

Dealing with Doubt (Proverbs 3:5-8, 1 Samuel 27 & John 20:24-29)

27-Oct-19

G'Day Church Family

There are **Bibles** in front of you

And we're looking at **1 Samuel chapter 27** - and we'll also be referring to Proverbs 3:5-8 and John 20:24-29.

Let me ask God for His help and guidance first - let's pray...

Intro/Doubt

I don't know if you're like this

If I turn up for a **meeting** or an appointment - and **no one else is there** - my first thought is - Oh - maybe I got the **wrong day** - or maybe I got the **wrong time?**

(pause)

Today we're looking at **doubt** -

Well - at least **I thought that's what** we were looking at?

(pause)

So first up then - we'd better have a **definition of doubt**

[PowerPoint 1-Definition]

Feeling uncertain or lacking confidence about something or someone

In this chapter David is doubting God is with him

[PowerPoint 2-David's Doubts God]

- Even though God helped him defeat **Goliath**
- Even though God **anointed him as the next King** of Israel

- Even though God has *preserved David from being killed* by Saul,
- Even though God *prevented David from foolishly wiping out Nabal* by sending Abigail
- Even though God gave David a *beautiful and wise wife, Abigail*
- Even *though David previously trusted* God to take vengeance against Saul, when David had 2 opportunities to kill Saul

But now in verse 1 of chapter 27

David **thought to himself**, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul..."

Why would David think like this - when he has been *shown clearly that God is with him* and he will be the *next king* - and *Saul will not prevail*?

David has doubt - because he's *just like us* - isn't he?

(pause)

[PowerPoint 3-What things?]

What things *do we doubt God* about?

Here's a few to choose from

- Is *God real*? Maybe the sceptics and Atheists are right?
- Is *God* really *listening*?
- Will *God help* me this time? Like He has in the past? He helped me with 2 big problems before - *maybe he won't help this time*
- Does *Jesus* really take away my *sins*?
- Will we really go to *Heaven*?
- Is the *Bible* really *true*?
- And so on...

Personally, my doubts come *when I'm tired - lupus* - affects my thinking when I'm *tired* - and I get *cognitive clouding* - and start to *doubt*. Is there another *sermon* in this head of mine? Will God get me thru' this visit from *Presbytery*?
(pause)

We all doubt - don't we?

But, does *doubt* come *from God*?

(pause)

The very *first expression of doubt in the Bible* is in Genesis chapter 3 - when Satan tempted Eve - and said - "[Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?](#)" (v1) - Satan wanted Eve to lack confidence in God's command. When Eve confirmed God's command, including the consequences, Satan replied with a *denial*, which is a stronger statement of doubt - v4: "[You will not surely die.](#)" Doubt is *a tool of Satan* to make us *lack confidence in God's Word* and consider His judgment unlikely.

But we *can't* lay all the *blame* at *Satan's* door - the Bible also shows we are accountable for our own doubts - when Zechariah was told by an angel. he would have a son (John the B) in his old age (Luke 1) - he doubted that God could overcome the obstacles of age. *Anytime we allow human reason to overshadow faith in God* - sinful *doubt is the result*.

But the apostle Paul says - [nothing is impossible for God - God has made wisdom of this world foolish \(1 Cor 1:20\)](#).

In this *chapter (27 of 1 Samuel)* there is *no mention of God* - and no mention of David consulting with God. *Doubt often leaves God out of the picture* all together - and has us *going it alone* - that's what David is like in this chapter

So, let's look at the problem with doubt in this chapter

The Problem with Doubt (1 Samuel 27)

[PowerPoint 4-Heading]

Looking at verse 1 of chapter 27 - we see how the doubt comes in

But David **thought to himself**, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul"

David's doubt comes because he *relies on himself* - and it was *his thoughts* - and *not God's plan* - that he was *focusing on*

[PowerPoint 4a-Discouragement]

And this doubt leads to **DISCOURAGEMENT and FEAR** - David *doubts God's protection* and *fears* one day *Saul will kill him* - even though God has shown He is with David all the way

Application - But aren't we like that? *We let doubt get the better of us* - and become discouraged and afraid? *Maybe God won't help this time? Maybe God doesn't care* about me anymore? Yet His Word - says **He will never leave us nor forsake us** (Deut 31:6 and Heb 13:5)

[PowerPoint 3b-Wrong Decisions]

Doubt also leads to **WRONG DECISIONS** - see the rest of v1- David thinks the **"best thing"** he can do is go the land of the Philistines?

Really David? The **best thing** is to go and live in **enemy** territory - **away** from **God's Promised Land** - **away** from worshipping with **God's people** - to live **with the enemy** - and to live with **people who worship false gods**. Really David?
(pause)

It's **ironic** - that **if Saul told David to leave** Israel and go to the idol-worshipping Philistines - **there's no way David would go** - but doubt and discouragement and fear drove David to do something Saul could never make him do!

Remember back in 1 Sam 22:5 - the prophet **Gad** - **told David to go** to the land of **Judah**. There have been no further instructions from God - so David should be staying in Judah. But **David hasn't consulted God** on this? What happened to the **priest Abiathar and the Ephod** - David hasn't consulted him since chapter 23 - because he's **not relying on God for his decision making** now.

Application - maybe **we're a bit like David** - we don't ask God - because we don't want to hear the answer - we've already decided what we're going to do?

[PowerPoint 4c-Others]

Doubt also affects **OTHERS AROUND US** (see v2,) - David's doubt leads his **600 men into danger** and into ungodly territory (v2) - and the **men's families** (v3) and **David's 2 wives** (Ahinoam and Abigail)

You could argue he's protecting them from Saul - but it would be like us **taking our family to an anti-Christian country** - not the wisest move?

David's decision **solves one problem** - **Saul gives up** the chase (in v4). But it creates more problems - because it **puts all those people in great danger** in a foreign hostile land - and **leads to lies and deception** as we'll see

Application - what about us? Does *our doubt - lead to a bad decision - which affects others?*

For example - *we doubt God will provide a new job - so we quit the job we're in - before God has provided us with a new one - and that affects the whole family?*

Or *we doubt God will provide for us - so we steal - or fiddle our tax return - or fiddle Centrelink - or make a false insurance claim? Then we get caught out - and that affects the whole family.*

[PowerPoint 4d-Deals with the ungodly]

David's doubt also leads to making **DEALS with the ungodly** - David has to *compromise* and make a deal with King Achish of Gath - David calls himself *Achish's servant* (in v5, and 28:2) Really David?

God's anointed King - is a servant to the Philistine King of Gath? Really?

The deal also includes David living in Ziklag (so he has freedom without being watched as closely - as he would be in Gath) - and living in Philistine territory for 16 months (v7). Would you like to make a deal with the North Korean leader - Kim Jong-un?

Achish accepts David's deal this time - as opposed to chapter 21:10-15 - for 2 reasons - David and Achish have a *common enemy* - Saul - and David has 600 fighting men that Achish can use

Application - What about us? Is our doubt of God's help - causing us to go to the ungodly for help - and then having us compromise on our Christian values - because we want their approval and their friendship?

[PowerPoint 4e-Ungodly Actions]

David's doubt also leads to **UNGODLY ACTIONS** (in vv8-12) -- David and his men *attack the enemies of Israel* [like Gershurites, Girzites and Amalekites] *rather than enemies of Achish and the Philistines*. David is using his deal with Achish - to go and attack Israel's enemies.

But *David, has to lie* to Achish and pretend that he's been raiding Israelites areas [the Negev of Judah, the Negev of Jerahmeel and the Negev of the Kenites] - and he *has to kill everyone* in the places he raided - *so no one can inform Achish* what David is really doing. In one sense David's fighting the *enemies of God's people* and *he can justify it that way*. But *God hasn't told David to do this*. And this is *no way of life - for God's anointed one*. He's *fighting wars for profit* and *not* under *God's approval* or guidance - and *not for God's honour*.

David didn't lie to Achish because he was ashamed of what he doing, *he lied to gain favour with Achish*, he knew Achish would be pleased David had raided his own people.

So, David's doubt has caused discouragement, fear, caused him to make a wrong decision, endangered others around him, caused him to make deals with an ungodly king and country - and led to ungodly actions - lies upon lies, mass murder, cover ups and deceit. You may have thought spies and *double agents were just in James Bond movies* - but they're here in the Bible.

And disturbingly, *David is so very good at it* - he has King Achish - in v12 - believing that David - is on the Philistine's side now and has become "obnoxious" to his own people?

And before we start thinking - well it's war-time conditions - David is just trying to survive. Yes - **but has he once consulted God** on any of this?

Application - the problem is - the **roots of sin must be dealt with** or they come back with greater force. What happens here in 1 Samuel chapter 27 - **sows the seed for what David does with Bathsheba and Uriah later on** in 2 Samuel 11.

Still want to be like David?

(pause)

Perhaps we all are a bit like David - to some degree?

To **some degree, many Christians have been where David is** at in this back-sliding state. We can understand what David is doing; **but it is still wrong**, and very very dangerous.

God left David to himself - so that we see **how sin can grip even the best of men** - and to **show the necessity of God's grace and mercy** - in sending **Jesus** - to release us from the grip of sin.

David is in the Bible **to show us it can happen to us** if we're not relying on God.

(pause)

Doubt leads to unbelief (John 20:24-25)

There's **one more thing** that doubt can do to us.

And it's in our NT passage from John 20:24-29 - **[if you could turn there in your Bibles]**

The context is that one of the disciples, **Thomas, wasn't present**, when the resurrected **Jesus, appeared** to the disciples.

Now, remember, **Thomas**, has been an *eye-witness* to a lot of Jesus' *miracles* - he's seen and witnessed the most amazing things - and he knows that Jesus said - He would *die* and on the *third day rise* from the dead. But when the other disciples tell Thomas - they've seen the risen Jesus - **Thomas - full of doubt** - says in v25

[PowerPoint 5-Unbelief]

- "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe"

You see, Thomas' doubt leads to him not believing

For Thomas - seeing is believing

He's *not prepared* to *trust Jesus'* promises nor the *evidence of* the other *disciples*

Application - for us - it can mean - *if we keep doubting God's Word* and *God's Promises* - we'll start to *believe less and less of God's Word* - and start to even *doubt Jesus' forgiveness* of our sins and His promise of *eternal life* - in Heaven.

The Answer to our Doubt (John 20:26-29, Proverbs 3:5-8)

The *answer to our doubt is* **faith** - faith comes by hearing God's Word (Rom 10:17)

[PowerPoint 6-Answer]

God gave us the *Bible as a testimony of His works in the past*. As we have faith in God and study His Word - we gain an understanding of what God has done in the *past*, what He has *promised* us for the *present*, and what we can

expect from Him *in the future*, we are then able to act in faith instead of doubt.

Jesus shows a *better way than doubting Thomas*

See v29 - Jesus says:

Because you have seen me, you have believed; ***blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.***"

Jesus is saying here - the *answer to our DOUBT is FAITH*

[Hebrews 11:1](#) says, "faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

With faith - we then have confidence in God's promise - even in the things we cannot see - because God has proven Himself faithful, true, and able.

Every Christian is in a blessed position and will be blessed - Jesus says -

because - unlike Thomas - we believe without having seen the Risen Jesus.

Yet, *Thomas*, is in the Bible because *he's like us* - and we sometimes doubt.

Our *response* to doubt - *boils down to trusting God* - no matter what.

So, let's get our response from our OT passage from Proverbs 3:5-8

[Please turn there now]

See v5 - [Trust in the Lord with all your heart](#) - David didn't do that - he

trusted in his own doubtful heart. What about us? Are we trusting in the Lord or ourselves?

V5 still - **Lean not on your own understanding** - David leaned on his own understanding and made a wrong choice. What about us? Are we relying on our own strength & understanding instead of God's?

V6 - **submit your ways to God and He will make your paths straight** - David didn't consult God before taking action. What about us? Do we consult God before we act?

V7 - **do not be wise in your own eyes** - David was wise only in his own eyes - He didn't seek the wisdom of God. What about us? Do we think we know better than God?

V7 still - **Fear the Lord and shun evil** - *David feared Saul not God* - he didn't shun evil - he became an **outlaw**. What about us? Do we have a reverent fear of God - and do we keep away from doing evil?

V8 - **this will bring health to his body** David's *mental health was not the best* here was it? - he was thinking *negatively* and *doubtfully* [*understandably tired on the run*] - and *not thinking about how God could help* and protect him as God had done many times before.

Thinking negatively and doubtfully and *not trusting God* - will affect our mental health - and will cause us to have fear and to have stress - and this will also affect our *physical health too*. Much better for us to *trust the Lord with all our heart* as the Proverb says.

Conclusion

So, as we leave here this morning/evening - we are *waiting* for the promised *return of* our Lord *Jesus* - and *waiting for our life* on this Earth *to end* so we can be with the Lord in Heaven - *whichever comes first?*

I encourage you, friends, *as we do wait* - to *remember*

We are in a *blessed position* - by having faith - and believing without seeing -

Jesus says so -

[PowerPoint 7-Conclusion]

And remember as the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians 5:7

We live by faith, not by sight.

Let's pray...