

Refine Women's Ministry
David Study Lesson 4: David's Trials Increase – 1 Samuel 19 – 21
February 14, 2018 by Kim Peelen

I therefore, a prisoner for the LORD, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:1-3

And then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul the son of Kish, a man of the tribe of Benjamin, for forty years. And after He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, "I have found David, the son of Jesse, a man after My heart, who will do all My will." Acts 13: 21, 22

The life of David is our Bible study topic this semester, specifically the period before he ascends the throne of Israel. He models the worthy walk of a Christ-follower as he continues to set his heart on God, even as he endures underserved persecution by Saul and his men.

- Heeds **God's Call** to be Israel's next king while a youth and the current king still reigns [1 Samuel 16].
- With all **humility** relies on the LORD and His strength to defeat Philistine's Goliath and army with a stick, some stones, and a slingshot [1 Samuel 17].
- With all **Gentleness/Consideration** wins the king's battles and meets the dowry obligation for two of his daughters, even though Saul wishes him to die [1 Samuel 18].

Today 1 Samuel 19 through 21 illustrates the **patience/longsuffering** of David as he endures Saul's increasingly irrational, murderous actions, yet also enjoys the covenantal friendship and protection of Jonathan, son of Saul.

With Patience

Saul's Death Decree on David: 1 Samuel 18:29 – 19:10

Then Saul was even more afraid of David. Thus Saul was David's enemy continually. Then the commanders of the Philistines went out to battle, and it happened as often as they went out, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul. So his name was highly esteemed. Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David.

In chapter 18 the rightful heir to the throne Jonathan extends a solemn, binding agreement to David, who is just the king's armor bearer. This covenant symbolizes their oneness to each other and Jonathan seals it by giving his personal garments and weapons to David. God uses this relationship as the means to protect David from the murderous king Saul several times. The first incidence Jonathan successfully reasons with his father to not sin against David who is not his enemy. *"For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the LORD brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood by putting David to death without a cause?"* Saul agrees to not kill David, so he again serves the king by fighting the Philistines and playing his harp. To return to Saul's court after two spear attacks reveals his patient endurance, not to mention courage!

However, the evil spirit from the Lord returns, and Saul again throws his spear at his musician, so David escapes to his home and to his wife Michal.

Saul's Men Pursue David: 1 Samuel 19: 11-24

Then Saul sent messengers to David's house to watch him, in order to put him to death in the morning. But Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, "If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be put to death." So Michal let David down through a window, and he went out and fled and escaped. . . Now David fled and escaped and came to Samuel at Ramah, and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naioth.

Read Psalm 59

To the Chief Musician. Set to Al-tashheth [Do Not Destroy]. A Michtam [personal meditation] of David when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him.

With his wife's help, David eludes Saul's men and escapes to seek Samuel's counsel. Scripture is silent on Samuel's words, but God sends a clear message that He controls the lives and tongues of men, as the Spirit of God comes upon not one, not two, but three separate groups of Saul's messengers so they prophesy and praise the LORD. Finally, Saul goes himself, and the *Spirit of God came upon him also, so that he went along prophesying continually until he came to Naioth in Ramah. He also stripped off his clothes* [a figurative naked; removed his royal armor or kingly attire] *and he too prophesied before Samuel and lay down naked all that day and all that night. Therefore they say, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"* This is the same question people asked when Saul prophesied under the power of God's Spirit among the prophets after his royal anointing by Samuel [1 Samuel 10:6-12]. This phrase links Saul's rise to power with his fall to shame. He is no longer a mouthpiece for the Spirit of God to the people. The LORD thwarts Saul's evil intent to harm the man after His heart by overwhelming each messenger, including the king, with adoration and praise to Himself!

Jonathan Saves David A Second Time: 1 Samuel 20: 1-42 Refer to map

Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and came and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity? And what is my sin before your father, that he is seeking my life? . . . Therefore, deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. But if there is iniquity in me, put me to death yourself; for why then should you bring me to your father?"

Jonathan believes his father's vow to not kill David, but may not know about his pursuit to Ramah and the humiliating episode of lying incapacitated for a full day. As his covenant friend, David appeals to Jonathan to kill him if he is guilty and deserving of sin against his father. Jonathan restates his commitment to David and offers to inform him if his father intends to kill him. After they make their plan to discover Saul's intentions regarding David, Jonathan acknowledges that David will one day be king (and not him), and requests protection for him, his family, and his father, when he takes the throne. Normally all threats to the crown are killed. *Jonathan made David vow again because of his love for him, because he*

loved him as he loved his own life. As they part, Jonathan restates their covenant: As for the agreement of which you and I have spoken, behold, the LORD is between you and me forever.

After two days, Saul inquires of David's whereabouts, and when Jonathan explains, Saul's anger burned against Jonathan and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you are choosing the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness? For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Therefore now, send and bring him to me, for he must surely die." Saul cursed Jonathan for siding with David who will take away the throne. Jonathan's resolve remains to protect David, so informs him that he must flee from the royal court or be killed.

When the lad was gone, David rose from the south side and fell on his face to the ground, and bowed three times. And they kissed each other and wept together, but David wept the more. Jonathan said to David, "Go in safety, inasmuch as we have sworn to each other in the name of the LORD, saying, 'the LORD will be between me and you, and between my descendants and your descendants forever.'" Then he arose and departed, while Jonathan went into the city.

Bowing down more than once, David acknowledges Jonathan as the prince, as well as his deep and humble affection for him. As Jonathan returns to Gibeah, the home of Saul, David becomes a hunted man. He will remain an outcast until Saul dies. The pressures God uses to refine David are beginning to heat up significantly.

David Flees to Nob: 1 Samuel 21: 1-9

Then David came to Nob to Ahimelech the priest; and Ahimelech came trembling to meet David and said to him, "Why are you alone and no one with you?" . . . So the priest gave him consecrated bread; for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence which was removed from before the LORD, in order to put hot bread in its place when it was taken away. Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds.

David is on the run from Saul's death warrant and flees to Nob, about a mile from Jerusalem. He needs food, weapons, and perhaps comfort. This name Ahimelech is likely a title [like Pharaoh] rather than a name; we know from Jesus's comments in Mark 2:25, 26 the high priest is Abiathar, a great grandson of Eli, grandson of Phinehas, son of Ahitub and brother of Ichabod who was born on the day Eli, Phinehas, and Hophni died (1 Samuel 4:18 – 22 and 14:3). Remember God rejected the house of Eli from priestly duties because they despised the LORD's offerings and were corrupt (1 Samuel 2:27 -36). This is a disqualified priest.

Scripture reveals an interesting detail when David asks for a weapon as the priest says, "*The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; if you would take it for yourself, take it. For there is no other except it here.*" The sword David used to cut off Goliath's head is stored with the priests' official garments [close fitting, sleeveless outer vest worn when officiating at the altar], acting as a memorial/relic of God's goodness and deliverance of Israel. David takes it to protect himself.

David Flees to Gath: 1 Samuel 21: 10 – 15

Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?'" David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath. So he disguised his sanity before them, and acted insanely in their hands, and scribbled on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva run down into his beard. Then Achish said to his servants, "Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? Shall this one come into my house?"

Gath is the city of Goliath, and one of the principle cities of the Philistines. The four other cities are Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gaza (1 Samuel 6:17). Interesting that Achish's servants refer to David as the king of the land. David, who is their greatest enemy, enters Philistine territory carrying the distinctive weapon of their most famous warrior, and he is surprised that they recognize him? David is in dire trouble, and acts insane to convince the king to release him. Note: having saliva run down one's beard is considered an intolerable indignity in the East, as it is like spitting in another's beard. Psalm 34 tells us more.

In your groups examine Psalm 34 using the Overview of The Psalms Worksheet.

Psalms 34 (and 25) builds with the acrostic of the entire Hebrew alphabet of all 22 letters. This literary technique helps to memorize it and to emphasize the perfection of its structure.

Psalm 34

A Psalm of David when he feigned madness before Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.

1. Which Book of Psalms contains this Psalm? To which book of the Law does it correspond?
2. Read the superscription (title) and record any details: author, historical setting, literary category, or musical instruction.

1 I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

2 My soul will make its boast in the LORD; The humble will hear it and rejoice.

3 O magnify the LORD with me, And let us exalt His name together.

3. What does David invite the reader to do? How often?

4 I sought the LORD, and He answered me, And delivered me from all my fears.

5 They looked to Him and were radiant, And their faces will never be ashamed.

6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him And saved him out of all his troubles.

7 The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him, And rescues them.

4. What does David do? What does God do? List some of David's troubles.

*8 O taste and see that the LORD is good; How blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!
9 O fear the LORD, you His saints; For to those who fear Him there is no want.
10 The young lions do lack and suffer hunger; But they who seek the LORD shall not be in
want of any good thing.
11 Come, you children, listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the LORD.
12 Who is the man who desires life And loves length of days that he may see good?
13 Keep your tongue from evil And your lips from speaking deceit.
14 Depart from evil and do good; Seek peace and pursue it.*

5. What does David call the people to do? Underlining commands will help you.

6. What example from nature does he use? What does it describe?

7. David instructs us to fear the LORD; if we have this, how should we act?

*15 The eyes of the LORD are toward the righteous And His ears are open to their cry.
16 The face of the LORD is against evildoers, To cut off the memory of them from the earth.
17 The righteous cry, and the LORD hears And delivers them out of all their troubles.
18 The LORD is near to the brokenhearted And saves those who are crushed in spirit.*

8. Who will the LORD respond to? Who will the LORD oppose?

9. David describes God with human physical features- how do these anthropomorphic images enhance what David is expressing? [These are figurative, not literal features of God.]

*19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous, But the LORD delivers him out of them all.
20 He keeps all his bones, Not one of them is broken.
21 Evil shall slay the wicked, And those who hate the righteous will be condemned.
22 The LORD redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who take refuge in Him
will be condemned.*

10. Compare and contrast the righteous and the evil and how the LORD deals with each.

11. Verse 22 summarizes the Psalm – what is the main idea of David's psalm?

12. What type of psalm is this?

Summary: David writes this beautiful song with an attitude of gratitude expressed throughout. He pens the words after several narrow escapes from Saul's vicious outbursts that include hurling his spear at him as he plays his harp, sending men to execute him at his home, pursuing him to the religious training school in Samuel's hometown, and then issuing an official warrant to execute him as an enemy of the crown. In addition to Saul's pursuit, David flees to Achish in the Philistine stronghold of Gath, and while holding the hometown hero's sword, is identified as the king of the land and a mighty warrior of Israel. Surrounded by Saul and his army as well as the Philistines, there is no safe place to run. David urgently prays to God, who delivers him from all his enemies. His message exhorts believers to praise God for His mighty deliverance, recognizing that He rescues His people from their fears and out of their distresses.

Just like David, we can find ourselves surrounded by enemies or trials that threaten to consume us. In our times of trouble, we are to worship and magnify the LORD, patiently and persistently calling on Him for rescue and He will hear us. Our hearts must revere and seek satisfaction in God alone. This anchoring of my soul to fear the LORD will bring true happiness as well as translate into a righteous, holy life.

Resources: Preaching the Psalms by Steven J. Lawson
Holman Old Testament Commentary: Psalms 1-150 by Steven J. Lawson
John MacArthur Study Bible
Precept Upon Precept: 1 Samuel

Homework for Lesson 4

1. Read 1 Samuel 20:41 – 21:15 and Psalm 34 again. Then read Psalm 56. The superscription reads: *For the choir director; according to Jonath elem rehokim [a dove on the distant oaks]. A Mikhtam [may be a private prayer or personal meditation] of David, when the Philistines seized him in Gath.*

2. When is Psalm 56 written? What apparently happens to David when he arrives in Gath? Mark or take notice of afraid and trust – what do you learn?

3. Briefly record: David's Troubles

David's Trust

David's Trials

David's Triumph

David's Thanksgiving

4. Reread Psalm 56, then 34. Reflect on how these passages – are they a before and after? Psalm 59 is also during this period. How can these psalms help you in stressful situations in your life?

5. Read 1 Samuel 22 for next week.