

“If God Be for Us”  
1 Samuel 18:11-30  
(Preached at Trinity, August 6, 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. As we've gone through 1 Samuel we've seen the fearful reality of being forsaken of God.
  - A. In **Chapter 4**, God judged Hophni and Phinehas the sons of Eli for their wickedness. The Ark of God was captured by the Philistines and Hophni and Phinehas were smitten with death. When Eli heard he also died. Upon hearing the news, the wife of Phinehas, went into labor and delivered a son. She died in childbirth but before she died she name the boy Ichabod which means, “No glory.” The glory of God had departed from Israel. They were left without the presence of God—the terrible experience of being forsaken.
  - B. In **Chapter 16** we read of God's presence departing from Saul. He was forsaken. **1 Samuel 16:14 NAU** - "Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him."
2. The remainder of 1 Samuel is a display of the contrasting lives of Saul and David. The Holy Spirit departed from Samuel but came mightily upon David. **1 Samuel 16:13 NAU** - "the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon David from that day forward."
3. Throughout **Chapter 18** we find the expression that God was “with” David. **1 Samuel 18:12 NAU** - "Now Saul was afraid of David, for the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul."  
**1 Samuel 18:14 NAU** - "David was prospering in all his ways for the LORD was with him."  
**1 Samuel 18:28-29 NAU** - "When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, <sup>29</sup> then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually."
4. What a startling distinction between David and Saul. I title tonight's sermon, “If God be for us.” I want to look at the subject from both sides. If God is for us it is implied that there must be a contrasting condition of God being against us.

- I. We'll begin with the negative. Those whom God is not for, He is against.  
This is the most terrifying thought that we could ever experience
- A. This was the terrifying reality for Saul
1. As soon as God departed Saul was filled with terror  
Everything in his life was characterized by fear.  
**1 Samuel 16:14 NAU** - "Now the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD terrorized him."  
**1 Samuel 18:12 NAU** - "Now Saul was afraid of David, for the LORD was with him but had departed from Saul."  
**1 Samuel 18:15 NAU** - "When Saul saw that he was prospering greatly, he dreaded him." – the word for “dread” means to be afraid.  
**1 Samuel 18:28-29 NAU** - "When Saul saw and knew that the LORD was with David, and *that* Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him, <sup>29</sup> then Saul was even more afraid of David. "
  2. While David enjoyed the kind favor of God, Saul suffered under God's indignation. David continually reminded him of God's condemnation upon his life. But instead of repentance and crying out for forgiveness, he continually tried to destroy David.
- B. There are only two possibilities in this world. Either God is for you or He is against you.
1. Because of sin all men have become the enemies of God  
**James 4:4 NAU** - "You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God."  
**Psalms 5:5-6 NAU** - "The boastful shall not stand before Your eyes; You hate all who do iniquity. <sup>6</sup> You destroy those who speak falsehood; The LORD abhors the man of bloodshed and deceit."  
**Romans 1:18 NAU** - "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness,"
  2. They are void of God's favor. God is against them.
- C. It is a fearful thing if God is not for you - If God is not for you He is against you
1. Most lost people will not claim this. We all want to think God is on our side; that He looks upon us favorably. Most have full expectation of going to heaven. This is not the case.
  2. For the Christian God is working all things for our good – **Romans 8:28**  
The unbeliever has no right to this claim -- Most misinterpret the blessings and common grace of God's providence as the smiles of His favor.
  3. The unbeliever is under God's wrath and each day the wrath increases  
**Romans 2:5 NAU** - "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God,"

- D. If God be against you, who can be for you?
1. Paul makes a wonderful statement of comfort at the end of **Romans 8**  
**Romans 8:31 NAU** - "If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?"
  2. But consider the flipside – If God is against you who can be for you? Who is able to come to your defense? Where shall we go. Upon what can we rest?
  3. Do you hope to stand in your own strength? Our human flesh is continually failing. Hospitals testify to our frailty.  
**Psalms 31:9-10 NAU** - "Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress; My eye is wasted away from grief, my soul and my body *a/so*.<sup>10</sup> For my life is spent with sorrow And my years with sighing; My strength has failed because of my iniquity, And my body has wasted away."
  4. On the Day of Judgment your good works will not be able to speak on your behalf? Your cries for mercy not be able to stand for you?  
If you do not know Christ He will stand before you as your enemy.  
**Jeremiah 50:31 NAU** - "Behold, I am against you, O arrogant one," Declares the Lord GOD of hosts, "For your day has come, The time when I will punish you."  
**Revelation 6:15-17 NAU** - "Then the kings of the earth and the great men and the commanders and the rich and the strong and every slave and free man hid themselves in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains; <sup>16</sup> and they said to the mountains and to the rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the presence of Him who sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; <sup>17</sup> for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?""
- II. Those whom God is for, nothing shall stand against
- A. For years Saul will attempt to destroy David.
1. All of his efforts to destroy David backfired. As he sent David to fight on the front line with the Philistines God continued to prosper David.
    - a. Instead of destroying David, God used it to teach David important leadership experience and more favor with the people.
    - b. Saul even tried to use his own daughter in this scheme to have David killed.  
**1 Samuel 18:17 NAU** - "Then Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab; I will give her to you as a wife, only be a valiant man for me and fight the LORD'S battles." For Saul thought, "My hand shall not be against him, but let the hand of the Philistines be against him."
    - c. When that failed Saul gave Merab's hand to Adriel the Meholathite (18:19). We shouldn't miss the significance that the five sons of this union were all put to death as payment for Saul's sins against the Gibeonites (2 Sam. 21:8-9) – more evidence of God's curse against Saul and his family.

2. David later knew that it was because God was on his side that Saul could not prevail  
**2 Samuel 22:1-4 NAU** - "And David spoke the words of this song to the LORD in the day that the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies and from the hand of Saul. <sup>2</sup> He said, "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; <sup>3</sup> My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge, My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold and my refuge; My savior, You save me from violence. <sup>4</sup> "I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, And I am saved from my enemies."

B. We have great and mighty enemies

1. Our flesh which is the great reservoir of sin  
 The world which seeks to conform us to its ways  
 Satan who is always present as a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour.
2. Our enemies are real; our struggles are real, but we are never alone
3. This was Martin Luther's testimony  
*Did we in our own strength confide, our striving would be losing;  
 Were not the right Man on our side, the Man of God's own choosing:  
 Dost ask who that may be? Christ Jesus, it is He;  
 Lord Sabaoth, His Name, from age to age the same,  
 And He must win the battle.*

C. What can overtake God's people when God is there to protect them?

1. When the Assyrians surrounded Jerusalem Hezekiah spoke these words of encouragement:  
**2 Chronicles 32:7-8 NAU** - "Be strong and courageous, do not fear or be dismayed because of the king of Assyria nor because of all the horde that is with him; for the one with us is greater than the one with him. <sup>8</sup> "With him is *only* an arm of flesh, but with us is the LORD our God to help us and to fight our battles." And the people relied on the words of Hezekiah king of Judah."
2. When the Syrians came upon Israel with a mighty force it looked as if all was lost but Elisha knew better. He prayed that God might open the eyes of his servant that he might see.  
**2 Kings 6:15-17 NAU** - "Now when the attendant of the man of God had risen early and gone out, behold, an army with horses and chariots was circling the city. And his servant said to him, "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" <sup>16</sup> So he answered, "Do not fear, for those who are with us are more than those who are with them." <sup>17</sup> Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, open his eyes that he may see." And the LORD opened the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha."

3. Listen to Isaiah:  
**Isaiah 54:17 NAU** - "No weapon that is formed against you will prosper; And every tongue that accuses you in judgment you will condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their vindication is from Me," declares the LORD."
  - a. The word for heritage means portion or inheritance
  - b. God's protection is a part of our inheritance. This is what it means to be a child.

#### Conclusion:

1. This message is meant to bring one of two responses:
  - A. If you do not know Christ. If you have not submitted your life to Him you are His enemy. He is against you. Turn to Him today and give your life to Him, trust Him and follow Him.
  - B. If you are a Christian does this give you confidence?  
**Romans 8:35 NAU** - "Who will separate us from the love of Christ?"  
 He loves us with infinite, Divine love. It is a love that is beyond our comprehension. It is a love that looks upon us with delight.  
 Nothing in this universe will take you from Him. Nothing can be against you if God is for you. If all of the combined forces of the universe gathered together with the sole purpose of standing against you they would fail.
2. We have the two contrasting forces flowing through this chapter: God's favor upon David and Saul's envy and hatred bent on destroying David.  
 The conclusion: God prevails.
3. The interesting point in **Chapter 18** is the obscurity of it all. Saul was often working secretly, scheming to put David to death (at least until the opening verses of **Chapter 19**). And God was working behind the scenes to preserve David and prosper him. Much of God's protection of you is behind the scenes, unknown to you. If God be for us who can be against us?
4. Lift your head up. Raise your eyes towards Christ. Keep your eyes upon eternity. The things of this life, though difficult, are but for a moment.
5. David teaches us the great blessing of being right with God. This peace is possible only through the Lord Jesus Christ. Through Christ we are made right with God. No longer are we God's enemies but His blessed child whom He loves with an infinite everlasting love.
6. Through Christ we discover the excellence of a life of righteousness and the blessings of Divine favor.  
**Psalms 1:1-3 NAU** - "How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, Nor stand in the path of sinners, Nor sit in the seat of scoffers! <sup>2</sup> But his delight is in the law of the LORD, And in His law he meditates day and night. <sup>3</sup> He will be like a tree *firmly* planted by streams of water, Which yields its fruit in its season And its leaf does not wither; And in whatever he does, he prospers."