

Message #9

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Life of David

2/2/2020

## SAUL AND DAVID AND DEALING WITH ENEMIES

### 1 SAMUEL 19

#### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW

As the decade of the 1930s neared an end, it was increasingly recognized in Europe that Germany was posing a threat to the peace of the continent. The devastation wrought by WWI was still fresh in the minds of European leaders, and most were doing all that they could to avoid war. In 1938 Hitler demanded that the victors in the Great War allow Germany to add the Sudetenland to its territory. (PROJECTOR ON--- SUDETENLAND)

The Sudetenland was territory created after WWI and added to the newly formed country of Czechoslovakia. The Sudetenland was comprised primarily of ethnic Germans. Hitler demanded that this territory be given to Germany. A meeting was held in Munich, Germany, in September of 1938, which included the leaders of Germany, Italy, France, and the United Kingdom. The result of the meeting was the transfer of this territory to Germany. Hitler assured the Allies that he had no more territorial aspirations.

Neville Chamberlain (NEVILLE CHAMBERLAIN) was the Prime Minister of the UK at this time. He grew up with a Unitarian Universalist religious background. He believed that people were basically good. Chamberlain came back from the meeting waving the agreement. He declared, **“I believe it is peace for our time.”** He described Hitler as a “gentleman.”

Winston Churchill (WINSTON CHURCHILL) had a less sanguine view of humanity in general and of Hitler in particular. He addressed the House of Commons five days after Chamberlain returned from Munich. Besides the words which you see on the screen, Churchill proclaimed, **“We are in the presence of a disaster of the first magnitude... We have sustained a defeat without a war, the consequences of which will travel far with us along our road...”** A year later Herr Hitler and his temporary Russian allies plunged the world into war when they invaded Poland. (PROJECTOR OFF)

One uncomfortable aspect of living in this world is that we have to deal with enemies. These enemies may be national enemies or political enemies or religious enemies or sports enemies. This enmity can come from bosses or fellow workers or teachers or classmates or team members or family members. Occasionally, and unfortunately, we may even feel like we have enemies in a church. The passage before us today has lessons for us about how to deal with enemies.

We have seen so far in our study of David's life that God had agreed to the demands of the people of Israel to have a king like all of the other nations around them. So around 1000 BC God through the prophet Samuel appointed Saul to be the kind of king whom they wanted. In Chapters 13-15 we saw that Saul proved to be a failure and fell short of God's standards. In Chapter 16 the Lord through Samuel appointed David to be the new king. Although he was only a boy and only a shepherd, he had character. He also had considerable talents.

David's musical abilities brought him into Saul's palace to calm him when an evil spirit from God plagued him. Then in #17 David defeated the Philistine giant Goliath. In #18 David was given military responsibilities, even though he was still a young man. He continued to be successful, but Saul became jealous and started conniving to take him out.

Today from #19 we will see how David responds to the increasing pressure. The pattern which he follows is instructive for us. Sometimes the Lord wants us to confront our enemies. Certainly Great Britain needed to do that with Hitler and Nazi Germany in 1938. Certainly David did that with Goliath, who was a national enemy. David is praised for that. He continues to lead military forces against the Philistines. In our passage today David is involved with people who claim to be part of the people of God. I suspect that more often the Lord would have us follow the pattern that we find in the chapter before us.

I.

In vv. 1-7 of #19 in 1 Samuel, which is found on p. 242 of the black Bibles under many of the chairs, we learn about THE ROLE OF FRIENDS AND REASONING. (PROJECTOR ON--- I. THE ROLE OF FRIENDS...)  
According to v. 1, **"And Saul spoke to Jonathan his son and to all his servants, that they should kill David. But Jonathan, Saul's son, delighted much in David."**

In #18 Saul's jealousy was hidden. He tried to manipulate David by getting him into positions where he would be killed, but his intentions were not obvious to anyone else. He sent David on dangerous military

missions. He offered two of his daughters to David as rewards for successful military adventures. But now Saul's evil intentions are put out into the open, at least before his son and his top advisers.

Back in #11 when Saul was first appointed as king of Israel, there were critics who spoke out against him. Saul won his first big battle, and the criticism went away. Some officials asked Saul if they should kill the critics. He said that they should not. Now Saul wants to kill someone who has only been supportive of the king. David has calmed Saul's spirit with his musical ability and he has killed the nation's enemies by leading Israelite troops in battle. He is married to one of his daughters. But Saul puts out a contract on David's life.

Jonathan was the one person who had the most to lose by the rise in popularity of David. He was the crown prince. He was next in line to the throne. But Jonathan was a godly man. He was brave and courageous. He had success in fighting against the Philistines, and he found in David a soul mate, a man who had the same commitment to follow the true God. Somehow he seems to recognize that David should be the next king, and he is willing to give away his own heirship. Now he proves to be a great friend for David.

In vv. 2 & 3 we read, **“And Jonathan told David, ‘Saul my father seeks to kill you. Therefore be on your guard in the morning. Stay in a secret place and hide yourself. And I will go out and stand beside my father in the field where you are, and I will speak to my father about you. And if I learn anything I will tell you.’”** Jonathan's first concern is to protect the life of his friend. He sees the danger that is coming from his own father. He knows that his father is wrong, and he needs to do what is right by warning David.

Verses 4 & 5: **“And Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father and said to him, ‘Let not the king sin against his servant David, because he has not sinned against you, and because his deeds have brought good to you.’ For he took his life in his hand and he struck down the Philistine, and the Lord worked a great salvation for all Israel. You saw it, and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by killing David without cause?”**

Jonathan is reasoning with his father. He is giving objective reasons why Saul should change his attitude and commands concerning David. His father is morally wrong in calling for murder. He is acting even more evilly in working against one who has only supported the king and acted bravely in defeating the nation's enemies.

The story continues in v. 6: **“And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan. Saul swore, ‘As the Lord lives, he shall not be put to death.’”** Saul places God as a witness to his vow that David shall not be put to death. So this seems like a good outcome. In this situation of enmity a friend intervenes and uses common sense to talk a father out of a wrong course of action.

On the world stage diplomacy is always a good place to start in dealing with a perceived enemy. Some countries will listen to reason. The same is true in the realm of religion and politics and personal relationships. Jesus told His followers that among fellow believers it is always best to go directly to someone who has done us wrong. (MATTHEW 18:15) In Matthew #18 vv. 15-17 Jesus said, **“If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. (MATTHEW 18:16) But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. (MATTHEW 18:17) If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.”**

According to v. 7 in our passage, **“And Jonathan called David, and Jonathan reported to him all these things. And Jonathan brought David to Saul, and he was in his presence as before.”** (PROJECTOR OFF)

Thus there appears to be a happy ending. David is brought back into the palace as a result of the intervention of a powerful friend and the use of sound reasoning.

This is a good place to start in dealing with opposition of any kind. Biblically the followers of God are called upon to make a direct approach to those who seem to have something against us. But it is also good to have friends who will intervene for us. In this situation the friend intervened before David knew that there was a plot against him. Jonathan also used good reasoning to convince his father to follow the right course of action. The unfortunate thing is that we human beings are not always reasonable. We don't always want to do the right thing. The Bible says that we humans are not primarily good. We are created in the image of God, but we are born with sin natures.

II.

Thus in vv. 8-10 we encounter THE ROLE OF SEPARATION. (PROJECTOR ON--- II. THE ROLE OF SEPARATION. Look at v. 8: **“And there was war again. And David went out and fought with the Philistines and struck them with a great blow, so that they fled before him.”** David continues to enjoy great military success. This should please the king, who is in charge of the army. But reason and

objectivity and the intervention of friends and a vow before God are not enough to penetrate a truly jealous heart.

According to v. 9, **“Then a harmful spirit from the Lord came upon Saul, as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. And David was playing the lyre.”** Literally, this is “an evil spirit.” We saw in #16 that the Spirit of God left Saul because of his disobedience, and the Spirit of God came upon David. An evil spirit then began to plague Saul. His persistent jealousy may have opened him up to further demonic attack. This is the same kind of setting involving a spear and lyre that was described in #18 vv. 10 & 11. Meanwhile, David is still seeking to help Saul.

Verse 10: **“And Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear, but he eluded Saul, so that he struck the spear into the wall. And David fled and escaped that night.”** In v. 8 the narrator said that David struck down the Philistines, and they fled. Now he says that Saul tried to strike down David, and he fled. Saul is treating his son-in-law like a Pharisee.

This will begin a time of severe testing for David. For the next seven years David will be treated like an outlaw for most of the time. He will frequently be on the run. This will prove to be a time of preparation for leadership for David. It is only through these difficult experiences that David could be able to write some of the Psalms which we still study today. It is only through these difficult experiences that David’s faith could grow to maturity.

Sometimes it is right and necessary for us to flee from our enemies. People are not always reasonable. We may have to separate from them. Sometimes there are companies and bosses who are unreasonable. Our families and our own set of values may suffer if we continue with them. Sometimes there are situations of domestic abuse where a mate, usually a wife but sometimes a husband, needs to separate for the sake of her own safety and sometimes for the safety of his or her children. Occasionally there are church situations which become toxic. We may need divine wisdom and the advice of friends to have discernment about when we should stay and when we should leave.

The New Testament lists several situations and circumstances where Christians are told to seek separation. Jesus told His followers to flee from false shepherds (John 10:5). The New Testament also says that we should flee from fornication (1 Corinthians 6:18), flee from idolatry (1 Corinthians 10:18), and flee from youthful lusts (2 Timothy 2:22).

III.

The third response to dealing with enemies that we find in this passage involves THE ROLE OF LISTENING TO MATES. (III. THE ROLE OF LISTENING TO MATES) That is the subject of vv. 11-17. According to v. 11, **“Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, that he might kill him in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, ‘If you do not escape with your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed.’”** In #18 Saul gave his daughter to Michal with the intention that he would be a snare to David. In order to marry her, Saul required that David kill a hundred Philistines. Now Michal has become a snare to her father and his evil plans.

Probably David's house was near the palace. Why did David not flee farther than that? Perhaps David thought that Saul's attempt on his life was the result of a temporary onset of this evil spirit. As Saul's chief musician, David had seen these fits come and go. Michal has a better sense of the seriousness of the situation. She cares more about her husband than about her father.

Verse 12: **“So Michal let David down through the window, and he fled away and escaped.”** Perhaps their house was on the outer wall of the city of Gibeah, and David escaped not just from the house but also the city.

Verse 13: **“Michal took an image and laid it on the bed and put a pillow of goats' hair at its head and covered it with the clothes.”** Michal somehow realizes that Saul's men may come for her husband. So she uses this deception.

The actual term for “image” here is “teraphim.” Scholars are uncertain about the exact meaning of the term. (TERAPHIM) These little idols have been found in Jerusalem and the outlying areas. They date from a bit after our time period. The archaeologists refer to them as Judean Pillar Figures. They are only around six inches tall. Some of the experts suspect that they are what the Bible calls teraphim. They have not found any that are the size of an adult that could be placed on a bed and covered by a blanket and made to look like an adult. Perhaps there were a bunch of these teraphim that were put under the blanket? Maybe just the head of a couple of them was left exposed? Maybe there were wooden teraphim that were larger and just rotted away with the passage of time. We don't know.

There are two more questions that have not yet been answered. What were these teraphim intended to represent? Some of the scholars think that they represented Asherah, a female deity. Some think Astarte, another female goddess. Some think that they were intended to represent ancestors. Then also

we wonder what they were doing in David's house. Why did he have idols in his house? Perhaps David didn't know that Michal had them. Perhaps they were a reflection of Michal's limited spiritual understanding.

Some of you will remember the earlier story in the Bible where Rachel stole her father's teraphim when Jacob decided to flee from Laban and return to the land of Israel. Jacob pronounced a curse upon anyone who had those teraphim in their possession. He didn't know that Rachel was hiding them under her. It sounds like those teraphim could not have been too large. Again we wonder what she was doing with idols, if that is what they were. Some scholars have suggested that these teraphim had more to do with inheritance rites than they did with idolatry.

However, in #15 v. 23 of 1 Samuel (1 SAMUEL 15:23) this negative statement was made about teraphim by the prophet Samuel: **"For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and presumption is as iniquity and idolatry [Lit., teraphim]..."** So whatever these teraphim were, the Lord regards them very negatively.

Our story continues in vv. 14-17: **"And when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, 'He is sick. (PROJECTOR OFF) Then Saul sent the messengers to see David, saying, 'Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may kill him.' And when the messengers came in, behold, the image was in the bed, with the pillow of goats' hair at its head. Saul said to Michal, 'Why have you deceived me thus and let my enemy go, so that he has escaped?' And Michal answered Saul, 'He said to me, "Let me go. Why should I kill you?"'"**

Michal is seeking to give time for David to make good on his escape. She uses deception to aid her case. The narrator makes no commentary on whether this is good or bad. Saul is the only one who criticizes her for her first deception. She deceives her father again when she says that David threatened her if she did not help him to escape. Michal wants to stay in her father's good graces. She may realize that she will need his support if David stays on the run and she has to stay in Gibeah.

Thus David follows the advice of his wife to make his escape. Michal seems to be the instrument provided by God by which David's life is protected from harm.

We should be able to recognize a general truth here that there is wisdom in listening to our mates, especially in situations of difficulty and stress and threat. Our mates may be able to have a more objective view of our situation. Our emotions can affect our objectivity when we are the ones who are in

the pressure cooker. Certainly my wife has been a help to me at certain points when I have felt that I am under attack.

IV.

Consider then THE ROLE OF TRUSTING GOD AND HIS PEOPLE as we look at vv. 18-24. (PROJECTOR ON--- IV. THE ROLE OF TRUSTING GOD...) Verse 18 tells us, **“Now David fled and escaped, and he came to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and lived at Naioth.”** Samuel is the prophet who anointed David to be king. It makes sense for David to seek help from him.

Samuel lives at Ramah. (RAMAH MAP) Ramah is twelve or fifteen miles north of Gibeah, Saul’s hometown and the current Israelite capital. Ramah is also where Saul first encountered this prophet and was anointed by him to be the king of Israel.

The meaning of “Naioth” is uncertain. No such town of that name has been discovered. The word “Naioth” means “habitations” or “dwelling places.” Verse 19 says, **“And it was told Saul, ‘Behold, David is at Naioth in Ramah.’”** Some of the scholars suggest that Naioth was a place in Ramah where Samuel had a school for the prophets. David would have found comfort and support by surrounding himself with a group of godly men. If they were truly prophets connected to the Lord, they would have been assuring David of his place in God’s plan. (PROJECTOR OFF)

Verse 20: **“Then Saul sent messengers to take David, and when they saw the company of the prophets prophesying, and Samuel standing as head over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul, and they also prophesied.”** God sovereignly intervenes to protect David.

What this prophesying was is uncertain. Did they fall into some kind of ecstatic trance? Were they forced by the Spirit of God to utter praises to Him? Was there a pronouncement of judgment upon Saul and these actions which they were forced to take? Was there a divine proclamation of God’s plans for David? That would have been fitting, wouldn’t it?

According to v. 21, **“When it was told Saul, he sent other messengers, and they also prophesied. And Saul sent messengers again the third time, and they also prophesied.”** If these guys can’t do the job, then Saul will have to go himself. Thus we read in v. 22, **“Then he himself went to Ramah and came to**

**the great well that is in Secu. And he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" And one said, "Behold, they are at Naioth in Ramah."** We don't know where Secu was. Perhaps it was a suburb of Ramah.  
(PROJECTOR OFF)

Verse 23: **"And he went there to Naioth in Ramah. And the Spirit of God came upon him also, and as he went he prophesied until he came to Naioth in Ramah."** Saul's attempt to apprehend David is no more successful than that of his emissaries. Saul has not learned that he cannot defeat the plan of God.

There is one more fitting judgment involved in this divine intervention. We are told in v. 24, **"And he too stripped off his clothes, and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay naked all that day and all that night. Thus it is said, 'Is Saul also among the prophets?'"** Probably Saul stripped off his royal robes and was left with what was regarded as his underwear. There was considerable spiritual significance in this. In #18 we saw that Jonathan took off his royal robes and gave them to David, signifying that he was giving up his position as crown prince to David. God had pronounced through Samuel that He had taken away Saul's kingship. Saul had refused to submit to that judgment. Now under the power of God, Saul is compelled to remove his royal robes.

The takeaway from this is that David trusted God and sought support from His people, Samuel and the prophets. David had a specific promise from God that he would be king of Israel one day. If that was true, it was impossible for him to be killed.

We may not have the same kind of specific promise from God that David did, but we can be confident that God will keep us for whatever purpose that He has for us to accomplish. Clive read Psalm 59 for us earlier in the service. I would like for us to look at that Psalm for a moment. It is on p. 477 in the black Bibles. The preface for that Psalm is part of the earliest manuscript copies of this Psalm. It tells us that David is indeed the author. It says that the occasion for the Psalm is **"when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him."** I would suggest that David's experience and the Psalm which was the product of it provide us with a pattern that may be helpful for our prayers and thoughts when we find ourselves in a tough situation, especially when we encounter enemies.

In vv. 1 & 2 he writes, **"Deliver me from my enemies, O my God;**

**protect me from those who rise up against me;**

**2 deliver me from those who work evil,**

**and save me from bloodthirsty men.”**

David then proceeds to give three reasons why the Lord should hear his prayer. First, v.3: **“For behold, they lie in wait for my life;**

**fierce men stir up strife against me.”** People are out to get him.

Second, from the last part of v. 3 and v. 4: **“For no transgression or sin of mine, O Lord,**

**4 for no fault of mine, they run and make ready. Awake, come to meet me, and see!”** God should hear and respond because he is innocent. David is not claiming to be sinless. But he has done nothing to deserve this treatment by his enemies.

Third, God should respond because of His character. That is what David says in v. 5: **“You, Lord God of hosts, are God of Israel.**

**Rouse yourself to punish all the nations;**

**spare none of those who treacherously plot evil.”** YHWH is the true God. He is the God of the heavenly hosts. He is the God of Israel. He is the righteous judge. He needs to intervene in this matter.

David describes the enemies in vv. 6 & 7: **“Each evening they come back,**

**howling like dogs**

**and prowling about the city.**

**7 There they are, bellowing with their mouths**

**with swords in their lips—**

**for ‘Who,’ they think, ‘will hear us?’”**

Verse 8: **“But you, O Lord, laugh at them;**

**you hold all the nations in derision.”** Here David seems to widen the application of the lesson that he learned about God’s faithfulness in this incident to apply to national enemies who oppose Israel.

Verses 9 & 10: **“O my Strength, I will watch for you,**

**for you, O God, are my fortress.**

**10 My God in his steadfast love will meet me;**

**God will let me look in triumph on my enemies.”**

In v. 11 the author has a fascinating insight about situations of evil and enmity. He says, **“Kill them not, lest my people forget;**

**make them totter by your power and bring them down,**

**O Lord, our shield!”** He seems to be saying that God allows evil to flourish for a time so that people will learn from it.

Verses 12 & 13: **“For the sin of their mouths, the words of their lips,**

**let them be trapped in their pride.**

**For the cursing and lies that they utter,**

**13 consume them in wrath;**

**consume them till they are no more,**

**that they may know that God rules over Jacob**

**to the ends of the earth.”** We see something here about the depth of David’s maturity and his genuine heart for God. David is not just praying for his deliverance from this situation so that things will be better for him. He is concerned about God’s honor. This is not just about David. This is about the trustworthiness and honor of the God who promised that David would be king one day. I suspect that our prayers for help in time of need catch the Lord’s attention when we are seeking for Him to be glorified in the midst of our difficult situation.

The Psalm concludes in vv. 14-17: **“Each evening they come back,**

**howling like dogs**

**and prowling about the city.**

**15 They wander about for food**

**and growl if they do not get their fill.**

**16 But I will sing of your strength;**

**I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.**

**For you have been to me a fortress**

**and a refuge in the day of my distress.**

**17 O my Strength, I will sing praises to you,**

**for you, O God, are my fortress,**

**the God who shows me steadfast love.”**

In the midst of times of trial, especially trials involving apparent enemies, we would do well to keep in mind the role of friends and reasoning, the role of separation, the role of listening to mates, and the role of trusting God and his people. It is this trust in God which should be our biggest focus. When times are tough, will we keep our trust in Him and His promises. Will we treat Him as our fortress?