

David Honors Spiritual Authority

Cole Martinez / General

Walking With The Giants

Introduction

Good morning church!

I have some questions for everyone...how many of you have worked for a boss that absolutely just got on your nerves? Now let me be very clear...that was not a “distress signal” or a Freudian slip from me! As Pastor Ron himself would tell you, ministry has its unique challenges yes, but I love being on staff here and I love the people here. This is home. And I mean, I am the youngest one on staff here so I got a lot of bosses! But I am just curious...what about you?

Maybe it isn't a boss, but have you ever had a coach that just killed your self-esteem? Maybe not even that but your parent's were actually not great people? The heart behind the question here is this, have you ever had an authority (or authorities) in your life that were honestly...kinda terrible?

The simple truth of the matter is that all of us in some way shape or form have probably dealt with this in some way. It is an unfortunate reality of life. But the follow-up question is this...how do we as Christians respond to this scenario?

It is a great question and it deserves a good answer. There is perhaps few other answers that would do this question justice like studying David's relationship with Saul.

We're right in the middle of a series called, Walking With The Giants that has focused on various aspects of King David's life and has been spectacular so far with Pastor Ron and Pastor Landon teaching through the first few weeks.

Today we are going to continue on with this series and talk about the honor King David had for his own "horrible boss" scenario with King Saul.

I pray you have been inspired, convicted, and have learned from the mistakes of David so far and I pray this morning is no different. As always, I am humbled and honored to teach the word to you guys.

With that, let's get started!

Spiritual Authority

What we will see in our passage today is a great picture of something called Direct vs. Delegated Authority.

What I mean by this is that God is our direct authority in life. Through His word and His Spirit, God directly guides

us through life. He is the ultimate source of authority. For most people, at least most people in the church, this is fairly straightforward. In this story like every other time... God is the direct authority.

What is less straightforward and more troubling for some, is the idea of delegated authority. Delegated authorities are not God but rather they get their authority from God. Delegated authority is the bosses, teachers, parents, law enforcement...and yes, even elected officials. In our story, Saul was a delegated authority in David's life. We may or may not realize but the bible speaks a lot about delegated authority. One instance is here in Romans 13.

Romans 13:1–2 (ESV)

¹ Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Now, don't miss this! This passage is telling us that every delegated authority in life has been placed there by God himself and therefore is worthy of honor and submission. This is exactly what David understood so well. Dishonoring Saul and rebelling against him would not be a man-to-man issue like it may seem. Saul had been placed in authority by God in David's life and therefore rebelling against him

would have been rebelling against God himself.

David modeled something for us that we need to get in our lifetimes as well.

Submitting under the authority that has been placed in our life acts like an umbrella to cover us and when we step outside of the umbrella through rebellion we step out from under the covering.

Children are covered by the umbrella of their parents [delegated authority] who have been placed there by God [direct authority].

Now, I know whenever this is taught defenses and objections go up. I get it. Leadership {big broad scope} in this day in age has done a lot to prove that they are not necessarily the best people. We should rest assured in knowing that when delegated authority contradicts God's direct authority. God's direct authority takes precedent. We see a great example of what to do here in the New Testament.

Acts 5:29 (ESV)

²⁹ But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men.

Context/Set-Up

If you have your bibles, please turn to 1 Samuel 24.

If you haven't been here for this series or the bible is new to you. Let me just give you a few quick things so we're all on the same page.

There are two main characters at play here in this passage, David and one is Saul. Now Saul was the first king of Israel, who didn't exactly do things the right way.

David was a young man called to be Saul's replacement many years before he would actually take the throne. David and Saul had a complex and odd relationship. Saul was his mentor, but also felt threatened by David. David loved Saul and looked to Him as a father. Saul loved David and looked to Him as a son.

In today's language we would say that Saul was battling his own demons, he was a troubled man, and this issue manifested itself in not always treating David right.

Saul was troubled and David desperately wanted to get it right.

For a deeper in depth study of what brought us here, I encourage you to go back and listen to the first three messages of the series.

1 Samuel 24

1 Samuel 24 (ESV)

¹ When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, “Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.” ² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats’ Rocks. ³ And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. ⁴ And the men of David said to him, “Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.’ ” Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul’s robe.

At this point in time, Saul has tried to kill David a few times...only a few. Of course, David has sought refuge in various places. Some people decide to rat David’s location out to Saul which prompts Saul to take 3000 of his finest men in search of David. I can’t read minds but my assumption is that Saul wasn’t exactly going to try to hug it out with David.

It is said that David was at a place known as Engedi. Engedi is actually a decently well documented place located on

the west shore of the Dead Sea. What we know is that Engedi is one of only two freshwater springs located on the western shore and has an abundance of land that is ripe for agriculture. Other accounts have referred to Engedi as an oasis community, a place of refuge, and a military stronghold...which we see more of later.

I don't think we should brush past the significance of this. While David was fleeing from Saul God saw it fit that He would be led to a place with a spring and abundant fields. Even in times of immense trouble, God provided a place of refuge. David was led to a place with still waters and green pastures.

You can't tell me there isn't something to see here. When you're hurting, when you're struggling, when you're trying to take cover. The Lord will provide a place of refuge. I just think it is so cool to see David the man who wrote Psalm 23 got to really experience what it meant to have the Lord be his shepherd and to be lead by still waters and green pastures.

While Saul was passing through searching for David, Saul has to do what everyone has to do during a long trip... relieve himself. Like something straight out of a Seinfeld episode, Saul chooses to have his "alone time" in the same cave David and his men were hiding.

I can imagine the awe...and disgust...David and his men must have had at this wild coincidence. Here we have Saul, the jealous, paranoid, murderous, God-abandoning King in a vulnerable and distracted position at the footsteps of David who has been abused, slandered, and mistreated by Saul.

Zooming out a second, by this point David has already been anointed King...he was Saul's successor. And Saul did NOT want to give the power up...hence the bad behavior.

If we were in David's high pressure position our thoughts could be: I am the rightful next King of Israel...the man who is supposed to be training me is abusing me and I have the opportunity to end all of my suffering by killing him. I know I WILL be King but can be King NOW if I just kill him. I mean at this point Saul has tried to spear me multiple times, he has lead smear campaigns against me, ruined my reputation, and he stole my wife. It would do me a lot of favors just to kill him.

David is faced with quite the dilemma...do I submit and honor the king or do I rebel and do things my own way? Do I wait for God to do things in His timing or do I force it to happen sooner?

There is a spectacular book called A Tale of Three Kings written by a man named Gene Edwards that serves as a

creative retelling of David's life. I would go so far as to say this book should be required reading. Especially with this series!

The way Gene Edwards put David's Dilemma is like this: "Nonetheless, the king was mad and therefore he was jealous. Or was it the other way around? Either way, Saul felt threatened by David, as kings often do when there is a popular, promising young man beneath them. The king also knew, as did David, that this boy just might have his job some day. But would David ascend to the throne by fair means or foul?"

Gene Edwards, *A Tale of Three Kings*

Zooming back in, David's boys are saying, "look at how God is delivering you". And, in verse 4, they give some reference of a supposed prophetic word given to David as proof that He should rebel and just off Saul right then and there. Now, as far as I can tell, there are no-cross references in scripture from what these men say. Meaning, it is entirely possible that these men were, at worst making up, and at best twisting a word of God to fit what they wanted.

There is a whole separate sermon here, but we need to be extremely careful that we don't twist God's word or make up a word of God as a masked proof to just give our flesh

what it wants. The heart is wicked...don't follow it. As one commentary I read about this passage says, "neither our desires nor our circumstances are good guides to the will of God."

David considers his options and makes a decision...he goes, spares Saul's life and cuts off a part of his robe.

⁵ And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁶ He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed." ⁷ So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

In our minds, David had every right to kill Saul. After all, Saul was trying to kill Him. Instead, David decides to give Saul a small wardrobe malfunction. In our minds, David gave Saul a peace offering. But David's heart was so tender and he was so concerned with pleasing God that the bible says his heart struck him, we may say he was wrecked.

He couldn't believe he had dishonored and defiled the King, someone he ultimately viewed as a father figure in his life, in such a way. In that day and age, the robe of a King symbolized authority. And as part of the levitical requirements, the end of the robe had tassels on them, which David would probably have cut off. Essentially by

doing so, David was effectively saying that he did not honor Saul nor did he care that Saul was now defiled before God. In David's mind, this was an overt attack on God and he forbid his men from following suit. All but letting Saul walk out...virtually scot free.

David in this exchange communicates a lesson that we have utterly forgotten:

Because all authority is ordained by God, the office of authority is always worthy of honor even if the person holding it is not honorable.

Only a man that is truly understands the connection to Direct vs. Delegated Authority could see the cave situation like this.

⁸ Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. ⁹ And David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm'?" ¹⁰ Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.' ¹¹ See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong

or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. ¹² May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. ¹³ As the proverb of the ancients says, ‘Out of the wicked comes wickedness.’ But my hand shall not be against you. ¹⁴ After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! ¹⁵ May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand.”

David honors a man who is not worthy of honor because of the call of God on His life. To David this was a God matter, not a man-matter. He doesn’t kill Saul and he still addresses Saul as “my lord, the king” and “anointed”. I can even imagine David saying, “you’re like a father to me, why are you trying to kill me?”

After proving to Saul many times over in this short exchange that he was not the man Saul made him out to be, he takes the humble position of allowing God and God alone to judge.

¹⁶ As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷ He said to David, “You

are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. ¹⁸ And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands. ¹⁹ For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. ²⁰ And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. ²¹ Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house." ²² And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

A great ending to this story indeed. Saul seems to have a moment of repentance that unfortunately is short-lived. As it doesn't take but two chapters later before he pursues David once again

Application

So we asked the question earlier...how do we as Christians respond to being under a bad authority? Like I said, it is a great question that demands a good answer. I think by taking an honest look at David in this scenario that we see somethings that he learned that we should also learn.

David learned that he had to be three things:

1- Be Teachable

Being teachable is simply the position of recognizing you do not know everything and that people who are above you have something to give you. There is a great curse with generational divides that author C.S. Lewis describes as “chronological snobbery”. Meaning, since I am younger or since I have access to more knowledge, I know more than you and therefore can’t learn anything from you. My generation is terrible about this by the way.

There were a lot of times up until this point that David honestly should have been teaching Saul. Saul skipped out on defending his kingdom multiple times, including from the Philistine giant, Goliath. But David realized that God had to have placed Saul over him for a reason. There was something in some way that David could learn from Saul. So rather than point out every little flaw and even the big flaws, David knew that he could learn a thing or two from Saul. If even it was what NOT to do.

2- Be Submitted (Resist Rebellion)

To be submitted means we have to resist rebellion...from our own hearts (I'm sure deep down inside David faced thoughts of wanting to be King) and even more dangerously...from others (his friends were telling him to take matters into his own hands).

Let me get very personal with this one. This is a situation I

know all too well. A few years back, I had a group of friends that came to church here but who all carried a lot of hurt in their heart towards authority and the Church as a whole. Just to give you a perspective: At one point in time, one of them even told me, I love Jesus but I kinda hate the church. These people were very close to me and I cared a lot about them. Over time, their past hurts grew into present offenses and eventually into a full on hatred of this church and this church's leadership...people that I had known my whole life to be honorable and faithful.

Because I was friends with them they shared their hearts with me many times over. One fateful night that forever changed my life, they told me absolutely everything that they hated and said they were leaving because God told them too...and they told me they wanted me to go with them because God told them I needed to go as well. So let me back up for a second and tell you my scenario, I had just been hired on staff a few months ago, I have been here my whole life...they had not, and until this point, nothing had ever severely bothered me. Now I wasn't perfect, I was certainly immature and carried hurt feelings from things I should have never carried hurt feelings from but I never ever entertained a full on rebellion like this until this point. You would be amazed at what shared offenses will do because I was about to walk. I was gone. Thankfully, I have people who love me enough to tell me the truth and not to give up on me. Even though, I am not sure what in that

moment drove them to want to fight for me. I was a knuckleheaded idiot about to leave a place God had called me to over offenses that weren't even mine to begin with. Sadly, and it breaks my heart to this day, my friends left and I have had extremely limited communication with them since. I don't know what has turned out of their lives...but I do know how mine has turned out since that season. While I have made plenty more dumb mistakes and I can promise I'll make plenty more, the Lord has blessed me beyond my wildest dreams. I'm the most undeserving vessel, but God has been kind. My life would have looked a lot different if I had rebelled and left the covering of this place. Like, I would not be here preaching this message, I would not be able partner with you parents in raising up your kids, I would not be about to marry my best friend.

Like we see with David and his men, I know what it is like to have to decide to do the right thing when people in your life are telling you to do something else.

Submission can be painful at times. And it is often tested when there is disagreement. But aligning and submitting to godly authority is a beautiful thing that brings a lot of peace.

3- Be Broken

David had to learn how to be broken. What I mean by that

word by that word broken, is that he had to have his will, his pride, and his desires broken. We hear that word “broken” and we wince. It’s not a word that has a lot of glamour in the world. But in the kingdom of God...it is a badge of honor. It is not that God desires that we are some hot mess, it’s that God desires that we see the sin in our life be broken. That the things that do not honor Him are broken. A broken and contrite heart is one that can be used and molded by God. In the life of David, this was characterized as him being, “a man after God’s own heart.”

Honestly, I have recently wrestled a lot recently about what it means to be broken. I kind of pride myself on being someone who is “strong” and “built for tough times”. But I have begun to realize that, I may be holding that as an idol in my life because I always focus on myself when I say that.

I recently asked the Lord, “how can I have a strong spirit and be broken?” And the Lord responded to me with, “you don’t. Being broken before me means that you recognize it is not on your strength that you do things. It is a full recognition of knowing that you are dependent entirely on me. And what you are looking for is not a strong spirit but an empowered spirit. Where you have laid down your efforts and you allow My Spirit to give you power.”

Again, brokenness is not being a mess, brokenness is realizing that God and God alone is the source of all you

need. It is when your sin and your flesh are broken away from your life through submission to the Lord in everything...especially in the painful situations.

Jesus himself understood this so well. The author of Hebrews writes about Jesus in this way:

Hebrews 5:7–9 ESV

⁷ In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. ⁸ Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. ⁹ And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

Y'all stand with me...

Final Encouragement:

Be Patient in God's timing

My dear friend, Pastor David Robertson (many of you know and love him) said this to me a long time ago and I will remember it for the rest of my life.

“The right thing, at the wrong time, is still the wrong thing.”

Pastor David Robertson

If David has killed Saul in that cave, he would have gotten his rightful place at the wrong time which would have been a disaster.

I wonder, how many of us, and I am asking myself are trying to force God to give us something that He knows we are absolutely not ready for? It may be rightfully ours but we are surely in the wrong heart space.

I just want to pray for us this morning. I want to pray for everyone who hears a message like this has been convicted of rebelling against authority. I want to pray for everyone who hears a message like this and it has just felt a nightmare relived...the only thing you can remember is all of the abuse and hurt you have taken. No matter what side of the fence you fell on with this message, please hear this. Christian Life is a place where you are ok to not be ok. This is a place where we want to see healing and restoration take place. No one here is perfect but we really love Jesus, we really care about the presence and power of God and we are passionate about seeing people get free. Pray with me, church.

Let's give the Lord a shout of praise for this morning! If you need some further ministering and prayer, we have a team of people up here that can pray for you. Otherwise, we

can't wait to see you again Next Sunday! Love you all! God
bless!