

Life of David: Learning from a Shepherding King

Session 2: David's Understanding of Authority

Context:

After slaying Goliath, David and Jonathan have become close friends and David's fame has grown among the Israelite people. Saul's insecurities have increasingly manifested themselves and he is regarding David with suspicion, most likely remembering Samuel's words about the kingdom being torn from him and given to another. David was succeeding in everything he did, and Saul ordered his execution. David has escaped with his life (barely) and is on the run with men who are loyal to him.

1 Samuel 24:1-7

1. Why was Saul pursuing David? What was he planning on doing to David if he caught him?
2. When Saul went alone into the cave where David and his men were hiding, it seemed to David's men that this was God moving supernaturally to deliver Saul to them. Do you think that David was tempted to agree with them?
3. Why do you think David cut off the edge of Saul's robe? Because he was hesitating? To impress the guys? To see if he could sneak up on Saul and kill him? What do you think?
4. In verse 5-6, it says that David's conscience bothered him about what he had done. Why do you think this is?
5. David's men submitted to him as he was submitting to the Lord. But do you think they fully agreed?
6. Even though Saul was seeking his life, David still submitted to the anointing that God had placed on Saul. What does this say about David's understanding of authority? Do you think that David remembered Samuel had also anointed him?
7. When we do not agree with those in authority over us, what should we do? What if those in authority over us don't have the things of God at heart?
8. Have you ever been in a situation like this where a certain course of action seemed right but it conflicted with authority? What did you do?

1 Samuel 24:8-15

1. David threw himself on the mercy of Saul. Why did David have confidence to do this?
2. In verse 8 (and 11), we see David's language and posture as one submitting to authority. What do you think David's men were thinking at this point? What do you think Saul's men were thinking?
3. David does not give Saul a pass on his sin, where do we see David speaking about Saul's actions? How does David simultaneously honor and admonish Saul?
4. In verse 12-15, we see David's reliance on God to deal with Saul and fight the battle that it would be wrong for him to fight. How can we apply this to our lives?
5. In verse 15, David reveals his understanding of God being a righteous judge. How do you think this helped him in this situation?
6. When we have problems with others, we often want to take matters into our own hands. How can David's example help us?
7. David never spoke a dishonoring word against Saul, and even the act of cutting Saul's cloak wasn't right in David's heart, this may have seemed childish to his men. What are some steps we can take to keep our hearts soft and our conscience sensitive?
8. Sometimes, our submission to God causes us to do things that might seem crazy to others. Have you ever been in a situation like this?

1 Samuel 24:16-22

1. What is Saul's overall response to David's actions?
2. Saul admits his own guilt and is ashamed of his actions. What was it about the wisdom of David's choice of words impacted Saul's heart?
3. In verse 20, Saul concedes that David will surely be king after him, though David has said nothing about being king. What does this reveal about the state of Saul's heart? What does it reveal about Saul's priorities?
4. In this situation, I believe we can learn from Saul's response. What do we see that is repentant? Does this last?
5. David swears to honor Saul's family and not cut off his descendants, though it would have been wiser not to swear or to swear falsely. Why did Saul make this request?
6. David and his men were allowed to go safely on their way without bloodshed. How could this situation have gone differently if David had not listened to his conscience?
7. Sometimes in situations like this, things do not turn out quite as well for us. How do we protect our hearts from becoming embittered against the Lord even when things don't go our way?
8. Romans 13:1 states that all authority comes ultimately from God. How does not submitting to the authority over us block God's ability to give us peace and blessing in our lives? Is this easy for our flesh?