

**Message #59****I Samuel 24:1-22**

One of the most dramatic stories that comes out of the American west is the story of Hugh Glass. Hugh Glass was attacked by a Grizzly bear in 1823. The Grizzly had two cubs and attacked Glass. He was traveling with a group of fur traders to the Yellowstone River when he was attacked by the bear. General Ashley, who was heading the mountain men, saw that Hugh was nearly dead and he asked for two men to stay with him until he died and bury him. John Fitzgerald and Jim Bridger volunteered. Well after five days, Glass had not died, even though he was mostly unconscious. So Fitzgerald and Bridger covered him up with a bear skin and took his knife, rifle, tomahawk, fire making material and belongings with them and left him to die. Well, Hugh Glass woke up. He had a broken leg; he had infected wounds and deep lacerations. He was 200 miles from Ft. Kiowa in South Dakota, where he could get any help. So he set his leg; he allowed maggots to eat the infected wounds and he began to crawl. He decided to track the two men down who had left him to die and kill them. It took two months for him to travel over 200 hundred miles and when he finally tracked the two men down who had abandoned him and left him with nothing, he decided to forgive them. He had the opportunity to kill them, but he didn't do it.

In the Bible there is an amazing story in the life of King David, in which he had an opportunity to kill a Satanic Saul and did not do it. David was a faithful man of God and Saul was being led by Satan to try to kill him. David was on the run for ten years being chased by Saul, and then one day God, in His sovereignty, put David in a position to kill Saul and David did not do it. That story shows up here in I Samuel 24. What we see in this chapter is this:

**EVEN THOUGH DAVID HAS THE MOTIVE FOR KILLING SAUL AND THE OPPORTUNITY TO KILL SAUL, HE GRACIOUSLY REFUSED TO DO IT AND DECIDED TO LEAVE HIM TO GOD.**

Here is a textbook example of leaving vengeance to God, even when you have the right and the opportunity to pour out that vengeance. In this is a beautiful picture of God's grace. God has every reason to destroy us and yet His grace permits us to live.

Now we want to make a very important observation here. David would not let every person live. In fact, next time we will see that David was so angry at Nabal that he went to kill him and only his wife Abigail stopped him from doing it (I Sam. 25:21-22).

However, when it came to Saul, David saw it differently. Saul had been God's first choice of King for Israel. David recognized the fact that God had given Saul a high-ranked position, and David would do nothing to usurp that. He would wait on God to settle that. It is a very serious matter to think light or treat lightly a high-ranked man of God. That is the way David saw it.

Now this is a very interesting story and it is comprised of five component parts:

**COMPONENT PART #1 – Saul goes after David. 24:1-3**

When Saul got back from chasing the Philistines, he learned through his Satanic network of spies that David was in the wilderness of Engedi. Engedi was an oasis east of Hebron situated above the shores of the Dead Sea. There is a fresh water spring there and a plush, fertile valley. In fact, it was an area that featured plush vineyards (Song of Solomon 1:14).

Saul took 3,000 choice military men from all of Israel to seek out and kill David. David had 600 men with him and Saul has access to the best trained men in the military and he took 3,000 to go get David. Why was David so hated and hounded? This was all due to cruel, Satanic jealousy and envy.

Saul took his men to seek David in the “Rocks of the wild goats.” This is a high cliff area where mountain goats live. This kind of area is almost inaccessible to humans. Saul knew that is the kind of place David and his men would hide.

Our former board chairman in Idaho was Larry Goetz. Larry is a very skilled hunter and a dead shot with any gun. Larry went on one hunt and shot a mountain goat. He told me that the area was so treacherous that he actually feared for his life getting the goat. This is the kind of terrain David was hiding.

**Verse 3** says he came to the sheepfolds. The “sheepfolds” were walls of loose stones made by shepherds at the mouth of a cave. In case of terrible weather, this was a place where the sheep could be corralled. When we were on the Island of Patmos, there were stone fences that were built by simply piling up stones. They held in the sheep.

When Saul got to this area, he had to go to the bathroom. You would never think God would be working in a person who has to go to the bathroom, but the sovereignty of God is in this. Saul went into a cave and he had no idea that deep in that very cave that he had chosen for a toilet was David and his men.

There are many caves in this area. What are the chances that Saul would have to go to the bathroom exactly by the one cave where David was hiding? This was all of the sovereignty of God. Who actually determined that Saul would need to find a restroom at just that moment? It was God who was controlling every bit of this.

Years ago, Jim Vander Veen and I was returning from a hunt in Wyoming. I was driving my truck and pulling my horses on I-80. We had just crossed the Mississippi out of Iowa and were in Illinois, and we decided we were going to stop at the next rest area and use the restroom. As we pulled off into the rest area, we noticed that cars on I-80 were beginning to slow down. At the very moment we pulled off there was a terrible accident just about where we would have been. Now who controlled that restroom stop? I have always believed the sovereignty of God.

Do not ever underestimate the capability of a sovereign God to do what He wants to do. No matter how intimidating the numbers or situation; God is sovereign.

**COMPONENT PART #2** – David has an opportunity to kill Saul. **24:4-7**

David’s men realized this very moment had been orchestrated by God (**24:4**). They see the providential hand of God in bringing Saul into that cave. God has set the stage for David to kill Saul, and the men with David knew it.

They must have talked quietly with David so Saul would not hear them. But they realized God had brought his enemy right to David, and David could do whatever he wanted to Saul. They realized God’s hand was on David.

David decided not to kill Saul, but to sneak in and cut off the edge of his robe. According to **verse 5**, as soon as David did that, his conscience bothered him. This is an important part of spirituality; you respond to the conviction of your conscience.

Godly people have a tender conscience. They may do something or say something wrong, but they will come under instant conviction and they will make it right.

David felt bad about cutting off the robe of Saul because David knew that God was the one who had made Saul king. Saul had been chosen by God.

I get this and I understand this. When I worked for Bob Kregel, and also for John Miles, I would not even go into their office if they were not there because my conscience bothered me. Some people could go into the office and set in the chair. Not me. I realized these were men of God that God had raised up and I was not about to go into their office if they were not there. Well who would know? God and my conscience.

**COMPONENT PART #3** – David decides to confront Saul. **24:8-15**

Now this confrontation is focused on what is factual and real. David decided to communicate and confront Saul. There are four observations we may make:

**Observation #1** - David addressed Saul respectfully and humbly. **24:8**

David went out of the cave and then he called to Saul, “My lord and king.” When Saul turned around David bowed down with his face to the ground and prostrated himself. What respect and humility this is. Saul wants to kill David and David still respects Saul and is humbled before Saul.

**Observation #2** - David informs Saul he could have killed him but has spared him. **24:9-10**

David says why are you listening to people who tell you I am out to harm you? Look at this, Saul. I could have killed you right here and right now, but I did not do it. I had pity on you because you are the Lord's anointed king.

**Observation #3** - David informs Saul he has cut off the edge of his robe. **24:11**

David says look at your robe, Saul. I have cut off a piece of it. You didn't know I did it. I could have killed you but didn't. David said I am not out to do evil against you even though you are out to do evil against me.

**Observation #4** - David informs Saul that he will wait on God for judgment. **24:12-15**

David said, Saul, I have decided to leave this to God. David said I have no intention of killing you but I have every intention to wait on the Lord. In **verse 13** David says if I had some wicked motive to become king, I would have killed you, but my hand is not against you.

**COMPONENT PART #4** – Saul responds to David. **24:16-22**

Now when you read these verses, it appears to be one of the greatest moments of repentance in history. But what we have here is an emotional response, not a real repentance. This will not last.

There are 14 responses of Saul to David in this cave:

**Response #1** - Saul identifies David. **24:16a**

This is so phony. David identifies himself and lays out everything carefully and Saul says, "Is this your voice David?" Who else would it be? Saul is just playing the part.

**Response #2** - Saul wept. **24:16b**

This looks good, doesn't it? Frankly these are tears of a spiritual clown. This emotional response means nothing. Sometimes people cry because they get caught. They are not sorry for the sin, they are sorry they got caught.

**Response #3** - Saul admits David is more righteous than he is. **24:17a**

Everyone knows this. Saul is not righteous at all.

**Response #4** - Saul admits that David has dealt well with him. **24:17b**

**Response #5** - Saul admits that he has dealt wickedly with David. **24:17c**

Saul is the same man who massacred 85 priests. Saul dealt wickedly with everyone.

**Response #6** - Saul admits God did deliver him into David's hand. **24:18a**

**Response #7** - Saul admits David did do good to him. **24:18b**

**Response #8** - Saul admits David did not kill him. **24:18c**

**Response #9** - Saul admits that he had been David's enemy. **24:19a**

Saul was David's arch enemy and yet he could never capture David or kill him.

**Response #10** - Saul admits that David let him go safely. **24:19b**

**Response #11** - Saul hopes that God will reward David. **24:19c**

**Response #12** - Saul admits he knows David will be the next king. **24:20a**

**Response #13** - Saul admits he knows Israel's kingdom will be established by David. **24:20b**

**Response #14** - Saul asks David to preserve his family and his name. **24:21**

When you look at this response of Saul, you think wow, this is fantastic. Saul has finally repented. The truth is this is a bunch of emotional babbling that means nothing. **Look at 26:1-3.**

I do not put any stock in emotional appeals or responses. I put no stock in altar calls or raising hands or walking aisles. I have seen too many Saul types to know that in many instances it is a sham. It is emotional and not real.

**COMPONENT PART #5** – David responds to Saul. **24:22**

David swore to Saul that he would preserve his family and Saul left and went home.

But notice **verse 22**, David and his men went up to the stronghold. Why? Because they all know the true character of Saul. He is a fickle liar. They don't believe he has changed at all.

#### **PARTING THOUGHTS:**

- 1. No matter who your enemy or how powerful, God will not let them destroy you.**
- 2. God is sovereign over everything in our lives, even trips to the restroom.**
- 3. When a person has established himself/herself to be a liar, be very slow to believe they have truly repented.**
- 4. Don't put much stock in instant emotional responses; most of the time it won't last.**