

The Life of Saul Again Spared by David: Lessons on Reaping What One Sows 1 Samuel 26:01–25

1. *The betrayal of David and Saul's renewal of his pursuit: A heart filled with anger and murder*

- a. David was betrayed by the Ziphites
- b. Saul set out to pursue David: In the Desert of Ziph
 - 1) Took 3,000 crack troops
 - 2) Camped on the hill of Hakilah
- c. David stayed hidden in the desert
 - 1) He sent out scouts
 - 2) He learned where Saul had camped

2. *David ventured into Saul's camp under the cloak of darkness: A heart set on never harming God's anointed*

- a. David sneaked up to Saul's camp: Noted where Saul and Abner were sleeping
- b. David asked for a volunteer to sneak into Saul's camp with him
 - 1) The two soldiers asked
 - Ahimelech the Hittite
 - Abishai, David's nephew
 - 2) Abishai volunteered
- c. David and Abishai sneaked right up to where Saul was sleeping
 - 1) His spear was by his head

- 1 The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?"
- 2 So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand select Israelite troops, to search there for David.
- 3 Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul had followed him there,
- 4 he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had definitely arrived.
- 5 Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him.
- 6 David then asked Ahimelek the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, "Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?" "I'll go with you," said Abishai.
- 7 So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head.

- 2) His soldiers and Abner were in a deep sleep
- 3) Abishai whispered that this was a God-given opportunity: He requested the right to kill Saul with his own spear

d. David refused to harm Saul, the LORD's anointed

- 1) Because David would become guilty before God
- 2) Because vengeance is the LORD's and the LORD would judge Saul in His own time and way

3) Because David feared the LORD

e. David and Abishai sneaked back out of Saul's camp

- 1) They took Saul's spear (a symbol of authority) and water jug (a symbol of life)
- 2) They were not detected: The LORD had sent a deep sleep upon Saul and his troops
- 3) They crossed over to the other side and stood on top of a hill, a safe distance away

3. *The charge of David against Abner — failing to protect God's anointed and deserving to die: A lesson on neglect, unfaithfulness*

a. David called out and awoke Abner and the troops

Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.

8 Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won't strike him twice."

9 But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless?"

10 As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.

11 But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."

12 So David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

13 Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away; there was a wide space between them.

14 He called out to the army and to Abner son of Ner, "Aren't you going to answer me, Abner?" Abner replied, "Who are you who calls to the king?"

- b. David challenged Abner
 - 1) His manhood
 - 2) His position in Israel
 - 3) His irresponsibility and neglect
- c. David charged Abner with terrible failure and issued the legal verdict
 - 1) The verdict: Death
 - 2) The reason: He failed to protect God's anointed
 - 3) The evidence: The king's spear and water jug

4. *The attempt of David to resolve the conflict with Saul: Seeking peace with one's brother*

- a. Saul recognized David's voice
- b. David presented a strong case for reconciliation
 - 1) If he had done any wrong, deserved any guilt – where was the evidence?
 - 2) If the LORD was chastising him for sin through Saul, then he would present an offering of peace to God
 - 3) If others had turned Saul against him, they deserved to be cursed:
 - For they kept him from his inheritance
 - For they tried to force him to other nations and their false gods
- c. David pleaded with Saul
 - 1) Not to let him die in exile, on foreign soil
 - 2) To consider the true facts: He (David) was nothing more than a flea or partridge

15 David said, "You're a man, aren't you? And who is like you in Israel? Why didn't you guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy your lord the king."

16 What you have done is not good. As surely as the LORD lives, you and your men must die, because you did not guard your master, the LORD's anointed. Look around you. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were near his head?"

17 Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is that your voice, David my son?" David replied, "Yes it is, my lord the king."

18 And he added, "Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of?"

19 Now let my lord the king listen to his servant's words. If the LORD has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, people have done it, may they be cursed before the LORD! They have driven me today from my share in the LORD's inheritance and have said, 'Go, serve other gods.'

20 Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the LORD. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea – as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."

5. *The confession of Saul:*
A lesson on reaping
what one sows

- a. Saul confessed his sin and asked David to return: A short-lived confession – acted not out of repentance
- b. David offered to return Saul's symbol of authority, his spear
- c. David proclaimed God's law of sowing and reaping: God rewards a person for righteousness and faithfulness
 - 1) David proved righteous by sparing Saul's life
 - 2) David cried out for the LORD to reward him accordingly: To rescue and deliver him
- d. Saul spoke the last words he would ever speak to David: A blessing and a prediction of a glorious future – David would do great things and be triumphant

21 Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have been terribly wrong."

22 "Here is the king's spear," David answered. "Let one of your young men come over and get it."

23 The LORD rewards everyone for their righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD's anointed.

24 As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all trouble."

25 Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, David my son; you will do great things and surely triumph." So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.