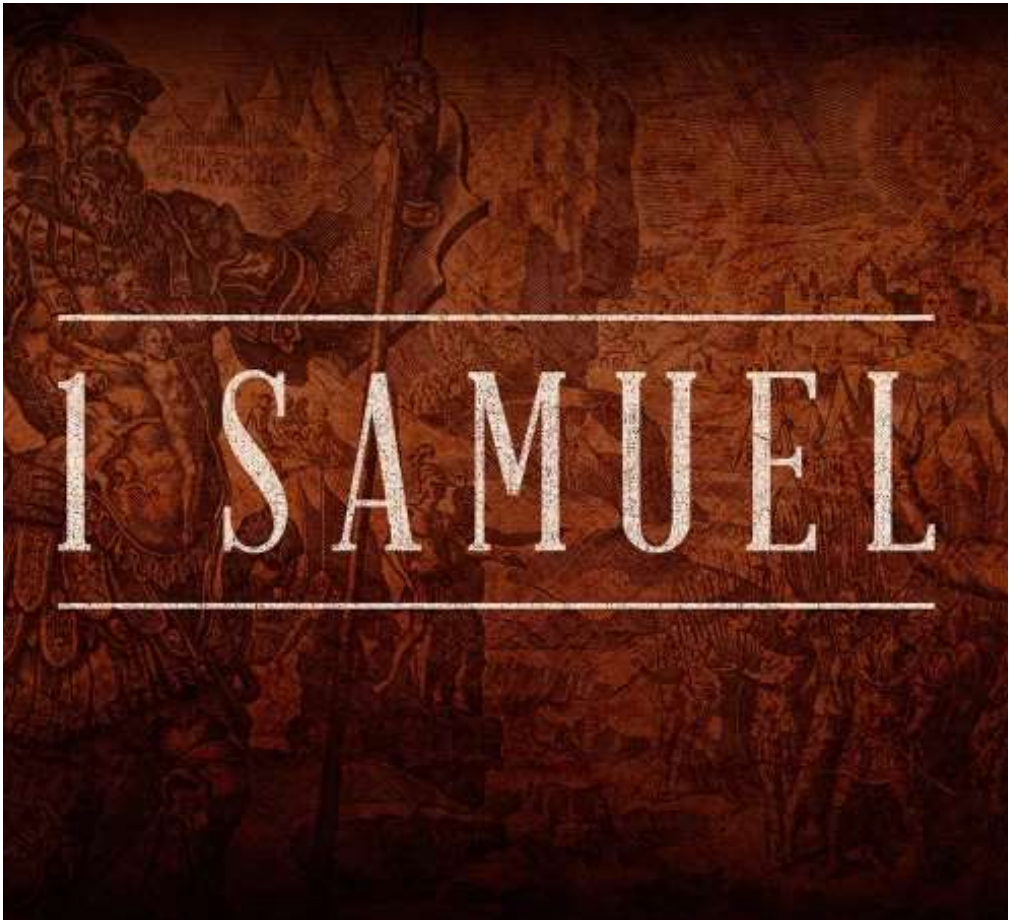


Let's Worship God

5th-10th October 2020

1 Samuel



1 SAMUEL

Monday - 1 Samuel 24 - An Inconvenient Convenience

David has just had a narrow escape at the Rock of Divisions. He heads north-east to Engedi on the shores of the Dead Sea. The area is dry, mountainous, and deserted. But there is an oasis amidst the limestone rocks and bluffs of this inhospitable and inaccessible area. It is still populated today by the wild goats (Ibex) that gave it its name (verse 2) and the sheep and shepherds that gave it its landmarks (verse 3). The area is pockmarked by caves - an ideal hideout, watered, isolated, and protected. However, after the Philistine attack is dealt with, Saul is fed intelligence on David's whereabouts, immediately picking up his pursuit with 3000 chosen crack-commandoes after David's 600 men.

At a particular set of sheepfolds Saul heads into a cave to, as we might say, "spend a penny"; or, as the Jews might say, "to cover his feet". The English translation says "he went in to relieve himself". Euphemisms aside - he's going to the toilet, such as it was. Let's get the sense of drama and tension that is in the story. Picture him wandering into the cave whistling and, after his eyes adjust to the darkness, he spies a good spot. He takes off his cloak, leaves it over the rock, takes his copy of the Engedi gazette with him and goes about his business. But can you believe it? Of all the caves in all of Engedi, at the back, in the dark, among all the twists, turns, nooks and crannies riddled throughout this rambling complex of caves are David and his 600 men!

Here is an open goal for David. The man who has hurled spears at him, hunted him out of his home, and harassed him high and low over the hills, is now a sitting duck. David tiptoes to Saul, his heart pounding, holding his breath, every sound magnified by echo, drawing his knife (thankful that it is well oiled and there is no squeak) he slashes, not at Saul the ruler, but at Saul's robe. What is going on here? Now we know what happened, we'll spend the rest of the week looking at its significance.

Questions

1. Do you think David was right to spare Saul?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the colour, drama and tension of the incidents in the Bible.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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."

1 Samuel 24:6

Praise: Psalm 57:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Tuesday - 1 Samuel 24 - Misreading Providence

The first lesson of this chapter is that we are not to misread God's providence. By providence we mean God's planning and purposing of all things, and bringing them to pass. As the catechism says, "[it is] his completely holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing of every creature and action."

It seems too good an opportunity for David to miss. It seems pragmatic - his hunter is helpless, and his predator is now prey. It seems pious (verse 4) - a day had been promised when David's enemies would be given into his hand, and he would have victory. It's all very plausible - his ducks are lining up and the door is open. Surely this is God's plan.

But David killing Saul is not the will of God, not the command of God, and not the plan and purpose of God. All the ducks might be in a row, but it is not God's will. God had revealed his will in Exodus 22:28 - rulers were not to be cursed, never mind killed. The king stood as a representative of God, in his place. To strike the king would be to strike God. God's will was clear: the king was not to be killed.

Sometimes when looking for guidance the ducks all seem to line up and the door seems to open. We ask, "How can it not be God's will?" Well, if he's clearly spoken in his word, then it's not his will. A friendship with a member of the other sex that is so much more fulfilling than your marriage - surely it's God's will for you to be happy together? You have the ability and opportunity to play high-level sport on a Sunday - surely God is opening a door to evangelise at the highest level? But opportunity does not equal guidance. God's word is clear on keeping your marriage vows and giving Sabbaths to God. Don't misread providence - Satan can open doors, and God can test. What we think about an opportunity must be measured against what we know from God's Word.

Questions

1. Where have you been presented with an opportunity that, at the time or with hindsight, seemed like guidance but was contrary to God's Word?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for a deeper knowledge of God's Word so that our evaluation of providence is shaped by it.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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."

1 Samuel 24:6

Praise: Psalm 57:5-8 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Wednesday -1 Samuel 24 - Taking Matters into Your Own Hands

We can appreciate David's difficult position. David is God's chosen king, and Saul is like a bad tenant who won't leave. David has been promised victory over his foes, and Saul is one of his foes. When David cuts the robe (verse 5) it is not just his calling card, it is symbolic. Earlier, Saul had torn Samuel's robe, and Samuel said, "So will your kingdom be torn from you and given to another" (15:27). David is staking a claim here. Also, in their culture this was a sign of disloyalty and rebellion. David is making a symbolic statement.

This explains why David is guilt-ridden afterwards (verse 5). As one writer notes: "Even this symbolic act was going too far." David had grasped the kingdom, but it was not his to grasp. It is God's job to raise up kings and bring them down. Vengeance was not David's to take. God is a God of vengeance (Psalm 94:1), claiming it as his own prerogative (Deuteronomy 32:35) and forbidding his people to take it (Leviticus 19:18).

This has obvious relevance for anyone experiencing interpersonal problems. It is not for you to get back or get even. It is not for you to bring retribution. It is okay to work to clear your name, as David does later in the chapter, but he does not overstep the proper bounds. We are to leave it in the hands of the just judge of all the earth.

It has a broader application also. David's temptation was to press fast-forward and jump ahead to the throne, bypassing God's route. This is a temptation many of us face, whether it is in pursuit of success, promotion and income, or children, relationship, marriage and sexual intimacy. We must not step outside the bounds of God's Word and take matters into our hands.

David maintains his innocence before God and man (verse 11) and leaves it all in God's hands (verse 12). This is faith in action.

Questions

1. Where are you tempted to take matters into your own hands?
2. What are the boundaries laid down by God's Word in that specific situation?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for patience and faith to not take matters that should be left in God's hands into your own.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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."

1 Samuel 24:6

Praise: Psalm 142:all - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Thursday - 1 Samuel 24 - Raising Your Hand to God's Messiah

So far we've noted two things about David and Saul in the cave. First, by these circumstances, God was not leading David to destroy Saul. This was not a providential opportunity. Second, we must not take God's matters (in this case, vengeance) into our own hands. But the question now is, why was this not a providential opportunity, and why could David not take the matter into his own hands? Verse 6 is the heart of the chapter - read it again.

Despite all his flaws, Saul is still God's anointed king and chosen representative on earth. Notice how David constantly speaks to him as king or lord, even bowing before him (verse 8). God's power and authority have been given to Saul. David is emphatic about this. Three times in his speech (verses 8-15) David declares that he will never put out his hand against the Lord's Anointed. He even puts himself on solemn oath (verse 12). The Lord's anointed is too special to strike; even wicked Saul. Of all the lessons in this chapter this is most important - do not raise your hand to the Lord's Anointed.

How is this warning relevant to us? The Lord's Anointed is his royal representative who rules all things for God; he is the king we live under. The Lord's Anointed is Jesus Christ - the Messiah, the Anointed King. How do we raise our hands to him? Think of a scene in a kitchen where the child has lashed out to hit his mother and she scolds him: "Don't you dare raise your hands to me!" Think of the cry from the football pitch: "Ref! He raised his hands! That's a red card!" We raise our hands to strike in anger.

Every sin we commit is a lifting of our hand to strike him, grasping for his crown to claim his rule. And if David's heart was struck (verse 5) at the prospect of raising his hand against wicked Saul, who has pursued him around the wilderness, how much more should we tremble at the prospect of raising our hand in anger against the perfectly good, loyal, and kind king Jesus.

Questions

1. In what areas have you been raising your hand in anger against God's king?
2. Is your whole life a strike against God's King, refusing to recognise his rule and willfully flouting his law?

Prayer Points

1. Ask God for heart that is "struck" at the prospect of raising our hand in sin against God's King.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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."

1 Samuel 24:6

Praise: Psalm 94:1-6 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Friday - 1 Samuel 24 - Missing God's Mercy

Let's flip perspective today. We've been thinking of Saul as the Lord's anointed king, but David is too. It's like the situation in the United States between this November and January - there will be a president and a president-elect. David is the anointed king in waiting, and he is a better king. David shows us more clearly than Saul the character of the true Messiah Anointed-King, Jesus.

David calls out Saul as evil. It is implied in his statements about striking the Lord's Anointed - Saul should be just as slow to strike him also. He is explicit in verses 11-13, where he tells Saul that his wicked actions come from a wicked heart and speaks of his desire that God should judge Saul. "But I spared you" (verse 10). David shows us the way of a better king, the way of King Jesus. It is the way of mercy to enemies and the sparing of evil people.

Perhaps you have a burdened conscience, or you feel like you don't deserve anything from God. God's King is full of mercy. There are some lovely phrases in this chapter, and as we reflect on them we see the mercy of the Lord Jesus. Verse 17 - we're like Saul, giving out evil to God's Messiah, but receiving undeserved good. Verse 19 - normally if a man finds his enemy he will not let him go away safe; but God's merciful king will. We were his enemies and we are allowed to go our way in safety. We receive good when we have given only evil.

This mercy does not come cheaply. The just King cannot turn a blind eye to our evil. The cost of this mercy was that God's Messiah, Jesus, should be hunted, though only having done good to people; and struck dead on the cross, though innocent. Messiah's mercy was a costly purchase for him.

Questions

1. Just reflect on the mercy of God's King as described in verses 17 and 19.

Prayer Points

1. Rejoice in the mercy of God's King to us.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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."

1 Samuel 24:6

Praise: Psalm 2:1-4 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

1 SAMUEL

Saturday - 1 Samuel 24 - Responding to Messiah's Mercy

David stands like a giant in this chapter, displaying the mercy of his greater Son, Jesus. Saul, for all his faults, and indeed his continuing faults (in chapter 26 he's back to pursuing David), does here give us a model of how to respond to the Messiah's mercy.

First of all, Saul acknowledges David's kingdom - verse 20. He acknowledges that David will be established as king and that the kingdom will be established in his hand. Secondly, he put his hope for the future in David - verse 21. In Israel a man's family and descendants were an aspect of his afterlife. To have your family wiped out was to be erased from among God's people, his purposes, and his blessing. Saul places his hope for his family, and thus his own future, in David, the messiah.

In this, he is a model and a pattern for us to follow. We should acknowledge the rule of God's Messiah, Jesus; and we should put our hope in him. Blessing can only be found in his rule. Hope and a future can only be found in him. He is merciful to his enemies; willingly staying his hand of judgement and opening his hand of blessing to those who acknowledge his rule and place their trust in him.

When Saul had done these two things, David swore to him that his future would be secure (verse 22). Likewise, his greater Son, Jesus, gives his Word that our future will be secure and safe. His promised sworn covenant in his blood, guarantees our present and future safety. In his mercy he also extends these promises to our descendants too. If they will acknowledge his rule and put their hope in him, he will give them eternal security also.

This chapter shows us 2 things, and we need them both. Realise your sin in striking God's Messiah, and realise his mercy is big enough to cover it.

Questions

1. Have you realised your sin in striking God's Messiah?
2. Have you realised his mercy is big enough to cover your sin?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that the Messiah's assurance of safety is a secure sworn covenant promise.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

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."

1 Samuel 24:6

Praise: Psalm 64 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

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