

God is FOR you, not against you

1 Samuel 18 to 21

- I. Do you know those cartoons where the antagonist always tries to kill the protagonist but keeps failing?
 - A. Looney Tunes Comparison:
 1. Tom & Jerry
 2. Wile E. Coyote and the Road Runner
 3. Bugs Bunny and Elmer Fudd
 4. Inspector Clouseau, Cato, and the Pink Panther
 5. Black and white silent films: The classic line "FOILED AGAIN!"
 - B. The villain's repeated, comical failures and the hero's calm attitude.
 - C. Parallel with Scripture:
 1. The next eight chapters of 1 Samuel mirror this cartoonish conflict.
 2. From 1 Samuel 18 to 26, Saul attempts to kill David 13 times!
 - D. In this section, it's like David can't fail
 1. Against impossible odds, when the king is opposed to him, despite circumstance, he still prevails
 - E. Why? Because if God is FOR David, who can stand against David?
- II. Saul Keeps Trying to Kill David (1 Samuel 18-21)
 - A. We saw last week that Saul's Jealousy and Fear has taken root and now grows:
 1. 1 Samuel 18:6-9: After David's victory over Goliath, the women of Israel sing, "*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.*"
 2. This song sparks Saul's jealousy and fear (flags, bumper stickers).
 3. David is innocent as a dove, but Saul sees him as a threat to the throne
 - a) It is crazy to think how much Saul's jealousy blinds him
 - b) Jealousy will distort and twist everything; it will mess you up
 - (1) We start to see everything through a nasty lens!
 4. 1 Samuel 18:10-11: Saul's first attempt to kill David.
 - a) David is playing the lyre trying to calm Saul down, and he has a psychotic episode and tries to spear him to death
 - (1) He does this not once but twice!
 - b) Saul has issues; he needs professional help.
 - c) What used to calm him (the music), now provokes him to madness
 - d) But David escapes b/c God is with him
 - e) AND he continues to bless him.
 - B. Saul, pulling on his mustache, comes up w/ another plot.
 1. 1 Samuel 18:17-25: Saul offers his elder daughter Merab to David as a wife, hoping that David would be killed in battle against the Philistines.
 - a) Whether or not David refuses isn't clear, but he downplays it b/c of humility, basically like, "I don't deserve that!"

- b) Then, Saul publicly gives his daughter to another man, essentially shaming David (maybe he's trying to instigate him)
 - c) Later, Saul offers his other daughter Michal, who loves David.
 - d) Saul demands a dowry of 100 Philistine foreskins (gross), hoping David will be killed in the attempt.
 - (1) David succeeds, bringing back 200 foreskins (David went above and beyond... in a really weird way)
 - e) There's nothing noble about Saul here. He is offering marriage not out of goodwill but b/c he wants proxy assassination - he's hoping David gets killed during impossible tasks
2. 1 Samuel 19:1-7: Saul tells his son Jonathan and all his servants to kill David (No more playing pretend).
- a) There's just one problem: Jonathan loves David like a big brother!
 - b) He warns him and speaks to Saul on David's behalf. Saul swears an oath that David will not be killed, and David returns to Saul's service.
 - c) So, once again, Saul's attempts on David's life are foiled
3. Now, a part of you at this point is like, "David, maybe you should go back to Bethlehem b/c who wants to live here with this agita!?"
- a) But remember:
 - (1) God spoke to David
 - (2) David trusts God
 - (3) David believes God is FOR him and WITH him
 - (4) So he doesn't even seem very phased!
- C. Things just get worse.
1. 1 Samuel 19:8-10: War breaks out again, Saul rallies the troops, and David fights the Philistines, achieving a great victory.
- a) Everyone is drinking, dancing, and celebrating the victory, when here comes crazy-eyes Saul again running at him with a spear
 - (1) David runs away and doesn't get skewered
 - b) Some observations:
 - (1) First of all, Saul needs to practice a bit more with the spear
 - (2) Second of all, Saul's irrational and obsessed
 - (3) Third of all, it's like David is invincible
 - (a) If God is FOR David, who can stand against him?
 - (b) That is the focus of David's trust during all this
2. 1 Samuel 19:11-17: Saul sends men to David's house to watch it and kill him in the morning. Michal, David's wife, helps him escape through a window. She deceives the men by placing a scarecrow in the bed, pretending that David has COVID
- a) Michal loves David and helps him escape, but quickly throws him under the bus to save her own skin when pressed
 - b) She doesn't want to face her dad's wrath - she's seen it firsthand!

3. 1 Samuel 19:18-24: David flees to Samuel, who anointed him king (first time we have heard about him since)
 - a) Saul keeps sending waves of soldiers to go and kill David
 - (1) The first wave comes... when they get near, they are overcome by the Spirit of God and begin to prophesy.
 - (2) The second wave comes.... It happens again
 - (3) The third wave comes... the same thing happens.
 - (4) Finally Saul is like, "I'll do it myself!" Saul himself goes and is also overcome by the Spirit, stripping off his clothes and prophesying all day and night in the nude
 - b) Ridiculous. **If God is FOR David, who can stand against him?**
 - (1) God is fighting David's battles
 - (2) No sweet ninja moves are needed to dodge the spear
 - (3) God overwhelms the bounty hunters with his Spirit and stops them in their tracks, even forcing them to prophesy
 - D. Meanwhile, Jonathan is kind of blind to his father's insanity, and keeps giving dear old dad the benefit of the doubt
 1. 1 Samuel 20: They come up w/ a plan to see if Saul hates David or not, and it culminates with Saul trying to kill his own son
 - E. Throughout this time we see David's faith & trust, and God's faithfulness and deliverance
 1. David trusts God rather than falling in fear
 2. David relies on God's promise and provision despite the odds
 3. **If God is FOR David, who can stand against him?**
 - a) That was his perspective with Goliath, and it's his perspective now
- III. But guys - David is human. He's not super-human (SS Theology). Exasperation sets in.
- A. It sets in on Saul
 1. 1 Samuel 20:30-33: Remember Jonathan and David's little ruse to figure out if Saul was still angry? Well, it makes Saul so mad that he tries to kill his own son and heir!
 - B. It also sets in on David... Eventually, he is just weary
 1. 1 Samuel 21:1-9: David's visit to Ahimelech the priest. David lies to Ahimelech, claiming he is on a secret mission from Saul. He receives consecrated bread and the sword of Goliath.
 - a) This passage marks the beginning of David's compromises. His lie to Ahimelech, though intended for survival, shows a departure from his usual reliance on God's truth.
 - b) The fact that the sword of Goliath is right there points out this juxtaposition between trusting and not trusting
 - c) We will see next week that this lie has severe repercussions, as Saul later massacres the priests for helping David
 - d) Our actions have a ripple effect and even in terrible circumstances we cannot compromise our integrity

2. READ 1 Samuel 21:10-15: David's desperation leads him to seek refuge in Gath, the hometown of Goliath. There, he pretends to be insane before the king to avoid harm
 - a) This marks the beginning of a few chapters of David's lowest moments
 - b) David is human, after all, and he is vulnerable and afraid
 - c) The irony of pretending to act insane while carrying Goliath's sword shows how far our hero has fallen
 - d) He is desperate and doesn't know where to turn
 - e) He DOES, though, right? B/C If God is FOR him, who can be against him?
 - f) But as we will see in the next section, even David loses faith

IV. So what do we need to know from this story?

A. Even those with strong faith can falter

1. Faith doesn't mean you're perfect. You're still human.
2. David's journey reflects both strong faith and human vulnerability
3. We aren't caricatures, we are human
4. David had great trust, but he also had moments of fear and his tendency to take matters into his own hands
5. This makes David all the more relatable and instructive.
6. Even those with strong faith can falter - David's going to fall hard in life

B. 2 Tim 2:13, "If we are faithless, He remains faithful [true to His word and His righteous character], for He cannot deny [who he is]."

1. God is FOR David, not against him.
 - a) This is a story about God's faithfulness more than David's
2. David may have wavering commitment, but God is unwavering in his promises to David → he is continually delivered from death
3. God's faithfulness to David reminds us that He is sovereign and His plans for us are good and sure.
4. You may be thinking, prove it to me, Preacher. How do I know that God has good things for me?

C. God proved he is FOR you (yes you) when he died on a cross for your sins

1. *Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to all these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare [even] His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, how will He not also, along with Him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against God's elect (His chosen ones)? It is God who justifies us [declaring us blameless]. 34 Who is the one who condemns us? Christ Jesus is the One who died [to pay our penalty], and more than that, who was raised [from the dead], and who is at the right hand of God interceding [with the Father] for us. 35 Who shall ever separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?... 37 Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors and gain an overwhelming victory through Him who loved us [so much that He died for*

us]. 38 For I am convinced [and continue to be convinced—beyond any doubt] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present and threatening, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the [unlimited] love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. God is FOR you, church, and not against you in all things → he proved it on the cross
 3. “I don’t know what you’re doing, God, but I know what you’ve done.”
 4. Are you in a situation right now where that’s how you feel?
 - a) God, what are you doing?
 - (1) Health, marriage, finances, kids, politics, country, tragedy, injury, strife, job, school, future unknowns
 - (2) God - I don’t know what you are doing!
 - (3) But I know what you’ve done, and you have proven to me that you are FOR me and not against me
- D. So what do you need to do? **If God is FOR you, then trust Him!**
1. Just as David trusted God’s promise that he would become king, we are called to trust in God’s promises for our lives.
 2. This means relying on His word and His character, believing that He is for us and will bring His plans to fruition.
 3. Trusting God involves surrendering our fears and doubts to Him, knowing that He is in control.
 4. It is a call to walk by faith, not by sight, and to remain confident in His love and provision.
- E. If God is FOR you, and not against you, then you can trust him in the process - even when all seems dark and lost