

There are Bibles in front of you

And we're looking at 1 Samuel chapter 21

There's an outline for you to take notes - if you wish

Let me ask God for His help and understanding

Let's pray...

Intro

What are you afraid of?

[PowerPoint 1-Question]

Researchers at Johns Hopkins University [USA] reported that 30 years ago, the greatest fears of school children were:

1) Animals, 2) Being in a dark room, 3) High places, 4) Strangers, 5) Loud noises.

Today, children are afraid of the following:

1) Divorce, 2) Nuclear war, 3) Cancer, 4) Pollution, 5) Being mugged.

What are you afraid of?

War?

Loneliness?

Ill Health?

Dying?

Persecution?

God's Judgement?

In our OT passage today...

David was afraid and understandably so...

David has been anointed as the next King of Israel

The problem is King Saul is the current king

And David has been serving in King Saul's palace

David has a close friendship with King Saul's son, Jonathan,

And in chapters 18, 19 and 20 of 1 Samuel - King Saul has become increasingly jealous and paranoid about David -

[PowerPoint 2-David on the run]

So much so - that Saul is now trying to kill David

So, David can no longer serve Saul in the palace

Fear drove David to the right place (vv1-9)

We pick up the story where David is now on the run from Saul who is out to kill him

Fear drove David to the right place - that's in verses 1 to 9 - of 1 Sam 21

[PowerPoint 3-Map]

David's fear leads him to a place called Nob (map) and to a man of God -

Ahimelek - the priest - v1

Ahimelek trembled when he saw David - why? The sight of a bedraggled David on the run - may have caused Ahimelek to be afraid - is there danger? is David in trouble? What's going on

[PowerPoint 4-right place]

Also, Ahimelek may have been surprised that David, God's anointed next king, is alone without any companions

V2 - David tells a lie - He says he's on a special mission for King Saul - it's a secret mission - no one is to know about it - and David will rendezvous with his men at a certain place

Why does David lie?

Most likely - David doesn't want to put Ahimelek in danger - the less Ahimelek knows the better

Is it ok to lie?

(pause)

During WWII, a Dutch lady called Corrie ten Boom, didn't tell the Nazis that she was hiding people in her house - in her opinion the Nazis didn't deserve to know the truth - as they would only kill those people, she was hiding

In the same way - David's life is in danger - to protect Ahimelek - David doesn't tell him all the details.

Whether that's right or wrong - you can decide...

David simply asks for bread - v3

Ahimelek, the priest, doesn't have any bread - only the showbread presented at the house of the Lord - as a sign of God fellowshiping with his people - and each Sabbath day, the showbread was replaced with fresh bread - and according to Levitical law only the priests could eat this bread

But Ahimelek, the priest, v4 - is prepared to give David the replaced showbread - as long as David and his men - have been kept from sleeping with women - that

is as long as David and his men are ceremonially clean - also a condition when Israeli soldiers were fighting in the army

V5 - David assures Ahimelek he and his men are ceremonially clean

Now, technically the priest is breaking the Levitical law by giving this bread to David - as it's meant for the priests only

In our NT passage from Mark 2 [Turn there now] - Jesus refers to this incident in Samuel 21 - the context of the Mark 2 passage - is that Jesus and His disciples are accused, by the Pharisees, of "working" on the Sabbath by picking some heads of grain to eat. Jesus' response endorses what David did - because the way Jesus sees it is that human need is far more important than keeping some ceremonial rules. God says in a few places "He desires mercy not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:8; Matthew 9:13 & Matthew 12:7)

The bottom line as far as Jesus is concerned is that - compassion and concern for those in need overrides keeping precise details of any ritual laws

A modern-day example of this would be - approving the breaking of the speed limit to save a life

In this Mark 2 passage - Jesus is also saying - the Sabbath day was made for humans - not so they worship the day and get bogged down in petty rules - but so that they use the day - to rest and to be holy and to do good things, like helping others and showing mercy and compassion

Jesus also says He's Lord of the Sabbath - in other words - the laws of God - including the Sabbath - are all pointing to Jesus - who is greater than all the laws and greater than the Sabbath itself - and it's actually in Jesus we get true Sabbath rest (as Jesus Himself says in Matthew 11:28 ²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.")

Back to 1 Samuel 21 - v6 - Ahimelek gives David the bread

It's probably worth mentioning a discrepancy we need to resolve here - between 1 Samuel 21 and Mark 2 - as to whether men were actually with David or not - 1 Sam 21 seems to imply David lied about men being with him - whereas Jesus in Mark 2 refers to David and his companions. Possible solutions to this discrepancy are:

- Either there were men were with David and he was telling the truth
- Or there is another incident where David and his men ate bread from the House of the Lord that Jesus is referring to
- Or when Jesus refers to 1 Samuel 21 - He is simply reporting what David said - that he needed bread for himself and his men - and Jesus is making no comment as to whether this is a lie or not

Then in v7 - unfortunately - we are told that there is an eye-witness to David and Ahimelek's exchange - the eye witness is Doeg, Saul's chief shepherd. It's

ironic that Doeg is a shepherd - not a nice shepherd though - in comparison to David a former shepherd boy - and Jesus - the Good Shepherd.

Doeg will become important in the next chapter (22) - next week - when he testifies against Ahimelek, the priest...

In v8 - David - also asks Ahimelek for a spear or sword - and again lies that the king's mission was so urgent - he didn't bring a weapon

Ahimelek gives David - the only weapon there is - the sword of Goliath - which David is more than familiar with

So, fear drove David to the right place.

Fear drove David to the wrong place (vv10-12)

Fear also drove David to the wrong place - that's in vv10-12

[PowerPoint 5-map]

In his fear - David fled from Saul - in v10 - and went to King Achish of Gath
Gath is Philistine territory [See map]

[PowerPoint 6-wrong place]

And the Philistines are Israel's and David's arch enemy - it's enemy territory

David's fleeing to

If David thought he could be incognito - and go undercover there

He can think again

See V11 - Achish's servants recognize David as a) the King - which is interesting because Saul is still King and David has only been anointed as the next king -

but they see him as king - perhaps because of his military prowess in killing the

giant, Goliath - and b) they have heard a song about David - v11 - *Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands*

V12 - Now David's really afraid - his covers blown and he's in the enemy city of Gath

Fear drove David to the wrong place

(pause)

Fear leads David to think fast (v13-15)

Realizing he is in danger - fear then leads David to think fast - that's in vv13-15

[PowerPoint 7-Fast]

So, David pretends to be insane in front of King Achish and his servants

He acts like a madman - making marks on the doors and letting saliva run down his beard (culturally a big no no!)

Certain cultures are superstitious about insanity - believing to harm such people is unlucky

Achish is alarmed - v14 - he has enough madmen of his own - without having a madman like David in his house

So, we read in verse 1 of the next chapter (22) - David escaped

Whether it was right for David to deceive Achish, the Philistine, by pretending to be insane, is again left to us as the reader to decide

In wartime situations some sincere Christians have decided that telling the truth is always paramount and God must be trusted to deal with the consequences. But other equally sincere Christians have decided that deceiving the enemy in order to save lives - is perfectly justified.

It remains a challenge for us to know how to behave in similar dangerous situations, but David's actions should not be seen as justification for treating all non-believers - as if they have no right to the truth.

It is also interesting to note that in Psalm 34 - the traditional heading of this psalm - presents David's reflection on these events in the city of Gath, and David makes no mention of his deceit and the Psalm does not focus on David's cleverness but focuses on the goodness of the Lord as the key factor that kept David safe - if you want to turn to **Psalm 34** - and note the following verses - 17 to 20:

- ¹⁷ The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears them;
he delivers them from all their troubles.
- ¹⁸ The LORD is close to the broken-hearted
and saves those who are crushed in spirit.
- ¹⁹ The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;
- ²⁰ he protects all his bones,
not one of them will be broken.

Psalm 56 also reflects on David's escape from Gath - ending with - verses 12 and 13:

- ¹² I am under vows to you, my God;
I will present my thank offerings to you.
- ¹³ For you have delivered me from death
and my feet from stumbling,
that I may walk before God
in the light of life

Application

[PowerPoint 8-Application heading]

So, some applications for us to take home today

[PowerPoint 8a-App1]

1. First - When we become fearful, we must be on guard against the temptation to revert to attitudes and actions that are self-focused - instead of relying on God

[PowerPoint 8b-App2]

2. Second - David serves as an example to all of us - that in our human nature - we can make good, bad and ugly choices. God can use our good, bad and ugly choices to achieve His purposes.
God preserved His anointed - David - and did not abandon him to the grave - and likewise He did not abandon His anointed Son, Jesus, to the grave - but raised Him to life on the third day - yet God still also achieved His purpose of saving people from punishment for their sins

[PowerPoint 8c-App3]

3. Third - David is like a shepherd to Ahimelek - trying to protect him from danger. David as a shepherd ultimately points to Jesus - our Good Shepherd

[PowerPoint 8c-App3]

4. Four - The bread given to David to sustain his life was God's bread - and it points to Jesus - who refers to Himself in John 6:35 - **as the bread of life** and later in John 6:51 Jesus says - **I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.**

The question for each one of us is have we come and fed from Jesus the bread of life - so we can be sure of eternal life?

(pause)

[PowerPoint 9-Conclusion]

Conclusion

And so, we come back to where we began.

What are you afraid of?

[PowerPoint 10a]

Well here's a verse for you from 2 Tim 1:7 - NKJV

For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

And if you are afraid of God's judgment then let me leave us with this verse from 1 John 4:18:

[PowerPoint 10b]

There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.

The "fear" that perfect loves casts out here - is the fear of God's judgment.

We know that [Judgment Day](#) is coming, but those who are in Christ know the love of God, which drives away fear of condemnation. The dismissal of the fear of judgment is one of the main functions of God's love. The person without Christ is under judgment and has plenty to fear ([John 3:18](#)), but, once a person is in Christ, the fear of judgment is gone. A person is then reconciled to God,

and "there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus"

[\(Romans 8:1\)](#).

So, as we leave this place today - let us remember that God's perfect love - drives out fear - and let us claim that promise...

Let's pray...