement that the prophet Samuel looks at Saul and says, Saul we've told you this time and time and time again.

33:28

God has rejected you and you're going to pay for it with your life. The kingdom is going to be stripped away from you. Saul's desires, what's the difference between Saul's desires and David's desires?

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Well the difference is that Saul's desires caused him to completely abandon his faith. He walks away from God. There was no substance for Saul and his faith beyond how God could benefit him in a moment.

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If there was something going on that Saul needed something, he would look to God and say, hey God could you save me from this problem that I'm facing? Saul did that several different times, but there was no substance to Saul's faith.

34:08

Meanwhile David had not forsaken his faith. David would look to God time and time and time again. God's grace was going to rescue David, and David was ultimately going to return to the Lord in response to his failures.

34:24

The difference between the two is Saul abandons God in his moments of failure, runs further and further away. Meanwhile, David, in his moments of failure, realizes his failure, and he comes running back to God instead of running away.

34:39

So let's go back to Aphek, where the Philistine armies are gathering together. We've got this giant crowd of troops that is coming together. They're gathering at Aphek about to march against Israel. As the Philistine troops are gathering to fight the Israelites, we've got all the troops wandering by the leaders, and all right, you guys line up there, and then you guys line up there, and then you guys line up there.

35:03

And there's a group of Israelites that goes walking by as they're preparing to go to war against Israel. And the Philistine leaders kind of look at each other and go, yeah, I saw it too, who are these guys?

35:14

What is going on here as these Israelites go walking by? Did I, I saw that right, yeah, we saw that right. What are these guys doing here? And so the lords of the other regions, Philistia had kind of five main cities, five main regions, and so there were kings or lords over each of these areas.

35:34

And so Aphek is where they're all gathering together, and so David is serving Achish, one of the five kings, but the other four are there, and they're gathering everyone together. And so those other four kings, the other regions, all look at each other and say, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

35:51

What has Achish done? The Philistine lords are, I would dare say, rightly suspicious of David as he's preparing to go into battle with them against Israel. It doesn't really matter how much Achish tries to vouch for David.

36:06

No no, no, David's been good, David's cool, he's with me. It doesn't matter how much Achish tries to stand up for David, the other Philistine lords won't have it. And so the Philistines don't take physical action against David and his men.

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They don't execute them, they don't attack them, they don't do anything hostile, but they certainly don't want them anywhere near the front lines where this battle is going to be

taking place. Maybe they assume that David in the heat of battle, it seems like they assume that David is going to betray the Philistines.

36:38

They don't want to give him an opportunity to endear himself back to Israel, to Saul and to the rest of the Israelites by striking the Philistines. The Philistines, if they go out to war against Israel and they've got Israelites here fighting against them and all of a sudden David and his men turn the tides from the back of the army, we don't want to be fighting on all sides surrounded by Israelites as they've brought David and his men into battle with them.

37:07

In fact, they start reflecting on, wait a minute, you said this is, you said his name's David? Wait, we, no, no, we know David. Philistines, David had a reputation among the Philistines, didn't he? You may remember a few chapters back, there was a giant by the name of Goliath that David was kind of famously known for executing, for killing in battle.

37:30

David, that's the one that they sing about, right? The women sing this song, Saul has killed his thousands, but David has ten thousands. Is this the same? This is that David, right? No, no, we don't want that David to go into war with us.

37:46

We certainly don't want that David to be a weak spot in our armor, a weak spot in our ranks where he could cause harm to us. And so no matter how much Achish tried to defend David, the others weren't having it.

38:01

The others would not allow David. This guy needs to go, and so they tell Achish, Achish, send David and his men home. So the second section of our passage in verses 6 through 11 is simply titled, David gets the boot, right?

38:15

David gets the boot, so reluctantly Achish agrees with his other Philistine lords, the other kings of the other regions, and so Achish complies with their demands. And strangely enough, the biggest portion of our passage this week is not the Philistines coming to a decision, is not any sort of an actual conflict, it's just Achish apologizing profusely for having to send David back home and to leave the front lines of this battle.

38:43

And so in a way, in this moment, the Philistines kind of resolve this dilemma that David is finding himself in. David is on the surface, he has to be nervous, or there's this problem where he has to go into battle with the Philistines, and on the surface, it's the Philistines who send David away, resolving this problem for him.

39:04

But in a deeper sense, we know that this is also God at work on David's behalf. Removing David from a precarious situation that he didn't want David to be in. And so Achish comes to David and Achish is apologetic.

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He still sees no fault in David. He's convinced that David has been honest with him time after time, is worthy of his trust. But with that said, he shares the news that David needs to pack up his things and go peaceably.

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And he says, go peaceably. Why do you think that is? Why would he say, David, just leave and go home, but do so peacefully? It may have just been a common way for him to tell him, go home, but I think there's probably some layer of Achish is assuming frustration in David.

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Achish may have believed that David had a right to be upset, that David might even respond violently and perhaps even be entitled to do so as his, maybe his character was being challenged. Maybe there was some some offense that he thought was appropriate for David to take in this moment.

40:11

But he tells David, please, just go home peacefully. There's no fight here for you today. And so as David is sent home, David responds by saying, okay, cool, I'm out of here. Is that what he does? No.

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What we see from David is strange to me. It seems strange to me because as David is being sent home, it tells us that David objects. It seems like he wants to go to battle with the Philistines. He wants to be allowed to enter into this battle to go in on the attack against Israel.

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Now that doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me. And so I did a little bit of digging and there's there's two possible explanations for this reality that commonly scholars will give to try to explain this away.

41:00

So I'm just going to give you both of them and let you kind of decide for yourself, what do you think happened here? Either one kind of works for us in this situation. The first explanation that's often given is that David was simply carrying out his false loyalty to its necessary end.

41:16

He wanted to make sure that he wasn't suspected as a traitor. And so if Achish comes back and tells David, you're free to go and he goes, sweet, I didn't want to fight with you guys anyways. Well, that would have probably raised alarms, wouldn't it?

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And so David is just playing out the bit to its necessary end. Matthew Henry kind of expresses this view, the Puritan. He says, David seemed anxious to serve the Philistines, to serve Achish when he was at this juncture.

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Really anxious to leave him, but he was not willing that Achish should know that he was. Saying David wanted to leave, but he wanted to make sure that Achish didn't know that he was anxious to leave. The second view of this is that David's objection to the Philistines kicking him out of the battle is that the Philistine lords had actually perceived accurately what David's true intentions were.

42:08

The Philistines look at this guy and say, no, no, no, what if he turns on us in the middle of the battle? Well, maybe that's exactly what David was planning to do. The David had planned to turn on the Philistines to strike them in the heat of battle, to strike a decisive blow for Israel from the middle of the Philistine army.

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And so people that would believe this, they say that there's clues of this intention that can be gleaned from David's conversation with these Philistines. David expressed his desire to go like, quote this from verse 8, David expresses a desire to go and to fight against the enemies of my Lord the King.

42:49

That's not specific about Achish, is it? He says the enemies of the Lord, well Achish is hearing that and Achish is assuming that David was referring to him as the king and the enemies of Achish were the enemies that David was referring to.

43:04

He was referring to the Israelites. It's also possible that David was referring to Achish in the Philistines as the enemies that would fight against his Lord, the Lord, God, Yahweh. David may have been standing there right in front of Achish saying, I'm planning to turn on you in the middle of the battle.

43:21

And Achish goes, cool, thanks. But regardless of David's intentions, Achish is clear in relaying the orders to David. It doesn't matter what you want, David. I hear your objection, but it doesn't matter.

43:36

You're going to pack up your things, you're going to leave at sunrise, and you're going to go back to the Philistia territory. David's plans, we don't know what they were. They're not spelled out for us here.

43:47

But it seems like David's plans were ruined. Whatever David had planned, David thought he knew what was going to happen, but God's plans kind of trumped over David's plans. David, his plans were ruined, but God's plans were being perfectly executed.

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David is unaware of what's going to happen at this battle. David didn't get to read chapter 28 as we see this pronouncement that King Saul, last week we saw King Saul, you're going to die in this battle.

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David's unaware of what's coming for King Saul, that this was going to be the end. And so beautifully enough, God accounted for the circumstances of all of these things coming together perfectly, playing out in a way that would keep David far away from the battle where King Saul dies.

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David's innocence could never be challenged. So David, he thought he had a plan, and as best as I can tell, David it seems like he was thinking three steps ahead of whatever he thought was going to happen.

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David was thinking he had a plan. But if David was three steps ahead, God was working 15 steps ahead of David. God knew better than David how to allow David to be involved or not to be involved in the battle.

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King of Israel, King Saul was going to be killed and God knew that David didn't need to be anywhere near there so that his innocence could be maintained. You know, if David was playing checkers, God's playing three-dimensional chess in this moment.

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David thinks he knows what's best, but God says, no, no, no, no, no, no. See, you don't see this and you don't see this over here and you don't realize, but this is also going to happen. God is orchestrating things perfectly in the way that he sees fit, but it's not just God booming through the heaven saying, David, go home.

45:43

God uses the intentions of the Philistines. He uses their kings to say, David, no, no, you don't get to be here. Proverbs 21, verse 1, I love this verse. Proverbs 21 tells us the king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord.

46:02

He turns it wherever he wills. God says, no, no, you're gonna go this way, and people do. God says, no, no, no, Philistine lords, you think you know what's best, and maybe there was some wisdom in them deciding, no, no, David's not gonna be here, but God knew all of the things that were going to tie in.

46:21

God said, no, I'm gonna use these Philistine evil kings to accomplish my purposes in these moments. See, we come to the end of this, it's kind of a strange little interjection that we have in the middle of this grand story that we see throughout the back half of 1 Samuel.

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And if we look at the entirety of the last several chapters of 1 Samuel, if we look at the end of 1 Samuel as a whole, we have this sort of comparison between King Saul and David when we look back and forth at several of these chapters.

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You may remember back in chapter 27, several weeks ago, David finds himself in trouble, and David seeks salvation from Saul's anger, from Saul's vengeance that he was seeking, David seeks salvation by turning to the Philistines.

47:12

Then in chapter 28, we see that Saul seeks salvation from God's rejection by turning to the occult, okay. Chapter 29 now, what we see is that David is being saved from the Philistines, saved from accusations, saved from being forced to go into this battle.

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God works the circumstances perfectly to bring David to salvation and to bring him out of the problem that he found himself in. Meanwhile, in chapter 31, we're gonna see that Saul is destroyed by those same Philistines.

47:46

That Saul is attacked, and at the end of this book, in just a couple of chapters, just a couple of weeks, King Saul is going to die. So what's the difference between these two? Why is it that both of them find themselves in problematic circumstances, and God shows favor to David?

48:06

But He allows Saul's end to come. It's David's relationship with God that makes all the difference in these two stories. One man has a true and meaningful relationship with God. Meanwhile, the other does some self-serving things in the name of religion.

48:27

One man, David, maintains his commitment to God even in the face of deep waters. Even when trouble comes against him, David's faith doesn't waver. David does some really dumb things, but David's faith remains in the Lord.

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Meanwhile, the other man, Saul, abandons his commitment to God whenever it's expedient for him. Whenever it would serve him in some way, whenever it would serve his cause, Saul is quickly to go, no, no, no, I'm gonna do this myself.

48:54

God, I'll let you know when I need you. The trajectory of one man's life, David's, is two steps forward, one step back. Over the course of his life, he continually grows in his faith. It's not perfect.

49:10

He certainly has moments where he stumbles, but the trajectory of David's life is an upward one, that he's moving closer and closer to God over the course of the grand narrative. When we look at the entirety of David's life, we see him moving in a positive direction.

49:27

But the trajectory of the other man, of Saul's life, is one step forward, two steps back. He slowly slides himself down the hill. His life reflects this slow but steady walking away from the Lord in his decisions.

49:44

He becomes more and more selfish. He becomes more and more evil. He becomes more and more calloused and hard and numb to the words of God in his life, as he just continues to walk away from God day after day after day.

49:58

David does some bad things. Saul does some good things. But in the grand scheme of things, the trajectory of one is a positive direction. The trajectory of the other is a negative. When you take an isolated portion of a person's life and examine it closely, the differences can seem indistinguishable at times.

50:18

We could take portions of David's life and go, look, how could you ever say that this is a man after God's own heart? How could you look at David and say, this is a godly man that God should be pleased with?

50:29

Because he's going to get himself in some big trouble in 2 Samuel. In fact, he gets himself in some pretty reasonable trouble. In 1 Samuel, he was ready to go and to wipe out a man in his entire household just a couple of chapters ago as he was upset before Abigail came and interrupted David's plans.

50:48

David is not a perfect man by any stretch. We look at David and we say, well, David does some sinful things and David does some good things. You look at little isolated portions of David's life and you go, eh. You look at some little isolated portions of Saul's life and they they almost line up perfectly, don't they?

51:09

We look at Saul's life and we say, well Saul does some good things and Saul does some bad things. So how do we take flawed men on both side of this and how do we say they have so many similarities? How are they different?

51:23

What do we do with this? Well, the solution to this problem is you take a step back. The solution to this is when we get into the weeds, when we look at just the single little isolated similarities of, well David did that and Saul did that.

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David did this and Saul did this. The evidence becomes clearer as you extrapolate it out over the course of a lifetime. Because as we look at the lifetime of King Saul, Saul's trajectory was a downward descent into sinful rebellion.

51:57

Meanwhile, the trajectory of David's life has him moving closer to God in obedience, has him realizing that when he realizes his sin, he has to turn from it. He has to forsake it. He has to say, no, no, no, I'm not perfect, but God, I want to be like you.

52:16

I want to follow you. I want to respond in the way that you would have me respond to. What we're describing here is the difference in the Christian life and the non-Christian life because I can look at people in this room that I know love God and have a relationship with God and have given their lives to him.

52:31

We're about to celebrate with four young people in a few moments how God has come into their life and given new life where there used to be death. We can look at those people and we can say, yeah, but sometimes they mess up.

52:45

Yeah, but sometimes we sin. I can say that of myself. Sometimes I sin and sometimes I look at my life and I go, how am I any different than anybody else that's out there walking around? And it's a fair question for us to ask.

53:00

But the difference is where is our hope? The difference is how have I responded in the grand narrative over the course of my life? Where do I place my hope? We look at this story. What we see is this small little side quest from David where he spends a year or two in Philistine territory.

53:31

He places himself in harm's way. David does not oppose God's people. He doesn't betray what God had commanded in the midst of all of this time that he spends there

with the Philistines. We don't get to know how David would have responded if he had been brought into battle with the Philistines and their conflict with Saul.

53:49

With that said, while he did kind of help the Philistines in a way during this year, many think that he was doing so as a double agent whose allegiance still lied with Israel in the midst of all of this.

53:59

David makes some poor decisions in his life. But the course of his life was guided by God's plan for him. When David falls, when David sins, he doesn't stay down. There's a perseverance in David's journey that shows him continually getting up and falling forward.

54:19

He falls, but he falls forward. He falls with progress. He falls closer to God as he continues to get up and just keep stumbling forward, keep pursuing God day after day. He realizes his error. He stands up.

54:35

He dusts himself off. He repents and acknowledges his sinfulness before God. He gets up and he keeps pushing forward, learning to obey in various ways. When Saul stumbles, he stumbles and he, I don't know, he balls up into a ball and he rolls down the hill, right?

54:55

He doesn't stumble forward. He doubles down on his sinfulness and he walks further and further away from God over the course of his life. When David stumbles, he shows a willingness to change and to repent, to change course and to pursue God's plan.

55:10

Meanwhile, Saul just continues to fall further and further, to descend further and further into madness, into sinfulness, into darkness. So that brings us to us today. Good news, bad news for you. The good news is we're in good company because I'm gonna stumble daily.

55:34

You're gonna stumble daily. We regularly sin in our lives. God says, no, no, don't do that. And we do it anyways. You will stumble, you will fall, you will sin. But the question for us that we see here in David's story and in Saul's story is, I would ask the question, how do you respond when you sin?

56:02

How do you respond when you stumble? When you fall down, how do you respond? Do you respond like Saul? Do you make matters worse by running away from God by saying, God, don't look at me. And we just run and hide like we saw Adam and Eve do.

56:15

They knew that God was looking for them and they hid. I don't wanna face God. I don't wanna repent. I don't wanna ask for forgiveness. I just want to hide. I like my sin. I like my stuff. I'm just gonna stay over here with it.

56:31

Are we gonna respond like Saul does in that moment? Or are we going to respond like David does? When David realizes his sinfulness in those moments and David goes, I can't stay here anymore. I can't continue to do this.

56:49

God, clean me up. God, help me. God, save me because I know how sinful I am. I know that this was wrong. I acknowledge my sinfulness before you, but God, I need help. That's the story of the gospel. That's the story

57:04

of Christianity in a nutshell. Sinful people, all of us, unworthy to stand before God on our own. When we realize our sinfulness we look to God and we say God I need help. God made a way for help to come.

57:23

God made a way for for help to be made available to us that when Jesus came and Jesus lived the perfect life perfectly met God's standards and then He died as a wrongly convicted criminal unjustly murdered for sins that He did not commit.

57:42

Jesus paid a penalty that He didn't owe. We did, but He didn't. When Jesus died on the cross Jesus said no no I'm not paying my penalty I'm paying theirs. And the great exchange was able to happen that Jesus took our sinfulness,

58:02

our punishment, our death that we deserve. He took it off of our account and placed it on His. Meanwhile, Jesus looks at us and says, no, no, if you would place your faith in me, if you would belong to me, if you would follow me, everything that's on my account is freely given.

58:22

It's freely given to us. It's the great exchange. What was on Jesus' account is now on mine. What was on my account is now on Jesus' It's the reason why we can gather here, why we can celebrate salvation being brought to these young people today.

58:40

Because when they said, God, I can't do it, but I placed my faith in you, God steps in and God does the rest. So the question for us today is how will you respond? Will you respond like Saul? No, no, I've got it.

58:58

I'll take care of it. It's mine. Or will you respond like David? Learning from your errors, correcting your mistakes and continuing to pursue God, however imperfectly that may be. If you've got questions, if you need to talk to someone about your own relationship with God, we would love to be able to talk with you.

59:16

I'm gonna be standing around as much as I'm able to when I'm not putting a swimsuit on. Come find me. I would love to talk with you. Our prayer team is gonna be down here after the service is over. Come talk to them.

59:27

They would love to share with you the hope of how we place our faith in Jesus and how Jesus rescues us from our sinfulness. Don't forget, there's a big tub up here behind me because in about 20 or 30 minutes, we're gonna have baptism.

59:45

All right, so you sneak out of here after the service is over, you go grab your coffee or you grab your kids out of class or whatever you need to do. And we're gonna gather back in here to celebrate together new life in Christ in just a few minutes.

59:56

Would you pray with me? God, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the opportunity to reflect on David's story and how you worked in his circumstances, how you rescued him from the hands of the Philistines in this terrible situation that he had found himself in.

01:00:16

And God, I pray that as we consider David's story and Saul's story, that you would help us to repent like David does, that you would help us to look to you for our hope like David does, that we would look to the one who is to come for David, who has come as we are further down history, the Messiah, the promised one, the one that you're going to promise to David and to his line in just a few months.

01:00:45

God, we pray that you would work in our lives, help us to point to Jesus when we're asked why is there hope for us. God, it's not because of our doing. It's not because of our obedience, it's not because of our religion or anything else that we could point to in ourselves, God, that we have hope when we stand before you one day because of what Jesus

01:01:07

has accomplished on our behalf. God, help us to fix our eyes on you. However imperfectly we may stand before you, God, we can stand perfectly before you because of the righteousness of Jesus. God, may He be our hope.

01:01:27

May He be our champion that we point to and say, no, no, no, not me, but Christ. Father, we love you. We thank you for loving us. It's in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.