

“Twists of Providence”
1 Samuel 22:1-5
(Preached at Trinity, October 22, 2017)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. David has been fleeing for his life. In **Chapter 20:3** David declared to his friend, Jonathan, "But truly as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is hardly a step between me and death."
2. Sadly, during this period, it would appear that David was relying more upon his wits and carnal ingenuity than upon the almighty power of God.
3. He first fled to Nob where he received bread and a weapon from the high priest, Ahimelech—but these were gained through lies and deception. He convinced the high priest that he had been sent on a secret mission by King Saul.
4. Then, David then fled to Gath, a city of the Philistines where he feigned insanity to protect himself from Achish, the king of Gath. Once again, David seemed to place his confidence upon his cunning deceptions. He then fled from Achish and the Philistines to the cave of Adullam which is where we find him as we begin **Chapter 22**.
5. When David first arrived at the cave of Adullam he was all alone. It was one of the low points in David's life.
 - a. Psalm 142 is written in the context of the cave. David cried out:
Psalm 142:4 NAU - "Look to the right and see; For there is no one who regards me; There is no escape for me; No one cares for my soul."
 - b. David arrived at the cave alone. Solitude is good for the heart. David most likely spent time reflecting on the previous days and his heart convicted him. His faith in the living God began to revive. Psalm 57 was also written from the cave.
Psalm 57:1-2 NAU - "Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. ² I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes *all things* for me."
The ESV translates **Verse 2 - Psalm 57:2 ESV** - "I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me."
 - c. This may sound strange. David is fleeing for his life. He is now all alone trembling in a cave. Does this sound like God fulfilling His purpose for David? Does this sound like the one God has anointed as Israel's next king?
Things are not always as they seem.
6. These first five verses are a condensed account of his time at Adullam. He must have remained there for an extended time because word was spreading of his location and a large number have joined with him. David's aging parents also came to join him.
7. In time, because of the Philistine threat and word from the prophet Gad, David left the region and entrusted his parents to the king of Moab.

8. As so often in life, all of this seems independent of the actions of God. David goes about keeping his distance from Saul and settles in the cave at Adullam. He arrives alone but soon others joined him. David makes decisions regarding his aging parents and continues his flight from Saul. God seemed removed from the situation—just another day of life.
 9. What I want to set before you tonight is how different the reality was. As always, God's mysterious hand of Providence was directing every detail. David may not have demonstrated great faith in God's direction during this time, but God's hand never ceased working His divine purpose in David's life.
- I. First, look at how quickly David formed an army
 - A. Men began to gravitate towards David
 1. It was as if David had some great magnetic force. Like all great leaders.
 2. David tried in vain to conceal himself. They just kept coming until they numbered almost 400.
 3. Can you not see God's hand orchestrating this. The Spirit of God had come mightily upon David and already he was being transformed into a great leader.
 - B. And look at the men who would make up David's army
They were the least likely force of men
 1. They were the outcasts of society – the text describes them in **Verse 2** as those in distress, in debt, and discontented.
 - a. These were not common criminals but those in distress due to Saul's reign. They had lost everything to Saul and were now in debt.
 - b. Samuel warned Israel of the consequences of asking for a king **1 Samuel 8:13-17 NAU** - "He will also take your daughters for perfumers and cooks and bakers. ¹⁴ "He will take the best of your fields and your vineyards and your olive groves and give *them* to his servants. ¹⁵ "He will take a tenth of your seed and of your vineyards and give to his officers and to his servants. ¹⁶ "He will also take your male servants and your female servants and your best young men and your donkeys and use *them* for his work. ¹⁷ "He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his servants."
 2. No one else would have them. They were the least likely choice for an army. Don't forget, David too was the least likely choice to become the next king. God told Samuel, **1 Samuel 16:7 NAU** - "Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."
 3. Where did these misfits come from? Why did they come? God's hand upon this is obvious. Didn't we see the same thing when God raised up Gideon's army. Gideon began with an army of 32 thousand men. God told Gideon: **Judges 7:2 NAU** - "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give Midian into their hands, for Israel would become boastful, saying, 'My own power has delivered me.'" God then reduced the army down to 10,000 and then down to 300.

4. God raised up for David a ragtag group of men, but they would be loyal to David even unto death. Later others would join David including Joab, Abishai and Asahel.
5. It is interesting, in God's providence, He was using the wickedness and injustice of Saul to build the army of David. God can use the wickedness of one to bless another.
Many years before, Joseph declared this truth to his brothers who had sold him into slavery.
Genesis 50:20 NAU - "As for you, you meant evil against me, *but* God meant it for good in order to bring about this present result, to preserve many people alive."

C. Once again, David stands before us as a type of Christ

1. Although they were the least likely, David received these outcasts and became their leader. These men would be loyal to David and love him.
2. Isn't that a beautiful picture of our own union with Christ.
1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NAU - "For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; ²⁷ but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, ²⁹ so that no man may boast before God."

The word for "base things" literally means "no family" or "low born" – of low esteem.

3. Were not the first disciples a ragtag group – fishermen, a hated tax collector, a zealot – they were not educated or wealthy; they were not influential people. And yet, upon the foundation of these unlikely men, Jesus would raise up His church.

D. God is always active, always working His purpose

II. There is another demonstration of God's powerful Providence working in this passage

A. David's parents came to join with David

1. It would seem David's brothers no longer looked upon him as just their kid brother, a keeper of the family's flock.
 - a. David wasn't even invited to the feast when he was anointed as king.
 - b. He was rebuked sternly when he came into the Israelite camp as they were gathered before the Philistines
1 Samuel 17:28 NAU - "Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger burned against David and he said, "Why have you come down? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your insolence and the wickedness of your heart; for you have come down in order to see the battle."

- c. Now it would seem they looked upon David with respect. It was God who was exalting David
1 Peter 5:5-6 KJV - "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. ⁶ Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time"
2. By this time Jesse and David's mother were advancing in years. David felt a duty to care for them. They had come to David, most likely because they too felt Saul's threat and were fleeing from him. Saul's hatred of David would have also included David's family.
- B. David did an unusual thing – he entrusted them into the hands of the Moabites
1. The Moabites were the fruit of incestuous affair of Lot with his daughter.
2. They were no friend of Israel. It was Balak, the king of Moab who sought to hire Balaam to pronounce a curse upon Israel.
Numbers 22:5-6 NAU - "So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River, *in* the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, "Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me. ⁶ "Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land."
3. They were among the nations Saul defeated in **Chapter 14**
1 Samuel 14:47 NAU - "Now when Saul had taken the kingdom over Israel, he fought against all his enemies on every side, against Moab, the sons of Ammon, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines; and wherever he turned, he inflicted punishment."
4. So why would David risk delivering his parents into the hands of the Moabites? Why would he expect them to show kindness to David's parents.
- C. Years before an unlikely marriage took place between a wealthy Israelite man and a poor Moabite woman by the name of Ruth
Ruth 4:13 NAU - "So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son."
1. It was by God's hand that famine had come upon Israel and that Elimelech took his wife and two sons to live in the land of Moab. It was by God's hand that the two sons married Moabite women, and that they died leaving Naomi and these two Moabite women destitute. It was by God's hand that Naomi and Ruth returned to Israel and that Boaz would take Ruth as his bride.
2. Ruth conceived and they named their son Obed who would be the father of Jesse. David's great-grandmother, Ruth, from Moab. This means David had Moabite blood circulating through his veins.
3. And so the events of three generations previous would be used of God to deliver David's parents.

- a. God's Providence is never absent, even when it may take more than a century to see it.
- b. It may be your children who fully comprehend what God is doing in the life of your family today. Will they remember how you trusted Him even if you didn't fully comprehend what He was doing?

III. Although David seemed to have forgotten God as he fled from Jonathan his heart was never far from trusting God's kind Providence

1 Samuel 22:3 NAU - "Please let my father and my mother come *and stay* with you until I know what God will do for me."

A. David the Psalmist knew it was God directing his life

1. **Psalm 142:1-5 NAU** - "Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer. I cry aloud with my voice to the LORD; I make supplication with my voice to the LORD. ² I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare my trouble before Him. ³ When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, You knew my path. In the way where I walk They have hidden a trap for me. ⁴ Look to the right and see; For there is no one who regards me; There is no escape for me; No one cares for my soul. ⁵ I cried out to You, O LORD; I said, "You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living."
2. **Psalm 57:1-2 NAU** - "A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave. Be gracious to me, O God, be gracious to me, For my soul takes refuge in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will take refuge Until destruction passes by. ² I will cry to God Most High, To God who accomplishes *all things* for me."

B. Even as David was leaving his parents at Moab he knew God was directing his life.

1. The prophet Gad arrived to give him a message:
1 Samuel 22:5 NAU - "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah."
 - a. Who was Gad? This is the first appearance of this prophet. Who was he? At the end of **2 Chronicles** he is mentioned among the three preeminent prophets of David's reign
1 Chronicles 29:29 NAU - "Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet and in the chronicles of Gad the seer,"
 - b. Who he was isn't as important as the fact God was giving direction to David.
2. In great contrast to King Saul, David was willing to obey the Word of God. Heeding the voice of Gad, David departed and went to the forest of Hareth. Saul, on the other hand, in spite of the clear word from the Prophet Samuel, he not only refused to receive it, he was determined to destroy God's Word by destroying David.

Conclusion:

1. So often, as we go day-by-day it seems that life just flows by without design. We must understand that there is nothing that happens without design.
2. Sometimes the events of today have taken years to unfold as God entwines the infinite details of our lives.