

“The Enemy of My Enemy Is My Friend?”

I Samuel 29

Stephen King

Let's Pray,

Father, we are gathered to proclaim the day. You're loving your promise. Keeping you watch after us. You protect us. You guide us. You save us. You rescue us. You snatch us out of situations that we get ourselves into because of our own sin. And our own imperfections. We praise you. We pray that, father, you would meet us here tonight as we open your word, that you would illuminate your word to our hearts, that we may hear it, that we may not just be hears of your word, but doers of your word, that we may be people who proclaim your name and seek a life of repentance and seek a life to grace to others. We ask all this in your name.

Amen.

If you have your Bibles, turn to I Samuel 27. But before we read the text this evening, I want to say kind of a personal thank you from Kate. We love y'all. We moved out of our house this week. It's a busy week for us. A house we lived over ten years, raised all of our three kids in that home. As we look forward to the next calling that God has for us. We went around Wednesday night and as a as a family and just shared memories, things that we were thankful for, what we loved about the house, prayed for ourselves, prayed for the neighbors, prayed for the new owners. And one of the things that I was very thankful about our house. I didn't share that with our kids, but I've been thinking about it all week. I'm thankful that our home got to be a ministry home, that we got to have prayer meetings there. We got to have pre-marital counseling on the couches in our living room. We got to have people over and events and cookouts. It was a sweet home for ministry, and I want to thank you for being a part of that. And thank you for calling me as one of your pastors. Thank you for sending me. Thank you for the ways you love me this week, as it's been hard for us as we transition, as you bring us meals, as you host us in a home. We're staying with some friends. We just want to say from the bottom of a heart, thank you. You continue to pray for us. We need it. We're mentally, physically, spiritually, in every way exhausted. But our God has been so good, so faithful. An answer, so many specific prayers. I would love to tell you just the work of God, and it's such a joy to be with you tonight, to preach God's Word to you.

And so we pick up in I Samuel 27. As we been talking about and going through this series, we've been looking at the life of two kings, King Saul, the people's choice for King and King David, God's choice. We know that King Saul lost his kingship out of disobedience, and God raised up

another. But there's been many different setbacks, many different circumstances that have been in the way of David at the cost of his own life.

And the question we leave here as we end in chapter 31, in the book, even though it's not going to be our last talk on this series.

How will King David become King? How will he continue to live in the midst of a man who wants him dead? How will the promises come true? And we will read about that tonight. We're going to have a little Baptist air conditioning tonight, and we're going to I'm going to bounce through four different chapters, but I'm going to read just a few verses on each one.

Then David said in his heart, now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than I should escape to the land of the Philistines. And then Saul, despair of seeking me any longer with borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hand. So David arose and went over, and he and the 600 men who were with him to Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath, and David lived with Achish at Gath he and his men and every man of their household, and David with his two wives. I hit them on, and of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the ball's widow. And when it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer sought him. Chapter 28, verse one. In those days the Philistines gathered their forces for war to fight against Israel. And Akka said to David, understand that you and your men are to go out with me in the army.

And David said, take it very well. You shall know what your servant can do. And he said, David, very well. I will make you my bodyguard for life. Flip over to chapter 29, verse one. Now the Philistines had gathered all their forces Aphek and the Israelites were encamped by the spring. That is, Jezreel and the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands. And David and his men were passing on in the rear with Akash. And the commanders of the Philistines says, what are these Hebrews doing here? And they said to the commanders of the Philistines, it is not. Is this not David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years since he departed, deserted to me, and I have found no fault in him to this day. But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, send the man back, that he may return to the place which you have assigned him, and you shall not go down with us to battle. At least in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to the Lord? To his Lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here? And finally, in chapter 31, now the Philistines were fighting against Israel, and the men of Israel fled before the Philistines and fell, slain at Mount Gilboa. And the Philistines overtook Saul and his sons. And the Philistines struck down Jonathan and I. Bit of that, and Malak Malika, and the sons of Saul. And the battle pressed hard against Saul, and the archers found him, and he was badly wounded by the archers. And Saul said to his armor bearer, draw your sword. Thrust me through with at least these uncircumcised. Come and thrust me through and mistreat me. For his armor bearer would not, for he feared greatly.

Therefore Saul took his own sword and fell upon it. And when his armor bearer saw that Saul had died, he also fell upon his sword and died with him. Thus Saul died, and the three sons of his armor bearer and all of his men on the same day together. And when the men of Israel, who were on the other side of the valley, and those beyond the Jordan, saw that the men of Israel had fled, and that Saul and his sons were dead, they abandoned their cities and fled, and the Philistines came and lived in them.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated.

So have you ever gotten yourself into a mess that you were not sure how to get out of? Have you ever gotten yourself into a mess you were not sure how to get out of? I freaking do this. with house projects. I don't know if you're like this, but I tend to overestimate my abilities when it comes to home repair. And as you know, we have been moving out of our house. And to get a house show ready, you have to do some necessary repairs that you have put off for years because you've been raising a young family and you're busy most nights. But being a, you know, any type of self-respecting, middle class, cheap man, I do most of the work myself. And to get our house ready, one of the things that needed to be repaired was our kitchen sink. The two drains and our kitchen sink were leaking pretty badly and I thought, this needs to be repaired. So I went on YouTube and tried to figure out how to repair it, and I searched and found a great video that seemed simple enough, and it seemed like you only needed a few supplies, two new drains, some plumber's putty, and the special wrench that you get that's only job in its existence is to take the nut off the drain so you could take it apart so that you can put on the new drain. I said, I can do this. Does it seem too hard? Simple enough. So I head off to the Home Depot. I get the two drains. I get the plumbers buddy. I buy that special wrench. Now. That's what this job is for. And I head back, confident about the work that I'm about to do. I get everything out from under the sink.

I take apart the PVC pipe that's underneath the drain, and I take that wrench out very confidently and put it up against, but none of that drain to take it apart. And I use all my energy for the next ten minutes and it doesn't budge. And in fact, I make things worse. The sink starts coming apart in different ways.

The washer that's holding the drain together starts crumbling. The putty that was on the sink drain begins to kind of go everywhere. And I am panicking because I'm a man and I wait to the last minute to do things. I don't know if you've ever noticed that before. because we have inspection the next day. And it's 945 at night, so no plumbers coming out at this time.

And I am panicking because the video didn't tell me how to take off a nut that has been corroded so bad that it is now fused onto the drain. And I'm like, how do I get out of this? The

inspector surely is going to notice this mess that I have now made. He may have gotten away from the original position of the sink, but now certainly not.

And so I begin to Google. Okay, how do I do take this drain apart that when this special wrench has does one job, won't do the job? And so the next video I come across is a hammer and a screwdriver. Flathead screwdriver. Nothing could go wrong with that, right? So close to 10:00 I am start banging away at this drain trying to break it off the sink, waking up my three kids and my wife who's not very pleased with me at this point. And it's just getting worse. That nut still not coming off. And I begin to panic and panic and panic some more. I'm like, this is going to be a disaster. I've now woken up all my kids. I've woken up my wife, the inspector, is going to really not like this. I don't know what to do. Eventually, I run into this one video that has a drill and tells you how to take a big drill bit and just basically drill the thing off, and I cut it off. But we can get ourselves some messes, whether it's something as simple as home repair.

Or something even more weighty, like relationships. We can be in arguments with somebody that started small, that grew beyond our abilities, to reconcile our abilities, to see the way out of that. Maybe it's a friend or a loved one that we're not sure how to bring us back together.

We get ourselves some messes. Sometimes we get our mess ourselves in a mess at work. We have a great idea for the business, for the company that we're working for, and we begin to go down that track, only for it to spiral out of control and we cost the company money. And we're wondering, what do we do now?

What do we do when we find ourselves in messes that we make calls ourselves a share that with you? Because David finds himself in a mess tonight. He's the future anointed king of Israel. And we just read that he is not in his homeland. He's not in Israel. Where is he? He's in the land of the Philistines, the personal bodyguard of King Achish.

And he's about to go to war against Israel. And we're left wondering, how in the world are you going to get out of this, David? What are you going to do? Are you actually going to go to battle against God's people? Are you going to slay the ones that you are called to lead and to protect, risking your kingship?

Are you going to do that?

Or are you going to betray this king, this Philistine king who now has your now has you have his trust. You're his personal bodyguard. Are you going to betray him in the middle of the battle and risk fighting a two front war where you had the armies of Israel and the armies of the Philistines against you?

How do you get past that? You flee to them for safety, and now you're going to be in one of the most perilous situations you could ever be in. What are you going to do? So this is an interesting

text. What's happening here? It's a little hard to figure out. How do we apply this? We have to be very careful with historical narrative because it just tells what happens.

It doesn't give us all of the times commands to follow, but there are some lessons that we can learn. But one of the chief things that we can take away is God's mercy and grace. Even when we do things that harm ourselves, that's what we're going to see in this passage and the passages that we read tonight. So there's three things that I want you to see about this text that we have read and David's life,

1. David's deception
2. David's dilemma
3. David's deliverance

The first is David's deception. Let's go back to chapter 27, verse one for a second. David is fleeing King Saul. Saul wants him dead and has tried many, many occasions to kill him and King David and David is trying to figure out how do I keep myself safe from him. This is erratic. King is the king that's unpredictable, is the king that has done many different things to harm him.

How can he find safety? And so he devises a plan, says this in verse one. And David's set in his heart. Now I shall perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me. What he means is there's no other options. I've exhausted all options that I can think of. This is the only option.

This is what he says to him self in his heart, that I should escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul would despair of seeking me any longer within the borders of Israel, and I shall escape out of his hands. Now, if you've been keeping up with your biblical history right, you know. That this where he's going is the long standing and current enemy of Israel.

He's going to the one that they're continuing to battle against and fight against. And he reasons in his heart, he says this is a good idea because King Saul is not going to risk crossing into enemy territory, risking going to war, going to battle. I will be safe with my enemies because of their might. King Saul won't do this inside of Judah.

I'm not safe because he's the king and he controls all things. He can certainly find me out. But in Philistine with the Philistines, I'm safe because of the threat of maybe war or aggravating their king. I'm safe there. The whole idea of the adage, which is the title of my sermon, that he's going by the kind of the ancient proverb, the enemy of my enemy is my friend, because the Philistines are the enemy of Saul, he feels he's safe, and then he believes he can convince King XIX that this is a good idea for him to be there as well, because he can be a mercenary, which is not something that's unheard of in the ancient times.

In ancient times, when you had a rivalry with two powerful people in a nation, the enemy nation would often hire one of the counterparts to work from him. And since there's safety, as long as that conflict is going on. And so King Achish gets a mighty mercenary and a strong fighting force to raid for him and to make a lot of money for him and maybe, just maybe, hurt his enemy, King Saul again, the enemy of my enemy is my friend.

And what's amazing is that this plan works for a little bit. He goes into this land. Look at verse four. It says this.

It says that when he was told to Saul that David had fled to Gath, he no longer sought him. Saul gives up the chase. He finds a little safety from the man that's after his life. And then secondly, we see Achish. Develops a strong liking to King, to David. He develops this bond for him, this affinity for him, which is a pretty amazing to the point where he says in his thoughts, he makes himself.

He makes David what we saw in chapter 28, his personal bodyguard. But he reasons. At the end of chapter 27 he says this. He has made himself such an utter stench to the people of Israel. Therefore, he shall always be my servant.

Achish believes, David can never return home. That David is completely loyal to him. And the question is, how did he figure that out? How did he get there? Well, again, this is part of David's deception because David, every time he would report to King Achish about what he was doing, he would tell him that he was raiding Judah and Judah's allies, which he was not.

He was actually busy raiding the enemies of Israel. He may be living in the land of Israel's enemies, but he never became an enemy himself. He was doing the very thing that God had called the nation of Israel to do, which was to drive out the inhabitants so they could dwell in the land he was going against those people groups, raiding them and devoting them completely to destruction. And nobody lived to cover up his deception. That people can't be a witness. Dead people can't tell what's really going on. So he lies. He deceives King Achish, telling him I'm going against Israel. Judah when he really isn't. So this makes Achish believe he has complete loyalty. Because David has committed treason. There's no way they will take him back because of the actions that he's done. But here's the question. We have to ask who's really being deceived? Who's being deceived?

Is it Achish or is it David? Go back to verse one.

Verse one he says this. Then David said in his heart, see, we have no record that God, that he had sought God in any way through prayer, through God's Word, or through godly counsel. So there is no evidence that he sought God's wisdom at all. This plan that he devised came from himself, and he spoke to his heart.

Now, in one sense, speaking to your heart is a really, really good thing. And it's good for mature believers to learn to speak to your heart. Why? With a Bible over and over again tells us that our heart is deceitful and wicked. We can't trust it. Jesus talks about our heart being the root of all types of evil that come out of us, the desires.

James talks about that as well over and over the Bible says, do not trust your heart. Do not follow your heart. We don't follow the Disney theology.

Our heart will lead us in the places where we don't need to go. The heart doesn't move towards the will of God, but away from the will of God. And knowing that we have to learn to preach to our hearts. But the message is vitally important of what we preach. We can't just tell it anything. We have to tell it what the Word of God says.

And David here does not tell his heart anything about the promises of God, about the protection of God, about the love of God. He speaks from a place of fear and a place of worry. He says, there's nowhere else I can go. I got to go to my enemy.

And then some level, you can kind of understand where David's coming from right now. We know he's not a coward because he's an incredible warrior.

But the whole adage is heavy is the head who wears the crown. He had 600 men. He was thinking four plus their wives, plus their kids. You're talking about 2 to 3000 people under his care. And he's maybe worried about them. What will King Saul do to them? And will they stay with me? Will they stay by my side if disaster comes upon them like it has been coming upon me?

It's a natural inclination to want to be safe. I want the people under you to be safe so we can kind of understand. But commentary is pretty much all of them say the same thing, that this was an act of disobedience. This was act of a lack of faith. Like we just remember just a couple of chapters before, the kind of the last scene that we have is David's about to completely annihilate in a ball for offending him.

And his wife intercepts, goes to David and says this to David. He says, hey, David, remember something. If men rise up to pursue you and seek your life, the life of my Lord talking about David shall be bound in the bundle of the living, in the care of the Lord your God. You are protected by God. You are cared for by him and the lives of your enemies.

He shall sling out as from the hollow of a swing. She makes reference to earlier in David's life when he defeated Goliath. So remember how you killed Goliath with a sling?

Who did that? That one you. That was God. He used you because you had faith that God could win the battle. That was the whole point. Don't forget that. Don't forget the many

circumstances in your life that the promises of God have been made to you and reaffirmed in your life. And he says, you're right. And he backs off.

This was just a recent moment in his life, and not too long after we have him fleeing the Promised Land, worried and concerned, it's a lack of faith. Says this about him.

He says, alas, when unbelief dominates us, God has forgotten and deliverance. Our own eyes obsess. The mind. I like that statement. Unbelief dominates us. It consumes us. It crowds out the thoughts of God and the thoughts of God's Word and His promises and deliverance. Our own ease of sets our mind the things that we want, the desired, the comfort that we have.

And hence, unless divine grace interposes, unless God intervenes, we seek relief in the wrong quarter by unspiritual means. Thus, it is here with David. He and his men passed over unto Akish, the king of Gath. It's a move.

That shows a lack of faith. But see what I like about David. He is lauded throughout scripture.

As one of the heroes of the faith, as someone we should look up to, as someone who's a man after God's own heart, as someone of repentance, as someone who loves the Lord. But he's not perfect. He's flawed. He has weaknesses. He has doubts, he has fears. And sometimes he allows those doubts and fears to take audience. And what I like about him is because that's me.

That's you. We're just like David. And David is just like us. We're all weak, we're all frail. We all doubt, we all worry. We all make decisions from the counsel of our own fears and worries and wonder how in the world we are going to get ourselves out of situations that we have no answers to. We devise our own schemes and we fail to trust the Lord.

I think about different examples that I've seen in life. Maybe it's a wife who is in a loveless marriage and a marriage that she doesn't feel pursued and cherished, and a man comes along that she meets who does all the things that she most longs for. That's thoughtful, communicates well, praises her, encourages her, and she may be tempted to believe and preach to her heart.

You know God wants me to be happy. I'm very unhappy. I think this man will make me happy. Maybe I should leave my husband. We preach our plans to our heart. Or about the student who is in school and he's got finals coming up, and he's trying to figure out how to make sure he makes the right grades so that eventually he can get a good, good grade and GPA in his university to get a good job and future in life.

And he's so worried and consumed about what may be next. They devise a way to cheat on the exam, and he rationalizes it and says, this is just one time. I know God wants me to have a good future. This is not that big of a deal.

Or the businessman who is desperate for a sale because he hasn't made a sell in many months and he knows that bills are due. He knows he has to provide for his family, and he's tempted to believe.

That it's okay to compromise morally with the clients that he's trying to do business with in order to gain their favor so that he can close the deal. We can rationalize things.

We can preach to a heart. The reality is, what are we saying to it? What are we preaching to our hearts? What are we communicating? It isn't the will of God.

Or is it in our own desires? And do we have faith to trust God in the midst of a dark and difficult time, and to follow him when things don't even make sense? So that's David's deception now. David's dilemma atheist decides it's time to go to war. We see that in chapter 28. He says this to David. Understand that you and your men are to go out with me in the army.

And in response David gives a very cryptic message. He says this very well. You shall know what your servant will do, like he kind of gives a non-answer. There. It's almost like he's saying, yeah, I don't even know what I'm going to do. We're about to find out. Because remember, the dilemma is this what is the future King of Israel going to do?

Is he going to attack the people that he's been called to lead and protect and risk his kingship, or he's going to betray King XIX and risk his own life? What's he going to do? That's his dilemma. See, there's certain dilemmas in our life and messes in our life that just come to us because we live in a fallen and broken world.

There are things that just happen to us that we don't know how to get out of, but we didn't cause. And there's other times we get into situations and messes due to our own stupidity or sin.

And that's where David is. He's in this dilemma, but he's not sure how to get out of because of his scheme, because of his plan. But as we've seen in times before, God remains faithfully committed to David even when he falters, even when he puts himself in a situation that risk everything, God continues to be faithful to him.

See, one of my favorite verses is Second Timothy 2:13. It says this if we are faithless, he remains faithful, for he cannot deny himself. If we are faithless, he remains faithful because he cannot deny himself. I love that verse because I am often faithless.

I often falter, I often doubt God. I don't always make the right decision. I sin against him and I sin against people that I love. We all do that. But the promises of the scripture, the promises of God is this. That if you're in him, you are secure.

There's nothing you could do to separate you from the love of Christ that is for you and for your good. Now, it doesn't mean that he won't allow you to feel your consequences of your sin. I love pastor readers. Analogy says if you go if you drive home from work drunk one day and you crash into a telephone pole and you have to get your arm amputated, you may be forgiven and things may be put right in your life. But that arm's not growing back.

But what we know, even in those circumstances and situations that God has committed to us, the God is for us. The God is redeeming us. Why? Because it's not about your faithfulness. Although we're called to be faithful, what keeps us is the promise of God. What keeps us is his faithfulness, for he can't deny himself. It's built on his character.

And that's what David continues to learn and continues to grow in. Is that he is loved and pursued by God, even when he falters.

And even in our discipline. As we turn to David's deliverance, chapter 29 and it comes in two parts. First he's delivered from himself. The Philistines gather to Aphek, things are about to go very poorly for Israel for the last time that the Philistines gathered there. Israel was soundly defeated. The Ark of the covenant was paraded around the nation of the Philistines. The prophet of Eli was killed. His sons are killed, and the people of God are broken. Worried, shamed. And desiring something better. It's in this battle. Back in chapter four that leads to them wanting a king, just like all the other nations.

And here we are again, almost full circle at the end of the book, the Philistines gathered in Aphek. And what we learn at this battle is that Saul and his sons, even Jonathan. If there's ever a virtuous person in this book, it's Jonathan, and he remains faithful even to the end, faithful to his father, faithful to his position, even dying on a battlefield.

Saul kills himself, not wanting to be tortured and humiliated by the Philistine army.

The people of God are running for their lives. Scared and worried.

Let's realize I gave you the second point before I gave you the first point, you're probably wondering, where are we going?

Let's go back to chapter 29. He's delivered from himself.

He's ready for war. He's ready for battle. And in 29, the commanders of the Philistines show up. And they look around. They survey the regiments, and they notice one particular regiment or one particular battle group that shouldn't be there. That's David and his mighty men. And he says, what are the Hebrews doing here? This is our enemy.

Why are they here?

What's amazing? Achish continues to defend David. And then. But the commanders say, come back to him with his fair question. So don't you know that this is David? He's the most famous enemy that we have. They sing songs about him. And by the way, he may be infiltrating our army and may be the next rank of the Hebrews who take us out.

And that gets him favor back with King Saul. And he can go back home. We can think of a million reasons why this is a bad idea and zero why this is good. Send him home.

And Achish defends David. He says this in verse six says, the Lord lives. You have been honest, which we know is not. And to me it seems right that you should march out and end with me in the campaign, for I have found nothing wrong in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, the Lords do not approve of you.

So go back now and go peacefully, that you may not displease the lords, the Philistines. And David pushes back. He says, no, I want to stay. And they continue to say, no, you've got to go.

What's interesting in this text is we don't see God mentioned a whole lot, but he's there.

And it's his merciful kindness to David to use the observation of pagan commanders to remove him from the battle so that he doesn't have to face this dilemma. He doesn't have to face the decision of what to do next, so he doesn't have to risk his own life. It's the Lord's kindness and the Lord's mercy. God was saving David from himself.

And see, what I love about this is this is a picture of the gospel. We often devise our own schemes of how to save ourselves, or how to be forgiven by God, or how to work our way to heaven in some way. What the gospel says is that your work can ever earn my forgiveness or my favor. Your work cannot deliver you.

I have to battle for you.

And that's what the gospel says, that Jesus comes into our world and does the work for us, that he faces the battle for us, and he gets on the cross, and he pays for our sins, that he faces the wrath of God for us, and that we receive it by faith. It's not what we do. That's what he does.

That's all we see in the life of David. God delivers him through his mercy, through his grace. And it's nothing that David had to do.

David is saved from himself. And then lastly, he's saved from King Saul, which I already began this point. We'll return back to it in chapter 31. He saved from the one man that's keeping him from the kingship, from all the promises that God has made toward him. And we see in the story in chapter 31, this book ends in a gloomy note and a very sad note.

The king is dead.

God's people are on the run.

God's name is even shame. They even put the armor of King Saul. In the temple, the pagan temple of the Philistines. And they hung his body and the body of his sons in the gates of Philistine city we see a small band of people from Jabez, Gilead, and their bravery and heroism go and rescue those bodies to give a proper burial.

But as we in chapter 31, we know what's coming. We've seen the full circle happen. The king that the people chose failed. The King that the people chose failed to deliver and rescue and bring peace. But there's a new king coming. There's a new king that's going to come, that's going to usher in peace for God's people. Who's going to defeat God's enemy, the Philistines?

Who's going to bring God's people back together?

He's a flawed king. He's a doubting king.

But he's a king that God chooses because he's the king who points to the ultimate king. Because there's one that's to come from the line of David who is actually who King Achish says about David that he's blameless, but he's honest. And he will actually give peace to God's people and rule righteously.

And bring all the promises to God's people. So our hope is not flawed in human men. But in the God who remains faithful because he cannot deny himself.

Let's pray.

Heavenly father, Lord, we praise and thank you for tonight. We thank you for this opportunity to speak your word, to teach your text. We thank you about the story of David.

Who was flawed king. But he was a repentant king. We know that from time and time again. He makes mistakes, but he turns back to you. But we know that our hope is not in a human king or human deliverer. But this text continues to scream and point to is that we need a better king. And that better king is Jesus.

Lord, we thank you that you sent your son to defeat the enemy of sin and death, that we may have everlasting peace. And we thank you that even when we fail, even when we cause messes, that we don't know how to get out of. You rescue us and you redeem us, and you have purchased us and secured us everlasting life.

We ask all this in your name.

Amen.