

# Trusting God with Vengeance

1 Samuel 22-26

## I. INTRO

- A. Hook: Women's boxing at the Olympics this year...
- B. We all face situations where we are wronged and want to retaliate. How do we respond when the opportunity for revenge presents itself?
  - 1. Maybe you're in the thick of such a scenario right now
- C. Today, we want to look at David's restraint in dealing with Saul and explore what it means to trust God with vengeance, timing, and your own future
- D. We will see that David teaches us to **trust God with justice, even when the temptation to take matters into our own hands is overwhelming.**
- E. Let's examine three key episodes in David's life that tested his trust in God.

## II. EPISODE 1: DAVID SPARES SAUL IN THE CAVE (1 SAMUEL 24)

- A. Context
  - 1. David is getting hit and betrayed continually
  - 2. Saul is obsessively pursuing David

### B. Read and talk through 1 Samuel 24

*1. 24 After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David had gone into the wilderness of En-gedi. 2 So Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men... near the rocks of the wild goats. 3 At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave!*

*4 "Now's your opportunity!" David's men whispered to him. "Today the Lord is telling you, 'I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.'"*

- a) David's men see this as a God-given opportunity to kill Saul and end their suffering and hiding → you can't blame them.

**b) Will David trust God with justice or will he take matters into his own hands?**

*2. So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.*

*5 But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul's robe. 6 He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this to my lord the king. I shouldn't attack the Lord's anointed one, for the Lord himself has chosen him." 7 So David restrained his men and did not let them kill Saul.*

- a) David instead cuts off a corner of Saul's robe
- b) He feels convicted about it b/c Saul is king

- c) David believes God appoints and removes leaders in HIS timing (let's remember this come November)
  - d) David doesn't take justice into his own hands...
- 3. *After Saul had left the cave and gone on his way, 8 David came out and shouted after him, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked around, David bowed low before him.*
  - a) Meanwhile his friends are thinking, "David, they have us surrounded..."
- 4. *9 Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you? 10 This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn't true. For the Lord placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, 'I will never harm the king—he is the Lord's anointed one.' 11 Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. This proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me. 12 "May the Lord judge between you and me, and may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you."*

*16 When David had finished speaking, Saul called back, "Is that really you, my son David?" Then he began to cry. 17 And he said to David, "You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil. 18 Yes, you have been amazingly kind to me today, for when the Lord put me in a place where you could have killed me, you didn't do it. 19 Who else would let his enemy get away when he had him in his power? May the Lord reward you well for the kindness you have shown me today.*

  - a) David didn't take matters into his own hands. He trusted God with justice and it worked out
- C. When we are wronged, our impulse is often to retaliate
  - 1. Lash out w/ tongue or fists; get even; get vengeance;
- D. That might be our default, but we must trust God's timing and justice.
  - 1. It worked out for David, but there's no guarantee here
  - 2. Upholding integrity often requires taking a stand, even when it is difficult and comes at a cost.
    - a) This is scary for David → 3000 vs. a few hundred
    - b) This is a bold move, but he won't compromise
    - c) Even with this, Saul still pursues him
  - 3. Question: Will you trust God enough to let Him be the judge?
    - a) Is God really in control, or is he biting his nails worried?
    - b) Will you trust in God's justice?
    - c) Are you willing to be patient with God's timing and work, or do you think you know better?
    - d) Can you let go of personal vengeance and leave room for God?

### III. EPISODE 2: DAVID SPARES SAUL AGAIN IN ZIPH (1 SAMUEL 26)

A. Context: Despite the previous encounter, Saul continues to pursue David.

**B. Read and talk through 1 Samuel 26**

1. *Now some men from Ziph came to Saul at Gibeah to tell him, “David is hiding on the hill... 2 So Saul took 3,000 of Israel’s elite troops and went to hunt him down in the wilderness of Ziph. 3 Saul camped along the road beside the hill of Hakilah, near Jeshimon, where David was hiding. When David learned that Saul had come after him into the wilderness, 4 he sent out spies to verify the report of Saul’s arrival.*

*5 David slipped over to Saul’s camp one night to look around. Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of his army, were sleeping inside a ring formed by the slumbering warriors. 6 “Who will volunteer to go in there with me?”...*

*“I’ll go with you,” Abishai replied. 7 So David and Abishai went right into Saul’s camp and found him asleep, with his spear stuck in the ground beside his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying asleep around him.*

*8 “God has surely handed your enemy over to you this time!” Abishai whispered to David. “Let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won’t need to strike twice!”*

a) Will David trust God with justice or will he take matters into his own hands?

2. *9 “No!” David said. “Don’t kill him. For who can remain innocent after attacking the Lord’s anointed one? 10 Surely the Lord will strike Saul down someday, or he will die of old age or in battle. 11 The Lord forbid that I should kill the one he has anointed! But take his spear and that jug of water beside his head, and then let’s get out of here!”*

a) 1 Samuel 26:10-11 Paraphrased: God will kill Saul in his timing, but it won’t be by my hands. That’s not my responsibility, and it would be wrong to kill the king. → I won’t compromise my integrity out of convenience

3. *12 So David took the spear and jug of water that were near Saul’s head. Then he and Abishai got away without anyone seeing them or even waking up, because the Lord had put Saul’s men into a deep sleep.*

*13 David climbed the hill opposite the camp until he was at a safe distance. 14 Then he shouted down to the soldiers and to Abner son of Ner, “Wake up, Abner!”*

*“Who is it?” Abner demanded.*

*15 “Well, Abner, you’re a great man, aren’t you?” David taunted. “Where in all Israel is there anyone as mighty? So why haven’t you guarded your*

*master the king when someone came to kill him? 16 This isn't good at all! I swear by the Lord that you and your men deserve to die, because you failed to protect your master, the Lord's anointed! Look around! Where are the king's spear and the jug of water that were beside his head?"*

*17 Saul recognized David's voice and called out, "Is that you, my son David?"*

*And David replied, "Yes, my lord the king. 18 Why are you chasing me? What have I done? What is my crime? 19 But now let my lord the king listen to his servant. If the Lord has stirred you up against me, then let him accept my offering. But if this is simply a human scheme, then may those involved be cursed by the Lord. For they have driven me from my home, so I can no longer live among the Lord's people, and they have said, 'Go, worship pagan gods.' 20 Must I die on foreign soil, far from the presence of the Lord? Why has the king of Israel come out to search for a single flea? Why does he hunt me down like a partridge on the mountains?"*

*21 Then Saul confessed, "I have sinned. Come back home, my son, and I will no longer try to harm you, for you valued my life today. I have been a fool and very, very wrong."*

C. What's David's angle here?

1. He could have killed Saul
2. He could have simply escape
3. Instead he seeks justice. Seeking justice is different from seeking vengeance
  - a) The pursuit of justice is righteous; personal revenge is not.
  - b) We should seek justice through lawful means with a heart that seeks fairness, not revenge.
  - c) David seeks justice (trying to prove his innocence) rather than getting even w/ Saul
4. Trusting God means refraining from revenge, but it doesn't mean not trying to right what is wrong
5. When I say to trust God with your situation, it doesn't mean DO NOTHING
  - a) Refraining from revenge means letting go of personal retaliation
  - b) It means positively placing faith in the reality that God will retaliate in his own timing, that he is a shield for his children
  - c) It also means we should seek godly solutions...
    - (1) For example, instead of harming Saul, David chose to confront him peacefully
    - (2) Praying for your enemies, seeking reconciliation, pleading with the court for mercy and justice, are all godly solutions versus bulldozing their house when they are at work

6. Question: How can you show grace and restraint in situations where you **have** the power to retaliate?

#### IV. EPISODE 3: DAVID'S ENCOUNTER WITH NABAL AND ABIGAIL (1 SAMUEL 25)

A. Context: Sandwiched in between the previous two episodes

B. **Paraphrase of 1 Samuel 25**

*David moved to the wilderness of Maon, where a wealthy man named Nabal lived with 3,000 sheep and 1,000 goats near Carmel. Learning that Nabal was shearing his sheep, David sent ten men to greet him, reminding Nabal of the protection his men had provided Nabal's shepherds and asking for provisions. Nabal insulted David and refused.*

*Hearing this, David prepared 400 men for a retaliatory attack. Meanwhile, one of Nabal's servants warned Abigail of the danger, praising David's men and urging her to act quickly since Nabal was unreasonable.*

*Abigail quickly gathered food and supplies, loaded them onto donkeys, and went to meet David without telling her husband. She bowed before David, took responsibility for Nabal's foolishness (name), and asked David to accept her gift to avoid bloodshed, reminding him that the Lord would establish his dynasty.*

*David, recognizing her wisdom, thanked God for sending Abigail to prevent him from taking vengeance. He accepted her gifts and promised not to harm Nabal.*

*When Abigail returned, she found Nabal drunk and waited until the next morning to tell him what had happened. Upon hearing the news, Nabal had a stroke and died ten days later.*

*David, hearing of Nabal's death, praised God for avenging the insult without his intervention. He then sent messengers to ask Abigail to become his wife, and she agreed, becoming his wife quickly. Meanwhile, Saul had given David's previous wife, Michal, to another man.*

1. Unlike his dealings with Saul, David reacts impulsively to Nabal
2. Abigail is a voice of reason
  - a) Her actions remind David to trust God's justice rather than taking it into his own hands.
3. Key Verse: 1 Samuel 25:33 – David praises Abigail for her wisdom:  
*“Blessed be your good judgment and for keeping me from bloodshed this day and from avenging myself with my own hands.”*

C. Application → Are you in a situation? Ever wonder why it's easier to have grace for some people and not others? Why is David crazy patient with Saul and not Nabal?

1. Sometimes, God sends people into our lives to remind us of His ways. Are we listening?
2. Question: In moments of anger, are you open to correction and reminders of God's principles?
3. When you're angry, do you listen to logic and reason from friends, or do you "see red" and just shut down?
4. Are you driven by your emotions or what is true?

## V. CONCLUSION

### A. Summary → **trust God with justice, even when the temptation to take matters into our own hands is overwhelming.**

1. David's trust in God's justice was tested multiple times with Saul, and he passed those tests by refraining from vengeance.
  - a) In every scenario, God worked it out when David trusted him
2. Nabal's story shows how easy it is to poke the bear
  - a) Through Abigail's wisdom, God intervenes, reminding David—and us—that vengeance belongs to the Lord → Which God executes!

### B. During this time, God wrote Psalm 52...

1. In it, he says that evil will be uprooted, David will be planted
2. He says: "I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever" (52:8).
  - a) This is one of the great secrets at the heart of the life of a believer.
  - b) The breakthrough to inner health and calm is fundamentally not activity on our part but stillness and trust
  - c) Psalm 46:10 says to "be still and know that he is God."
    - (1) The opposite of being still is STRIVING
    - (2) In your scenario, are you STILL, or are you STRIVING?
  - d) Being still is to trust God, and trusting God means living your life as if God actually exists and is who he says he is.
  - e) It is to conduct your affairs in such a way that what you say that you believe about God aligns with how live
  - f) It is to leave your final welfare in God's hands rather than yours

### C. Final thoughts...

1. In our lives, we will face injustice
2. When we do, do we trust God enough to leave vengeance in His hands?
3. Will we allow God to be our defender, even when the opportunity for immediate justice is within our grasp?
4. Let us commit to trusting God with our grievances
5. **Trust God with justice, even when the temptation to take matters into our own hands is overwhelming.**
6. Charles Stanley: "If we fight our battles on our knees, we will win every time." → make this our primary directive
7. If you want the elders to pray over you and your situation this morning, we would love to intercede on your behalf.