

Message #63

I Samuel 26:1-12

If you are right with God and if you are doing what God wants you to do, you will discover there will be times you will not be popular and there you will have some enemies who would like to see you gone. But what you will also discover is God is watching out for you. That is certainly a lesson David learned. What David learned was this:

NO MATTER HOW POWERFUL OR THREATENING THE ENEMY, GOD SOVEREIGNLY PROTECTED HIS CHOSEN SERVANT; AND IN THE END HIS ENEMY WAS DESTROYED.

It was not the enemy of God or God's people who ended up with victory; it was God's faithful servant. One who becomes an enemy of a faithful servant of God, puts himself on a course of disaster. God will not ever bless one who attempts to destroy one faithful. In fact, in the end, God will destroy that kind of person and the faithful servant won't have to do a thing except watch God's destruction.

David's life is a true illustration of this reality. Saul hated David and sought to destroy David. Saul had the numbers on his side and the power on his side. Not one time did David raise his hand against Saul. In fact, as one commentator observed, not once did David even say anything bad about Saul. **David was given over to totally and completely trusting and relying on the sovereignty of God.**

David was a fighter. David was a warrior. David was a go getter. But he learned a very important lesson that would stick with him for the rest of his life, and that is to trust in the sovereignty of God.

David learned to trust in the sovereignty of God when he had no clue as to what God was doing.

This is truly a dramatic story from the life of David and it is filled with the mysterious, sovereign direction of God:

SOVEREIGN DIRECTION #1 – The Ziphites report David's location to Saul. 26:1

Here we go again. Just when it looked like things were calming down for David, here comes another problem. The Ziphites went to Saul, who supposedly had some emotional repentance concerning David, back in I Sam. 24:16 and they report they know where David is.

The Ziphites were an offshoot of Ziph, who was the son of Jehallelel, who was in the tribe of Judah (I Chron. 4:16). This is the second time that the Ziphites have turned on David like a bunch of weasel spies and informed Saul of his location (I Sam. 23:19; 26:1).

These Ziphites had some secret jealousy and animosity against David and were out to destroy him. These guys were supposed to be on David's team, kind of like the Rinos who are supposed to be on the side of our President, but aren't.

If we keep in mind that David is the one right with God, then we may conclude that their hatred of David is really a hatred of God and His will.

Some of David's own Israeli relatives were out to destroy him. It was just like when Jesus was here. He came to His own people and His own people rejected Him. These Ziphites pinpointed David's location as being on a hill which was located before "Jeshimon," which was toward the desert waste-land.

When you are doing the will of God, don't be surprised if you discover that some of the people who should appreciate you and defend you actually end up turning against you. **But if this happens, God's faithful people can know God is still sovereign and He is looking out for and protecting His people.** Stay faithful and steady and watch what God will do.

Perhaps you have done or said things against God's faithful people. Turn from that before God turns against you.

I know of a woman who verbally attacked a very faithful and quite famous man of God who was a Pastor of a large church in the south. She is a woman who literally was in and out of her mind. It was as if God took away her sense of reason and I always thought it was due in part to her attack against a faithful man of God.

The Ziphites reported David's location, but God had a sovereign plan for even this.

SOVEREIGN DIRECTION #2 – Saul goes after David again. 26:2-3a

As soon as Saul learned of David's location, he got 3,000 men together to go after David. These were "chosen" men so these were the military elite. **What Saul did not know and what David was learning is that when God has His hand on someone, he is invincible.** Saul could take 3,000 of the best trained soldiers or 30,000 or 300,000, but he will not be able to hurt David.

Saul knew that David would be the next King of Israel (I Sam. 24:20a) and he also knows the entire nation will be strengthened and established by David's leadership (I Sam. 24:20b). Saul had actually shed tears over his hatred of David (I Sam. 24:16). But Saul is a chronic liar. His word means nothing. He lives a lie and he is a liar and God will take him out.

Verse 3 says that Saul camped on a hill "beside the road." Now any good military man knows that this is not a real good place to camp, because it is visible and out in the open. When we lived out west, I would go deep into the mountains and a good mountain camp would not be set up right on the trail; it would be back in some secluded or hidden area.

Apparently Saul felt so secure with his 3,000 men that he was not afraid to set up a camp right by the road. David, who is right with God, is hiding in the wilderness and Saul, who is not right with God, is out in the open in front of everyone.

Practical Thoughts:

- 1) People being influenced by Satan are emotional, irrational liars.
- 2) People being influenced by Satan appear to be successful and secure. They are insecure.
- 3) People being influenced by Satan flaunt their evil out in the open.
- 4) People being influenced by Satan will eventually be destroyed.

SOVEREIGN DIRECTION #3 – David goes into Saul’s camp. 26:3b-12

As we have said God’s sovereignty does not replace human responsibility. **Verse 3** says that David saw Saul coming after him. When he saw it he reacted in four ways:

Way #1 - David sent spies to make sure Saul was coming after him. 36:3b-4

David is checking his facts, to make sure he is seeing this correctly. There is great wisdom in what David is doing here. Before David did anything or made any move, he checked his facts.

We may assume if an enemy is out to get us, God will see to it that we learn about it. He will give us the information we need to know the truth.

Way #2 - David personally went to observe Saul and his forces. 26:5

David teaches us a great lesson. A great leader checks things himself. A great leader listens to counsel, but also verifies things. What David saw was that Saul and Abner, who was the military commander, were lying in the middle of a camp surrounded by 3,000 men.

Three thousand men had formed a perimeter circle with Saul in the middle. It is obvious that David was awake, looking things over while Saul and his men were asleep. David and two men are with him and they are on a recon mission. They are looking things over while the enemy is sound asleep.

Good principle for victory, stay alert and stay focused while others are sleeping.

Way #3 - David asks his two best men who wants to go with him into Saul’s camp. 26:6

Both of these men were fearless and loyal. David had two men with him. One was Ahimelech, a Hittite, and the other was Abishai, a relative.

Ahimelech is interesting. It was Esau who married a Hittite wife contrary to the will of God (Gen. 26:34). It was the Hittites who were driven by Joshua out of the Promised Land (Josh. 3:10). **What this proves is that you cannot stereotype individuals.**

Any person of any pedigree or background may become a faithful and loyal servant of God. You could come from an ancestry that is an absolute disaster. You may come from a dysfunctional family; a broken home or you may not even know who your parents are. If you love Jesus Christ and purpose to be faithful to God's word, you can end up a God-honoring hero.

The second man, Abishai, was the son of David's sister Zeruiah (I Chron. 2:16). Abishai was not only a nephew of David, but he became a brave, loyal servant of David. He would actually save David's life in a battle with a Philistine (II Sam. 21:17). He shared military command of Israel's forces with his brother, Joab (II Sam. 10:10) and when Absalom rebelled against David, he stayed faithful and loyal to David (II Sam. 16:9; 18:2). When David asked which guys wanted to go with him, it was Abishai who said, "I will go down with you" (v. 6).

I believe there will be moments of warfare that will enable God's chosen leader to see who truly is loyal. This decision of Abishai to go with David was a real risk, but it would pay him rich dividends in the future because David will not ever forget who was loyal to him. There will be times in church life when you will need to take a stand and step out by faith and do something, and it is in those moments who will see who the true faithful servants really are.

Way #4 - David and Abishai sneak into Saul's camp. 26:7-12

This is an exciting moment of espionage. There are three observations we may make:

(Observation #1) - David and Abishai walk right into the middle of the circle where Saul is sleeping. 26:7

This takes tremendous courage, skill and confidence in God. Saul is lying on the ground sound asleep. He has his spear by his head. He is surrounded by 3,000 men who are all sleeping. They all think they are secure and yet David and Abishai are right there in the middle of them all. They have no knowledge of this and David and Abishai could have destroyed any one of them at any moment.

The risk to David and Abishai is major here. To actually assume you can walk into a camp of over 3,000 men and not have one wake up and see you is a very brave move. Truth is God was in this plan. God had all of these men sound asleep.

God watches over His faithful people. God can protect His people when they are outnumbered and outgunned.

(Observation #2) - David and Abishai discuss what to do to Saul while standing in the middle of this military circle. **26:8-11**

Keep in mind that these guys are having this conversation as they are standing in the middle of 3,000 soldiers who are their enemies.

In **verse 8**, Abishai tells David that God has delivered Saul into his hand and he (Abishai) can take him out quietly and quickly with one strike. Abishai knew just where to spear a man so he would be instantly killed.

David had the opportunity to take things into his own hand. In **verse 9**, David said we will not execute Saul because Saul is still God's anointed king. David said whoever raises a hand against God's anointed will carry the guilt of it forever. There is culpability for doing hurtful things against a chosen servant of God. Even if that servant is unfaithful, woe to one who hurts him. That is God's business.

According to **verse 10**, David knew that God would strike him down. So he trusted in the perfect timing and will of God to carry this out.

David had tremendous faith in God's sovereignty.

(Observation #3) - David and Abishai leave the camp with Saul's spear and water bottle. **26:11-12**

David said I won't kill Saul, but get his spear near his head and his jug of water and let's get out of here.

According to **verse 12**, they took the spear and jug of water and went away. Now notice carefully why they got away with this: "they were all asleep because a sound sleep from the LORD had fallen on them." This was a very supernatural deep sleep that caused an entire military elite group to stay sound asleep (Gen. 2:21; 15:12).

What we see here is that God is sovereignly able to put people into a deep sleep. God will cause Saul type people to be in a deep spiritual sleep so they do not wake up to the truth. God can sovereignly determine that one remain in a spiritual coma and not see anything.

If a believer keeps rebelling against God, God can and will shut down his ability to see truth. They will walk through life, not even knowing God is there.

PARTING THOUGHTS:

- 1. When we are where God wants us to be, we will have enemies.**
- 2. When we are where God wants us to be, God will provide faithful, loyal friends and soldiers.**
- 3. When we are where God wants us to be, God will sovereignly work in mysterious ways.**
- 4. When we are where God wants us to be, keep from taking urgent action.
No one will ever regret careful action.**
- 5. When we are where God wants us to be, we can know that God will protect us and eventually drop and destroy our enemies.**