

"Humbling Yourself for God's Use"

- 1 Samuel 24 -



"Humbling Yourself for God's Use"

- 1 Samuel 24

by Pastor Tim Dodson

at JF Believers Church

in Menomonie, WI

on Wednesday August 24th, 2016

How often we want to not just believe in the sovereignty of God, but moreover even embrace it, and yet it all seems to fall apart when God doesn't move like we think He ought to. Thus our faith and allegiance generally runs about as deep as our **own** will and plans adhere to that of

God's. When the 'path divides', we quickly dump that whole 'God sovereignty thing' and adopt a more pragmatic stance...one that generally involves us "front and center," We have to rescue God out of a tight jam. But hey...it's ok, because God probably didn't know the depth of the issue or the consequences if the situation wasn't rectified to my standards! Ahhh...the heart of mankind!

Again, we want to believe in God's sovereign power but when we don't understand, or we just disagree, we are apt to abandon such a belief. And the situation that David was in is a classic example! Because when bad men reign, we just got to believe that God isn't behind such and that of course we need to get personally involved with our capes fluttering in the wind. We just have a hard time acknowledging that God's hands are not tied. Not *ever*. He is not panicked. He is not worried. He is not distraught nor is He in need of help.

Proverbs 16:9 *The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps.*

Lam 3:37- *"Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it?"*

Psalms 135:6- *"Whatever the Lord pleases, he does, in heaven and on earth, in the seas and all deeps."*

Romans 9:19-20 *You will say to me then, "Why does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?"*

Proverbs 21:1 - *"The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; he turns it wherever he will."*

Deut 32:39 - *"See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god beside me; I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal; and there is none that can deliver out of my hand."*

Job 12:13-14 *"With God are wisdom and might; he has counsel and understanding. If he tears down, none can rebuild; if he shuts a man in, none can open."*

Proverbs 21:30 - *"No wisdom, no understanding, no counsel can avail against the Lord."*

Daniel 2:21 - "*He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding...*"

David could have easily taken matters into his own hands and much of the nation would have supported his actions. For it is doubtful that Saul's 'misbehavior' would have been a guarded secret! Saul was out of control. And there was nothing about his actions... both his objective and his method's, that speak of peace or Godly directives.

One cannot help but notice that Saul took 3000 men to get David and his boys! That essentially says "if God doesn't come through, this nuclear bomb will do the trick." We can laugh and ridicule, and yet we are so often guilty of the same! The fact is we will trust God until we don't! We will trust God until He does something crazy and then we whitewash our actions that are to the contrary by stating that God *wanted* us to act in such a manner. Meaning we believe we are the 'hand of God'...the 'holy hitman' if you will, that has been recruited by God to be the judge, jury and of course the *executioner*.

Isaiah 55:8-11 says this: "*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it."*

It seems we can 'reason' ourselves into about any scenario, no matter how ultimately ungodly in might be. But truth be told, our 'common sense' and 'reason' can be bad spiritual counselors. For such a premise *...out of the gate...* is flawed, when we believe that all that God does will be agreeable to us and we will understand and affirm it all! Do we *really* want a God that we totally understand and agree with? If so, who needs Him? The fact is, we can easily rationalize decisions and directions that are totally contrary to God, but it can *all make such sense to us at the time*. We can also often confuse opportune circumstances with the leading of the Lord. When will we realize that Satan 'opens doors' too? Frankly, sometimes 'easy' is just too easy.'

Our conscious also will assist us in this matter, but one must be practiced at listening to it. I find that most folks only run into their conscious at points of crisis and never really get to know or understand it at all. And then...assuming we ARE listening, it is crucial that one reacts to such quickly because even with a 'guilty conscious' and/or a troubled heart, it can often matter little 'after-the-fact.' Meaning, once you have burned down the barn, it doesn't really matter that you feel bad about it. The barn is gone.

Temporary remorse...like the kind we see here in Saul, is impressive but ultimately meaningless! One has to respond promptly to a conscious that is *already* known and familiar to us...one in which we have a very honest relationship with. We have to be early enough in that game in which to retrace our steps to find our way out of the quagmire that we so often find ourselves in. Then we have to plant our feet in repentance and not 'revisit' our wrath and bitterness again and again as Saul will do.

In the scheme of faithful kingdom life, it really does matter how we deal with people that do not like us and seek to hurt us. David would herein be an example to this. We know he was not a perfect man by anyone's measure, but there was something here in this man that would endear him to His God, and thus it seems it would behoove us to find out what it is!

One thing that has greatly changed in today's culture is how we deal with those who rule over us in any form. It seems if one has power and position, then that makes him or her immediately 'in our sights' and it is 'open season.' Truly this attitude comes from the unadulterated pride and ego of today's society. We don't care who they are, what they say, or what they want...they're wrong until proven otherwise, and even if that happens we will stay remain astute and 'on-guard.'

We're naturally suspicious and imminently judgmental, because the default position is that we are right and everyone else is wrong! We go out of our way to denigrate and destroy anyone who has authority over us. Police, government officials, politicians, judges, and of course *pastors*. Honor for someone who is in position simply because they are *in* position is unheard of today. David had every earthly reason to kill Saul and no one would had faulted him for doing so, except quite possibly *God!* God says that nothing goes unseen by Him nor is anyone in a position unless He either *put* him there or at the very least *allowed* such because it fits His ultimate plans.

Romans 13:1-7 tells us "*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.*"

Why would Saul even care about David? Why would he fear him? Sadly, we seem to go out of our way to air dirty laundry and attempt to bring down the mighty. We want vindication at any cost...even if that cost is the sacrifice of the truth! Why do we do it? Why is this such an issue? The answer is not deep or profound. It is nothing more than the jealousy and pride of mankind, and of course a culture that so greatly feeds that dog. But is there any other answer for us that say we are Christians and are guilty of the same as the world? Well, it is the same 'dog' that the world has...the pride and jealousy, but with one added caveat, and that is we are supposed to be trusting God and when we respond in kind, we are certainly not believing our God is sovereign and truly 'the boss.'

It is a strange thing to see that the more we struggle for control, the weaker it seems we become. Saul would become increasingly paranoid and bitter, while David, the focus of his angst, would get stronger and stronger. No doubt such a heart acts like a cancer within us and can consume us while the object of our hatred goes about his or her business undeterred...increasingly blessed, and often unknowing that you even have a beef with him! Whatever we call it, God calls it **revenge**. Rom.12:19-21 *Beloved, never **avenge** yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head."*

What must we do to react like David and to avoid acting like Saul? For is this not the great lesson herein for us today? One thing that we must grasp in this dilemma is that there is nothing Satan will not do, no length or effort too great when it comes to his work to hurt you. If he can get Christians to do battle, he can 'kill two birds with one stone', not to mention making them and their faith look foolish while he does it!

We have seen again and again in scripture and in practical modern life, that righteous living and Godly decisions do not occur 'on the fly.' Such rarely happens when we wait until we are in the throes of deep emotional crisis to step up. Unless we have become intimate with our own conscious and we have sown the seeds of Biblical living and we have made commitments to God and tested them in battle, seldom do sudden decisions bode well for any of us.

David had great reverence for the position and calling of king as well as for the God who does the job interviews. I have to believe that had something to do with why he eventually ended up on the throne. I have known men who made a habit of beating up people in the pulpit while scratching and clawing their way to having a pastors office of their own. I also know such men never make good pastors if they manage to get what they wanted anyway. This position that David took is simply humility. And much of the acquisition of such again comes through its purposeful practice before the heat is eventually put on it. James tells us to "***Humble yourselves*** in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up." (James 4:10) There has to be a real ***practice*** of holiness in order to walk in holiness! The things of God are not attributes that are easy to wear in our humanity.

Another notable is that throughout this game of "cat and mouse", David kept communicating. He did not shut Saul off. He tried repeatedly to find some peace between them. I think it is important to keep talking whenever it is possible. And "whenever possible" is the key. Even Paul made that call: *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.* (Ro 12:18) David tried to reason with Saul. And for brief periods there was remorse and repentance on the part of Saul. Eventually, Saul would repeatedly return to his bitterness, and in the end He would die alone, having been just a shadow of what God had called him to be back in 1 Samuel 10.

Daniel was a man who knew what it was to practice the art of humility and found great blessing and use by doing so. He was told in Daniel chapter 10, verse 12 *"Don't be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day you began to pray for understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your request has been heard in heaven. I have come in answer to your prayer."* Humility is much easier to embrace when we daily acknowledge that God knows more about everything than you do. He is the quintessential 'master' of everything! David saw himself equal in value as that of a dead dog or a single flea. He didn't beat himself up or practice some weird self flagellation. He was just straight up honest about himself in light of the presence and control of his Creator.

John Wooden, nicknamed the "Wizard of Westwood," was head coach at UCLA when he led his team to ten NCAA national championships in a 12-year period, including a record seven in a row. This is a quote by him: ***"Talent is God-given. Be Humble. Fame is man-given. Be grateful. Conceit is self-given. Be careful."***

Final I leave you with this quote by G.K. Chesterton: *"Humility is the mother of giants. One sees great things from the valley; only small things from the peak."*