

God's Way of Escape is Never Narrow

Call to Worship: Isaiah 45:5-7

Hymn #149- *Joy to the World!*

1st Scripture: Acts 23

Hymn #151- *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

2nd Scripture: 1 Samuel 19:11-17

Hymn #147- *O Come, O Come, Emmanuel*

Introduction:

David is as innocent as they come; indeed, he has done great good for the king, and yet, Saul has treated him terribly, even to the extent of repeatedly attempting to have David killed. Well, it doesn't get any better. Being caught in the throes of God's harsh providence, David is about to become a fugitive for the remaining duration of Saul's reign. One might ask whether David would have wished himself back to the quiet and simple life of shepherding sheep, at this point, but David is God's anointed king. And because God has anointed him unto the throne of Israel, David would most assuredly get there. The road there would be a very difficult road to travel, but God *has been* and would *continue to be* with him, utilizing every preordained, harsh providence as a means of sanctifying David, and molding him into the king who would serve to foreshadow the coming greater Son of David, even The Lord Jesus Christ!

Following his latest encounter with one of Saul's hurled spears, David yet returns to his home, to be with his wife Michal, possibly assuming that, in due time, the king would yet again, get over his madness and desist from pursuing David. But, this time would be different. As God would have it, providence would carry David into a very difficult and lengthy period of constant fleeing; living as a fugitive, running for his life, as he became the ongoing target of King Saul's bitter hatred and fierce wrath.

I. God's Way of Escape is Never Narrow

Saul now wants to close the gap on any possibility of David escaping, and so, he sends some messengers to David's house, to watch him and then to kill him in the morning. He is

going to get it done this time, and even God will not be able to stand in his way. But, as God would have it, Michal, David's wife, somehow gets word of what is going on, and cautions David to immediately flee, avoiding certain death in the morning. However, with guards patrolling the house outside, David would have to find a means of escape that would keep him from being seen by the guards. And so, Michal helps David escape by letting him down from a window (Perhaps, the old multiple sheets tied to the bed post trick?). And David gets away.

And furthermore, in order to buy additional time, allowing David to get far enough away without being caught, Michal pulled the old "Ferris Bueller" trick. She took an image of some sort, laid it in the bed, put a cover of goats hair at the top of the bed (to give the appearance of a head being there), added some clothing, and created the appearance of David sleeping in the bed, as a means of deceiving the guards into thinking that David was there, sick in bed. And when the messengers came to take David into custody (to be killed), Michal told them that he was sick in bed, and could not get up. And so, they go back to tell Saul of the present dilemma, and Saul, not wanting to allow anything to delay his wicked intentions any further, says, "Go back, and bring him to me in the bed, so that I can kill him." "Each of you grab a corner, and carry him here, bed and all, so that I can get this over with already." And so, they go back to fulfill the king's command, and now they discover that they have been duped by Michal, David's wife.

David has had plenty of time to get away, but now Michal is going to have some explaining to do, to her father, the mad and enraged king. In verse 17, he says to her, "Why have you deceived me like this, and sent my enemy away, so that he has escaped?" And obviously being terrified by her father's countenance, rather than defending the righteousness of David (as her brother, Jonathan had done), Michal responds in a way that would preserve her own life, while sadly adding fuel to the fire of Saul's rage: "He said to me, 'Let me go! Why should I kill you?'" "Dad, I was going to tell you, but he threatened to kill me!" If Michal helped David escape before, she just dug his grave here, giving her father more reason to pursue David, with a sense of fervency. Needless to say, without underestimating the terror she experienced when her father approached her, an early indication of her ungodly, selfish heart, might be beginning to manifest itself here.

All that said, next time, Lord willing, we will find that David flees to Ramah, to seek wisdom and help from Samuel, the great prophet, whom God had anointed David as king. In the

beginning of David's lengthy journey, as a fugitive on the run, the *anointed* will spend some time with the *anointer*.

II. Concluding Thoughts and Applications

Now brethren, what do we have going on here? From our standpoint, we would more than likely state that, David has narrowly escaped with his life. And when we follow the rest of David's "fleeing circumstances," we might be tempted to state, "David must be the luckiest guy in the world, because he seems to just squeeze out of danger by the skin of his teeth, every time." I mean, already he has avoided the unexpected spear several times, he has defeated the great giant Goliath (with a sling and a stone), he has successfully romped the far more advanced Philistines on numerous occasions...he is bound to get hit sooner or later, is he not? I mean, the king is after him continually! If the king wants you dead...you may as well pack it in! But David just keeps narrowly slipping away.

Well, at least from our standpoint. But from God's standpoint, the escape is not as narrow as it seems. The narrowing effect does well to cause us to recognize God's hand in the deliverance, but God is not way off in heaven somewhere, sitting in the recliner shivering and routing for his favorite team, as we live the reality. No, God is busy ordaining and unfolding every scene of history, right according to His divine plan. And His plan never changes. Should Saul be given a million "do-overs," the results would still be the same...David escapes, David is better because of this, and God's Word comes to pass...every time...or He is not God. And, if there is a sea in the way, well, God will just part it. This is His world; His story, and every frame, every cel, works toward the completed design of His will.

Now, you might say, "Well, that is great for God and all, but what about us? What assurance do we have in all of this? Nice to see who controls the maze, but what of the mice in the maze?" Well, that is why He has given us His Word, brethren! He has documented and delivered to us, the very blueprint of His divine will. And while we may not have a description of all of the direct details of how God brings point A to point B; point A, B, C, D...etc, give us enough to rest our souls upon, so that we do not have to be concerned about the details. Let me give you an example:

Back in chapter 16, God anointed David as Israel's king. How the shepherd boy would get to that position, was not told him, but he could rest assured that he would get there. And a lot has happened up to this point, to indicate that this is the direction God was taking him. But, a lot has also happened to indicate that David might not live long enough to be king; many narrow escapes. But you see, the Word of God must and will prevail...so, not one of those escapes was even remotely narrow from the standpoint of God. The anointing oil of God upon the head of David; the "Thus saith the Lord," spoken from the mouth of God on behalf of David; the Word of God declared in time and space, revealing the will of God, most assuredly guarantees that David will get there. And so, everything in between the stages of David's anointing and David's literal, realized reign, serves as nothing more than providing the very stepping stones for preparing and bringing David to that destination. And so, amidst all manner of doubts, fears and hardships that David experiences along the way; amidst all manner of doubts, fears and hardships that all of God's children experience on the path, which they tread to glory, from the standpoint of God, there were never any close calls or narrow escapes. Rather, every stone, over here and over there, and over here and way over there, was carefully placed by God, in advance. And the real impossible ones...well, those are character shaping, faith enhancing stones, because God is doing more than bringing us somewhere...He is changing us on the way. He is clothing us for the wonderful occasion!

You see brethren, there are no "almosts" in God's will. "Almost" is not a word in heaven's dictionary. There are only "most assureds." From our standpoint, Paul barely made it to Rome. A large group of Jews vowed neither to eat nor drink until they had killed Paul, Paul was stoned and left for dead, beaten severely on many occasions, shipwrecked and left in the deep, beaten with rods, bitten by a venomous snake...etc; Paul was pretty busted looking, but there was never a moment, from God's standpoint, when Paul almost didn't make it. Sure enough, he made it to Rome, right according to plan...and oh, not a moment too soon or too late. The Word of God carried him there.

Well, the Lord Jesus; the Messiah seemed to lose the battle, when the religious leaders crucified Him; when they "outed Him," and got rid of the threat. But wait, no surprise to God, because God ordained that very means, as the way in which He would accomplish salvation for His fallen people, before exalting a risen Jesus to His eternal throne! Yeah, God raised Him

from the dead! Such being the case, can the will of God be thwarted in any way, shape or form, particularly with us, brethren? How many times have we read, in the Gospels, "And this happened in order to fulfill the Word of God" from a particular Old Testament passage?

You see, brethren, David's escapes were never narrow. In experience they were, but he was always surrounded and carried by the words, "Thus saith the Lord," and here is the key application for us then...so are we! There are *living* promises, filling the Scriptures, which belong to us, brethren. And we must constantly be in the Word, daily, so that we can rest our souls upon them. In doing so, we will be in touch with God's perspective, when the circumstances that surround us seem impossible. "No Abraham, you don't need Hagar---I will use her as well---but you don't need to help God along, Sarah *will* conceive and bear a son. For, "Thus saith the Lord," assures this.

"Brother so-and-so, get up and move forward; take risks for God, for, your labor in The Lord is not in vain." "Indeed, all things are working together for your good; Christ is being formed in you!" "God will never leave you nor forsake you!" "Confess your sins; repent, and He is just to forgive you and to cleanse you from all unrighteousness." "His mercies are indeed new every morning"; you can get up and lunge forward in fresh grace today, for, "Surely goodness and mercy follows you everywhere you go, and you will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever!" "No one can ever pluck you out of the merciful and gracious hand of God!" "We, the church, are the apple of His eye!" "He who began a good work in you will complete it until the Day of Christ Jesus!"

The Gospel!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25