



1 Samuel 19-21

Tape #7086
By Chuck Smith

CHAPTER 19

Shall we turn now into our Bibles to the 19th chapter of I Samuel?

When a man turns his back upon God, there is always a loss of judgment. And a person who has turned his back upon God, oftentimes does foolish things. Saul has turned his back upon the LORD, and he has developed a great jealousy of David. He does suspect, and correctly so, that David is God's choice to succeed him on the throne. And so he is doing his best, by force, to destroy David-to kill him, in order that he might hold on to that which, according to God's plan, is no longer rightfully his. Turning against your godly friends is always a sign of spiritual backsliding and deterioration. You don't want to be around your godly friends, you feel convicted when you're around them. You begin to avoid them. Watch out! That's a danger sign. You're on a slippery path, you're going down.

It is interesting that Saul, in this way, becomes an interesting type of Satan, and David a type of Jesus. You see, Satan has been ruling over this world. The Bible calls him, "*the god of this age.*" Jesus calls him, "*the prince of this world.*" And he has been ruling over the earth, but God has anointed Jesus Christ to be the King. And Satan, knowing that Jesus Christ was God's anointed-for the demon said, "*We know who you are; the Holy One of God.*" Satan did his best to destroy him and continues to do his utmost to hold, by force, that which is no longer rightfully his. Jesus redeemed the world from the power of Satan and darkness. And yet, he is not ascended to the throne, he is not yet begun his reign over the earth: he reigns only in the hearts and lives of those that have submitted to him. But one day he is going to reign over the earth. But in the meantime, as Saul, Satan is doing his best, by force, to keep the rightful King from sitting upon the throne. But even as Saul was destroyed, and David ultimately sat upon the throne, so is the throne of David to be filled by that descendant of David, Jesus Christ, whom God has appointed the rightful King over the earth.

Thus, we are in that portion where Saul has vowed to kill David. And we observe David in this time of great stress, and as we see David under this tremendous pressure, the sentence of death hanging over him, being pursued, according to his own words, "*like a wild partridge over the mountains by Saul:*" we see David with lapses of faith, we see David an imperfect man, we see him resorting to the flesh and to fleshly means. We do not see him as a constant picture of trust and faith in God, we see him in a very vacillating state: sometimes speaking of great trust in God, and yet devising his own schemes for escape. And as we read of David's conditions, his deceptions, his lies in order to escape the hand of Saul, it is easy to throw darts at David and say, "Oh ho, you know: he's supposed to be this great king, and trust in God, and all. But look at that." But if you were in David's shoes, under the same circumstances, I dare say, that you would have had your problems too. And as Jesus said, "*Let him that is without sin, cast the first stone.*"

Now, in spite of David's failures, lapses of faith, it is comforting to know that God's testimony of David was, that he was "*a man after God's own heart.*" That encourages me. I'm glad that the Scriptures are honest enough to tell us the faults of the heroes. It doesn't seek to paint them as perfect men, it shows that they are human just like us.

As James said, concerning the prophet Elijah, that "*he was a man of like passions just like we are.*" I don't think of Elijah that way. Man, I think of him as a "super-saint." I mean, this guy was something special. You know, he prayed, and it didn't rain for three and a half years. Wow! But he was *a man of like*

passions just like you and me. He wasn't a super-saint. David was not a super-saint, David sinned. David failed in faith and of his trust of God, and yet, God used him. Yet, God anointed him. And yet, God testified, *"he's a man after my own heart."* And that encourages me.

If God only used perfect men, then I would go hide in a corner someplace. And I would disqualify myself, and I'd say, "Well, God can never use me because I'm imperfect. I know I am imperfect." And I would disqualify myself. But all the way through, I find that God has used imperfect men. Seeking to deal with their imperfections, seeking to mold them, and shape them into His image, and using the testings and the trials for that very purpose: of revealing our places of human failure and weakness so that we would not trust in our flesh, but we would trust more in God.

The 19th chapter begins with Saul's announcement of his intention of killing David and ordering his servants to do so.

Now Saul spoke to Jonathan his son, and to all of his servants, declaring that they should kill David. But Jonathan Saul's son delighted much in David: [we saw last week where David and Jonathan had a love covenant between them. There was this tremendous love] and Jonathan told David, saying, my father is seeking to kill you: now be careful, and until the morning, abide in a secret place, hide: and I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will commune with my father of thee; and what I see, I will tell you. So Jonathan spoke good of David unto Saul his father, and said unto him, Don't let the king sin against his servant, against David; because he has not sinned against you, his works have been towards you very good: for he did put his life in his own hand, when he killed the Philistine, and the LORD wrought a great salvation for all of Israel: you saw it, and you rejoiced: why then will you sin against innocent blood, to kill David without reason? And Saul hearkened unto the voice of Jonathan: and Saul sware, [falsely] As the LORD liveth, he shall not be slain.

We see that Saul has become somewhat of a schizophrenic. He orders them to kill David, and then Jonathan points out, "Hey, this guy has been a faithful servant. He risked his own life to kill the Philistine, and you rejoiced at his victory. This guy has behaved himself wisely, he is a faithful servant to you. Why should you sin against him? *Why should you kill innocent blood?*" And Saul had enough reason to realize that what Jonathan was saying was correct. And he said, *"Surely as the LORD liveth,"* and swearing by taking an oath by the LORD, *"he'll not be slain."*

So Jonathan called David, and Jonathan shewed him all of those things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and David was there, [sitting at the table] as he had done in times past. Now there was war again: and David went out, and fought with the Philistines, he slew them with a great slaughter; and they fled from him.

That got him into trouble because Saul's jealousy arose again. David is doing great exploits out on the battle field. And this thing all, sort of, sprang out of the fact that David's exploits were being heralded by the women. They would come out of the cities, with their tambourines, and their dances, and they would sing, *"Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."* And Saul had a real ego problem. And with David getting this kind of attention, and this kind of acclaim, Saul couldn't handle it. And so now that David is once more victorious over the Philistines: they flee from him, he really wipes them out, Saul, again, has this jealousy stirring up within him.

You know, we can open the doors of our lives to the work of the enemy. And if you open yourself up to these things, an evil spirit can just take over your life. The Bible says, *"Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you."* But if you don't resist the devil, if you

give into this ill spirit, or you give into jealousy, then an evil spirit can just take over your life. And thus, with Saul giving in:

--the evil spirit from the LORD was upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his javelin in his hand: --

And as was the ordinary custom, when Saul would go in to one of these deep moods of depression, David would come in and play skillfully on the harp-- soothing music. And what is it, but, "Music soothes the heart of savage beast," or whatever. And Saul would be soothed. But this time he didn't give David enough opportunity to play. He took the javelin --

--to smite David to the wall with it; but David slipped out of Saul's presence, and the javelin stuck in the wall: and David fled, and escaped that night. [So Saul, in a fit of rage, took his javelin in his hand, threw it at David, and David ducked. The javelin just missed him: stuck itself in the wall. And David left, wisely, and escaped that night.] So Saul also sent messengers unto David's house, to watch him, and to slay him in the morning: and Michal David's wife told him, saying, If you don't save your life tonight, tomorrow they're going to kill you. So Michal let David down through a window: and he went, and fled, and escaped. And Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth.

So she made up the bed, put this statue in it: and made up the bed to make it look like David was lying in it. Took the goats' hair, and put it for the bolster (he was red headed), and just wrapped it around and just put the form in the bed. You know when you were a kid, you used to put pillows in the bed and make it look like you were lying there, and hiding in the corner until your mother came in to shake the bed, and then you laugh. So it's just one of those kinds of things where she makes it look like David's in the bed.

And when Saul sent the messengers to take David, she said, He is sick. And Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, Bring him in his bed, that I might kill him. ['Bring him bed and all.'] And so when the messengers were come in, behold, there was an image in the bed, with a pillow of goats' hair for his bolster. And Saul said to Michal, Why have you deceived me so, and sent away my enemy, that he is escaped? And Michal answered Saul, He said unto me, Let me go; for why should I kill you? [So she said, 'He threatened my life. I was afraid.']

Now, at this point, we have the background for one of the Psalms. It is Psalm 59. Psalm 59 was a prayer of David when Saul sent the messengers, and they watched the house to kill him. And you should put a note there, that when you read Psalm 59, this is the background: the messengers, the servants of Saul, had come down and watched the house in order to kill David, but he escaped by Michal letting him out of the window.

So David fled, and escaped, and came to Samuel to Ramah, [Ramah was about 10 miles north of Jerusalem. However, Jerusalem was not at that time the capital. So he came from Gibeah to Ramah] and he told Samuel all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and dwelt in Naioth. [Now, Naioth was the school that was in Ramah that Samuel had for the prophets. So they went to the school of the prophets, there at Naioth.] It was told Saul, saying, Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah. [It was the school that Samuel had in Ramah for the prophets.] And Saul sent messengers to take David: and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as appointed over them, the Spirit of God was upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied. [The power of the Spirit was so strong, these guys were overcome, and they couldn't take David. They just started joining in the prophecy.] So when they told Saul, he sent other messengers, they also prophesied. And so he sent messengers again the third time, and they prophesied also. Then he went up

to Ramah, and he came to a great well that is in Sechu: and he asked and said, Where are Samuel and David? And one said, Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah. And so he went there to Naioth: and the Spirit of God was upon him also, and he went on, and prophesied, until he came to Naioth in Ramah. And he stripped off his clothes, and he prophesied before Samuel in like manner, and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Wherefore they say, Is Saul also among the prophets?

So the power of God was protecting David. And that is an important note to make. Saul was desiring to kill him. He had sent messengers to take David. But each time he would send the messengers, the Spirit of God would come upon them, and they would prophesy, they would be helpless to do anything against David. Finally Saul came himself. And the Spirit of God came upon Saul: he became helpless to touch David. And thus, David was divinely protected from Saul. An important note to make because we find that though God divinely intervened, yet David, in a lapse of faith and trust in God, resorted then to his own devices to escape from Saul.

Much different from Abraham, who had such confidence in the promises of God, that *through Isaac was the seed to be called*: was willing to offer Isaac as a sacrifice before he had any children, knowing that God would have, if necessary, raise him from the dead in order to keep His Word. In other words, God's Word is going to come to pass. Abraham had that strong faith, David didn't.

It was the Word of the LORD that David should be king, but David just couldn't rest in God bringing it to pass. Though he saw the hand of God delivering him, yet he lapsed to his own devices. He is so much like us. Even though we see the power of God, and we have seen God provide, and we have seen God bless, we begin to panic when a troublesome situation arises again. You know, we forget so quickly what God has already done, we forget so quickly the promises of God, and the deliverance's of God that we often turn to the flesh in the hour of trouble or despair. So David fled from Naioth in Ramah. Saul came, David got out. Even though Saul was under the power of the Spirit and couldn't do anything, David fled.

CHAPTER 20

And he came to Jonathan and he said to Jonathan, What have I done? what is my iniquity? and what is my sin that your father is seeking my life? [And Jonathan didn't really believe that his father was still after David's life. Jonathan thought that Saul had, you know -- Saul was anointed with the Spirit, and Jonathan figured, 'Hey, that should do it. Now the old man's cooled down, it's going to be okay.'] And he said unto him, God forbid; you shall not die: behold, my father will do nothing either great or small, but what he shows it to me: why should my father hide this thing from me? it is not so. [“No, dad's not after you. If he was after to kill you, he would have let me know. He tells me everything. And if he was after you, wouldn't he have told me?”] And David said, Your father knows of this grace that I have in your eyes; [your father knows of our friendship, he knows of our love] and therefore he has said, Don't let Jonathan know these things, lest he is grieved: but truly as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death.

David was living in the consciousness that his life was hanging on a thin thread: 'Man, I'm just a step away from death.' He had that consciousness. This is true of all of us. We, all of us, live just a step away from death--but we don't always have that consciousness. In fact, we usually have the opposite. We usually have a consciousness of immortality: "It's not going to happen to me." You go into a situation, and you think, "It won't happen to me. It can't touch me."

And I think that's probably good. I think if we didn't have that, we wouldn't even lie comfortably in bed. We'd fear there was going to be an earthquake, the roof's going to fall on our head, and you would live in just constant panic and fear. You would be totally immobilized. So it's good that we don't have that

thought of, 'death is lurking around that corner there, waiting to pounce me as soon as I go past.'

And yet, on the other hand, I think there is wisdom in the recognition that my life is in the hands of God, and I don't know at what time God may withdraw His hand, or His protection, and I might be taken. And thus, I should live with the consciousness of the eternal, and I think that motivates me in my service for God.

In the New Testament times, as we look for the return of Jesus Christ, it is that realization that he could come at any moment that keeps us walking a straight line. It keeps us pure. John said, "*Beloved, we are now the sons of God, it doesn't yet appear what we're going to be: but we know, when he appears, we're going to be like him; for we will see him as he is. And he who has this hope purifies himself, even as he is pure.*" It's a purifying hope: the fact that Jesus is coming at any moment. I don't know when -- it could be tonight. And therefore, I want to be doing those things that would be pleasing to him when he returns.

The consciousness that I live on the border of eternity, and I don't know when I am going to pass through that door into eternity. David had this awareness, this consciousness: "*I'm only a step away from death.*"

Then Jonathan said to David, Whatever you want David, I'll do for you. So David said to Jonathan, Behold, tomorrow is the new moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king at meat: but let me go, that I may hide myself in the field to the third day at evening. And if your father at all misses me, then say, David earnestly asked me the permission that he might go to Bethlehem his city: for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family. And if he says, It's well; then your servant will have peace: [I will have peace] but if he is very angry, then you can know that he has determined evil against me. Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant; for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you: notwithstanding, if there be any iniquity in me, then slay me yourself; for why should you bring me to your father? [If I've done something wrong, go ahead and kill me yourself. Why should you bring me to your dad if there's something wrong.] And Jonathan said, [God forbid] Far be it from thee: if I knew certainly that evil were determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you? Then David said to Jonathan, Who shall tell me? and what if your father answers you roughly? And so Jonathan said to David, Come, and let us go out into the field. And the both of them went out into the field. And Jonathan said to David, O LORD God of Israel, when I have sounded my father about tomorrow any time, or the third day, and, behold, if there is good toward David, and then I send not unto thee, and shew it thee; the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan: but if it please my father to do thee evil, then I will shew it to you, and send you away, that you may go in peace: and the LORD be with you, as he has been with my father.

Now Jonathan recognizes in the conversation with David that David is going to be the next king. He knows that. And he is seeking, now, that David would make a covenant with his family, David's family, Jonathan's family: that there would be kindnesses between the family by David, and on David's part when he becomes king.

And thou shalt not only while yet I live show me the kindness of the LORD, that I die not: but also thou shalt not cut off your kindness from my house for ever: no, not when the LORD has cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. [Jonathan is recognizing David's ultimate triumph: God's hand is upon him. 'When you come into the kingdom, when you come into the throne, then show kindness unto my family.'] So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, Let the LORD even require it at the hand of David's enemies. And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul. [So this pact of love: this covenant of love that was between them, was renewed.]

Jonathan is to go and sit at meat with his father. Now the new moon was always a feast time, and the king had his entourage at the feast. David had his place at Saul's table during the feast, and the feast was a two day feast. (Each month, each new moon, they would have these feasts at the beginning of the new month, the new moon. And they had the lunar calendar, so it was just the beginning of each month they would have this feast.) David's absence from the feast is surely to be noticed by Saul. And if Saul brings up the question of David's absence, then he is asking his friend Jonathan to lie for him. 'Tell your dad that our family was having a big yearly sacrifice in Bethlehem, and my brother wanted me to come, and required me to be there: so please excuse David. He's gone to be with his family in Bethlehem.' And if your dad says, 'Fine, I hope he has a good time,' then we'll know everything is okay. But if your dad gets angry, 'it's only because he has intended evil against me.' And so Jonathan says, 'Okay, we'll do it, and I swear before God. I'll come and let you know what my dad's attitude is. "But David--I love you, and you love me. Let's renew our covenant of love."' And so there was the renewal. Jonathan caused David to swear again.

It's interesting how that we love the reaffirmation of love? If someone loves us, we want them to tell us, over and over. "Of course I love you, I told you that when I married you. Isn't that enough?" No! We want reaffirmation's: "Now, swear to me again. Tell me again." And that is something that we can't hear too much, isn't it? We love the reaffirmation of the covenant of love, or the declarations of love. And so, here, Jonathan seeking again: 'Let's reconfirm this covenant of love that we have.' Because, "*he loved him as he loved his own soul.*"

Then Jonathan said to David, Tomorrow is the new moon: you will be missed, because your seat will be empty. And when you have stayed three days, then you shall go down quickly, and come to the place where you did hide yourself when the business was in hand, and you shall remain by this stone Ezel. And I will shoot three arrows on the side, as though I was shooting at a mark. And, behold, I will send a little boy, saying, Go, and find the arrows. If I expressly say to the lad, The arrows are on this side of you, take them; and come out yourself: for there is peace, there's not hurt; as the LORD lives. But if I say thus unto the young man, Behold, the arrows are beyond thee; then go your way: [escape] for the LORD has sent thee away. And as touching the matter which you and I have spoken of, behold, the LORD be between you and me for ever. [This thing of 'honoring my family,' and 'when you have come into power,' and so forth-showing kindness-] So David hid himself in the field: when the new moon was come, the king sat down to eat meat. And as the king sat upon his seat, as at other times, even upon a seat by the wall: [the place of prominence] Jonathan arose, and Abner [the general] sat by Saul's side, and David's place was empty. Nevertheless Saul did not speak any thing that day: for he thought, Something has happened to him, he is not clean; surely he is not clean. [Now you had to go through a ceremonial kind of a cleansing in order to come and eat at the feast. And Saul figured, "Oh, he didn't have a chance to go through the ceremony of cleansing himself to eat. So, surely, that's the problem; he'll be here tomorrow."] It came to pass on the next day, the second day of the month, that David's place was still empty: Saul said to Jonathan his son, Why has not the son of Jesse come to eat meat, yesterday, or today? And Jonathan answered Saul, and said, David earnestly asked me the permission to go to Bethlehem: and he said, Let me go, I pray thee; for our family has a sacrifice in the city; and my brother, has commanded me to be there: and now, if I have found favour in your eyes, let me go away, I pray thee, and see my brother. And therefore he did not come to the king's table. Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, You son of a perverse rebellious woman, [isn't that interesting, that dad wants to blame the wife if there's problems with the kids?] do not I know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own confusion, to the confusion of your mother's nakedness? [or, "to her shame?"] For as long as the son of Jesse lives upon the ground, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom.

In other words, "Jonathan, you're a fool! Don't you know I want to kill him for your sake? If that

guy lives, you're not going to be king, Jonathan. You'll never come to the throne; don't you understand that?" And to Saul it was a thing of hanging on to the kingdom, though he had been told by the prophet that God had taken the kingdom from him. But yet, he is trying to hold on.

[Now he said] *Send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die. And Jonathan answered his dad, and said, Why should he be killed? what has he done? And Saul cast the javelin at him to smite him: [the guy's mad. He's insane: insane rage and jealousy] whereby Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David. So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, he didn't eat the meat on the second day of the month: he was grieved for David, because his father had done him shame. And it came to pass in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad with him. And he said to his lad, Run, and find now the arrows which I shoot. And as the lad ran, he shot the arrow beyond him. And when the lad was come to the place of the arrow which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried after the lad, and said, Is not the arrow beyond thee? And Jonathan cried after the lad, Make speed, hurry up, don't tarry. And Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows, and he came to his master. But the lad did not know anything: only Jonathan and David knew the matter. And Jonathan gave his artillery to the lad, and said to him, Go, and carry them to the city. And as soon as the lad was gone, David arose out of a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times: and they kissed one another, and wept one with another, until David was just overcome.*

Here is, of course, unfortunately, the last time these two fellows meet together. This tremendous camaraderie, this tremendous love that they had; and this is their final and last meeting: weeping together.

Jonathan said to David, Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and your seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went to the city.

So this was the final time; and certainly a lot of 'pathos' and emotion here.

CHAPTER 21

Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest: and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of David, and said to him, Why are you alone, and no man is with you? [He's sort of suspicious that David is there alone.] And David said to Ahimelech the priest, The king [and here's a lie] has commanded me a business, and has said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have appointed my servants to such and such a place. Now therefore what do you have? give me some bread in my hand, or what you have here as a present. [So David tells an outright lie to Ahimelech, and asks for something to eat.] The priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread in my hand, all I have here is the hallowed bread; and if the young men [that is, those that were gathering with David] have kept themselves at least from women they can eat it. And David answered the priest, and said to him, Of a truth women have been kept from us for about three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in the vessel. So the priest gave him the hallowed bread: for there was no bread there but the shewbread, that was taken from before the LORD, to put hot bread in the day in which it was taken away.

Now, according to the law, there in the tabernacle, as you would enter into the tent of the tabernacle, it was called the holy place, (it wasn't the holy of holies), but this holy place, on the right hand side there was this little golden table. And on this little golden table there were set twelve loaves of bread: each loaf representing one of the tribes of Israel, and each week these loaves of bread were changed. They would take the twelve loaves of bread that had been sitting out there all week, and they would put fresh bread on the

table. That was part of the weekly ritual; and again, representing the twelve tribes before the LORD.

Now, according to the law, this shewbread, which it was called, could not be eaten by anybody but the priest, they were the only ones allowed to eat this shewbread according to the law. However, David is hungry. The men that are with him are hungry. And David asked the priest to give him this shewbread, 'cause we're hungry.' And so the priest gave to David and to the men this bread that was forbidden under the law for them to eat; yet, because of their need, the law of hunger actually superseded the ceremonial law of God.

In the New Testament, Matthew's gospel, chapter 12: Jesus and his disciples were going through the wheat fields, and his disciples began to pick the wheat, the corn of wheat (they call it the corn), and they were rubbing it in their hands to thresh the wheat.

You know, the wheat has a little rough kernel around it. It's a husk, and it's sticky, and it gets caught in your throat. And so you rub it in your hands, and then you blow. And you blow the chaff, or the husk away, and then you can just eat the wheat raw. It's soft enough that you can chew it, and if you chew it long enough, it turns into sort of a gum.

It's very interesting: when we were kids, we used to get into the chicken feed and pull out all the wheat and make our own gum. When I was growing up, you didn't always have a penny for bubble gum, and so we had to improvise. And so we would get into the chicken feed, and get this wheat gum that we would make for ourselves, and we would chew our wheat gum. But it is actually edible, and I like it. I think it's delicious.

But they (the disciples) were doing this on the Sabbath day. Now, it was not lawful to harvest on the Sabbath day, and the Pharisees said to Jesus, "*Why do you allow your disciples to do that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath day?*" And Jesus said, "*Don't you remember what David did, when he was hungry, how he went to the house of God, and he ate the bread, which was not lawful to eat?*" In other words, a man's hunger supersedes these things. I mean, you've got to use good judgment: if a guy is starving to death, you can't say, "Well, I'm sorry. You can't eat that, it's sanctified." But the need, the hunger, superseded (the ceremonial law of God). So the disciples were doing that which, technically, according to the technical aspects of the law, what they were doing was unlawful. But their hunger brought it into a lawful action: the need. So Jesus uses this situation with David, to show that need supersedes the ceremonial aspects of the law.

Now a certain man was there who was a servant of Saul, and he was detained before the LORD; [he had probably been going through a cleansing ritual, or it is possible, that they thought he had leprosy. But he was under detention before the LORD to fulfill some kind of a spiritual vow, or some spiritual problem] his name was Doeg, [his name sounds bad] and he was an Edomite, and he was the chief of the herdsmen that belonged to Saul. And David said to Ahimelech, Do you have any spear or sword around here? for I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of Goliath the Philistine, who you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: and if you will take it, go ahead: for there is no other besides that here. So David said, There is none like that one; give it to me. And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and he went to Achish the king of Gath.

Achish is also called Abimelech. But Abimelech is the Philistine title for the king; like the Turkish title was Sultan. The Russian title is Czar, the Egyptian title is Pharaoh, the Assyrian title was Sennacherib. So the title for the king, the Assyrian king, Sennacherib, was not the king, but the king's high messenger. The title for the king was Abimelech. And so, you remember Abraham went to Abimelech, and the actual

name of this king was Achish, but he was also called Abimelech because that was the king's title among the people. And so when you get into the Psalm of David, and there was a Psalm that was written concerning this time, and it was addressed concerning Abimelech. So David fled to their enemies, the Philistines. He came to Achish, the king of Gath.

And the servants of Achish said unto him, --

--He probably thought, because it had been several years since he had wiped out Goliath (he was just a kid then. He's now in his twenties and he has probably grown a beard. He's no longer a little stripling), he probably figures, "Hey, they won't recognize me."

And the servants of Achish said to him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one unto another of him in the dances, saying, Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands? And as David heard these words he laid them up in his heart, and he was afraid of Achish the king of Gath. And so he changed his behavior before them, he feigned himself to be insane in their hands, he began to scrabble on the doors of the gate, he let his spit fall down on his beard. Then Achish said to his servants, Lo, the man is crazy: why have you brought him to me? I don't need any madmen, why have you brought this fellow to play the mad man in my presence? shall this fellow come into my house? [And so--"Get rid of him." So David escaped out of the hand of the king by feigning insanity.]

In Proverbs 29:25, there is a scripture that declares, "*The fear of man bringeth a snare.*" Now David was afraid of Achish. And the fear of Achish led David, this man that God had ordained to be king, lead him into this behavior of acting like a mad man: scrabbling at the walls, letting his spit run down over his beard, and just babbling insane babblings. The fear of man will bring even a great noble man into the actions of a fool. "*The fear of man brings a snare,*" contrast: "*but whoso puts his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*"

Now about the only good thing you can say about this, is that it worked. David did escape. However, it shows, again, David's lack of real trust in God. But David is quite ambivalent at this time. I mean, he is under extreme pressure: he knows that Saul is out to kill him, and he knows that there is just a step between him and death. And so he is reacting under this kind of pressure.

But on the flip side, there is still that trust in God. There is still that awareness, and consciousness of God, and that seeking of love.

Turn to Psalm 34. Notice the heading of this Psalm: "It is a psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech;" [and I told you Abimelech is the title for the king, whose name was Achish.] "This is a psalm of David, when he changed his behavior before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed:" when he escaped from Abimelech by this little rouse of pretending to be mad.

What does David say? "*I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad. O magnify the LORD with me, let us exalt his name together. I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all of my fears.*" David was afraid, and yet, he attributes the LORD as the One who delivered him: "*They looked unto him, and were lightened: their faces were not ashamed. This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all of his troubles. The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivers them. O taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusts in him. O fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.*" And so, again, this Psalm.

And I want you to, in your meditations, go ahead and read Psalm 34 in light of this which we have studied tonight. Then also, in Psalm 52: it was written at this very same time of David's history.

Actually, several psalms were born out of these experiences. Psalm 56, "To the chief Musician a prayer of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath." They said, 'Hey, this is the David,' and they took him. So he was afraid and he pretended, then: the madness. And so Psalm 56 along with Psalm 34 has to do with the experience in Gath.

Psalm 52 is, again, "A prayer of David when this guy Doeg the Edomite came to Saul, and said to him, David went to the house of Ahimelech." (So we'll get that next week: as Doeg reports to Saul, and Ahimelech is helping David; and we see Saul's fierce and ungodly vengeance that he took out against Ahimelech for helping David, though Ahimelech was actually innocent of it.)

So these Psalms were born out of this particular history of David's life, and thus, they become more interesting to read with that background as you understand the circumstances that David was experiencing that caused him to write these particular Psalms. It puts the Psalms in a brighter light, it focuses a brighter light upon them, and brings you a clearer understanding of them.

Next week we'll go on to the next three chapters, as we continue this glorious trek through the word of God.

May the LORD be with you now, and bless you, and keep you in His love. And even as Jonathan sought that David should renew the covenant of love; how long has it been since you have renewed your covenant of love with Jesus Christ? How long since you just told him that you do love him? And because of your love for him, you want to just commit your life fully and completely. Love wants a commitment, love desires to make a covenant, and it desires the renewal of that covenant. And many of you have made a covenant with our Lord Jesus Christ, but it's been awhile since you've renewed that covenant. And maybe some things have happened in the meantime that you're not too proud of, but it's time to renew the covenant, and say, "Oh Lord, I do love you. I do want to commit and surrender my life to you."

I would encourage you to learn from David's mistakes: here he is, as we so often do, resorting to the flesh; calling upon the LORD, seeking the LORD: resorting to the flesh. Oh, that we would just trust in the LORD at all times, and lean not to our own understanding. But just commit our ways completely unto him, knowing that God will work things out, for His glory.

And thus, may you experience the hand and the help of God in your life, this week, in Jesus' name.

May the LORD richly bless you, as you continue to study His Word.