

Title: Love your Enemies
Scripture: 1 Samuel 24
Series: God, the True King!

1. Introduction:

- a. So far, in the life of David, we have studied what it means to suffer both as an individual and as a member of the corporate body of Christ.
- b. Because of the emphasis on suffering in our last few sermons last week, we spent much time discussing the five mercies of God present in the suffering of every believer.
- c. Today we study one of the most beautiful yet convicting passages in all of Scripture. The question for our consideration is: How are we to deal with those that cause our suffering? In our passage, David gives us an example of the scriptural command of loving your enemy.
 - i. This is important because oftentimes, our suffering results from the efforts of an individual or a group that comes against us. When this is the case, we are prone to engage in a physical battle, forgetting that the battle is not to be fought in the physical realm.
 1. **Ephesians 6:12** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

2. In other words, we are not to fight with unbelievers, no matter how poorly they might treat us. We must understand that we are fighting a spiritual battle against the enemy who uses individuals like pawn pieces on a chessboard.
- ii. Christ teaches us how to deal with such individuals in **Luke 6:27-28** “But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, (28) bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you.

2. Verses 1-2: Long and yet momentary trials: When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, “Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.” (2) Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks.

- a. After the Philistine incident in our last chapter, Saul is at David's throat once again. David is scarcely done with one trial when an even more deadly trial begins.
 - i. Sometimes such is our Christian walk. David's experience is not unique to the saints of God. Let us consider the waves of suffering that Job, Joseph, Elijah, and Jeremiah endured.
 1. Even our Savior promised this reality in **John 16:33** "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."

ii. However, it is also equally true that our great suffering is but for a moment when viewed from the eternal perspective.

1. **1 Peter 5:10** After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you.

2. **Romans 8:18** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

3. Beloved, we must keep our suffering in perspective.

b. Looking again at our passage, we know that Saul cannot win the war he is waging against David. God has declared this truth by anointing David as the future king. Saul knows this truth, but in the futility of worldly thinking, he prepares thousands of his best soldiers to fight against God.

i. This is typical of hardened sinners. They fight what they know to be an unwinnable war, choosing to be destroyed by the wrath of God instead of surrendering to His goodness and love.

1. **Psalms 2:1-2** Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? (2) The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD and against his Anointed, saying,

2. **Psalms 2:10-12** Now therefore, O kings, be wise; be warned, O rulers of the earth. (11)

Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. (12) Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish in the way, for his wrath is quickly kindled. Blessed are all who take refuge in him.

ii. However, the believer understands that true strength is not found in our resources but in trusting in God.

1. **Zechariah 4:6** Then he said to me, “This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts.”

3. Verses 3-7: Providence or providential testing: And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. (4) And the men of David said to him, “Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.’” Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. (5) And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. (6) He said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed.” (7) So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

- a. Our passage takes a dramatic turn. Saul decides to go into a cave to relieve himself but unknown to him, David and his men are in that very same cave.
 - i. Again, this is not coincidental but the sovereign providence of God. Saul is unaware of David's presence, and David has the upper hand for the first time in this conflict.
 - 1. The question before David is; for what purpose has God brought Saul?
- b. David's men immediately assume that God had delivered Saul into the hands of David for destruction. David has an opportunity to:
 - i. Kill the man that has been actively trying to kill him.
 - ii. He could bring God's promise of the Kingdom to completion.
 - iii. He could go home and reunite his family.
 - iv. In other words, David could go back to his life.
 - v. Beloved, what would you have done?
- c. But David respected Saul as the Lord's anointed (***mešîah YHWH***). Saul was still on the royal throne as king over Israel, even though the spirit of the Lord had already left him. David realizes that God had put Saul on the throne; therefore, Saul is untouchable.
- d. As a man who feared the Lord, David did not choose the path of self-realization by getting rid of his enemy. In other words, David did not allow himself to disobey God's commandment by interpreting this occasion as a God-given opportunity to commit murder.

- i. David avoided appealing to a human method and entrusted the matter to God’s best judgment.
This is what the fear of the Lord looks like.
- e. So instead of killing Saul, David cuts a piece of Saul’s robe. This would prove to Saul that David had the opportunity to kill him and chose not to do it. This would prove to Saul that David did not consider Saul, his enemy. Beloved, look at David and long to be like him in this respect. Look at David and see the reflection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
 - i. **Luke 23:33-34B** And when they came to the place that is called The Skull, there they crucified him, and the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. (34) And Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”
 - ii. Both David and Jesus, in their most terrible man-caused suffering, demonstrated great love toward their enemies.
 - iii. The Bible tells us that David felt tremendous guilt for even cutting a portion of Saul’s robe. Even this was an offense, a retaliation against Saul. We read in our chapter that **afterward, David's heart struck him because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.**
- f. Look deeply at David’s love for Saul. We read, “**The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed.**”
 - i. He repeatedly identifies Saul to his men as the **Lord’s anointed.**

ii. He submits to Saul's authority by calling him **my lord**.

g. I pray that the weight of Scripture would cause great conviction in your life. Look at how Saul receives unmerited grace from David. Look at the love of David for his enemy.

i. Understand that David chose to continue to suffer at the hands of Saul instead of killing him.

4. Verse 8-15: David proclaims his innocence: Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. (9) And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm'?" (10) Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.' (11) See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. (12) May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. (13) As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.' But my hand shall not be against you. (14) After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a

flea! (15) May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.”

- a. David comes behind Saul as Saul is leaving with his men. He shouts to get the king’s attention. When Saul turns around, he finds a humble David. David is bowing before the king. In all his actions, David teaches us much about loving our enemies.
- b. It is at this point that David proclaims his innocence.
 - i. Deception: Saul has been listening to lying men.
 - ii. Providence: God had given Saul into David’s hand.
 - iii. The voice of opportunism: Some wanted David to kill Saul.
 - iv. Restraint: David would not put his hand against his lord. David had an opportunity but only cut off a piece of the robe.
 - v. Sinlessness: David had not sinned even though Saul was hunting him down. (Vindication)
 - vi. Resolved: even if you continue against me, I will not rise against you. Such wickedness will not come from David. (sinfulness)
 - vii. Self-abasement: He calls himself a dead dog, a flea.
 - viii. David commits the matter to God: Since he will not fight Saul, he will give Saul over to God.
 1. **Deuteronomy 32:35** 'Vengeance is Mine, and retribution, In due time their foot will slip; For the day of their calamity is near, And the impending things are hastening upon them.'

2. **Romans 12:17-19** Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. (18) If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. (19) Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.”
3. David demonstrates complete confidence in God. He believes that God brings justice to his people. There will be vengeance, but God will bring it. God will prosecute this case in His time.
 - a. Saul now finds himself in even more mortal and spiritual danger. He is fighting against God.
- c. This is the place where we must find ourselves. Beloved, do you believe God sees all, knows all, and judges all? If so, there is no reason for us to avenge ourselves. God will deal with the persecutors of His people.
 - i. **Commentary**: If God’s crushed and afflicted people cannot place their case in His hands and expect Him to bring just vengeance on their behalf, what hope can they have? Only a God who rights the wrongs inflicted on His people can be their well-proved help in troubles.
 1. **Revelation 6:10-11** They cried out with a loud voice, “O Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before you will judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell on the

earth?” (11) Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer, until the number of their fellow servants and their brothers should be complete, who were to be killed as they themselves had been.

5. Verses 16-20: Saul confesses his guilt: As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. (17) He said to David, “You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. (18) And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands. (19) For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. (20) And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. (21) David’s Covenant with Saul: Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father’s house.” (22) And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

a. After David’s long speech, Saul responds to him with tears. Saul is not repentant, but he has caught a glimpse of his own evil, which is profound. For a moment, he is overwhelmed by his sinfulness.

- i. Even a demonically influenced heart can be temporarily melted by the love of God demonstrated in the actions of His people.
- b. Saul acknowledges that David's goodness to him is beyond common sense. Only those who fear the Lord can act like David in such a situation.
- c. Saul finally admits that David will indeed become king (**now, behold I know**) and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in his hand. And, like Jonathan, Saul asks for an oath from David. He wants an assurance that when David becomes king, he will not kill Saul's household. He asks for mercy that he would not give if the roles were reversed. Saul is asking David to do him good. I remind you of the words of Christ again.
 - 1. **Luke 6:27** "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you
- d. Before we leave this portion of Scripture, let us look at God's mercy in this exchange. David hears once more that God's word is dependable, this time from the mouth of his own enemy.
 - i. Beloved, when even the enemies of God prove the veracity of His Word, we can rest confidently.
 - ii. **Commentary**: If God can speak sense through the jaws of Balaam's donkey in Numbers 22, surely he can confirm truth through the lips of a deranged king.

6. Benediction:

- a. **2 Thessalonians 1:6-7** since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, (7) and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels

Public Reading of Scripture
2 Thessalonians 1:5-12