Lesson 71 – David a Fugitive Part II

based on 1 Samuel 20 to 22.

Saul's jealousy and paranoia had gotten the better of him in regard to David. He intended to kill him. Jonathan had not yet come to believe his father wanted him dead, so Jonathan and David came up with a plan to verify one way or the other.

At the time of the new moon a sacred festival was celebrated in Israel. This festival recurred upon the day following the interview between David and Jonathan. At this feast it was expected that both the young men would appear at the king's table; but David feared to be present, and it was arranged that he should visit his brothers in Bethlehem. On his return he was to hide himself in a field not far from the banqueting hall, for three days absenting himself from the presence of the king; and Jonathan would note the effect upon Saul. If inquiry should be made as to the whereabouts of the son of Jesse, Jonathan was to say that he had gone home to attend the sacrifice offered by his father's household. If no angry demonstrations were made by the king, but he should answer, ***"It is well,"*** then it would be safe for David to return to the court. But if he should become enraged at his absence, it would decide the matter of David's flight.

On the first day of the feast the king made no inquiry concerning the absence of David.

1) What happened on the second day?
   1 Samuel 20:27 And it came to pass on the morrow, which was the second day of the month, that David's place was empty: and Saul said unto Jonathan his son, Wherefore _____ _____ the son of Jesse to meat, neither yesterday, nor to day?
2) What was Jonathan's reply?
   1 Samuel 20:28 And Jonathan answered Saul, David earnestly asked leave of me to go to _____:
3) Was Saul buying the excuse?
   1 Samuel 20:30-31 Then Saul's anger was kindled against Jonathan, and he said unto him, Thou son of the _____ rebellious woman, do not I know that thou hast chosen the son of Jesse to thine own confusion… …For as long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground, thou shalt not be _____, nor thy kingdom. Wherefore now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die.
4) What did Jonathan respond with?
   1 Samuel 20:32 And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said unto him, Wherefore shall he be slain? what hath he _____?

When Saul heard these words, his anger was ungovernable. He declared that as long as David lived, Jonathan could not come to the throne of Israel. This appeal to the king only made him more satanic in his fury, and the spear which he had intended for David he now hurled at his own son.

The prince was grieved and indignant, and leaving the royal presence, he was no more a guest at the feast. His soul was bowed down with sorrow as he repaired at the appointed time to the spot where David was to learn the king's intentions toward him.

5) What were Jonathan's last words to David?
   1 Samuel 20:42 And Jonathan said to David, Go in _____, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD, saying, The LORD be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed for ever. And he arose and departed: and Jonathan went into the city.

The king's son returned to Gibeah, and David hastened to reach Nob, a city but a few miles distant, and also belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. The tabernacle had been taken to this place from Shiloh, and here Ahimelech the high priest ministered. David knew not whither to flee for refuge, except to the servant of God. The priest looked upon him with astonishment, as he came in haste and apparently alone, with a countenance marked by anxiety and sorrow. He inquired what had brought him there.

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6) What lie did David tell Ahimelech at Nob?
1 Samuel 21:2 And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The _____ hath commanded me a business, and hath said unto me, Let no man know any thing of the business whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee: and I have _____ my servants to such and such a place.

The young man was in constant fear of discovery, and in his extremity, he resorted to deception. David told the priest that he had been sent by the king on a secret errand, one which required the utmost expedition. Here he manifested a want of faith in God, and his sin resulted in causing the death of the high priest.

7) What else did David ask in opposition to God's laws?
1 Samuel 21:3-4 Now therefore what is under thine hand? give me five loaves of _____ in mine hand, or what there is present. And the priest answered David, and said, There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is _____ bread; if the young men have kept themselves at least from women.

David asked the priest for five loaves of bread. There was nothing but hallowed bread in the possession of the man of God, but David succeeded in removing his scruples and obtained the bread to satisfy his hunger.

8) Did David's presence in Nob go unnoticed?
1 Samuel 21:7 Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the LORD; and his name was _____, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul.

At sight of this man David determined to make haste to secure another place of refuge, and to obtain some weapon with which to defend himself if defense should become necessary.

9) Did David have any weapons with him?
1 Samuel 21:8-9 And David said unto Ahimelech, And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword? for I have neither brought my _____ nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste. And the priest said, The sword of _____ the Philistine, whom thou slewest in the valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod: if thou wilt take that, take it: for there is no other save that here. And David said, There is none like that; give it me.
10) Where did David flee to from there?
1 Samuel 21:10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to _____ the king of Gath.

David fled to Achish, the king of Gath; for he felt that there was more safety in the midst of the enemies of his people than in the dominions of Saul.

11) What was given Achish as a warning?
1 Samuel 21:11 And the servants of Achish said unto him, Is not this David the king of the land? did they not sing one to another of him in dances, saying, Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his _____ _____?
12) Realizing his peril, what did David do?
1 Samuel 21:13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scrabbled on the doors of the gate, and let his _____ fall down upon his beard.

The first error of David was his distrust of God at Nob, and his second mistake was his deception before Achish. David had displayed noble traits of character, and his moral worth had won him favor with the people; but as trial came upon him, his faith was shaken, and human weakness appeared. He saw in every man a spy and a betrayer. In a great emergency David had looked up to God with a steady eye of faith and had vanquished the Philistine giant. He believed in God, he went in His name. But as he had been hunted and persecuted, perplexity and distress had nearly hidden his heavenly Father from his sight.

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This experience was serving to teach David wisdom; for it led him to realize his weakness and the necessity of constant dependence upon God. Oh, how precious is the sweet influence of the Spirit of God as it comes to depressed or despairing souls, encouraging the fainthearted, strengthening the feeble, and imparting courage and help to the tried servants of the Lord! Oh, what a God is ours, who deals gently with the erring and manifests His patience and tenderness in adversity, and when we are overwhelmed with some great sorrow!

13) What promise should we never forget?
Isaiah 54:10 For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my _____ shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee.

David ought not to have distrusted God for one moment. He had cause for trusting in Him: he was the Lord's anointed, and in the midst of danger he had been protected by the angels of God; he had been armed with courage to do wonderful things; and if he had but removed his mind from the distressing situation in which he was placed, and had thought of God's power and majesty, he would have been at peace even in the midst of the shadows of death.

14) Where did David go from Gath?
1 Samuel 22:1 David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave _____: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.
15) Who else joined up with him?
1 Samuel 22:2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was _____, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.

Among the mountains of Judah, David sought refuge from the pursuit of Saul. He made good his escape to the cave of Adullam, a place that, with a small force, could be held against a large army. The family of David could not feel secure, knowing that at any time the unreasonable suspicions of Saul might be directed against them on account of their relation to David. They had now learned, what was coming to be generally known in Israel, that God had chosen David as the future ruler of His people; and they believed that they would be safer with him, even though he was a fugitive in a lonely cave, than they could be while exposed to the insane madness of a jealous king.

16) What did David write while he was there in Adullam?
Psalm 133:1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in _____!
Psalm 57:1-2 Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul _____ in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast. I will cry unto God most high; unto God that _____ all things for me.
Psalm 57:5-6 Be thou _____, O God, above the heavens; let thy glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; my soul is bowed down: they have digged a _____ before me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves. Selah.

Here David had a little kingdom of his own, and in it order and discipline prevailed. But even in his retreat in the mountains, he was far from feeling secure, for he received continual evidence that the king had not relinquished his murderous purpose.

17) What did David do in keeping the Fifth Commandment?
1 Samuel 22:3-4 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my _____ and my _____, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they _____ with him all the while that David was in the hold.
18) Was God still with David?
1 Samuel 22:5 And the _____ Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David _____, and came into the forest of Hareth.

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The experience through which David was passing was not unnecessary or fruitless. God was giving him a course of discipline to fit him to become a wise general as well as a just and merciful king. With his band of fugitives, he was gaining a preparation to take up the work that Saul, because of his murderous passion and blind indiscretion, was becoming wholly unfitted to do. Men cannot depart from the counsel of God and still retain that calmness and wisdom which will enable them to act with justice and discretion. There is no insanity so dreadful, so hopeless, as that of following human wisdom, unguided by the wisdom of God.

Saul had been preparing to ensnare and capture David in the cave of Adullam, and when it was discovered that David had left this place of refuge, the king was greatly enraged. The flight of David was a mystery to Saul. He could account for it only by the belief that there had been traitors in his camp, who had informed the son of Jesse of his proximity and design.

19) In his rage, what did he say?
1 Samuel 22:8 That all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a _____ with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is _____ for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?

20) Who spoke up?
1 Samuel 22:9-10 Then answered _____ the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to _____ the son of Ahitub. And he enquired of the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.

Doeg the Edomite turned informer. Moved by ambition and avarice, and by hatred of the priest, who had reproved his sins, Doeg reported David's visit to Ahimelech, representing the matter in such a light as to kindle Saul's anger against the man of God. The words of that mischievous tongue, set on fire of hell, stirred up the worst passions in Saul's heart. Maddened with rage, he declared that the whole family of the priest should perish. And the terrible decree was executed. Not only Ahimelech, but the members of his father's house.

21) How many perished?
1 Samuel 22:18-19 and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen _____. And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, _____ and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.

This is what Saul could do under the control of Satan. When God had said that the iniquity of the Amalekites was full, and had commanded him to destroy them utterly, he thought himself too compassionate to execute the divine sentence, and he spared that which was devoted to destruction; but now, without a command from God, under the guidance of Satan, he could slay the priests of the Lord and bring ruin upon the inhabitants of Nob. Such is the perversity of the human heart that has refused the guidance of God.

This deed filled all Israel with horror. It was the king whom they had chosen that had committed this outrage, and he had only done after the manner of the kings of other nations that feared not God. The ark was with them, but the priests of whom they had inquired were slain with the sword.

What would come next?

Can you see it's better to do the right thing the first time?

Would you like be safe in the arms of Christ?

When is it time to humble yourself before the LORD?

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