

David: Responding to Mistreatment (Psalm 31:5; 1 Samuel 24, 26)

RESPONDING TO MISTREATMENT IN A GODLY WAY

One of the most important aspects of our spiritual life is how we respond when we are mistreated. That is obvious. Now just to make it clear: I know you know this, but it is just good to say it. Everyone in the whole world is mistreated many times during their life. You are not being picked on in a special way. Six and a half billion people are being mistreated at some point throughout their whole life. I mean not at some point, but many times throughout their whole life in small ways and in large ways. The point is some people are hoping in vain to finally get to that place in life where mistreatment just kind of becomes really rare. That day does not exist on this side of eternity. You will always be mistreated in small ways and sometimes big ways; so it is not that big of a deal when you understand that we can respond to the Lord in a right way. If we respond rightly, we go deep in God. Our heart expands its capacity to experience God. If we respond wrong then a residue of bitterness builds up in us, and it ends up making our spirit dull.

1 Corinthians 6:19: “You are not your own . . . For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” This is the foundational principle in responding in a right way to mistreatment. Here is the key principle: the fact that Jesus owns us; because He owns us, He takes responsibility for the times that we are mistreated. If we give Him that responsibility, He will take it.

FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLE: JESUS BOUGHT US AND OWNS US

Let’s read the verse. I will spend a minute on it. Paul said IN 1 Corinthians 6:19: “You are not your own . . . For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.” You are not your own. It seems obvious, but this is a dramatic revelation. You do not own yourself. The money you have it is not yours. Your ministry, your destiny—it is not really yours. It is His. You are not your own. This is an obvious point, but sometimes we lose track of that. 1 Corinthians 6:20: “you were bought.” Jesus paid the full price for us. He owns us. 1 Corinthians 6:20: “Therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit which belong to the Lord.”

So here is the point: the Lord owns you, your money, and your reputation; if somebody steals your money, they are stealing from Him. If somebody attacks your reputation, they are attacking His interest. This only works if we consciously live under that principle of His ownership where we transfer our money, our reputation, the rights over to Him, and we put it in His hands.

DAVID: RESPONDING RIGHTLY WHEN MISTREATMENT OCCURS (PSALM 31)

David was the premier example in the Old Testament of a man who did this. He understood it really belonged to the Lord because he was really the Lord’s. So when somebody would come against him, he said, “Lord they are coming against You, Your servant, Your cause, because I have given myself to You entirely.”

Now the classic psalm is Psalm 31. I want to encourage you to read through Psalm 31 several times in the next couple of days. It is the classic statement of how David navigated through all of the mistreatment. He had more mistreatment than I think anybody in the Old Testament; I mean over a sustained period of time, an entire lifetime. He was constantly being mistreated even in the midst of his prosperity.

“INTO YOUR HAND I COMMIT MY SPIRIT” (PSALM 31:5)

Psalm 31:5, 15: “Into Your hand I commit my spirit . . . My times are in Your hand . . .” Psalm 31 is this classic psalm, and we are just going to pick out two different phrases from this. I mean the whole psalm is loaded. He said the famous phrase in Psalm 31:5: “Into Your hands I commit my spirit.” Then he went onto say, “My times are also in Your hands.” Now when David said this famous statement, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit,” that is the very statement that Jesus would quote on the cross. Luke 23:46: “He said, ‘Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.’” David was the one who said it first in Scripture. When he said, “Into Your hands I commit my spirit,” he meant the things that his spirit deeply cares about. He did not just mean that when he dies, he will go to heaven. He meant the things he care most deeply about; he commits to God his money, his reputation, his ministry, his key relationships. “I put them into Your care, and I invoke Your involvement in these areas of my life.”

TO COMMIT OUR SPIRIT IS TO COMMIT IMPORTANT ISSUES TO HIM

Now when we commit our spirit—or the things we care about in our spirit—if we commit the deep things of our life to Jesus, then we commit it to Him—it means there is a transaction taking place. We consciously give them to Him. It is a deal that we are making. It is actually a transaction. It is a deal.

We are saying, “We will trust Your leadership in this area. We give it to You.”

The Lord says, “OK, in that case, I will take the issue into My hands, and I will settle the mistreatment in My own way and in My own timing.”

The issue of trusting the Lord with it is we have to trust His will, His way, and His timing. The problem is when we get mistreated, we sometimes have a different agenda about that mistreatment than the Lord does. So we give it to the Lord; but He is not doing exactly our agenda, so we take it back.

He says, “No. You have given it to Me. You are breaking the deal here.”

We respond, “OK. We want Your agenda, but would You hurry up and answer?”

He says, “No. You have got to give it to Me and that means trust My timing.”

We have to trust His way because the Lord’s way, He has a different approach to things. He will end up blessing our enemies in ways we would not vote on.

WE MUST TRANSFER OUR PERSONAL RIGHTS INTO HIS HANDS

So if we commit it to His hand, we are saying, “We are trusting Your leadership; however, You determine to work it out at whatever timing You determine. We will not take it back. We will not take matters into our own hands. We will leave them in Your hand.” If we make that transaction, and if we really give ourselves to Him, He says, “If you give Yourself to Me, then I commit to intervene, and to take ownership of your life. If you really give Me your money, when somebody steals it, and you trust Me with somebody mistreating you; I will really go after and get it back for you.” Now He does not always bring it back in our timing. Some of the times, He will not answer until even the age to come; but beloved, we live for billions, billions, and billions of years. That is the beginning of it. So the payback—that is a little time delayed— deferred payback is still real.

David said, “I buy into that. I will literally put my times into Your hands”—he said in Psalm 31:15 (paraphrased). In other words, it is as if David was saying, “The timing of the breakthrough, I will give to You. Whether it is in a month, a decade, or even the age to come, my times are in Your hands. That is part of the bargain. That is part of the deal of trusting You with these issues that are so deeply weighing on my spirit.” Now when David did this, he actually brought God into the battle, into the conflict. If you entrust your spirit, an issue to the Lord, and you really give it to His leadership where you will not take it back to manage it in your own way, but you really give it to Him, you are evoking God in the battle on your behalf. The problem I have seen for many years of ministry: two believers are in a conflict, and neither of them are evoking God. They are both taking matters into their own hands, attacking each other, counter attacking, telling the story of how they are mistreated, and getting back and getting even.

The Lord says, “If one of you will call Me to the scene on My terms, I would really help you. I have seen many times where two believers, neither of them are evoking the Lord’s involvement. He will only get involved on His terms when we really trust in His leadership. We take our hands off of it. I am talking about areas of conflict. I am talking about when we are mistreated.

AT THE CROSS, JESUS COMMITTED HIS SPIRIT INTO GOD’S HANDS

Luke 23:46: “He said, ‘Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit.’” In the most dramatic hour of His life during the most dramatic crisis, He quotes one of David’s main verses and life verses; it is as if Jesus said, “David, I am going to borrow it in the crisis.” The way that Jesus used it obviously gives us insight into Jesus, but it also gives us insight into how David used it.

Now when Jesus said, “Into Your hands I commit My spirit” (Lk. 23:46). He did not only mean, “When I die, My spirit goes to heaven.” He meant that, but far more than that. It is as if Jesus said, “I am on the cross under the understanding that everything I am letting go of, entrusting You with, everything that is important to My spirit, to My heart I am trusting You are going to return to Me, Father. My kingdom is on earth forever; I am trusting that with You.” That is what He meant when He said in Luke 23:46: “Into Your hands, I commit My spirit.” Far more than Jesus saying, “When I die, I am coming to You; but more than that, He meant what David meant in Psalm 31.”

THE IMPLICATIONS OF JESUS COMMITTING HIS SPIRIT INTO GOD’S HANDS

1 Peter 2:23: “When He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously.” Peter comments on Jesus committing His spirit to God under crisis; Peter develops the idea to give us more insight. Now we have insight from 1 Peter 2:23 into what Jesus felt, but it also gives us insight into how David did it. That is what we are talking about tonight—how David handled mistreatment.

Peter is commenting on Jesus’ use of that famous passage that David quoted: “Into Your hands I commit My Spirit” (Ps. 31:5). It is as if Peter said, “Well, let me give you—break it down for you—what Jesus meant when He committed His Spirit to the Lord. It says when Jesus was reviled, He would not revile in return. When He suffered, He would not threaten the people in return, but He committed Himself, or He committed His spirit. He committed His cause to the Father who judges righteously” (1 Pet. 2:23, paraphrased).

When Peter says Jesus committed Himself to God’s judgment, he meant committed to God’s intervention. The idea of judgment means intervention. It means making wrong things right. Now when we commit our spirit to

the Lord, when we commit our money, our reputation, our ministry impact, we commit those areas to the Lord. We are committing them to God's judgment meaning to God's intervention. He will intervene the right way at the right time to do the right thing. He will intervene in the mistreatment. He will bring judgment. He will bring an intervention that makes wrong things right.

GOD WILL MAKE WRONG THINGS RIGHT

Even in the area of being reviled, Peter said, "When He was reviled, He would not revile back." Now to be reviled means to be insulted. To be reviled means you are spoken to in a demeaning way, in a sarcastic way with a negative overtone. All of us are spoken to in insulting, demeaning ways with negative sarcastic overtones, but when that happens, our natural way is to answer in the same spirit.

Jesus understood the spiritual law. When He was demeaned, when He was insulted, He effectively said, "I am not returning that. I am not going to operate in that spirit but the opposite spirit. I am going to get God involved in this. I am going to bless My enemies, and when I bless them, then I invoke God's involvement in this minor mistreatment because to be reviled or insulted is a mistreatment." It is a minor one, but even in these little issues, Peter is telling us when Jesus committed His Spirit to the Lord, it was even the little issues of being insulted in conversation. The reason I say that is that some people will trust the Lord on big issues and big crises, but on the little ones they will take matters into their own hands. If we do not take them into our own hands, we choose to literally trust the Lord's judgment or intervention. It will change our spirit, and the Lord will bring honor. He will set the record but in His own timing. I want to encourage you that even in the little areas of being insulted verbally by somebody call the Lord's presence in.

WE MAKE ROOM FOR GOD'S VENGEANCE BY REFUSING TO TAKE OUR OWN

Invoke His leadership by blessing the one that insults you. Romans 12:19-21: "Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,'" says the Lord. Therefore, 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him a drink . . . DO not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.'" Here is the spiritual law that Peter is referring to. Paul develops the spiritual law, and then we are going to apply it in David's life in just a moment.

Paul lays out the spiritual law of trusting God's judgments to break in. What the spiritual law in Romans 12:19-21 is—I will sum it up, and then we will read the passage—Paul is saying here is how the law, the spiritual law or the law in the spirit realm, operates this way: if you take your own vengeance, God will draw back, and let you take matters in your own hands; if you are successful, you are successful. If you are not, you are not. God will not intervene if you take it into your own hands; however, if you draw back and put it in His hands, He will intervene. It is as if the Lord says, "You get one, or the other. Either you take it, and I draw back on this issue, or you give it to Me, and you draw back. Then I will answer it for you in My timing." So this spiritual law says this: only one will intervene.

ESTABLISH OUR OWN JUSTICE AND VENGEANCE, OR TRUST GOD TO DO IT?

Most believers are the first ones to intervene for their own cause.

The Lord says, "I really would. I really would, but not while you are."

So we say, "Lord, I will make You a deal. Why do I not intervene? Then, You come behind me, and just double my efforts? You back me up."

It is as if the Lord says, “No. No. It is not going to work that way. You commit it into My hands. You back up. You trust My timing and My way.”

“Yeah, but Lord, You may take more time than I would,” we think.

He says, “Well, Your only other option is for you to intervene, and for Me to draw back and watch.”

So He says here in Romans 12:19 to not take vengeance.

TAKING VENGEANCE FOR OURSELVES IS A CRUEL TASK MASTER

Vengeance means to not set the record straight. Do not make the wrong things right by taking matters in your own hands. This is talking about in a time of conflict in relationship. He says, “Do not take vengeance” (Rom. 12:19, paraphrased). Or you could use the word *justice*. Establish your own justice, but rather give place to God’s wrath. Give place for God to break in and intervene on your behalf, because if you do not give place to it, then God will not do it. The way we give place to wrath is for God’s anger to break in, or for God’s judgment against the mistreatment by us trusting Him without taking it to our own hands. So Paul said basically that we get to choose.

WE CHOOSE: OUR VENGEANCE OR GOD’S VINDICATION

If you want to give way for God to break in, you have got to draw back. If you do not draw back, God will. It is one way or the other. That is a spiritual law because Paul said, “Vengeance—or payback, which is the domain of vengeance—belongs totally to God” (Rom. 12:19, paraphrased).

It’s as if God said, “I want control over the domain of the payback, vengeance.” He says, “I will payback. I will intervene”—instead of repay, put the word *intervene*—“I will intervene. I will set things in order. I will set the record straight about you, but you have to put it in My hands, which means you have to let go of it and trust Me” (Rom. 12:19, paraphrased).

We think, “Lord, are You sure we cannot work together where I set the record straight? You come back me up.”

The Lord says, “I will tell you again ‘no.’ That is not an option. The law or the Spirit, we get to choose which one will intervene.”

Most believers are just so accustomed to taking matters in their own hands when somebody insults them, when somebody mars their reputation, when somebody mistreats them, that they instantly go into war mode. The Lord instantly backs up and says, “Let’s let them do what they want to do without intervening.”

The Lord would have intervened if we would have given room for Him to do it, but He would not necessarily intervene in the same way, or the same timing than we would have. When we take vengeance ourselves, I call it a *cruel taskmaster*, because when we are in the “take vengeance ourselves” mode, which is our natural mode somebody mistreats us, so they do not give us what is rightly ours, and we get into the attack mode.” We go tell people and we circulate the story about how we are mistreated and how we are being—it is bad. It is bad. It is bad. The Lord is saying, “Do not do it that way. Bring Me into the battle. Invoke My involvement, but the way that you are talking, you are not evoking Me because you are going to do it yourself.”

WE MAKE ROOM FOR GOD’S VENGEANCE BY REFUSING TO TAKE OUR OWN

I call that *taking vengeance mode* as a *cruel taskmaster*, because when you get in that mode, when I get in that mode, any of us we get so preoccupied with the anxiety, the anger and the stirred up spirit of being mistreated that we cannot connect with the Lord in a sustained way. There could be people totally committed to intimacy with God, but because they take their own vengeance; they do not give place to the Lord’s vengeance by putting it in His hand they have a firestorm of emotional activity on the inside. So when they sit down in the prayer room, for example, to connect with the Lord, they cannot connect because they are so busy with all the machinery turning inside.

THE DOMAIN OF VENGEANCE, OR PAYBACK, BELONGS ONLY TO GOD

There is really a big price we pay when we take vengeance into our own hands. It is a mode. It is a mode of operation. It is a mindset. It is an internal quality in our life. The vengeance mode: most believers never get free of operating in the take their own vengeance mode, or set the record straight, by making sure they get the honor they deserve etc. They do not really do the math—that mindset is a cruel taskmaster. I mean they put hours in the prayer room and never ever connect with God; they just caught in a tornado on the inside of preoccupation with who did it and how they are going to answer it. They are debating and figuring out. The Lord says, “I so would love to connect with you rightly now.” Every time we are mistreated, it is an opportunity for promotion in the Lord it really is. The small mistreatments and the large ones— every mistreatment is an opportunity to go forward. We will go forward at the heart level, and we will also go forward even in our circumstances.

SET YOUR HEART NOT TO WASTE ONE GOOD TRIAL

If we do this right, if we respond rightly, the Lord will increase His blessing on our circumstances. Again maybe not in our timing, He may have a delayed payment, but He will increase, even our external circumstances; but He will definitely in the short term increase our internal experience of Him. Any time somebody comes against you, I mean just insults, undermines you, and you choose to answer rightly, it is an opportunity in that immediate timeframe for you internally to go forward. Set your heart never to waste a good trial. It is truly an opportunity to go forward, and that is something that David understood in a profound way.

DAVID AND SAUL

Roman numeral II. Now, we are going to look at two examples: We will just take a few minutes on each one. I just want to point them out to you, so you can read them on your own, and read them with Psalm 31. The two classic chapters in what I call David’s training in the seminary of Saul.

Lou Engle calls it the *SOS*, the seminary of Saul. Most of you know that Saul was a jealous king. He was the king of Israel. He was the old king, and David was the young anointed one. David was in his twenties, Saul is in his sixties, and Saul is insanely jealous of David. But Saul has the power; he is the king. David is just on Saul’s staff, so Saul could do anything he wants to David. Saul determines that he is going to kill David. In these two classic chapters, 1 Samuel 24, David encounters Saul in the wilderness of En Gedi. Then a few months later in 1 Samuel 26, two chapters later in the wilderness, they are close to each other in the land of Israel.

In these two wilderness encounters, Saul is chasing David who is a fugitive; he is out in the wilderness running from Saul. Saul has got an army of 3,000 men coming after David to kill him. That is why they are out in the wilderness because David is a fugitive of the law. He is literally the number one public enemy in Saul’s world. He is number one most wanted criminal in Israel, as there are 3,000 fulltime choice soldiers under Saul whose main objective is to chase down the fugitive David and kill him—what a pretty intense reality.

Saul was the king of Israel. He had an intense love and hate relationship with David, as I just mentioned. It is complicated because Saul is David's father-in-law because David married Saul's daughter, so he is a family member. He is dad. He is David's boss because David is in the military. He is one of the captains in the army, but Saul is the head of the army, so he is his boss. Saul is the law enforcement. He is head of the police force, so he has the power to establish laws against David to make him a criminal against society. Saul is the president of the nation. He is king. So he is the head of state, the head of the law enforcement, he is David's boss, and he is dad all in one package. I mean, talk about complicated. Whatever your conflict is with anybody, it fits in one of these; you could even get a few more categories if you want to.

DAVID AND SAUL AT THE WILDERNESS OF EN GEDI (1 SAMUEL 24)

David and Saul in the wilderness of En Gedi, 1 Samuel 24—this is the first example. Many of you know this story, but it just worth going through. I read it over and over. I have read this story so many times through the years. I love it because it encourages my heart to respond rightly in mistreatment. 1 Samuel 24:1-3: "When Saul had returned from following the Philistines . . . it was told him, saying, 'Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi.'" When Saul had returned from following the Philistines, he was just in a military conflict with the neighboring nation the Philistines. So that military conflict is over, so then the spy network throughout the land tells Saul, "Hey, we found David the fugitive. He is over in the Wilderness of En Gedi." It is actually about 30 miles from where Saul is. David is in that wilderness.

1 Samuel 24:2: "Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David." Saul took 3,000 choice men from all of Israel to seek after David. I mean can you imagine the intensity Saul has? Do you know how expensive it is to pay the salary of 3,000 men? Saul means business!

Now just so you are not tempted to be melodramatic in your own life sometimes—I have been a few times—sometimes we talk about when three of our friends are agreeing in a gossip report against us. We think we are in a Saul and David encounter. David had 3,000 soldiers trying to kill him—not three friends saying that we have a bad motive. It is not really a Saul and David thing, just to put it in perspective. A few times in the year I say, "This is a Saul and David thing," and I can just hear the Lord or imagine Him whispering, "Not exactly that. You and your three friends you will sort it out." Saul and David—it was more serious. OK, 1 Samuel 24:3: "He (Saul) came to . . . a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave."

DAVID FINDS SAUL SLEEPING IN A CAVE

Saul is up in the wilderness of En Gedi with 3,000 men. He goes into a cave. He goes into the cave, and he ends up taking a nap, falling asleep in the cave. He is exhausted. They have just come from battle and had a 30-mile march; so he goes into the cave. It just so happens, it is a big cave, just coincidence seemingly, but obviously the Lord is leading it. David is in the back recesses of the cave. Can you imagine this? David does not even know Saul is coming. The last word David has is Saul is fighting the Philistines. So they are back there, and they have got their set up deep in the cave. They hear some noise in the front of the cave, and they think, "What is going on?" A couple of guys come around the cave, and there is this big figure in the doorway of the cave; Saul was a head and shoulders taller than all the others in Israel, so he is this big warrior with all the royal garments on.

David is in the cave; he looks and he says, "Oh my goodness! It is Saul coming into our cave. He found us. Oh no." Of course Saul does not know David is back there. I am adding a little of my own part to the story here.

Saul lies down and falls asleep. David says, “I guess he does not know we are here. Imagine this.” It is clearly an orchestration of the Lord that this has happened.

DAVID STOPPED HIS MEN FROM HARMING SAUL

1 Samuel 24:4: the next verse David said, “No. No.” The men of David said, “Hey, David this is the day of which the Lord has said to you, ‘Behold, I will deliver your enemies into your hands.’ You may do with him what seems good to you.” So David’s guys say, “You know the prophecy; David that you heard over the years that God was going to one day get rid of Saul and take care of it.” David has been a fugitive for some years now. It ends up that David is a fugitive about seven years, as he is chased in the wilderness. I mean that is a long time: six or seven years. You cannot be exactly sure, but it is more than a few months. There was a prophetic word established that one day God would take care of Saul, and the problem would be over. One of David’s guys say, “This is the day. All we have got to do is kill him.” Later on, it makes it clear that they wanted to harm him. They wanted to kill him, because he is sound asleep. He is only a few steps away. God put Saul in their hands. It says that David arose and secretly cut off the corner of Saul’s robe. Imagine: there is Saul sound asleep. David says he is going to walk over there.

The men question him: “What? What are you doing? You going to kill him?”

He says, “No.” He goes there and he cuts Saul’s robe. He walks back. I mean, how dangerous is that?

Saul just wakes up, just by some way. The whole army is there. David is in big trouble. So he has got the robe. Then he tells the men. The men say, “Hey let’s go finish him off.” He says in 1 Samuel 24:6, “No. No. No. The Lord forbid. No. You cannot touch the Lord’s anointed. Stretch out your hand.” Here is the problem in this case: David is the Lord’s anointed too.

WE ARE TO WALK OUT THIS PRINCIPLE IN ALL RELATIONSHIPS

So many conflicts in the Body of Christ is the Lord’s anointed against the Lord’s anointed, so you cannot do the Lord’s anointed argument. There are millions of the Lord’s anointed. Besides these principles work in just everyday relationship whether people in the kingdom, or not in the kingdom; but the fact that he was God’s anointed brought another dimension of seriousness to it. David said, “I cannot touch him. I am not going to get rid of my enemy with my own hands.”

1 Samuel 24:7: David restrained his servants. They did not allow them to arise against Saul. They wanted to kill him. I mean these servants were saying “No, wait. The day has come. Dave, open your eyes David. God put him here. Of all the caves of Israel he sleeps in our cave. He does not even know we are here. What are the chances?”

David says, “OK. OK. Got it, it was the Lord, but I have a totally, entirely different interpretation than you.” David was right. His friends thought it was the Lord so they could kill Saul; David thought it was the Lord, so David knew his heart was being tested by God. Same event, same prophecy, two totally different interpretations, and David was the right one. 1 Samuel 24:8: so a few hours pass. Saul wakes up from his nap. He goes out. He goes on the other side down in the valley. David is up on the mountain in the cave. David arose. 1 Samuel 24:8: David went out of the cave. He called, “Saul.”

Saul said, “Who is calling my name?”

David calls, “Saul.” Saul looks up there, and there is David up on a mountaintop.

Saul says, “David, what are you doing up there? David was far enough away where Saul could not get to him really easily.

DAVID TEMPORARILY CONVINCES SAUL HE DOES NOT SEEK TO HARM HIM

1 Samuel 24:10: “This day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave . . . I said, ‘I will not stretch out my hand against my lord.’” Saul is saying, “What are you talking about? What cave? What do you mean delivered me into your hands?”

He says, “I did not stretch out my hand against you. I did not hurt you. I am not trying to hurt you. Let it go. I am on your team.” 1 Samuel 24:11: “See the corner of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand . . . Yet you hunt my life to take it.” David is saying, “See the corner of your robe it is in my hand.”

Saul says, “What do you mean?” Saul looks down at his robe. There is a little part cut off. He says, “David. You were in the cave. Oh my goodness. You could have killed me.”

David responds, “I cut off the corner of your robe. I did not kill you. I have no malice in my heart toward you. Know that I will not hurt you. See that there is no evil or rebellion in my hand. Why are you hunting me down to kill me? Stop it. You are my father-in-law. You are my boss. You are my president and you are the chief of police. Come on give me a break.”

1 Samuel 24:12, 15: “Let the Lord judge between you and me, and let the lord avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you . . . Therefore let the Lord be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand.” You know this passage—these two verses I have used so many times over the years. I want to encourage you write your name in these verses; have your name on them. Use them over and over for little things—little insults, somebody that reviles you to big issues where a Saul chases you. By the way, if you have a calling like David, I guarantee you, you will be enrolled in the seminary of Saul, whether you know it or not. If you want to have a heart like David, you will have a Saul that will train you because every David must be trained by a Saul. That might be a company of Saul’s. It might not be just one person. There will be a Saul factor in your life testing your heart.

So a lot of people say, “I want to be a man after God’s own heart. I want to be a woman after God’s own heart. I want to have a ministry like David.” Just know if it is true, and the Lord takes you up on it; He will enroll you in the seminary of Saul even without your permission.

DAVID COMMITTED HIS CAUSE INTO GOD’S HAND

1 Samuel 24:12: let’s get back to the point. Here is what David says: now David is in essence speaking Psalm 31:5. The principle of “I commit my spirit into Your hands, I commit my spirit into Your hands” is what David is saying here in 1 Samuel 24:12. He is just saying it in different language. It’s as if he says, “Saul, here is the way that we are going to do this. David is up high on a mountain. I am going to let the Lord judge. I am not going to kill you or hurt you. I am not taking judgment into my hands. I am going to let the Lord judge.” Now put the word *intervene*: “I am not intervening on this issue of conflict. I will let the Lord avenge. That is the word that is the same idea of justice.

It is as if David is saying, “I will let the Lord set the record straight. That is what avenge or justice, set the record straight and make wrong things right. My hand shall not be against you. I will not speak against you. I will not do harm against you physically. I will not use my money against you. I will not touch you. I will truly entrust you to God.” 1 Samuel 24:15: “Therefore let the Lord be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand.” David is saying, “Let the Lord be the judge. I am happy for the Lord to judge anyway even if He lets you win, that is fine. I just want the Lord to intervene and have His way. My heart is with the Lord. Let Him judge. Let Him decide. He may bless you greatly. That is His business. I am on the Lord’s team. If He blesses you, I bless you.. Let the Lord plead my case.” That is the same thing as “I commit my spirit into Your hands Lord.”

DAVID AND SAUL AT THE WILDERNESS OF ZIPH (1 SAMUEL 26)

Roman numeral IV. So that situation ends. It is some months later. The same scenario happens again, a couple slight different points. This time it is in the Wilderness of Ziph. Now the reason it is happening again is that if we blow it, if we are tempted and we sin, the Lord gives us many chances again to have victory over that sin. That is great. He gives us a new beginning every day if we want it, but if we pass the test—and we do righteously, we choose righteousness—the Lord will often have us go through it again, so that our choice for righteousness is confirmed, and it is deeply established in our heart. It is not like we hold our breath for a few minutes, pass the test, and then we just forget about the reality.

God wants it deeply confirmed in our character and our spiritual history that this is a reality of how we relate to the Lord. If we fail the test, we fail the Lord’s pop quizzes. The Lord is always giving us pop quizzes. He is giving us a test like this with David. He did not know Saul was going to be in the cave, and he did not know he is going to catch Saul again here in a few minutes. David is the one being tested actually if he would respond in a right way. It is actually a test on David.

Now the good thing about when the Lord gives you a pop quiz, as He gives us lots of them. We never know when they are coming. It might happen today. He lets you take the test. It is an open book test. You get to have the book open, and you get to search for the answers. The Lord’s pop quizzes, you get to lean over the aisle, and look at your neighbors test. Whatever answer they put on the test, you can use on the answer. The Lord does not mind. You can get anybody to help you, and the good news is if you fail the test, He will give it to you again and again and again.

Is that not nice? We are going to pass these tests. Well David is getting the same test twice in a short period of time. Not because he failed it, but because the Lord wanted to confirm it in him, not just he kind of barely got through this by the skin of his teeth. He wants this to be a profound reality deeply established in David’s character, not something David barely made it by one day. So it happens again.

SAUL CONTINUES TO PURSUE DAVID WITH 3,000 MEN

1 Samuel 26: Saul went down to the Wilderness of Ziph. The same 3,000 men are still with him. They are still employed by Saul. They are still seeking David. David is the fugitive. 1 Samuel 26:7: “There Saul lay sleeping within the camp, with his spear stuck in the ground by his head . . . Abishai said to David, ‘God has delivered your enemy into your hand this day. Now therefore, please, let me strike him at once with the spear.’” Saul was down in the valley sleeping in the camp, and David came up on the hillside. David effectively says, “Oh the whole camp is down there. Look. It is late one night. Fires are going.” They can tell where Saul is because he is in the middle of the camp with the king’s standard there and all the regal kind of things that go along with the

king's tent. You know he is in the center—all the bodyguards around. His spear is stuck in the ground right there. It was a unique spear that everybody would recognize. It was a spear that made it known it was the king's spear.

Abishai, one of David's mighty men, says to David as they are up on the hillside looking down in the valley, "Hey, God delivered your enemy into your hands. Let me go kill him" (1 Sam 26:8, paraphrased).

DAVID REFUSED TO KILL SAUL

It's as if David says, "Are we having that conversation again? Did I not make it clear some months ago when I had the team meeting, and the other guys were mad that we did not kill Saul in the cave? I am not going to touch Saul. Never, ever, ever will I touch Saul."

Abishai might have said, "Yeah, but David you do not have to. Give us the nod, and we will do it for you." Most people who are mistreated often—a hit man will emerge. There is this one guy or one gal who says, "OK. OK, be godly, but I am your friend. I will go slander your enemy for you. You just stay out of the way, and you go—well, the Lord's will be done." I mean, what am I going to do?

David did not go for that. David believed it was a true spiritual interaction with God. He effectively says, "No. No. No. No. You guys do not get it. God's eyes are watching. You do not get it. The resources of heaven are behind this. If I mess up on this; I only delay. Do not. Seriously, do not."

Abishai might respond, "Come on. This is God two times in a row. You missed the first opportunity in the cave. This is obviously the will of God. You missed it. You are a great guy, but you are a little naïve, David. This guy is a monster down there trying to kill you."

It's as if David says to Abishai, "You do not get it. I passed the test. I am being confirmed on it because my calling is mighty. The Lord's eyes are on me"—1 Samuel 26:9: "David said to Abishai, 'Do not destroy him; for who can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless?'"

David said to Abishai, "Do not destroy him. Let me give it to you straight. Who can stretch out his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? You will get in trouble with God, and I will get in trouble with God. No. You cannot touch him" (1 Sam. 26:9, paraphrased). David had a profound sense of the Lord's eyes watching over him.

This kind of got Abishai a little bit nervous. He might have said, "Wow. I do not want to be guilty. I am trying to be loyal." Beloved, you do not want to be loyal to a David who God is testing and then go complicate the situation by attacking the Saul. Let God attack the Saul. David does not need a hit man to go take care of business. David said "No." The Lord will strike him. He said, "The Lord has already—I have clarity. He is going to take care of the matter. I do not know when. Maybe years from now—I do not know. The Lord will take care of Saul because Saul was demonized" (1 Sam. 26:11, paraphrased).

Saul refused to repent. David said, "Maybe he will die in battle. I do not know, but the Lord has made it clear to me He will take care of him in His own timing"—1 Samuel 26:11 (paraphrased). David is basically saying, "Abishai, here is what you can do. You can go with me, sneak through the cave of three, I mean down in the

camp of 3,000 men.” Can you imagine 3,000? I mean, this sanctuary holds about 1,500 people, so double it, all full of mighty soldiers.

It is at night. There are guys on watch. David says, “Abishai, go with me. We are going to walk to the middle of the camp, we are going to take the spear, and we are going to run back” (v. 6, paraphrased).

Abishai might say, “Why do we not just kill him while we are there?”

David responds, “No. No. No. I am not going to do that. Well, do you have the boldness to go in the middle of that camp?” (v. 11, paraphrased). David, where is your brain at? It’s as if David said, “The Lord is with me.”

THE LORD BRINGS A DEEP SLEEP AS A SECOND TEST

1 Samuel 26:12: For the camp of Israel were all asleep, the 3,000 were in a deep sleep—the Lord put on them. Just like the Lord directed Saul to the cave, the Lord put a deep sleep, so in both occasions there was a supernatural activity of the Holy Spirit leading Saul to the cave—both back in 1 Samuel 24 and a sleep falling on 3,000 soldiers in 1 Samuel 26.

In both occasions, it was not so that David could kill Saul as his men thought; both occasions is so David can prove that he committed it into God’s hands by not killing Saul. That was the issue. God gave him every opportunity to get away with it and to be justified. David says, “I am not taking the opportunity” (v. 11, paraphrased). The Lord is saying, “David, this is good. You are qualifying to be the king of Israel.”

1 Samuel 26:13-17: “David went to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off . . . David said to Abner, ‘ . . . Why then have you not guarded your lord the king? . . . Now see where the king’s spear is, and the jug of water that was by his head.’ Saul knew David’s voice, and said, ‘Is that your voice, my son David?’ Now David goes back with the spear up the mountainside again. You know they are down in the valley. He stood up on the top of the hill. He said in 1 Samuel. 26:15—David said, “Abner.” Now Abner was the head of the army under Saul. I mean the main guy of the whole army. The reason David knows him is because David was one of the captains. They were all friends for years until Saul became so jealous. 1 Samuel 26:15: they wake up. “Abner? Who is yelling ‘Abner’? Why have you not guarded the king?” Saul looks at him.

It’s as if Abner says, “King, I have always guarded you with my life. I would go to death for you. What is he talking about? I have always guarded you.”

David asks, “Where is the king’s spear? King, where is your spear?” (v. 16).

Abner answers, “I do not know. I fell asleep and it was right there. Did you take it? Did you take it? Who took the king’s spear?”

David says, “I have the king’s spear.” Saul looks at Abner; Abner turns red.

Abner responds, “I do not know how he got the spear. I was just sleeping.”

Saul gets angry. “Sleeping? You are supposed to be on guard protecting me.”

Anyway on and on, David had a little element of drama in him; you know, David cutting that robe, getting the spear, got back at Abner—I mean he had that little element.

DAVID INVOKES THE LORD’S INVOLVEMENT; SAUL CALLS DAVID “SON”

1 Samuel 26:17: it is as if Saul said, “Wait, that is David. That is my son in law. That is my old friend. That is my son, my son in law—David that is you. Oh no. Not again. Did you do this twice?”

1 Sam. 26:21: “Saul said, ‘I have sinned. Return, my son David. For I will harm you no more . . . David answered and said, ‘ . . . May the Lord repay every man . . . for the Lord delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the Lord’s anointed . . . so let Him deliver me out of all tribulation.’ Then Saul said to David, ‘May you be blessed, my son David! You shall both do great things and also still prevail.’” Saul realized that this is two times in a row. At the cave, David said, “I would forgive you. I would never chase you. That spirit got on me again; I changed my mind, and I came after you again with 3,000 men.”

Saul goes on in 1 Samuel 26:21 (paraphrased): “I have sinned. This is really it. I am never coming after you again. I promise. I promise.”

David is thinking, “We are not going there. Do not ever trust the sincere promises of a demonized man.” I mean Saul is crying with tears, making promises, but he has got a demon. David says, “Do not trust him. Do not kill him, but do not trust him.”

Saul says, “Return, my son, to my daughter, the grandkids, Christmas, family reunions—for I will harm you no more. Do not go there, David” (v. 21, paraphrased).

David responds, “I am not. Do not worry.” 1 Samuel 26:22: it is as if David said, “I am going to say again what I said some months ago about the cave. May the Lord repay every man. May the Lord decide in His perfect wisdom what is best. I do not care how He answers it. Let the Lord answer this dilemma. I am not answering it with my own hands for the Lord delivered you into my hand today, but I would not kill you.” 1 Samuel 26:24: It is as if David said, “So, let the Lord deliver. Let the Lord deliver me. I am not going to do it myself.”

SAUL PROPHESES AND BLESSES DAVID IN THEIR LAST CONVERSATION

He is evoking the Lord’s involvement in the process. 1 Samuel 26:25: this is the last conversation Saul and David ever have. These are the last words that Saul ever tells David in the Scripture.

Saul said to David with tears—he is all emotional and stirred up. Saul says, “May you be blessed, my son.” He speaks blessing. He is the anointed of God speaking blessing on David the fugitive in 1 Samuel 26:25: “You shall . . . do great things.” I know it. Saul did not have that bad spirit on him like he has so often. That bad spirit comes on him a bunch of times later. Saul said, “You will do great things, and I know that at the end in this conflict, you are going to prevail over me. I know that you will prevail.”

SAUL’S DEATH IN BATTLE

Several years pass, and Saul dies in battle. Here is what the report is in Chronicles. It says that they are giving the record years later. Saul in 1 Chronicles 10:13: “Saul died for his unfaithfulness . . . Therefore He killed him, and the Lord turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.” At the end of the day, God promised David, “I will take care of the matters in My own timing. I am not telling you how I will do it.”

The Scripture says that Saul died in battle, and the Lord Himself killed Saul, and removed him out of the way. The Lord Himself put David in place. But it was God's will, God's way, in God's time, because David entrusted his spirit to the Lord.

Amen. Let's stand.

MINISTRY TIME

Well, the Lord is calling us as individuals to entrust our spirits into His hands. I want to take a minute just as the worship teams. I want us to make that transaction in our heart.

“You own my life Jesus. You bought me. All my money is for You. All my reputation is for You. My ministry is Yours. I put it into Your hands. You can intervene how You want, when You want, and I will trust You. I will praise You and operate in a right spirit between now and then. I will not get in a bad spirit and take matters into my own hands.”

Let's pray. Everyone I just encourage you just for a moment just to close your eyes. You are talking to the Lord. Somebody is talking bad about you, not today, they will tomorrow. That is how life really is. Someone is not giving you the money that is rightfully yours, if not today, sometime tomorrow. I mean in the future is what I mean by tomorrow.

Somebody is blocking your goals. Some of you your ministry just seems like it is not—it is just so weak, you just want to give up. It's as if the Lord says, “Trust Me with it. Trust Me. Put it into My hands. Others of you, it is relational conflict. It does not mean, you do not dialogue in the relationship, but you are not going to get into a bad spirit about it.” That is what this is talking about. You do not get into a bad spirit, but you stay in a blessing mode. You are committing yourself to the Lord. Just going to let the instruments play.

Lord, we say, “We are Yours.” Just talk to Him. You want to be a man or woman after God's own heart. That is what you are all about. That is why you are here, but you have to do it God's way. You have to make room. You have to make place for the wrath of God. You cannot take it yourself. You have to make room for it by not taking it.

“Lord, here we are. We say *yes* to You. We say *yes* to You, Lord. We are not going to operate in a wrong spirit in the conflict.” Again, you do not have face-to-face talks. It does not mean you do not share. It does not mean you do not get together, but you do not operate in a bad spirit. That is what it means by taking matters into your own hands: slandering and getting into anger, trying to cause harm to the person.

“Lord, come and touch us. Come and touch us even now.” We are going to wait on the Lord for a few more minutes. “Lord, release Your presence on us. Holy Spirit come and touch us. Holy Spirit, we invoke Your presence. I say *yes* to You Lord. I say *yes* to You Jesus. I commit my spirit, my cause to You. You are always faithful Lord. You are always true. You will never leave me. You are faithful Jesus. I trust Your leadership, Jesus. Holy Spirit, come and touch us now all over this room. Release Your glory in this room, I ask You. I trust You Jesus. Plead my cause Lord. Lord You judge, You decide. You are good Lord. You are good Lord.”

Anyone who would like prayer for anything, I want to invite you to come up. If you would like prayer physically for healing or for this issue we are talking about tonight or for another matter, just come stand on these prayer lines up here. Now, Lord come and visit us.

Stand on the lines. Some of you, you are setting your heart to entrust the Lord with the deep things of your spirit. It is a new way to carry your heart. Jesus . . .

About twenty of you come up to help me pray for people, if you would just—all over the room anyone who loves Jesus, come up and help us on the prayer lines. Just lay hands on them, and ask the Lord to touch their heart. When you are praying for them, stand in front of them, just so you can talk to them, if you need to. Just ask the Spirit of glory to come and touch your heart. If you want something specific to be prayed for, just tell the person praying for you.

Release Your glory Lord. Release Your power right now in this room.