

Message #54

I Samuel 22:1-5

One thing is very clear from David's life and that is when you are actually doing the will of God and when you are right where God wants you to be, you will have your share of setbacks and problems. When you are right where you are supposed to be, there will be times when you will feel more like a loser than a winner.

But we have also been seeing that in the midst of the hassles and hurts and hardships, God surfaces people who will rally around you and support you. These people will be critical to your survival and welfare. They will be used by God to help you survive physically, emotionally and spiritually.

These people will be crucial to your endurance. They will be at your side. They will be warriors, who will take a stand with you and for you. When you feel as if you are a loser, they will be used by God to make you feel like a winner.

If ever there is a remarkable example of this very fact, it is right here in this text from the life of David. David had just been in Gath where he had to pretend he was insane just to stay alive and get away. David then left Gath and escaped to "the cave of Adullam." This is about as lonely and depressing a situation that anyone could ever face.

But God was with David. God would not fail David. God would provide for David and David would learn a very significant lesson:

EVEN WHEN YOU ARE TOTALLY HUMILIATED AND THINK YOU ARE ALL ALONE BECAUSE YOU ARE DOING THE WILL OF GOD, GOD IS STILL SOVEREIGNLY WATCHING OUT FOR YOU AND HE WILL BRING VARIOUS PEOPLE INTO YOUR LIFE TO RALLY AROUND YOU AND THEY WILL ENCOURAGE YOU, SUPPORT YOU AND HELP YOU.

You could be in a cave-type existence and think you are all alone. God will send someone into your world as an encouragement and support. They will be sent by God to you to strengthen you.

Now the opening words of **verse 1** set the stage for this. David left Gath and "escaped."

We are in a time of life when David was always having to "escape" from someone. To this point he was escaping from Saul (19:10, 12, 17, 18), but now here he is escaping from the Philistines (22:1).

David is like an outlaw on the run. He has not done one thing wrong to deserve any of this and yet he finds himself lonely, afraid and hunted.

David is right with God and he looks like a loser and Saul is not right with God and he looks like a winner.

Now **verse 1** says that David escaped to “the cave of Adullam.” That cave was about 10 miles to the NE of Gath. Adullam was an ancient city of the Canaanites, which was located near the Valley of Elah (Josh. 12:15; 15:35), about 20 miles southwest of Jerusalem.

About 2 ½ miles out of the city called Shocoh, there is a high rounded hill, which commands an excellent view of the main valley. In fact, the hill is almost isolated by valleys. It is a natural place for lookout and defense.

It is believed that this is the ancient city of Adullam. In the side of the hill where a tributary runs, are a series of caverns or caves. Some of them are large and some are small. But there is one cave that stands out.

That cave is not located at the base of the hill, but is located on the hill itself, about 500 feet up. It is a cave that is large enough to house a family, and people who have visited this cave have noticed that there is black smoke on the ceiling. Most believe this is “the” exact cave where King David hid.

There is no question that this is a very strategic spot for David to hide. But still David would have felt so all alone. It was in this lonely setting where God sent David some people who would become his support team.

David will actually write two more Psalms while he is in this cave—Psalm 57 and Psalm 142. When we carefully read these Psalms, again the two main themes are 1) Prayer to God; 2) Trust in God.

I want us to specifically notice Psalm 57:2. David believed that God was in the process of accomplishing all things for David’s life. In other words, David believed God was developing him by allowing him to go through these very circumstances, which frankly made no sense.

Prayer to God and trust in God are two specific reactions we need to have when surrounded by difficulty. We need to realize that God is at work in our world and God is working out all things for good to those who love Him.

But having said that, this does not eliminate human responsibility to do what we can. You and I are responsible to do what we can to put ourselves in the best possible position to receive the blessings of God. We need to do what we can to protect ourselves from the threats of the world. But once we have done that, there are still times we may feel very alone and very intimidated. It is in these very moments that we need to pray and trust.

We can be certain God knows exactly where we are in life and He also knows what we need in life and in His time and His way, He will surround us with those who can help.

When all of this goes down, David is in a cave. God makes all of what you are about to see happen when he is about as isolated as he can be. What that tells us is that you do not have to be in a glamorous spot to be blessed by God. You can be isolated from family and friends and God will still take care of you. What we learn is this:

IN THE LOWEST AND LOWLIEST TIMES OF DAVID'S LIFE, GOD PROVIDED FOR HIM, PROTECTED HIM AND ENCOURAGED HIM.

If ever there were one who needed God to encourage, it was David. He is on the run, he is hiding in a cave and he is alone. In that very context, God very specifically made four provisions for David:

PROVISION #1 – God provided David his brothers and all from his father's house. **22:1**

Obviously word had spread that there was a serious problem between Saul and David and it is possible that David's relatives and family were afraid of what Saul might do to them. They may have been thinking, we will be next as Saul's target. **It certainly is possible that David's family is not motivated by a great love for David, but by a great fear of Saul.**

We don't know that for sure. It is possible that David's family had come to their senses and this is a move of "solidarity." What we do know is that God is sovereign and God did send David's family to the very cave where David was hiding.

Some of these relatives, especially his brothers, had not been nice to David (I Sam. 17:12-13, 28), but David received them. For whatever reason, they wanted to be with him again and he gladly received them.

God was using this critical event to get David's family to support him and encourage him. He was using this nightmare to bring this family back together.

When you are doing the will of God, God will see to it that certain family members support you. They may not even know why they are being led to do it, but God will bring them to you for your benefit.

It is interesting to notice that Saul's family is falling apart and David's family is getting back together. Saul's own daughter and son are against him and David's brothers are once again with him.

Some good things are happening for David, even in this difficult situation.

PROVISION #2 – God provided David with a 400 man army. **22:2**

Carefully observe the kind of people God sent to David. They were not rich and successful. They were not prominent scholars. They were a group of misfits who came because of different motives.

There are three descriptions of the types of people God sent to David. All three descriptions begin with an English word that starts with the letter “d”:

Description #1 - They were men in distress. **22:2a**

The word means these were people who were pressed, compressed. They were compressed into a narrow area and felt boxed in (William Gesenius, *Hebrew Lexicon*, p. 706).

Description #2 - They were men in debt. **22:2b**

These were men who could not pay their bills. Creditors were putting pressure on them (*Ibid.*, p. 570). Apparently there was political pressure to pay high taxes and these men just couldn’t do it.

Description #3 - They were men who were discontent. **22:2c**

These were people who were inwardly bitter and sad. They were very sorrowful (*Ibid.*, p. 505).

These were men who didn’t fit in well with the political and social world. As one commentator said, they “lived on the ragged edge of society....those who for various reasons had failed to integrate into the fabric of society may have thought to find in David a leader who could understand them and who would help them create a society insulated from those from whom they were alienated” (Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel*, p. 225).

This is not the type of group you would say was the crème de la crème of society. But this is just the type of person God can use and in fact loves to use.

Jesus Christ loves to make a top notch soldier out of people like this who have been burdened with sin. He loves to take those who are distressed and discontent with life and turn them around for His glory.

These are just the kind of people God loves to use and He sure did with David.

PROVISION #3 – God provided David with a refuge for David’s family. **22:3-4**

Now we read the beginning of **verse 3** as if it is just jumping in a car and driving a few miles. The text says, “And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab.” I doubt we realize the difficulty of this move.

David had to cross several mountain hills and also cross the Jordan River. Just the logistics of this is not like it would be for us.

David decided to move his father and mother to Mizpah. Mizpah was on the East side of the Jordan and Dead Sea some 50 miles from where this cave was located. It would seem to be a safe haven for people from Bethlehem (Ruth 1:1-2).

The name “Mizpah” means watchtower. John Woodhouse said you can translate Mizpah “the lookout of Moab” (*I Samuel*, p. 429).

So this probably was a very strong, fortified military city. When David got to this city, he asked for a meeting with the King and the King granted him that.

David feared for his mother and father, who by this time were getting up in years. They could not withstand the kind of life David was living at that time. He was on the run and on the move and he was in war. His parents could not keep pace with that.

So he went to the King of Moab and asked if he would take care of his father and mother until he knew the outcome of all of this. He wanted him to take care of them “until I know what God will do for me.”

Certainly David believed in the sovereignty of God. There are times when we are uncertain about what God will do. That does not mean we are not spiritual. We need to keep ministering, keep moving and keep trusting.

There can be little doubt that David believed he had a real ally with the Moabites because his great-grandmother, Ruth, had been a Moabitess. Ruth was married to Boaz and she produced Obed, who produced Jesse, who produced David. Ruth is Jesse’s grandmother and David’s great-grandmother (Ruth 4:21-22).

We don’t actually know what happened to David’s parents. A Jewish tradition says that the King of Moab eventually murdered David’s parents, which prompted David to take heavy vengeance on them when he finally became king (II Sam. 8:2).

We are to honor our parents. We are to look out for them when they get older. Pressures do not change that (Prov. 23:22; Matt. 15:4-9; Eph. 6:1-3).

Some commentators criticize David because they do not think he has the right to leave his father and mother here. But I don’t think that is right because when the prophet of God comes in the next verse, he does not suggest this is wrong.

For the time being, David’s parents were in a very safe place. What that says is, when we are doing God’s will, God will provide what we need not only for ourselves, but also for our family.

PROVISION #4 – God provided David with a prophet to communicate God’s word. **2:5**

God always kept David one step ahead of Saul. He surfaced a prophet to inform David to get out of the cave and head to the land of Judah. The prophet’s name was “Gad.” He was a very special man of God. This is the first time we learn of this prophet, but it won’t be the last time. In II Samuel 24:10-19 and I Chronicles 21:7-19, Gad told David what to do when he had sinned against God.

In I Chronicles 29:29, we learn that Gad wrote inspired Scripture.

In II Chronicles 29:25, King Hezekiah ordered worship governed by the way Gad structured it.

So Gad was a very special man of God that God sent to help David.

We do not have our own prophet, but we do have God’s prophetic word. God will care for us and protect us. The greater the pressure, the more we are in need of God’s word. In fact, a lesson we learn is read the Psalms.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1. Godly people will face lonely cave-type experiences.**
- 2. Being right with God in a cave-type experience is a far better life than not being right with God in a plush palace. One in this circumstance will see God do amazing things.**
- 3. When we find ourselves feeling all alone, we need to take a good look at who God actually surfaces to support us. God will bring faithful people into our world that will be our allies.**
- 4. When you face uncertainties as to what God is doing, stay faithful and keep ministering until God makes it clear where he wants you to be and what He wants you to do.**