

## **Looking for Help in all the Wrong Places**

(1 Samuel 21:1-22:5)

8/19/15; Wed PM Pine Grove

### **Introduction**

I am sure that many of you have heard the phrase, “Hindsight is 20/20.”

And that is just a short way of saying that we only fully understand or appreciate things as we look back over them.

As I look back over my life, I now see how God used vervain events to bring me where I am today...

Let me just share a few and I know we all have stories like this, and I don’t care to bore you with mine....

After I got saved in 1997, God impressed upon my heart the need to complete my college degree.

I was dating Tonya and wanted to marry her but I was making minimum wage and had very little means to take care of her.

Now, I had spent 4 years at Clemson before withdrawing in 1996, and I think I had earned around 70 credit hours...

So, I grabbed some university catalogs and I took my Clemson transcript, and I began to make a plan to get a degree in something.

Now, determining a major is an important task, yet I changed 3 times at Clemson, so I had a wide range of classes..

So, I began to see what majors were out there that would allow the largest part of my classes to transfer into it.

And I truly can't remember what the other major was, but it came down to two choices, —

I could either attempt to complete a bachelor of science in Education or I could get a bachelor of arts in Journalism..

So, I picked Education based upon this idea..

It would not require me to take a foreign language...

The simple truth of why I chose to major in education was not some thought that I could make a difference in the lives of some kids...

Or that I came from a long line of teachers in my family...

The simple reason I chose Education is that I had no interest in taking 2 semesters of Spanish...

That is it. Plain and simple. Nothing fancy there. Just the truth..

But the reality is that God knew what my future entailed.

He knew that I would one day stand before a group of people and offer a lesson for a living...

However, it wouldn't be a group of 5th graders...

It would be all of you sweet people here at Pine Grove..

To me, it was the silly decision of not wanting to learn UNO, DOS, TRES...

But to the Lord it was all a part of His grand design for my life...

From my perspective, I can now say that God used my silly method of choosing a major and turned it into his glory...

But I think a far better way to look at that is that God had the foreknowledge to guide me to major in education so that he could use that choice for His glory.

When it comes to God' foreknowledge, he knows with perfect accuracy what the future holds...

Even in the smallest of details.

And as we are able to reflect on God's foreknowledge, we are able to see how he uses that in some incredible ways in the lives of His people..

And I think we are going to see that tonight in David's life in 1 Samuel 21 and 22 in a most unusual way...

But before we get to see that, we kinda find our way through a cesspool of bad decisions that David makes...

Now what we are going to see tonight is really a lesson on what not to do in your desperation...

And though we read these things in the Bible once again in 1 Samuel, the actions of David are not meant to be an encouragement to you to do them..

However, there is a great lesson here for all of us..

God's protection of His people is not based upon their performance; it is simply based upon His promises to us.

Now, that statement would make some people nervous..

“You can’t say that...”

If you say that God’s protection is not based upon what we do, that is a license for people to go out and sin..

Doesn’t the Bible say that we show our love for Jesus by keeping His commandments?

Yes sir, it sure does..

Doesn’t the Bible call Christians to a life of holiness?

Yes ma’am, it sure does..

Then why in the world would you say that God’s protection is not based upon what we do?

Isn’t it better to tell people to obey so that God will protect them?

And I understand that argument in some ways...

But here is how the Bible replies to that...

If God only protected those who never sinned, no one would “deserve” his protection.

And David is no different.

He is sinful and we are going to see his sin tonight, and we are going to see his weak faith, and his lack of trust...

Yet, in all of that, guess what else we are also going to see?

We are going to see God protect Him.

Because the bottom line is this...

IF God only protected us based upon our performance and not on His promise, we would all perish in a matter of minutes...

Just consider Israel for a minute...

If any nation deserved to be deserted, it was Israel.

They disobeyed God time and time again.

Yet even to this very night, Israel has not been abandoned by God.

Are they living in disobedience now?

Yes.

Are they under the curses of God in the book of Deuteronomy?

Yes.

Has they fallen to a place beyond the Lord's protection?

Not a chance.

And God will one day restore the nation to glory.

God doesn't love and protect based upon our obedience and even based on the love we show Him...

God loves and protects because that is Who He is.

He is a covenant-keeping God who protects His people even when they sin...

And I think that is a great encouragement to our souls tonight...

That is never permission for us to sin, but it is a source of comfort when we do.

So, let's look at all of chapter 21 and a small bite of chapter 22 tonight under these 3 headings...

## **I. David Deceives But God Delivers (21:1-21:9)**

## **II. David Deserts But God Protects (21:10-21:15)**

## **III. David Hides But God Provides (22:1-22:5)**

And those two words “But God” are really the focus of our hearts tonight in this passage...

You know there are a number of “but God” passages in the Bible...

***“My flesh and my heart fail; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (Ps. 73:26).***

One of my favorites is in Ephesians 2...

Listen to this this description of us before salvation.

Ephesians 2:1-3...

***2 And you [a]were dead [b]in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the [c]course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, [d]indulging the desires of the flesh and of the [e]mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.***

That is a description of everyone of us in here before we came to Christ..

Dead in your sin..

Walking according to the world...

Living in the lusts of your flesh...

Indulging our desires...

Children of wrath...

And then here is verse 4....

***4 But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead [f]in our transgressions, made us alive together [g]with Christ (by grace you have been saved), 6 and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7 so that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. 8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and [h]that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.***

We have a “but God” moment in our lives as well...

And David was also on the receiving end of many of the Lord's interventions in his own life...

So, let's take a look at a few of these tonight...

Let's begin with the first 9 verses of chapter 21...

## **I. David Deceives But God Delivers (21:1-21:9)**

Let's begin in verse 1...

***1 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?"***

We need to stop right here and set the scene for a minute..

Saul, Israel's first king, is seeking to kill David.

After Saul disobeyed and God vowed to remove the kingdom from him, things have gone downhill in Saul's life..

Not only has he lost the kingdom, David is now getting all the attention in Israel...

After he was anointed by Samuel as the next king in Israel, David killed Goliath and has become the talk of Israel.

They wrote songs about him and cheered him, and Saul grew jealous and began to try to kill destroy him...

To make matters worse, Saul's own son Jonathan even loved David more than his own father.

And so for the past few chapters, David has been trying to dodge Saul's spears and Saul's assassins all sent to kill him.

In chapter 19, David sought for safety by going to Samuel.

In chapter 20, David sought help from Jonathan...

And though Jonathan helps David, Saul's anger still burns and so David is still on the run...

Tonight, he continues to seek safety but this time, he makes some poor choices in how he looks for help...

The first place he turns is to the priests in Nob.

Here is the location of Nob in Israel.

It was home to some of the priests in Israel, and Ahimlech was the priest that came out to meet David.

He was a descendant of Eli the priest that we met way back in chapter 1 of 1 Samuel...

And he comes out to meet David.

He would know that David was a commander in Saul's army...

So, he asks why do is alone since it would be unusual for a commander to be without his men.

David then responds in verse 2

***2 David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has commissioned me with a matter and has said to me, ‘Let no one know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you; and I have directed the young men to a certain place.’***

Here, David replies with a totally made up story of a top secret mission from Saul...

He mentions that his men are in hiding in another place awaiting instruction...

And he continues with his reason for coming to see the priest in verse 3..

***3 Now therefore, what [a]do you have on hand? Give [b]me five loaves of bread, or whatever can be found.”***

The reason for the visit is that David is simply hungry.

He is looking for some bread.

All the time on the run had simply hindered David from even eating.

Therefore he comes to the priest asking for bread.

David knew that there would be bread there for the priests to eat and some was also some hot bread there to be offered to the LORD.

Ahimilech responds to him in verse 4...

***4 The priest answered David and said, "There is no ordinary bread [c]on hand, but there is consecrated bread; if only the young men have kept themselves from women." 5 David answered the priest and said to him, "Surely women have been kept from us as previously when I set out and the vessels of the young men were holy, though it was an ordinary journey; how much more then today will [d]their vessels be holy?" 6 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.***

After David assures Ahimilech that he and his men are ceremonially clean, the priest offers some consecrated bread to David.

Now, one thing to remember here.

The error in David is not that he came to the priest looking for bread.

The error is the deception.

And that is going to lead to bigger problems..

Because we meet Doeg in verse 7..

***7 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.***

Doeg was a close associate of Saul, and he happened to be in the tabernacle that day.

And he simply overheard what David said and did, and for now, we just need to stick that in our memory banks.

IT won't be important until next week, but it will be very important then.

There is one final thing to take note of what happened at the tabernacle...

And we find that in verses 8-11...

***8 David said to Ahimelech, "Now is there not a spear or a sword [e]on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons [f]with me,***

***because the king's matter was urgent.” 9 Then the priest said, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you [g]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.” And David said, “There is none like it; give it to me.”***

Now here is where the scene turns humorous..

Here is David a mighty warrior, and he just told Ahimlech that he is on a secret mission form the king...

But he needs a sword...

Now, that is like the carpenter showing up at your house to build some cabinets and then asking you for the hammer and nails...

If the lie about the secret mission sounded believable at first...

It is now ridiculous...

Then king sent me on a secret mission...can I borrow a sword?

Yet, Ahimlech shows him Goliath's sword, and David takes it.

The point is that David came to the tabernacle looking for bread...

And even though, he lied and decided to get it, God still provided for David's needs.

That is an incredible testimony of the Lord's goodness.

Some would object and say that since David lied, he deserved no help.

Praise the Lord that God does not always react how we would react.

God provides even when we don't necessarily deserve it, and I am very grateful that HE does..

Interestingly, now that David has Goliath's sword, he heads looking for help in Goliath's land...

The second point of the outline is this..

## **II. David Deserts But God Protects (21:10-21:15)**

Verse 10...

*10 Then David arose and fled that day from Saul, and went to Achish king of Gath. 11 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’?” 12 David took these words [h]to heart and greatly feared Achish king of Gath.*

Of all the places to seek help, David does the unthinkable...

He heads to the Philistines looking for refuge, and he even goes there carrying Goliath's sword.

Folks have asked why would David head there.

Maybe he was thinking that a Philistine king would welcome him and treat him well in order to gain info to destroy Saul.

Maybe he was hoping to just bend in and not be recognized..

Maybe he was thinking that would be the last place that Saul would look.

However, his plan fails when the Philistines capture him, and then David is filled with fear at what they might do to him...

So in verse 13, he comes up with a plan...

***13 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.***

In other words, when all else fails, start acting crazy.

So, David puts on a great show for all the king and all his men...

He becomes the world's first graffiti artist and writes on the doors of the city gate...

He begins to drool uncontrollably and even lets it other in his beard...

Most people who act like this get captured and committed for life...

However, David acts crazy and they turn him loose..

Verse 14..

***14 Then Achish said to his servants, “Behold, you see the man behaving as a madman. Why do you bring him to me? 15 Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this one to act the madman in my presence? Shall this one come into my house?”***

You have to love the king’s response here...

“I don’t need a mother crazy man running round my house...

I already have enough mad men in my life now!”

If nothing else, you can appreciate his sense of humor.

But what I want you to notice is the depth to which David sank her in his life..

This is the greatest king in the history of Israel drooling and vandalizing all in an attempt to appear crazy

And on top of that, turning to a pagan king hoping that he can provide protection for him...

***But God*** does abandon David here.

Instead God even allows the foolish behavior of David to convince the Philistine king to let him go..

Now, there is an interesting connection to this scene..

IF you look at Psalm 34 and Psalm 56, both of those are psalms of David that speak of this episode...

Here are the heading for both of those psalms..

***Psalm 34***

***A Psalm of David when he [a]feigned madness before [b]Abimelech, who drove him away and he departed.***

***Psalm 56***

***For the choir director; according to [a]Jonath elem rehokim. A [b]Mikhtam of David, [c]when the Philistines seized him in Gath***

I only have time to read one of these, but I want to read Psalm 34 before we briefly look at our last section tonight...

And you only assume that David wrote this after he had been released from the Philistines captivity.

He had acted like a mad man, and it worked...

And maybe on the day when he walked away from that dangerous situation...

Maybe as he was preparing to go to sleep that night, God inspired him to write these words...

*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.*

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 [c]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.*

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.*

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 [d]crushed in spirit.*

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  
[e]condemned.*

22

*The Lord redeems the soul of His servants,  
And none of those who take refuge in Him will be  
[f]condemned.*

Just one thing I want to note about that psalm..

Never once did David point to or praise his own wisdom in escaping from the Philistines...

Who is always the focus?

The LORD delivers...The LORD protects...The LORD saves...

Even when we literally act like fools, the Lord delivers and guides...

We were fools in our sin, **but God** sent a rescue for us.

There is one final place that David heads for protection...

The Lord gave him bread even when he lied...

The Lord gave him freedom even when he went looking for help from the pagan Philistines...

This time, David is going anywhere to get help...

He hopes he can find help by simply disappearing...

Let's look at the first 5 verses of chapter 22 really quick and see that...

### **III. David Hides But God Provides (22:1-22:5)**

Verse 1...

***22 So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. 2 Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who [a]was in debt, and everyone who was [b]discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.***

David leaves Gath in Philistine territory and heads back into Israel and finds a place to hide in a cave..

His family finds out that he is there and then heads down to see him...

And then they are all joined by a group of misfits who come to the cave as well..

I love how these 400 people are described....

Distressed.

Debt-ridden.

And discontented.

Boy, that is going to make a good army, yet David sets himself up as captain over them..

At least they will be some protection from Saul...

And so while David is trying to hide, God sends help his way...

David then needs a place for his parents to stay...

Bethlehem is not the safest of places...

Saul may be persecuting them there, and if not Saul, the Philistines will be persecuting them there...

And so where does David turn?

Verse 3...

***3 And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come and stay with you until I know what God will do for me." 4 Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.***

Remember the introduction where I talked about the fact that God has perfect foreknowledge of all things...

And that he cares about even the smallest details of our life...

Why would David think that a pagan king in Moab would care for his parents?

Well, who was David's great grandmother?

Ruth. And where was Ruth from?

Well, she was from Moab.

And that may have been just enough reason for the king of Moab to offer some help her for David.

Now, how did Ruth end up in Israel?

Well, her husband died at a young age, and she went back with her mother-in-law Naomi back to Israel...

And she happened to go into the right field of the right man named Boaz, who happened to in a position to marry her..

And they had children, and Jesse was her grandchild, and David was his child...

Now, that a long way to say that all of that happened for a number of reasons...

But one of those reason may be so that the Moabite king would one day provide protection for David's parents...

So, now that David has gone into hiding as a way to escape the world's problems...

God had provided men to protect him..

And a place of protection for his parents..

Yet, God is not done...

Because in verse 5, God is going to provide his greatest gift to David...

Verse 5...

***5 The prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.***

We haven't heard from Gad yet, but he was a prophet of God.

He may have been one of the prophets that Samuel had trained under his ministry...

IT doesn't really matter, but what does matter is that David is now provided his greatest weapon in his fight against Saul..

He has access to the word of God.

And the simple instruction here is to get out of the cave and get back in the land.

Stop hiding and get back to work.

Now, when I step back from these few verses, this is an incredible picture of God's protection...

David hopes to hide himself from the world's troubles...

Yet God sends protection for him, for his family, and then gives him clear instructions on what to do next...

David hides but God provides...

## **Conclusion**

It is often said that you can't out give God...

But I would also add that if God has plans for your life and ministry to do through you, you can't escape his protection....

You can't out-give God, and you can't act foolish enough to escape His care...

That's a comfort to me...

David lied to the priest BUT GOD still gave bread to eat.

David looked for help from unbelievers BUT GOD still saved his life.

David tried to withdraw from life BUT GOD provided protection and then gave him instruction on what to do.

We sinned BUT GOD saved us through His Son.

Let us pray.