

1st Samuel Ch 29

As to where Ch 28 deviated just slightly from the ever thickening plot in David's life, in order to give us a glimpse into the final episode in the life of Saul just before his end in this battle between Israel and the Philistines, Ch 29 picks right back up where vs 2 of Ch 28 left off. And I can't really think of a better way to begin our time this evening considering the ch that lies before us other than to say, "Sin stinks!"

I mean, how many of us have gotten ourselves into a world trouble because of sin? And the only thing that's delivered us from that circumstance with out cataclysmic, and catastrophic results to our detriment is the grace of God. Because sin seems to have this "snowball" effect whereby it seems to start out as this small thing, but once the ball starts rolling it just keeps growing bigger and bigger until we're tangled up in this web of our own making with seemingly no way out. I don't know who said it but how accurate it was when the statement was uttered, "What a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive." Because you for whatever reason choose a certain path, or speak some lie to cover your tracks, and then a situation comes into play where you have to make up another lie in order to cover that lie and on and on it goes until one day you find yourself so far down that there seems to be no way up. And you find yourself in a situation or circumstance that you thought you'd never be in.

I suppose one of the best biblical illustrations of this is with Peter, I mean compared to the rest of the disciples, (in his mind) comparatively they didn't love the Lord at all if their love was to be compared to, or placed up beside his. "Hey, they might all deny you, but I never will, in fact come what may I'm ready for it, even if I have to die with You I'm ready because Lord I love you that much." "Peter, before the rooster crows you'll deny me 3x." "No way, not me, it'll never happen, I'll never be in that place, it's You and me to the end!" And so many of us are just like Peter, even if you told us we'd be in a certain place at a certain period in our lives down the road based upon where we're at right now we'd say, "No way" "It'll never happen, other people might go there, but as for me, I'm rock solid." Yet what does the bible say, "*Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*" 1 Cor 10:12 And so often what happens is the very thing that I think I'm so impervious to and resilient against is the very area of life in which I stumble and find myself in need of rescue from.

And so it started with following the Lord from a distance, Peter "slid back" from Him ever so slightly. Then someone says, "Hey, you're with Him aren't you?" "with who, I'm here on vacation, I don't know what you're talking about." And let the landslide begin, so much to the extent that by the time it's all said and done Peter is calling down curses on himself, saying things like, "May God strike me dead if I know or have any relationship to this Man whatsoever!" And what happens? He denies the Lord 3x's the rooster crows and suddenly Peter sobers up to the reality that he's right in the middle of that place that he could never believe that he would be.

He bottomed out, and from that point the Lord was able to restore him, and so often that's what it takes, we don't even realize we're where we are as we're in this landslide until we hit the bottom and then we come to that place where the Lord is able to restore us because we've bottomed out, and the only way to go from such a point is up. And when we're at the end of our own rope, so often that's where we find the Lord's. And aren't you glad that God loves us enough to allow us to come to such a place that we might be open to Him extending Himself to us once again in order that we might be restored into that place of right fellowship to Him?

And chapter 29 finds David in much the same type place, oh he won't bottom out in ch 29, that'll happen in about the 1st 6 vs of ch 30. But he finds himself in that place that I'm quite certain that 10-15 years ago, or probably 5 or less years ago, you'd have never, never convinced him that he would be.

The 1st time David really steps up to bat in the scriptures (we find it there in 1st Sam ch17) was there in the valley of Elah and he was squaring off *against* the *champion* of the Philistines, Goliath. And he was fighting for the cause of God on the behalf of Israel, oh he didn't have much as far as worldly resources went, but he had a wealth of faith, confidence and trust in the Lord. Saying things like, *"You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the LORD of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you and take your head from you. And this day I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."* 1 Sam 17:45-46

And who would've guessed that in a matter of years he'd have gone from *defying* the Philistines (the sworn enemies of Israel) and *defeating* their champion to *defending* their king and becoming a Philistine bodyguard? Yet such is the place David finds himself in at this point in his life. He finds himself in Apehek having traveled up north from Ziklag and he's joined ranks with the Philistine army which is squaring off against the armies of Israel having submitted himself as the servant of Achish, the Philistine King of Gath, the very region from which Goliath himself came. And who's on the opposite side of the battle line? The closest friend that David would ever have in this life, Jonathon; and maybe nothing's going on in his head, but I would think there would be a whirlwind of confusion, and "what am I doing here?" and all kinds of thoughts that would betray you, going on in your mind and in your heart.

Now the day that David took Goliath's head if you would've approached him and said, "David the day is coming in which you'll defend the king of this very city even if it means waging war against Israel, and you'll find yourself prepared to kill your own countrymen in order to defend this king of their sworn enemies." "No, way, it'll never happen, not in a million lifetimes." And the very area that he seemed so strong in he finds himself floundering in spiraling downward out of control.

But again aren't you glad that even when your life is out of control, that God is still *in control*? And God owes us no such thing, but He is able to take even our sin and disobedience and turn it to His good and use it for His glory, and through it accomplish His will. It's simply impossible that we should derail the ultimate plan and purposes of God.

And before we dive in (I know this is a long intro but there's only 11 vs so you can relax) but I want to touch on something towards the tail end of ch 28 that time didn't allow us to on our last gathering.

You recall that Saul had visited a medium to seek God's guidance (of all things) which is expressly forbidden by the Lord. But the thing I want to draw to your attention to lies in this last portion regarding Saul hearing the news of his death, falling prostrate on the ground, and then what happens is this medium comes up to him and seeks to comfort him, gives him a meal and sends him on his way. And I suggest to you, that far from an act of kindness (though I'm sure that's all she meant by it) but remember she was an instrument of Satan, she was a spiritualist and I think that this was far more to his detriment than it was to his benefit.

And I think that we can fall into this trap more than not if we're not careful, why, what do you mean? Jesus said, "*And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.*" Matt 21:44 In regards to His place in people's lives as the cornerstone upon which they build, and Christ can have either one of 2 effects in our lives, He can break us in His mercy as we open ourselves to Him, or He can grind us in judgment as we reject Him His rightful place in our lives.

And here we find Saul, he's fallen to the ground, he's at the end, he's all but a broken man, practically at his end. And I believe that the Lord in His grace was extending Himself one final time to Saul in order that he might have a window through which he might repent. And again here we have the contrast of 2 men, Saul and David, both backslidden, both in a place that they thought they'd never be, one of whom will repent, the other of whom never will. It's like Peter and Judas, but what's the difference in Saul and David when they bottomed out? I suggest to you that the difference lied in whom it was that raised them up from that place of rock bottom. Time doesn't permit, but Daniel found himself prostrate before God as dead to, but the touch that raised him up was from God, the touch that raised Saul up was from Satan and they bear 2 radically different results.

How many times God is seeking to isolate someone in their sin, get them to a place where they're at the end of themselves and they're all stressed out, at the end of their rope, they're downcast and downtrodden, it seems like everything is against them and falling apart in their lives. And they're as it were on their faces just prostrate before the Lord, and God is seeking to deal with them and we come along and say, "Hey, don't be so down, let me fix you something to eat, you're not looking good, and you need some strength, a little company and something to eat will do you good. It's all going to be ok."

And though our intentions are good, we place a pillow under their freefall that keeps them from breaking and turning to the Lord when God is trying to work repentance in their lives.

And I suggest to you that God was seeking to deal with Saul, seeking to bring him to that place where he would humble himself and cry out to God once again from a position of repentance and humility. But then came the voice of “reason” through this medium and his buddies, who were near him, and *they* lifted him up, and he left there an unrepentant man. How much better it would’ve been if they would’ve left him there until *God* raised him up a repentant individual, not that the sowing and reaping would’ve changed, it was still his time to meet his Maker, but he could’ve been ready for it, right with God. What would’ve happened if he’d have been left there on the floor, a broken and contrite individual? We’ll never know, but I’ll tell ya the propensity for God to work in his heart would’ve been much greater, be careful whom you *raise up* and speak comfort into their lives and breathe some type of false hope to them. It’s better that we point them to Jesus Christ and encourage them to turn their sorrows and their heart to Him, that He might raise them up in their time of need. Let’s look at the 1st 2 vs of ch 28 and then segue into ch 29.

Vs1-2 through vs 2 of Ch 29.

And so we see the picture here, the Philistine base is there at Aphek and as they’re all coming together from this city and that city, they’re central hub is there at Aphek where they’re preparing to engage the Israelites in battle. And as Achish presents himself, lo and behold who’s there with him? David with his band of 600 men, this man who’s been anointed of God to be the next king of Israel finds himself in such compromise that he’s willing to come against and fight the people of God whom in reality he should be leading. He’s preparing to fight the very people he’s to rule over in order to *defend* the very people he should be seeking to *defeat*.

When he was a general in Saul’s army who was it he engaged in warfare? The Philistines, when he married Saul’s daughter he killed 200 Philistines to present their foreskins as dowry to Saul. But now here he is running in league with the very people with whom he should be having nothing to do with and he’s coming against the people with whom he should be in harmony and unity.

Vs3

Now I could be wrong here, but I would imagine that David was in earshot of this conversation. And to be honest there’s red lights all throughout this scene that should be alerting David as to how far down he’s declined and awakening him to his need to repent. Now he didn’t start out here, he’s been living with the Philistines for over a year, but when Achish said, “Hey, he’s with us, he’s been with me for a long time and he’s never given me reason to doubt his loyalty to me and his desertion of Israel.” That should’ve cut David to the quick, he should’ve thought, “What am I doing here?” But he’s been living there for so long that he’s become, well, “worldly” in his reasoning and reacting in many ways. But what I want you to notice is that the people who were in the world had more discernment over this issue than David himself.

They say, “What are these Hebrews doing here?” In other words, “Achish, one of these things is not like the other, one of these things just doesn’t belong.” They were able to see what David was blind to, and what is that? That they were unequally yoked; the NT puts it like this, “*Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord.”* 2 Cor 6:14-17

And Achish is defending his debauchery, it would be like you backsliding to the point that when one of your worldly buddies gets chided for hanging out with the likes of a Christian like you that he says, “Believe me, he’s no Christian I’ve seen the way he lives” or “No, Christian talks like she does.” And you think, “Oh, what am I doing here, am I really that far gone?” This is one of those scenes whereby you’re on a backslide and you step into a bar and one of your work buddies whom you’ve been witnessing to is there and they look at you and say, “What are you doing here?” Believe me, when the world chastens you for acting out of your Christian character it’s time to re-evaluate where you’re at with the Lord, if they’re seeing things that you can’t, or that I can’t, I need to stop and make sure that my life is as it should be. And these words, “He’s with *me*” and “*I find no fault in him*” and “*He defected to me*” coming from the mouth of an individual who has no relationship with God whatsoever should’ve been a radical wake up call for David. God’s seeking to rattle his cage here, but he won’t be shaken.

Vs4-5

And David’s thinking, “There’s that song again.” That international hit that swept the country side that incidentally was inspired by his defeat of Goliath and the host of the Philistines that he’d killed.

Vs6

So Achish pulls David aside and says, “David, I need to tell you something and I gotta tell ya it breaks my heart, my *Achish breakish* heart, I just don’t think it understands.” But be that as it may (the original Achish breakish heart, he may’ve had the original Achy breaky hair mistakey to!) But be that as it may, “David I know that you’ve been a man of integrity and don’t deserve this treatment.” Now in reality that wasn’t true, David had been ravaging *not* Israelite land, but Canaanite land and lying to the king all along, but he did a good job of it, and so the king thinks he’s been upright in his sight.

Now we all have a propensity or a persuasion maybe towards a certain inclination of the flesh, be it anger, or jealousy, or any number of things (lust or whatever) and with David it was lying. His lying mouth got him and the people around him in more trouble anything else. And one day David’s going to come to grips with his propensity to lie about things, we read where he wrote in Ps 119:29, “*Remove from me the way of lying, And grant me Your law graciously.*”

And so as the Lord brings him along He'll deal with David regarding his weaknesses as He will and does with all of us. But meanwhile David is in this bind here, he's lied about his loyalty to the king, now he has to defend his lie by being willing to kill his own countrymen, and he's in that proverbial place of being between a rock and a hard place, that catch 22 of which there seems to be no way out. Because on the one hand if he fights Israel it'll be horrible for him personally, politically as the next in line to be king, emotionally, spiritually, and everything else. Yet on the other hand he's all but given Achish his sworn allegiance, and when you're in the middle of thousands of enemy soldiers, that's probably not generally the best place to disclose your disloyalty to the king. There's just no way out of it for him.

But thank God we serve a God with Whom nothing will be impossible, and a God who is able to make a way when there is no way, and Who is willing to intervene at times in our lives even when we're in rebellion to Him in order to prohibit us from doing something we'll regret the rest of our lives. God uses the fear, and anger, and the suspicion of the Philistines to keep David from sinking lower into his sin. And there are those times when because a non-believer is around we opt out of doing something, or we're "inhibited" from doing something that we'd do if they weren't around. Thank God for that person being there and God placing them in our path, God will use whatever means necessary at times to keep us from slipping farther away.

Now we understand that God doesn't owe us anything, and there's no guarantee that He'll keep us from the harvest of the seeds we sow, but thank God for the grace and mercy that He's opted to display here in David's life in rescuing him from this situation. This is nothing but the grace of God that's hindering him from sinking deeper into sin, Achish says, "These men aren't behind you."

Vs7

Why should he care about displeasing the lords of the Philistines? That should be a primary hope of his.

Vs8-10

Again, was David actually going to kill Israelites in order to defend the Philistines? I would surely like to think not, and it could be that David is just continuing to lead the king on. You know, "Ah, c'mon, I really want to go!" And the king is here patronizing David, giving him the accolades of innocence though that's the farthest thing from the truth. David's all, "What have I done?" But in reality the question should be "What haven't you done, David?" You've lied you've pillaged, you've backslidden, you're living in the world, and you're prepared to fight the people of God in order to defend the cause of the ungodly.

But how do you like this, David gets fired. He's asked to leave, 1st Saul won't have anything to do with him, and now his worldly buddies are rejecting him. There's too much of the world in him to grant him comfort in Israel, yet too much of the Lord in him to grant him peace with the worldly. The most miserable person in the world is the backslidden believer. Trying to straddle the fence, but it'll never happen; you have to pick a line.

Vs 11

Again this is nothing but the grace of God in David's life, now he no doubt doesn't see that yet, but he's been rejected by nearly every security in his life. The king of Israel is after him, feels insecure in the land, goes to another place, seeks to establish a home in the world, gets rejected by the world, and he's no doubt bummed out and feeling down. But God's not about to let him go that easy, Jesus said, "*What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.*" Matt 18:12-14

The Lord is pursuing David, He hasn't hit the bottom yet, but he's about to, and when he does God will be right there waiting for him. And He waits for me, and He waits for you to, maybe you find yourself in a place you thought you'd never be 5-10 years ago, 6 months ago. A certain snare has you in its clutches that as far as you were concerned, it'd never happen to you.

That being the case, God wants to loose those chains and stir your heart to repentance tonight, let Him do it. Let His hand touch you and lift you up, and restore your soul, it's so much better to land on the rock and find yourself broken, than to have the rock land on you and find yourself crushed.

And for those of you who are cruising along with the Lord and things are going well, what's the lesson? If it can happen to *this* man after God's own heart, it can surely happen to anyone of us. We need to guard our relationship with Jesus Christ daily lest we find ourselves in that place waking up one day and saying, "How did I get here?" And we find ourselves in that place of utter desperation, God would spare us from that, but we have to safeguard our walk with Him, that we might lead our lives, all the days of our lives after Him.