

Faith of the Stolen Spear – I Samuel 24:1-7

I. Introduction:

- A. Generally speaking, all of our lessons thus far have been positive.
 - 1. Noah needed faith to trust the Lord's revelation and to build the ark. By faith he completed the Lord's will.
 - 2. Moses and Joshua needed faith to move forward, trusting God to across uncharted waters.
 - 3. Jonathan told his armorbearer that he had faith to believe the Lord was going to bring down the Philistines who were on the hill above them.
 - 4. They were all trying to move forward by faith, as were all the other examples we examined so far.
- B. Tonight I'd like to briefly consider two other varieties of faith.
 - 1. We might describe one of them as a lifestyle of faith, rather than a specific faith for a specific purpose.
 - 2. And the other is somewhat opposite to positive faith, but at the same time it isn't exactly negative.
 - 3. This second variety isn't about moving forward; it's more about keeping us from falling back.
 - 4. Faith is the victory in many different ways, and we need them all.

II. Consider what David was doing in I Samuel 24 and 26?

- A. He was experiencing persecution from someone who should have been his example in the service of the Lord.
 - 1. David was running from King Saul, who by this time knew he had been rejected by God as king of Israel.
 - 2. David was fleeing for his life, keeping just one step ahead of the spear and the sword.
 - 3. I hope you can see that this took faith. Every day he awoke asking for and trusting God to protect him.
- B. On the other hand, Saul was clinging to something which no longer belonged to him – the crown.
 - 1. He had a small army of 3,000 special body guards. They are mentioned in both chapters.
 - 2. Picture 3,000 fully equipped soldiers. I doubt that we could squeeze 200 into our auditorium.
 - 3. We probably couldn't fit 3,000 onto our church property.
 - 4. Saul had 3,000 men seeking David upon the rocks of the wild goats and throughout the wilderness of Ziph.
 - 5. If those men could have located David, it would have been game over for the young heir to the throne.
- C. But neither Saul nor David were in control of things – Jehovah was.
 - 1. David was trusting in the Lord to protect him and to keep His promises to him.
 - 2. But Saul was living in the denial of God, trusting in his own wisdom and strength to remain king.
- D. In **chapter 24**, after spending a full day looking for David, Saul & his men came to a sheep-cote – a corral-like enclosure – which in this case was up against a hillside with a cave behind it.
 - 1. Saul's soldiers filled the sheep-fold, spilling out and around it, while the king went into the cave to sleep, probably still surrounded by a handful of his most trusted and most diligent men.
 - 2. They had no idea that David and his little handful of friends *“remained in the sides of the cave.”*
 - 3. Saul's people may have made a quick search, but they weren't as thorough as they should have been.
 - 4. David was perfectly safe, sheltered in the dark, under the wings of the Lord.
- E. After the weary king fell asleep, some of David's men whispered to him that God had given him the opportunity to get rid of the enemy.
 - 1. They mis-quoted, or mis-interpreted, God's word in the light of the situation.
 - 2. *“Behold the day which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee” – I Samuel 24:4.*
 - 3. The Lord tested David's faith, and some of his *“friends”* were pushing him toward murder.
 - 4. But what *“seemed good”* unto David was to carefully & silently creep up & to cut off the skirt of Saul's robe.
 - 5. When the king later learned what David could have done to him, Saul *“lifted up his voice, & (actually) wept”*
 - a. *“And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I:*
 - b. *for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil.”*
 - 6. He then asked David not to destroy the royal family when God put him on the throne.

- F. Some weeks later, in **chapter 26**, David and Saul were once again in the same sort of situation.
1. Saul was still seeking to kill the man he considered to be a rival to his throne.
 2. This time, as the sun began to set, Saul and his men filled the hill of Hachilah.
 3. Right in the middle of his 3,000 men, the king nestled down under the stars, and fell asleep.
 4. It may have been one of those rare blessings: this was the sleep of God – a deep, deep coma-like sleep.
 - a. Saul apparently was feeling perfectly safe. Trusting himself & his warriors. He had no fear whatsoever.
 - b. What fools the flesh can make us be. The truth was: Saul was in imminent danger.
 - c. We are always in imminent danger but for the grace of God.
 5. David and his nephew Abishai, the son of David's sister Zeruah, crept past the dosing perimeter guards and through hundreds of sleeping soldiers right up beside Saul and his general, Abner.
 6. *"Then (whispered) Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee" – I Samuel 26:8.* David did **not** give him that permission.
 7. Rather, they took Saul's spear and his canteen – his cruse of water – and they carefully made their way back through the host and escaped.
- G. Saul may have considered David to be his enemy, and Abishai may have called Saul David's enemy.
1. But David didn't agree. He didn't consider any worshipper of Jehovah to be an enemy.
 2. The Philistines were enemies, but not Saul or Abner.
 3. Just because there are doctrinal issues or personal problems between the saints, God's people are still brethren.
 4. Later David proved his relationship to these two men when he mourned over their death.
 5. He certainly was not going to take their lives.
- H. Again, what was David doing in these chapters? He was fleeing from someone who wanted to kill him.
1. I'm sure that you could come up with ways to apply that situation to Christianity today.
 2. And after that we could make some applications about David's faith, but let's move on.

III. David was hiding from Saul; he was also trusting in the Lord to protect him.

- A. And that trust involved two things. David had faith that the Lord would keep him safe.
1. He could wake up every morning with the expectation of God's protection.
 2. Ordinarily he didn't dare God to preserve him.
 3. He was simply trusting God to keep him alive until the day he would receive God's promise of the kingdom.
 4. This was positive faith; this was forward looking faith.
- B. But I'd like to draw something else from this story.
1. David was also trusting Jehovah to keep him from sin and tarnishing his reception of God's promise.
 2. David pictures faith in God in the midst of the temptations his men were throwing at him to kill the man who hated him.
- C. Back in **chapter 24**, inside the cave, his well-meaning friends were encouraging David to murder Saul.
1. But this wasn't hand-to-hand combat forced by Saul on a very reluctant David.
 2. Saul was asleep. To kill him would have been murder.
 3. Rather than do that, David crept up to him and cut off a part, or perhaps all, of the fringe around the bottom of Saul's robe.
- D. I don't care how sharp his knife was, I can't imagine how that could have been done without awakening Saul.
1. David's confidence and trust that God would keep the king asleep while this was going on is amazing.
 2. Only a fool, or someone who could trust the promise of the omnipotent God, would have attempted this.
 3. And still, *"it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt."*
 4. Why did that so bother him? It was probably because of the shame it must have caused the king.
 5. But it had to be done. David felt obligated to get his message through to wicked Saul.

- E. That morning, as the sun started to come up, Saul ordered his men to once again start looking for his enemy.
1. When they left the sheep-cote, David and his men silently emerged from the cave.
 2. Then probably remaining in the shadow of one of the hills, David revealed what he had done.
 3. That is when Saul wept and confessed his sin.
 4. After a few more words, Saul left David alone and went home for a while.
- F. From **chapter 26** consider the faith required to pass through an army of trained soldiers to reach the king.
1. Remember, David was well-aware the God had promised him the kingdom.
 2. His faith in the Lord and His promise refused to fail, despite the on-going opposition and hatred of the King.
 3. David **also** refused to sin in order to force a fulfillment of God's promise.
- G. There might be many ways to apply that temptation thrust upon David.
1. I am not going to sin against God by worrying over a possible war with China and Korea.
 2. I refuse to use worldly or sinful tools to try strengthen and build this church.
 3. We are not going to cast aside important doctrines to please the unbelieving world.
 4. I am not going to hide the importance of repentance and sorrow for sin when witnessing to the lost.
 5. By faith, I want to continue to trust God and do His work in godly ways.
 6. And in the process, I will let the Lord work things out His way.
- H. In our second chapter David stole Saul's spear and water cruse before later giving them back.
1. What I am trying to suggest is David's spectacular faith in the Lord.
 2. Look at him creep up to the man who wants him dead, expecting God to keep him asleep.
 3. If one soldier had seen or heard either David or Abishai, it probably would have meant instant death.
 4. But David trusted the Lord to keep him safe in the midst of trying to make a point with Saul.
 5. The king needed to know that David didn't intend him harm; David had to cut the robe and steal the spear.
 6. He risked his life, trusting God, to teach and preach an important Bible lesson.
- I. Also, David's faith kept him from listening to the tempters who were telling him to force God's hand.
1. It might be argued that David didn't kill Saul because of the command, *"Thou shalt not kill."*
 2. But it was more than this. He knew that the Lord was going to move Saul out of the way in His time.
 3. David could trust God, waiting patiently for the Lord's perfect timing.
- J. I hope you can see that it was David's faith which kept him from the sin of murder.
1. ***1 Samuel 26:10*** is an expression of his faith – *"As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle and perish."*
 2. So very often we sin because we lack faith enough not to trust.
 3. Why do people lie when they are cornered and confronted with something they have done?
 4. Isn't because they subconsciously think there is no safe alternative?
 5. For the child of God there is always a safe alternative – trust the Lord to work things out.
 6. Sin is never the right thing to do. God doesn't need our sinful help so that He can keep His promises.

IV. What as David doing in these two chapters? He was living in faith.

- A. This is slightly different from my last point.
1. David could trust God to keep Saul and his army of guards asleep, because he was living in a state of faith.
 2. He didn't have to pray, mustering up enough courage to trust God for these specific miracles, he awoke every morning and passed through every day trusting the Lord.
 3. I am not saying that he didn't pray about new problems and challenges, but he was constantly leaning on the Lord by faith, whether or not he had time to stop and pray.
 4. He experienced God's blessing on his faith day after day.
 5. And with each day his faith increased. He was learning day-after-day that God can be trusted.

- B. David didn't have a refrigerator filled with fresh veggies, and a freezer stuffed with hamburger.
1. He was leaning on the Lord for every meal, while scampering through the wilderness from cave to cave.
 2. The God who fed Israel with manna for forty years could easily care for David & his men for forty months.
 3. When he was forced to visit one of the outlying villages, David had to trust the Lord that they wouldn't send a message to Saul about his whereabouts.
 - a. And there were occasions when they did report him, but David trusted the Lord to enable his escape.
 - b. And, you what? He always escaped.
 4. At night, David didn't have a tent in which to sleep, because that might have been spotted by Saul's men.
 - a. He went to sleep trusting God to keep him safe – even to keep him from a prowling lion or bear.
 - b. And I wouldn't be surprised to learn that he slept soundly.
 5. David later testified, *"I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the Lord sustained me"* – **Psalm 3:5**.
 - a. *"I will both lay me down in peace, & sleep for thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety"* – **Psalm 4:8**.
 - b. **Isaiah** said, God, I know you *"wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee"* – **Isaiah 26:3**.
 6. That is where David was. He was living in faith as a permanent lifestyle.
- C. I won't try to imply that David was the perfect believer. There probably isn't such a creature.
1. David had his sinful moments of distrust, but as we see in these chapters, he had his good days and good nights as well.
 2. And in fact, generally speaking, it was in the more dangerous situations that David's faith was the strongest
- D. David was living by faith, trusting God to bring the divine will to pass.
1. This was his manner of life. This is the pattern he is sharing with us.
 2. In regard to Saul, David said to Abishai, *"As the LORD liveth, the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed"* – **1 Samuel 26:10**.
 3. David, this servant of God, was trying to help other believers to believe and trust the Lord more.
 4. And he left them an example: when a man's faith is strong, it will help keep him from falling back into sin.
- E. And God blessed that man's faith.
1. David slept by faith. And Saul slept, and Abner slept.
 2. David had his needs met for many months throughout all his wilderness wanderings.
 3. Then, in God's perfect time and way, Saul was removed from the scene, and David was crowned king.
 4. The point is: Jehovah **CAN** be trusted, but **WE have to TRUST Him** – really trust and depend on Him.