

1st Samuel Ch 20-21

Ch 19 left us with that-interesting scene whereby Saul decided (having sent 3 groups of men to arrest David, all 3 of them having failed being arrested themselves by the Holy Spirit) that if you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself. But when he showed up in Ramah and pursued David who was at Naioth, he to instead of arresting David was arrested by the Holy Spirit as he began as well to prophesy and speak or even sing out under the inspiration of God. And He took off all of his royal garments and lowered himself due to the unction of the Holy Spirit upon him and laid down on the ground, having puffed himself up, the Lord brought him low. And all that day and all that night he was just laid out there before the Lord as he prophesied.

And chapter 20 begins with David seeing his opportunity, the Lord having made a way once again when it may've seemed as though there was no way, and so he fled from the presence of Saul as the Lord just held him captive there.

Vs1

So while Saul is there in Naioth, David flees back to Jonathon, and he begins to question him as to what's going on and what has he done to deserve this. And quite frankly I can understand where's he's coming from, he hasn't done anything to Saul, he's been faithful to him as a king and as a father-in-law, he's done everything he's asked him to do, and now he's literally fearing for his life. He's on the run, he's living this fugitive lifestyle fearing to go around every bend for fear of what lies around the corner, if it's Saul or one of his cabinet members, David's dead. And so due to his circumstances he begins to ask all these questions as to why he's being punished. And this is exactly what you and I do so often when things turn sour in our lives, that we know of we haven't done anything wrong and yet one thing after the other seems to be working against us. And these are the kind of questions that we ask, "What have I done?" "What's my sin that I'm being punished like this?" But the lesson that you, and that I would do well to learn is that it's not always about "punishment" but quite possibly it's about "preparation." You see David can't see the forest for the tree in front of his face, and I doubt that in his circumstances any of us could, but God wasn't *punishing* David, He was *preparing* David. He's taking David through the school of hard knocks, knocking off the rough edges, teaching him what it means to depend upon God, allowing him to associate with the lowly so that when he's exalted he'll remain humble and yielded to God. And by the time He's done, David will have earned a 10yr degree, and the same thing happens with me, and it happens in your life to. Oh maybe not to the extent that David experienced it, but God will at times use *tribulation* to bring about *transformation* in your life, as He takes you from glory to glory. You remember James 1 "*My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing.*" James 1:2-4 So *problems* bring about *patience*, and *patience* brings about *perfection*. Now if there's one area I really seem to lack in (though there are many) but 1 in particular is patience, my wife could tell you all about it, but it serves to testify against me how far from perfect I really am.

Now we'll never reach that mark this side of eternity, but God is progressing us towards it, and this school of hard knocks that David is beginning to experience isn't punishment, it's preparation, teaching Him patience and dependence upon the Lord that he might become the man that God has called him to be.

Vs2-4

Jonathon to me seems to be a bit naive here since Saul has thrown his spear at David 3 times already and down right commanded his death in vs 1 of ch 19. But you recall in vs 6 of ch 19 Saul swore to Jonathon that David wouldn't be killed. And so this is probably what Jonathon is referring to, and he says, "Hey, I don't know what's got you so paranoid, but Dad won't do anything, great or small with out telling me 1st and he hasn't mentioned anything to me about wanting you dead." and David says, "Dude, I know that you want to think the best of your dad and all, but he knows that we're best friends, he's not going to tell you that he's trying to kill me and I'm tell you that as the Lord lives and as your very soul lives, there's but a step between me and death." No doubt referring to those spears that he was able to step out of the way of just in the knick of time, but I love the sobriety of that statement because in reality that's everyone of us. There's but a step between you and death, you're but a breath away, or a heartbeat away from death, we're all just a moment away from eternity, and we would do well to lead our lives with this sobering reality in the forefronts of our hearts and minds. If you need to tell someone something tell them, if you need to work something out, do it, because you may not get another chance, there's but a step between you and death, and that's true for them as well, so make things right that need to be made right. But Jonathon says, "Hey, whatever I need to do to ease your mind and help you out I'll do."

Vs5-9

David is really in a hard way here, and the implication of vs 8, what David is saying there is, "Hey, I know that you and me made an agreement, we've cut covenant, and determined to stand by one another through thick and thin. But if for some reason you've changed your mind, and you know what's going on and you're in cahoots with your dad, and this is an opportunity for you to turn me in, then just go ahead and kill me yourself right now, why give me over to your dad?" and *Stress* has a tendency to raise *suspicion*, *pressure* can produce *paranoia* and David is a bit paranoid right here, he doesn't know who's in on his dad's ploy. And he's saying, "Jonathon if you're just playing the fool in order to stall me so that when your dad gets back he can kill me, you just kill me right here, right now, yourself."

But Jonathon comes right back and says, “Hey, don’t be accusing me of condoning my dad’s sin, I told you that I was with you and if I knew anything was up, I’d be sure and let you know.” You remember Jesus said, *“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.”* Matt 10:34-37 and In reality Jonathon gives to us a real working example of how to love the Lord more than father or mother and yet never show disrespect to his father. He disagrees with his dad, has purposed in his heart to be obedient to the Lord over his dad and yet he never tries to instigate a rebellion against his dad, is always respectful of his dad, but he obeys God over his dad when the two have conflicting interests. And there are unfortunately lots of sons and daughters out there who have parents that are ungodly and yet they desire to serve the Lord, and I think Jonathon is a great testimony of how that can be done. He honors the Lord over his dad, yet doesn’t get in his dad’s face in a demeaning way, he just speaks the truth and doesn’t compromise it.

Vs10-13

That is, may you be exalted to the throne, having rule over Israel and victory over your enemies just as God has granted these things to my father.

Vs14-15

As you know it was commonplace in that day that when you assumed the position of the king, you would have executed any and all of the lineage of the previous king so as to end any possibility of a rivalry. But what Jonathon is saying here is that when David takes the throne, he’s asking David to show kindness to him and to his family and not have them executed.

Vs16-25

So Saul in his paranoia sat with his back to the wall so that no one could approach him quietly from behind, Jonathon sat opposite of Saul, Abner on one side, and David on the other, so his absence would’ve definitely been noticed.

Vs26

That is, ceremonially unclean, maybe he’d been with his wife the night before, or had killed some philistines and touched some dead bodies or something, and in such case he’d of had to bathe and go through the ceremonial cleansing rights prior to joining the feast.

Vs27-29

Now either Jesse was so old at this point that the eldest brother had assumed the responsibilities of the family patriarch (so to speak) or since his brothers were in Saul's army Jonathon may've thought that it was better to mention them (maybe Saul knew them) hoping that that would ease any suspicions. And rather than just assume this was an outright lie (though David will do just that later on here) but it's probable that he did trek down to his families house during that 3day period and then report back to the "rock" (if you will) on the 3rd day.

Vs30-34

So Jonathon goes forward with the plan, Saul gets mad at his son calls him the son of a perverse, rebellious woman and in a fit of fury lashes out and throws his spear at his own son. In essence he's saying, "Don't you understand that as long as David is around you're not going to take the throne, (even though God had taken it from Saul's line already) your mother bore you to take my place and you're willing to step aside, you're no son of mine!" and He was accusing Jonathon of being illegitimate, saying if you were *my* son, you'd be on my side, you're shaming your mothers nakedness in the position you take. Well once again as Saul thrust the spear at his son, let's just say that Jonathon got the *point* and realized that David had been right all along. Now Saul considered David his enemy, Jesus said we're to love our enemies, and here we see what can begin to happen if we don't. We think we can hate these people, be kind to those people, not forgive this person, but love that group of people. But that's not true, hatred is an interesting thing, it's like pouring some contaminants in a fresh water well, it just permeates the whole thing. And what happens is that that hatred begins to spill over into every facet of our lives until we're out of control even around those nearest to us, our own families, it hurts everyone around us, and the whole episode is one of insanity even as we're seeing here before us.

Vs35-40

Now we commend Jonathon for standing up for David even here because if his dad found out about it, there's no telling what the repercussions might be. But even more so to be commended are those who will take a stand for the son of David Jesus Christ today. Jesus has been rejected by the world, He's in disrepute, His gospel has been misrepresented, He's not the popular stand to take, those who follow Him are often given to rebuke and scorn, and even as Jonathon's act here is a noble act, even more noble still are those who will go against the flow of the world to take their side with Jesus Christ

Vs41-42

So not knowing if they'd ever see each other again they wept together, kissed one another in the traditional custom, (you know 1st one cheek and then the other). But David wept more because he knew this was the beginning of a journey that would last no telling how long, and for the next several yrs of his life he would live his life on the run, either in this forest, or in that cave until God removed Saul from the throne and established him. So they re-established their commitment to one another and parted ways.

Ch 21

Vs1

Now David begins well here, the 1st time he sensed real trouble he went to the *prophet* Samuel, this time he went to the *priest* Ahimelech. But from here it just goes south, David seems to have a momentary lapse of faith, whether he was seeking to protect the priest from knowing anything, or simply scheming and trusting in his own wit, I don't know, but either way he begins to lie.

Ahimelech knew who David was and that he was captain over 1,000 men, not to mention the king's son-in-law so he was afraid when he saw David out by himself, probably looking all distraught and stressed, and his secret service men and body guards were nowhere to be seen. And though David is alone in the sense of on his own, it's reasonable to presume that there were a few men who were with him even at this point (though not the official delegates who were to guard him) and the reason I say that is because when Jesus made reference to this event, He mentioned men being with David. And we'll see that in a moment (but notice 1st).

Vs2-6

Now had the Israelites been tithing as God commanded them to, the priest would've had plenty of supplies on hand, but be that as it may, and sadly it seems to go that way often times today, the priest couldn't do much for David because there was nothing much there to bless him with. But what he did have was the showbread that was positioned on a table in the tabernacle to the right side, as you would walk through the door. Obviously pointing the "Bread of Life" Jesus Christ Whom it foreshadowed, and the fact that God desired to commune with the people of Israel "break bread with them" (if you will). But ordinarily this bread was reserved specifically for the priests. And it was always to be fresh; before it got stale it was to be replaced with that which was fresh, what does that mean? It means that God wants our communion with Him always to be fresh. And He doesn't want your relationship with Him to grow stale, what's fresh today will be stale this time next week, be growing in your relationship with Him, keep things fresh and progressing.

But Ahimelech said that he'd go ahead and let David have it if they were at least ceremonially clean, and so this bread literally became to David, the bread of life, this priest was offering life to David, the bread of life. Even though ritualistically it was reserved for the priest, practically speaking Ahimelech knew that the spirit of the law took precedence over the letter of the law. The Law was meant to preserve life and lead us to a Savior, so how then could he justify with holding that which would aid human need in the name of God? What did Jesus say all the Law and the Prophets hung upon, 2 commandments, Matt 22:37-40 "*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*" *This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.” In other words whenever the Letter of the Law and Love seem to have a conflict of interests, Love always supercedes Law. God’s Law was established to aid man, not to abolish man, (especially in aiding them to see their need for a Savior) and so when placed in question human need always supercedes all ritual and ceremonial laws. (Look quickly at Matt ch 12:1-8)

Marks records Jesus as saying, *“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath.”* Mark 2:27

Which is to say, the law was given to man, man wasn’t given to the law, and whenever human need is present, the ritualistic and ceremonial laws are to be put on hold.

Vs7

Enters this Judas type character Doeg who’s snooping around here, you might say that he was the original “snoop Doeg” not even an Israelite, he’s there at the temple. Maybe because he was a proselyte who needed to go through some rite or ceremony to maintain status among the Jews but definitely not because he was a God fearer, but he’s sort of just dropped in here but will surface in chapter 22 as the one who begins to bring a deadly unraveling to David’s lies.

Vs 8-10

Now what’s wrong with this picture, what David’s doing here seems to be incredibly insane, at one time content with a sling, now he takes up this sword. Whose sword, Goliath’s sword, this huge sword that was probably about as big as David was, and he straps it to his back and takes off towards Gath. Now Gath (as you may know) was philistine country, specifically Goliath’s hometown, he was their champion “Golly” they called him. And now here comes David seeking refuge in the enemies domain, carrying on his side (or strapped to his back) the very sword of their champion. What’s the deal, my wife was embarrassed last Saturday because when we were watching our son play football, I’d holler out “hit em hard” and “drive em back” and various other one liners like “run for your life” but we were sitting on the opposing teams side. She didn’t think I was real smart, but what David’s doing is in essence flying into New York City sporting a Taliban T-shirt with a turban wrapped around his head, you just don’t do that, and you’re just signing your own death warrant if you do.

Vs11

So the song that swept the nation in Israel apparently made the international charts as well in the neighboring nations.

Vs12

“Oh no, I’ve been discovered” Duh, you’re carrying Goliath’s sword around like a banner saying, “Here I am catch me if you can” but when he knew he’d been caught he was freaked out because he figured that spelled the end for him. And there was some serious rerouting going on in his heart right about now, you can read Psalm 56 and Psalm 34 in regards to this point in David’s life.

Vs13-15

David did a crazy thing in going to Gath, and here it is literally surfacing in his behavior the way that he’s been acting in going here in the 1st place. And though it was another deception it was fairly quick witted on David’s part and no doubt saved his life. He just flipped out and frothed at the mouth and pounded on the doors. One commentary says this, “An indignity to the beard, whether done by another or by one’s self, is considered in the East an intolerable insult; and no wonder, therefore, that the disgusting defilement of it which was committed by David, and allowed to remain unwiped away, was alone sufficient to convince Achish that he was insane.” (Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown)

And basically Achish said, “Don’t bring this freak into my house, get him out of here.” And whether or not they escorted him to the border I don’t know, but he was delivered once again out of the hands of the enemy as he continues in this preparation period of his life for the throne of Israel.