

1 Samuel 27:1-12

David Discouraged

In the psalms, David many times "speaks to his soul" words of God's faithfulness. But this period of time produced no psalms. He sees that Saul's promises to cease pursuing him always turn out to be lies. He has forgotten all the times God has protected him, and focuses on the potential dangers.

Instead of speaking truth to his own soul, David "said in his heart"...

1 Samuel 27:1 - "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand."

The rabbis said that it was better to remain in the land of Israel surrounded by gentiles than to live elsewhere surrounded by fellow Jews. In fact, David had just said in the previous chapter that Saul's pursuit was basically telling David to "Go, serve other gods," because leaving the Promised Land put him and his men in the position of being influenced unduly by pagan Gentile customs and society.

Now he was proposing that very thing.

1 Samuel 27:2-3 - "And David arose, and he passed over with the six hundred men that were with him unto Achish, the son of Maach, king of Gath. And David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's wife."

This had consequences not only for him and his wives and family but also his men and their families.

1 Samuel 27:4 - "And it was told Saul that David was fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him."

David was right that Saul would stop pursuing him. But now he had to deal with the Philistines.

1 Samuel 27:5-77 - "And David said unto Achish, If I have now found grace in thine eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country, that I may dwell there: for why should thy servant dwell in the royal city with thee? Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: wherefore Ziklag pertaineth unto the kings of Judah unto this day. And the time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months."

Achish had rejected David when he was acting crazy earlier (**1 Samuel 21:10-15**). But now David had 600 warriors with him that could be useful to Achish. And it was clear now that they shared a common enemy in Saul.

Ziklag was actually among the cities granted to Simeon, whose land was within the territory of Judah when Joshua divided the land (**Joshua 19:1, 5**), but the Philistines had occupied it for a long time.

David the Bandit

1 Samuel 27:8-9 - "And David and his men went up, and invaded the Geshurites, and the Gezrites, and the Amalekites: for those nations were of old the inhabitants of the land, as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt. And David smote the land, and left neither man nor woman alive, and took away the sheep, and the oxen, and the asses, and the camels, and the apparel, and returned, and came to Achish."

David probably consoled himself with the idea that he was attacking enemies of Israel but telling Achish he was attacking Israel.

1 Samuel 27:10 - "And Achish said, Whither have ye made a road to day? And David said, Against the south of Judah, and against the south of the Jerahmeelites, and against the south of the Kenites."

But his ruthless attacks leaving no one alive was not according to God's instructions on warfare. Israel was only authorized to drive out or exterminate the Canaanite inhabitants of the land.

1 Samuel 27:11 - "And David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring tidings to Gath, saying, Lest they should tell on us, saying, 'So did David, and so will be his manner all the while he dwelleth in the country of the Philistines.'"

This strategy all "came to roost" years later.

Geshur was an independent kingdom between Arabia and the Philistines. Later, David married a daughter of the king of Geshur (**2 Samuel 3:3**). Her son was Absalom, who fled there after he murdered his half-brother, stayed there for three years, and rebelled against his father David. It is not known for sure who the Girzites were. The Amalekites of course had been the longstanding enemy of Israel since Moses' day (**Exodus 17:8-14, 1 Samuel 15:2-3**).

1 Samuel 27:12 - "And Achish believed David, saying, 'He hath made his people Israel utterly to abhor him; therefore he shall be my servant for ever.'"

David gets in so deep with the Philistines that in the next few chapters he argues to be included in a major Philistine attack on Israel, but the other Philistine leaders mistrust him. Instead he and his men are sent back to Ziklag, only to find their homes burned and women and children taken away by the Amalekites.

By only capturing the women and children, the Amalekites were more merciful than David has been! David realizes that his actions have brought this upon them. His men

turn on David to stone him. This must have been David's lowest point.

What can we glean from this?

This story of David is meant to show us how *not* to deal with discouragement.

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.” (**Galatians 6:7-8**)

David, in a season of discouragement, had lost his trust in God's protection and put himself and his men in a precarious situation that required him to lie to his Philistine host. He was temporarily “sowing to the flesh.”

We aren't immune to discouragement. But when we confront it, we can “speak to our own soul.”

David in this chapter doesn't speak to his own soul in faith. Instead he lets the fear and discouragement in his heart speak to him. "And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day..."

David learned a lesson from this and in later psalms repeatedly spoke to himself from God's viewpoint.

I remember that Bob Mumford, one of the charismatic movement's teachers in the 1970s, when someone was about to explain their reason for lacking faith, “under the circumstances...” he would say, “What are you doing down there under the circumstances?”

David eventually learned how to get out from under the apparent circumstances and look from the top down.

- **Psalm 42:5** - “Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me?”

hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance.”

Part of this process is to remind yourself of what God had done for you in the past:

- **Psalm 116:7-8** - “Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.”

This is not motivational thinking, or lying to yourself, or getting psyched up. It’s faith.

We don’t have to remain “under the circumstances.”