

## Introduction

Well, I figure we have been on the cliff of suspense long enough. It would seem the narrator of 1 Samuel under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit agrees. When last we were with David, he was facing the dilemma posed by the expectation of Achish that David and his men would join the Philistine army as it engaged in battle against Israel. If we glance back at chapter 28 and verse 2 we recall David's vague reply to Achish that he would see what he could do. Remember now that David was in the land of the Philistines and had cozied up to Achish for protection because he had begun to believe that if he remained in Israel, sooner or later he would perish by the hand of Saul. He was depending upon himself. He had let go of the assurances that once stabilized his heart that the Lord who sovereignly anointed him to become king would certainly bring it to pass. Then he resorted to deceit and destruction of life to win and keep the trust of Achish. He was relying on the arm of flesh, and that is how he got himself into this pickle. Well, let the suspense be over.

[Read text and Pray]

So the battle was about to begin and the Philistines drew together in battle array, one platoon at a time under the observation of the commanders. And there, bringing up the rear, was Achish and the troops from Gath. And they were accompanied by David and his men. Now the suspense is intensifying. Bite your nails! David is in line to go fight against God's people! His own people! But that is when something happens. The commanders of the Philistines take note of David's presence. They exclaim in amazement and in disdain, "What are these Hebrews doing here?"

Achish has really been won over by David's pretense. He has a history of gullibility with David. He was fooled when David pretended to be crazy and now he has been fooled when David pretends to be attacking his own people. He defends David to the commanders: "Is this not David the servant of Saul, king of Israel who has been with me now for days and years (He grossly exaggerates—it was 1 year and 4 months), and since he deserted to me I have found no fault in him to this day."

The Philistine commanders were not to be easily persuaded. They presented solid reasons why David in fact should not be trusted and should not be involved in this battle. They argue David's best path to reconciliation with Saul would be to turn against the Philistines once the battle got underway. They remembered the #1 hit song in Israel not many years ago. It was "David's Song." If there was Spotify back then, this would have been the song blaring out in everyone's earbuds: Saul has struck down his thousands and David his ten thousands." That song still rang in the ears of these Philistines because the tens of thousands David had struck down were Philistines! If you think we would allow this Hebrew to go to battle supposedly with us, you have got to be crazy! No way! Uh-huh!

So Achish informs David of what he thinks is a bad decision by the commanders, but it is one he cannot oppose. He urges David then to go back to Ziklag to maintain peace among the Philistines. Now you have got to think here that David would have unbegrudgingly submitted and turned back to Ziklag, thanking God for his providential intervention. But man! He takes his acting a part to an uncomfortable level, if you asked me. Perhaps the doubt of the other Philistines stirred up in David fear that Achish might join in their doubt. So he said, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

Perhaps it was in fact in David's mind to have gone into battle with the Philistines only to have turned against them. At any rate, this was not the will of God. We know what the will of God was. It had been spoken to Saul by Samuel in his spiritual form. The Lord was going to give Israel and Saul into the hands of the Philistines and Saul would die. David would have been in the way if he had turned and been a means of victory for the Israelites. David would have been shamed for sure if he had entered the battle on the side of the Philistines and fought for them. What Israelite would later stand for David to be their king? So it is emphasized thrice that David then took off early in the morning when he had light. He had escaped the noose that had been put around his neck by his own self-dependence. Now I want to bring to your attention three aspects of David's deliverance which stand out here in the narrative.

David's Deliverance:

### **I. The Fact that Luck Has Nothing to Do With It.**

The scripture as a whole teaches us that God is sovereign over every single detail no matter how small. "Our God is in the heavens and he does whatever he pleases" (Psalm 115:3). "The LORD has established his throne in the heavens and his kingdom rules over all" (Psalm 103:19). He works all things according to the counsel of his will (Ephesians 1:11). "The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will" (Proverbs 21:1). Even when the lot is cast into the lap, it's every decision is from the LORD (Proverbs 16:33).

And when the Philistine commanders see David and his men and they demand to know what in the world is going on here, it is not by happenstance. David did not get lucky in this text. The sovereign hand of God was at work to keep him out of the battle, no matter what his intentions were. It was the will of God. It was his determination, his decree that Israel lose this upcoming battle. It was the will of God that Saul lose his life in the midst of the battle. It was the will of God that David be uninvolved. It was the Lord who delivered David out of the very sticky situation into which he had gotten himself through self-dependence.

And look who God used to accomplish his purpose. He used the enemies of Israel. Consider the irony. God is using Israel's enemies to remove the rejected king, and he is using the same enemies to keep David out of the equation. He is using David's enemies to set him free from the fiasco it would have been for him to have fought with the Philistines.

I will not be here this Wednesday for Learning and Leaning, and Pastor Ted will be teaching in my place. He told me that he will be teaching on the inscrutability of God's ways. I do not intend to teach that lesson this morning, but I do think that the situation described in this text qualifies as an example of God's working in inscrutable ways. Truly, he moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. He uses his enemies and the enemies of his people to fulfill his good purposes for his people. God uses even people with evil intentions to accomplish his purpose and bring ultimate blessing to those he loves.

I like what Dale Ralph Davis says in this regard. "Even in our folly and fainting fits, we are still no match for our God, who has thousands of unguessable ways by which he rescues his people—even by the mouths of the Philistines. He can make the enemy serve us as a friend. He not only prepares a table for us in the presence of our enemies but also has the knack of making the enemies prepare the table!" (305).

The story has been told of a woman who ran low on money and food. She turned to the Lord to pray that he meet her needs. As instructed by the Lord, she was praying, "give us this day our daily

bread.” This Christian woman lived beside a rather arrogant man who was agnostic. Somehow he overheard her prayer and decided to play a trick on the woman. He bought a couple loaves of bread from the corner market and put them by her door. When the woman went to check her mailbox that day, she saw the loaves of bread and burst into a song of thanks to the Lord. That is just what the neighbor was waiting for. He quickly went to the woman to correct her understanding. It was not God who answered her prayer. Rather it was he who heard her praying and he purchased the bread and he placed it at her door. “Oh, no,” she said, “It WAS the Lord who answered my prayer, even though he used the devil to do it!”

Many times in our lives we will have the opportunity to see the hand of God at work even through those who do not know him and do not love him. Just because the hand of the Lord operates in a stealthy fashion or through unexpected means, we should not fail to see that it is his hand. And we should not fail to give him thanks and praise.

In Psalm 40 David writes,  
I waited patiently for the LORD;  
he inclined to me and heard my cry.  
He drew me up from the pit of destruction,  
and out of the miry bog and set my feet upon a rock.

I have told the glad news of deliverance in the great congregation;  
behold I have not restrained my lips ...  
I have not hidden your deliverance within my heart;  
I have spoken of your faithfulness and your salvation;  
I have not concealed your steadfast love and your faithfulness from the great congregation.

As for you, O LORD, you will not restrain your mercy from me;  
your steadfast love and your faithfulness will ever preserve me!

However the Lord sustains us, let us make it known that it is the Lord’s goodness that keeps us from being consumed even from our own selves.

David’s Deliverance:

## **II. The Claim that He Is Faultless.**

It happens actually three times in this text. It happened as Achish was initially informing David of the decision of the commanders. He said, “I have found nothing wrong in you.” It occurred again when Achish was attempting to comfort David in his apparent disappointment that he was not going to be allowed to participate in the battle. Achish said, “I know that you are as blameless in my sight as an angel of God.” The FIRST time Achish proclaimed that David was faultless was when the commanders asked what those Hebrews were doing there. Achish advocated for David saying, “I have found no fault in him to this day.”

What we see in Achish is a weak leader. He was hood-winked by David, and he holds no sway over the commanders. They ordered Achish to send David back where he had come from. He was rejected from fighting with them.

For a moment here please notice the defense of David that Achish uttered three times. “I have found no fault in him.” This is an appropriate spot to compare and contrast with David’s greater Son

Jesus. You see, Jesus himself stood before a weak and seemingly powerless leader who was also convinced of his faultlessness.

When Jesus was arrested and charged, the Jews brought him before the Roman governor, Pilate. Pilate examined Jesus according to the charges that were presented. And it sounds like Pilate took a page out of 1 Samuel, for he declared to those standing against Jesus, "I find no guilt in him." And the gospel points out that Pilate made this declaration three times. This is a striking parallel that we have here.

But there are some differences, and we need to point them out. Man, was Achish hood-winked! He was absolutely convinced that he could trust David even though David had completely pulled the wool over his eyes. Now we can say that there was a sense in which David was faultless during his time in Philistia. But it was actually and only in regard to David's faithfulness to Israel and to Saul as the Lord's anointed. He may have shown a lack of faith and trust in the Lord, but he never turned his back on him as God and he never turned against Saul and the Lord's people. But the man who proclaimed David to be faultless was duped.

Meanwhile, when we place the spotlight on Jesus, he had hoodwinked nobody. His life was lived as an open book before the people of Judea for 33 years. His life and message were vindicated by miracles of all kinds. He did not bring destruction but he brought healing and hope. No one could bring anything but false charges against Jesus. And yet the weak leader who advocated for him could not persuade the ones who disputed with him. Like David with the Philistines, Jesus was also rejected by the Jews. Pilate gave in to their insistence.

We must also note that Jesus was not just faultless in a manner of speaking or from the perspective of one who was hoodwinked. Unlike David, Jesus was absolutely and completely without any guilt of any kind. This is why Jesus is able to redeem sinners. The only way he could be a wrath-satisfying sacrifice was to be perfect, without spot or blemish or any such thing. Peter says it this way: "you were ransomed from [your sinful ways] not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). As David was rejected by the Philistine commanders, Christ Jesus was rejected by the Jews. He was sent out of the city to be crucified. But he was not rejected by God. His blood was welcomed into the Holy of Holies of heaven and he atoned for the sins of his people. If you will believe on him, you will be reconciled with God.

David's Deliverance:

### **III. The Hope that He Is Given a New Day.**

At the conclusion of the chapter I want you to notice a detail which may seem to be not that significant. And yet if we take note of the emphasis that is there by repetition, we have to pause and ask why. Why in the world is it that the human writer and the Holy Spirit who breathed these words out wants us to be sure that we take note of the fact that David departed in the morning?

First of all just look with me at the emphasis. In verse 10, Achish says, "Now then rise early in the morning," and again he says, "start early in the morning, and depart as soon as you have light." Then verse 11 says, "So David set out with his men early in the morning." It makes sense whenever you are going to travel that you get off to a good start. If the trip is long, you want to go early. Don't let the day get away from you. I always feel if I don't get a good start in the morning that the whole day is like a waste.

But there is more than that here. The significance manifests itself as we give consideration to the fact that the text is moving back and forth between Saul and David. David got in trouble because of his faithlessness and then what was he going to do to get out of the bind? Then we switch to Saul. He is in his own desperate situation and the Lord is silent, so he seeks out a necromancer. And after that encounter he goes off to face judgment and die. And when is it that Saul goes out? It is at night. Hopelessness and darkness merge together for Saul. The sun is setting on him and his reign. The sun has set upon Saul. But now we are shown how God rescues David from a potential debacle. He takes him out of the realm of disaster and David goes off in his deliverance. Hope for David is restored. And when is it that he goes? It is IN THE MORNING. The sun has set on Saul; the sun has arisen on David. Morning is the time of hope.

It was David himself who wrote Psalm 30. Listen:

I will extol you, O LORD, for you have drawn me up and have not let my foes rejoice over me.

O LORD my God, I cried to you for help, and you have healed me.

O LORD, you have brought up my soul from Sheol;

you restored me to life from among those who go down to the pit.

Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name.

For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime.

Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning.

The morning was a joyful time for celebrating the faithfulness and delivering hand of the Lord. It was a hopeful time. The sun is rising and there is hope.

Now let me tell you about another morning and another king, the one whom David foreshadows. After King Jesus had been rejected, in darkness he was nailed to the cross on Friday. He died and he was placed in the tomb. It would seem the sun had set upon the one who claimed to be Israel's true Messiah. Saturday came and went. But then came Sunday MORNING.

Matthew tells it this way. "Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. And behold there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ... The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen as he said."

When Jesus rose from the dead darkness turned into day. He brought hope to life. He completed his saving work. Paul writes in Romans 4:24-25, that righteousness "will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord, who was delivered up for our transgressions and RAISED for our justification." Morning is such an appropriate time for Christ's resurrection as it was for David's departure. The same feature of sunrise is the theme of Isaiah in chapter 60 as he looks ahead to the fulfillment of God's promise to his people in Christ.

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you. And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. This is Jesus—the hope of the world.

We experience many dawns out of darkness in our lives, but there is a consummate dawn for the people of God. It is the day of Christ's return. This is our blessed hope.

## **Conclusion**

Thanks to so many of you who gave me birthday wishes this week. I turned 60 on Thursday. And my phone was ringing that the morning with wishes. I got a special facetime call from Philip and Ellie and Titus and Rebekah. After singing to me, Titus told me he wanted to come see me in heaven. And I said, "Well I hope I see you before I go to heaven, like tomorrow when we get together." Later in the conversation Philip gave me the background to the comment. He had told Titus that Grandad was turning 60 years old that day. Titus responded with a question, "Is he going to die?" Philip replied, "No, he won't die until his time is done and God comes to take him home to heaven." Titus then said, "I want to visit Grandad in heaven. We need to go pack! Da-da, does God have pajamas in heaven, because if he doesn't we need to pack pajamas." Philip explained, "God has all we need in heaven!"

The sunrise of all sunrises, the morning of all mornings is the day when the morning star rises before us and we see him face to face. He certainly does have all we need, because he is all we need!

Rejoice in the hope and provision of God's people. He delivers us now. And he will deliver us forever in that glorious day! Let these promises lift your hearts and lift your praises to him!