

Patience Prevails (I Samuel 26:1-25 and 31:1-13)

I Introduction

A. *This Week in Clear Living*

1. God's timing requires patience.
2. God is honored when we patiently seek reconciliation with our enemies.
3. God honors those who patiently wait for His timing.
4. God's timing brings judgment to those who reject Him.
5. God honors those who respect His anointed.

B. Between the chapters (I Samuel 21 through I Samuel 25)

1. In I Samuel 18:10-11, Saul tried to kill David with a javelin.
2. In I Samuel 19:9-10, Saul again tried to kill David with a javelin, this time while David was trying to comfort Saul by playing his harp.
 - a. I Samuel 19:9 says that an evil (**ra**) spirit came over Saul. The Hebrew meaning of the word was an unpleasant or disagreeable spirit, not a demonic spirit.
 - b. We know from other portions of Scripture that David often fell short, too, as do we all. See the additional notes at the end of this lesson.
3. In I Samuel 20, Jonathan gave David the symbolic warning that he should go away and stay away from Saul.
4. In I Samuel 21, David went to Nob.
 - a. While there, his men ate bread that had been consecrated to the Lord (**notice verse 6**).
 - b. An evil man, named Doeg, saw David.
 - c. David took Goliath's sword and went to find refuge among the Philistines. David became afraid there and behaved as a mad man before the king. So, the king of Gath sent him away.
 - d. The special bread was not for the Jews to eat. Plus, David looked for refuge in the enemy's camp. What was going on with him? **Compare this to Matthew 12:1-8.**
5. In I Samuel 22, David assembled himself an army of 400 men (verse 2) from among those that were in distress, in debt, and discontented.
 - a. He became a guardian over the Jewish people.
 - b. Doeg went back to Saul and reported that he had seen David at Nob.
 - c. Saul went to the priest. He ordered his men to kill all of the priests, but they would not do it. So Saul had Doeg kill 85 priests.
6. In I Samuel 23, the Philistines were fighting against Keilah.
 - a. Keilah was a city in the lowlands of Judah northwest of Hebron.
 - b. Threshingfloors (**goren**) were their barns, which were probably filled with corn.
 - c. David asked the Lord two times if he should go to that battle, and twice the Lord put into his heart that he should go. David was somewhat afraid because he knew that he could be risking an encounter with Saul.

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- d. **Notice verses 7-8.** Saul actually thought that God had delivered David into his hands. That shows how far from the Lord Saul had gotten. He actually believed that the Lord would do such a thing.
 - e. The Lord led David to believe that he could not trust the Keilahites.
 - f. Notice that the Lord was protecting David (**see verse 14**).
 - g. In verses 16-18, Jonathan went to David and reassured him.
 - h. Next, the Ziphites (Ziph was in southern Judah) told Saul that they would give him David.
 - i. In verses 26-29, Saul was on one side of a mountain, and David was on the other. When things started looking bad for David, Saul was suddenly called back to battle against the Philistines. **Thus, once again, David and his men were spared.**
7. In I Samuel 24, Saul chased David to Engedi, which was on the western side of the Dead Sea. When he got there, he went into a cave for a few minutes, and David was inside the cave. David cut off the hem of Saul's garment, but once again he would not do anything to hurt Saul. **Notice I Samuel 24:4-6.** Verse 4 compares closely to I Samuel 23:7-8.
 8. In I Samuel 25, Samuel died, and David's men become involved with Nabal, who just happened to have a beautiful wife, named Abigail (**verse 3**).
 - a. Nabal treated David's men very harshly, saying, "Who is David?"
 - b. **Notice I Samuel 25:21.** David had been protecting the people as he wandered through the land trying to stay away from Saul.
 - c. In verses 24-28, Abigail met him and convinced him not to kill her husband.
 - d. In verses 37-42, Nabal died suddenly, and David took Abigail for his wife.

Question: As the preceding chapters show, Saul constantly looked for an opportunity to kill David or have him killed. If you were David, what would you have done? What did David do?

- II. I Samuel 26 - David was spending his life on the run.
 - A. In verses 1-12, David had another chance to kill Saul, but he did not do it.
 1. David was in hiding in Hachilah, and the Ziphites told Saul.
 2. When Saul learned that, he assembled an army of ***three thousand soldiers*** to go after him.
 3. David knew that Saul had come to him.
 - a. At night, Abishai and David went to the trench where Saul was sleeping.
 - b. Notice that the Lord had caused Saul and his army to be in a deep sleep.
 - 1) David was being tested, and my opinion is that he passed the test. **Killing Saul would have been the easy thing to do, but David was more interested in doing what the Lord wanted him to do.**

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- 2) Saul should have realized that he would not overturn the Lord's plan. He should have focused on God and not worried so much about protecting his power and position.
- c. David was close enough to Saul to kill him, but he would not do it.
- d. Saul would have had David killed in an instant, but David would not do anything to raise his hand against the Lord's anointed.
4. ***These verses perfectly illustrate the first three points presented by the Quarterly.***
 - a. God's timing requires patience.
 - b. God is honored when we patiently seek reconciliation with our enemies. David was willing to be reconciled with Saul, but Saul was clearly the aggressor in their relationship.
 - c. God honors those who patiently wait for His timing. Patiently waiting on the Lord was the right thing to do for Joseph, Caleb, Ruth, and David.
5. The Quarterly said that we cannot always avoid encounters. That was also true of the early church.
 - a. First, the Jews tried to destroy the church by killing Christians.
 - b. Then, the Romans got in on the act. Christians were in violation of Roman Law in three ways.
 - 1) They did not worship Caesar.
 - 2) They did not worship the mythological gods.
 - 3) Their faith was not associated with a national religion.
 - c. At one point, the Roman government accused Christians of cannibalism because of their practice of the Lord's Supper.
 - d. The Roman government regularly blamed natural disasters on the church so that the people would turn against the church.
6. In our personal life, we cannot always avoid encounters, either. Several places, the Bible says that David behaved himself wisely, and through the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we can, too. The Quarterly pointed out that we can behave wisely, too.
7. Saul wanted the people to be against David. He had tried to turn Jonathan against David. He had tried to use his daughters to destroy David. But in each of those cases, he failed. The Roman government tried to destroy Christianity, but it also failed. ***Except the Lord allow it, our enemies cannot destroy us, either.***

Question: For the Christian, which is more important - holiness or love for others?

B. I Corinthians 13:4-7 - the "love" chapter

1. Love (*agape*) - brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence, relating to love feasts.

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- a. Luke 11:42 says, "But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone"
 - b. John 5:42 says, "But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you."
 - c. John 13:35 says, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."
 - d. John 15:9 says, "As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love."
2. Jesus or one of the New Testament writers used the word "**agape**" 116 times.
 3. The Apostle Paul devoted a significant portion of his first letter to the Corinthian church to the topic of **agape** love (I Corinthians 13).
 - a. **Agape** love suffers long (note II Peter 3:9). God is long-suffering towards us.
 - b. **Agape** love is kind.
 - c. **Agape** love does not envy.
 - d. **Agape** love does not exalt itself.
 - e. **Agape** love is not easily provoked.
 - f. **Agape** love is not puffed up.
 - g. **Agape** love behaves itself wisely (see I Samuel 18:5 and I Samuel 18:14).
 - h. **Agape** love never fails.
- C. In verses 13-16, David calls out to Abner, who was responsible for protecting Saul.
1. David told Abner that he had not done his job, that he was worthy of death.
 2. He told Abner that he had come into their camp and taken Saul's spear and cruse of water.
- D. In verses 17-20, David speaks directly to Saul from the top of the hill.
1. David indicated that Saul was trying to kill him and that he had not done anything to deserve such treatment.
 2. He told Saul that he was listening to the wrong people if they were turning the king against him.
- E. In verses 21-25, Saul admits that he will not prevail over David. **Notice that David commits the struggle between them to the Lord.** Then, they both went their way.

Question: What often happens after we make a bold decision for the Lord or after we have won a great victory on His behalf? Usually something bad.

III. Between the chapters (I Samuel 27 through I Samuel 30)

- A. In I Samuel 27, David became depressed and made two bad decisions.
 1. He decided that Saul would someday kill him.

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2. He decided to go to the Philistines. They were the enemy, but his decision got Saul off his back (verse 4).
3. But after the bad decisions, he used his new opportunity to do even more harm to the Philistines (verses 8-12).
- B. In I Samuel 28, the Philistines decided to go to war against Israel, and Saul visited a witch (a woman with a familiar spirit). While there, he talked to Samuel, from the dead.
 1. Samuel told Saul that the Lord had taken the kingdom from him (verse 17).
 2. Samuel told Saul that Jonathan and he would die in the upcoming battle with the Philistines (verse 19).
 3. Was Saul saved? Only the Lord knows.
- C. In I Samuel 29, the Philistines prepare for battle, and David tells the Philistine king that he cannot fight against his own people. The king excused him from the battle, but he also says some very nice things about David (verses 6-7). **Notice Proverbs 16:7.**
- D. In I Samuel 30, David's camp was attacked by the Amalekites, so he went after them.
 1. He first asked the Lord if he should.

Question: Why was David successful and Saul not successful?

2. **Nine times David inquired of the Lord** (I Samuel 23:2, I Samuel 23:4, I Samuel 30:8, II Samuel 2:1, II Samuel 5:19, II Samuel 5:23, II Samuel 21:1, I Chronicles 14:10, and I Chronicles 14:14). **Saul only once and then he was where he should not have been** (I Samuel 28:6).
 3. David's example is worthy of imitation.
- IV. In I Samuel 31, Israel and the Philistines battle, and Saul fights his last fight.
- A. Jonathan was killed (verse 3).
 - B. Saul was wounded in the conflict (verse 3). He had his armor bearer kill him rather than be captured alive.
 - C. In verses 8-13, the Philistines found Saul's dead body. They mutilated his body and took his armor. Saul died in disgrace.

Question: How do Old Testament and New Testament saints compare?

- V. Additional Notes
- A. **What can we know about what the Old Testament saints probably knew?**
 1. Remember that they were not indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

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- a. John 14:26-27 says, "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."
- b. John 15:26 says, "...But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. "
- c. John 16:7-8 says, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."
2. Nevertheless, men like Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Samuel, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, the Minor Prophets, and probably many more were Holy Spirit-inspired or Holy Spirit-influenced.
 - a. This is especially true of those that wrote part of the Old Testament.
 - b. II Timothy 3:16 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."
 - c. A writer of Holy Spirit-inspired Scripture would also have been Holy Spirit-inspired or at least influenced by the Holy Spirit.
3. Old Testament saints would have had some understanding of the Lord.
 - a. Romans 10:1-2 says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge."
 - b. An Old Testament saint would have had a zeal for God according to knowledge, but knowledge of what?
 - 1) Everyone gets saved by entering through the same door (Jesus), even Old Testament saints. John 10:7 says, "Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, **I am the door of the sheep.**"
 - 2) When one become aware of God, there are two general ways to respond.
 - a) The unsaved person tries to do great things to please God.
 - b) The saved person realizes his or her hopeless estate and begs for mercy.
 - 3) They would have understood Galatians 3:24 even though that verse had not been written. That verse says, "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."
 - 4) They would have experienced God's love and forgiveness in their life.
 - 5) Many of them or even most of them would have had a sense of their hopelessness without the Lord.

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- a) Psalm 8:4 says, "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"
- b) Psalm 144:1-4 shows David's reliance on the Lord.
- 4. Old Testament saints would have known about their coming Messiah from all of the prophecy, especially Genesis 3:15.
- 5. In many ways, they would have been just like New Testament saints, only without the indwelling Holy Spirit.
- B. That being the case, what can we learn from Old Testament saints like David and Saul? From time to time, they stumbled just like New Testament saints.
 - 1. We should not be too quick to judge the evil deeds of Saul.
 - 2. On several occasions, David behaved in an ungodly manner, too.

VI. Next week's lesson: The Path to Power (II Samuel 2:1-7; 5:1-10; and 6)