

Facing Injustice

1Samuel 19:1-24

One of the most remarkable Christians in the history of the church is a man by the name of Jonathan Edwards.

He was born in 1703 and by 1722 had graduated from Yale with a master's degree.

In 1729 he took the pastorate of a Congregationalist church in a town in New England called Northampton.

He was a significant part of one of the greatest revivals in the history of the church known as the great awakenings.

His preaching and writing helped to disciple many people in his own time and it is still looked to by many as wonderful help on the journey of truly knowing the LORD.

His own town and church experienced the revival in powerful ways, church attendance grew and at times it was commonplace for many people to be lined up at the pastor's door feeling great concern for their souls and wanting to seek spiritual guidance.

As great as that was, the relationship between the congregation and its pastor did have some challenges over the years.

Some did not appreciate his preaching, some did not care for his personality, and some took issue with some of his theology.

Part of the challenge came from the fact that Edwards had taken over the pastorate from his grandfather Solomon Stoddard.

Stoddard had been pastor of the church for sixty years and Edwards had to live in the shadow of that for the twenty plus years he pastored the church.

One of the things that lingered on was Stoddard's view of communion.

He believed that the Lord's Table was a converting ordinance. In other words people could be converted to faith in Jesus by eating the bread and drinking the cup.

Over the years Edwards rightly came to see that this was unbiblical.

He rightly came to believe that only those who had an experience of repentance and faith should be allowed to take communion.

He believed that his steady preaching over the decades of his ministry would have persuaded the congregation to adopt a more biblical view of the Lord's Supper.

When he began to implement the new direction some influential people in the church, who didn't really like him to begin with, strongly opposed the pastor.

The whole matter came to a congregational vote where only ten percent of the people voted to keep Edwards and so he was fired for doing what was biblical and right.

It was a moment of injustice.

[Things like that should not surprise us. The fact is that there are times when people will seek to harm us for no good reason. There are times when God's people are falsely accused and unjustly persecuted. There will be times when saying and doing what is right will cause us trouble. Has that ever happened to you? I've had that happen a time or two, especially in my years as a pastor. How do we face that as believers? Our text this morning **1Samuel 19:1-24** has some good lessons for us about facing injustice. Chapter nineteen continues to tell us about the relationship between King Saul and a young man named David. While David has done Saul no wrong, the king wants David dead. It is a clear example of someone faced with injustice and it has some important lessons and encouragements about being in such a circumstance. Here is lesson number one...]

Point #1 – True friendship will help us face injustice. (Verses 1-7)

God's design is for us to need one another and if we ignore that we are very foolish.

To get the full effect of the opening verse of chapter nineteen we need to go back to the last verse of chapter 18.

We know David's success happens because of God working in his life and it is clearly serving the good of the nation of Israel as its enemies are defeated.

Now look at the **first half of the opening verse of chapter nineteen.**

Because David is doing well, better than anyone else in the army, Saul wants him dead.

Jonathan, we are told at the end of verse 1 has a great affection for David and so instead of carrying out his father's command warns David to be on his guard and go into hiding.

On top of that Jonathan says to David that he will "go out and stand with his father and speak to him about David."

Jonathan knows that his father is completely wrong, he is willing to stand up for David, and argue his case.

Earlier in the book of 1Samuel we saw Saul willing to kill his son Jonathan and because that is true it is reasonable to say that Jonathan is going to act on David's behalf at the risk of his own life.

That brothers and sisters is true friendship.

He makes his case in **verses 4-5.**

What is he doing there? He is pointing out to his father the great injustice of what he wants to do to David.

He makes several important points.

How can you kill someone who has done you no wrong, but has acted instead for your good?

How can you kill a man who risked his life for you?

How can you wrong an ‘innocent man’ (not perfect, but someone the king has no just cause to put to death)?

What Saul wants to do to David is wrong and Jonathan is willing to stand up for David not only because it is right, but because they are friends.

That kind of friendship is a great treasure.

[I couldn’t help but think of the Apostle Paul. Many times Paul suffered injustice. On more than one occasion he found himself in jail for the sake of the gospel. Now jail in the ancient world was very different from what it is today. In Roman jail prisoners were most often dependant on friends and relatives to meet their daily needs. In 2Timothy 1:16 Paul mentions a man named Onesiphorus who “often refreshed him” and was “not ashamed of his chains.” His friendship and love for Paul made him unafraid to be associated with someone the state considered to be a criminal for unjust reasons.]

That kind of friendship like that of Paul and Onesiphorus and like that of David and Jonathan is a great blessing especially when facing injustice.

Sometimes we get it into our heads that it is better to face things alone.

We think we are strong enough or we think we don’t need others.

That is not the Christian way brothers and sisters.

God does not intend for us to go it alone, He intends for us to realize our need of other believers to sustain us.

Jonathan does that for David and in verses 6-7 we are told that Jonathan plea to his father on behalf of David works.

Saul makes a solemn oath to withdraw David’s death sentence and welcomes David back into his service as before.

That happens because of friendship and we need that.

[We need people who are willing to come along side us, people who are willing to stand for what is right even though it may be risky. Yes God can keep us through anything, but He often uses fellow believers who are bound to us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to sustain us through days of trouble. Here is a second lesson from this text. This one is incredibly helpful to remember. It is that...]

Point #2 – Unjust people often defeat themselves. (Verse 8-17)

While injustice may stand for a while it will certainly fail to endure and those who seek it often prove to be their own worst enemy.

Saul’s oath to spare David, which he makes using the LORD’s name, lasts only a short while.

That is an enormous offense against God according to the Law of Moses, but the king is far from being concerned about what is right and good.

He is gripped by jealousy and selfishness which are fueled by the oppression of an evil spirit.

These things lead Saul to once again attempt to take David's life by pinning him to the wall with a spear.

As before David eludes Saul and escapes to his house and we read this in **verses 11-12.**

On the surface it may seem obvious to expect David's wife to help him escape, but if we go back to the previous chapter we read there that Saul's plan was to have his daughter's marriage to David be "a snare to him" and bring about his death.

Instead we find here that his plan gets turned back on him because instead of bringing David harm she is the means by which he escapes Saul's murderous intentions.

Not only does she warn him and help him out the window, but in verses 13-17 she fashions a decoy using an "idol" and some "goats' hair" to make Saul believe David is still at home and sick in bed.

At first that sounds bizarre, why in the world is there an "idol" in the house of David, a man clearly dedicated to the LORD?

It is a little uncertain as to exactly what this "idol" was. It is actually a different Hebrew word than the word translated idol in the second of the Ten Commandments which forbids the making and worshipping of images.

Some commentators think the idol here is an object used more like a good luck charm than a statue that is worshipped.

It still bad. God's people ought to avoid superstition and charms and the fact these are present in David's house show us how easy it can be for even godly people to be blind to cultural sins.

That said, the main point here is that Michal whom Saul thought would help bring an end to David does the opposite and defeats Saul's intentions.

[We see this happen multiple times in the Bible. Remember Daniel and the lion's den? He ended up in the lion's den because some of his fellow government officials set a trap for him. Daniel though is saved from the lions and in the end it is those who set the trap for him that are killed by the hungry animals. A similar thing happens with a man named Haman who hated a Jew named Mordecai. Haman has a massive gallows built to hang Mordecai and in the end it is Haman who gets hung on his own gallows.]

That is what happens here with Michal. Saul wanted to use her to kill David but his plan gets turned upside down.

I love what Matthew Henry says about this portion of God's word.

He says, “Often is the devil out shot by his own bow.”

Listen, evil is a self-defeating endeavor.

That is incredibly important for us to keep in mind in our own time.

There is no question that Christianity is under attack in our culture and it has been that way for some time now.

Don’t think for a minute that the Church is being defeated.

Godless people are bringing about their own destruction and long after they have done so, the bride of Christ will be still be here to the glory of His Name.

[Injustice seems to be increasing by the day all around us. Things like critical race theory, woke ideology, economic entitlement, gender delusion, and alike are completely opposed to biblical truth and justice. And they are all self-defeating philosophies. It will take some time but you can be sure they will all do themselves in. That raises an important question though. The question is what do we do in the mean time? While David escapes here with his life, Saul does not give up trying to kill him. Where David goes shows us a third and most important lesson about facing injustice. Here is the lesson...]

Point #3 – The Lord is always our best refuge when facing injustice. (Verses 18-24)

Since God is the ruler and judge over absolutely everything we find in Him the best of protection.

Verse 18 tells us where David went when he ran away from Saul.

Why does he go to Samuel? Because Samuel is a prophet of the LORD which means God had chosen to speak His word directly to Samuel and Samuel gives God’s word to the people.

It was Samuel who, acting on a command from God, came to David’s house and poured oil on his head anointing him the next king of Israel.

Why does he go to Samuel? The most reasonable explanation seems to be he goes there seeking God’s protection.

He tells Samuel every unjust thing Saul has done to him likely with the intention of trying to find out what to do next.

It does not take very long to prove the wisdom of David’s decision. (**Verse 19-21**).

Three times Saul sends people to capture David to have him killed.

All three times when the men come into the presence of Samuel and the other prophets the Spirit of God comes upon them and they prophesy.

I believe the correct way to understand this is to see this as the will of the Holy Spirit overpowering the will of these men.

They are there to take David in, but their desire gives way to the power of the LORD.

Saul doesn't give up though and decides to go find David himself and after a few stops we read this in **verses 23-24**.

Just like the three groups before him Saul's will is overcome by the Holy Spirit.

This is not intended to teach us about Saul's spiritual condition it is meant to teach us that God can easily put the king into submission.

It is interesting we are told here that Saul "stripped off his robes" and "lay that way all that day and night."

The Hebrew word for robes here can also mean treachery or deceit.

Saul taking off his clothes and laying bare before God is a physical illustration of a spiritual reality.

Saul's evil intent is stripped away before the power of the LORD which means David is completely safe and sound under God protection.

The best thing we can do when facing injustice is take refuge in the LORD.

[Jonathan Edwards did this after he was fired. Shortly after his congregation voted 90% in favor of getting rid of him they realized that they had no one to preach at the upcoming Sunday service. Having no other option they were forced to go knock on the door of their recently dismissed pastor and ask if he would consider filling the pulpit. In what I believe was an enormous act of humility which demonstrated Edwards to be on the right side of the controversy he agreed. Not just once but many times over the course of the next year and never once did he raise the issue from the pulpit or attempt to stir up discord. Instead he simply entrusted himself to the LORD and sought to serve the people who treated him unjustly. Amazing.]

The Lord is every bit as powerful and every bit as trustworthy today as the day David fled to Samuel.

He is by far the safest place for us to turn and because He is present everywhere on earth we can seek refuge in Him wherever we may be found.

As Christians we can see and enjoy these lessons to an even greater degree than David because we get to experience these things in the knowledge of the cross of Christ.

At the cross we find our greatest possible friend in Jesus.

No one in the history of the world faced a greater act of injustice than our LORD did at Calvary.

He did not go there because He was forced to, or because He was too weak to prevent it, He went there in full control of every moment to act on our behalf.

Jesus said, "Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends." He says, "You are my friends if you do what I command." (John 15:13-14)

Jonathan stood up for David believing Him innocent before an unjust King.

That is a great friend, but how much greater is Jesus who stands up for us even though we are guilty before the Holy and perfectly just King of the universe?

Is Jesus your friend today? You need Him more than you know.

At the cross we also see our greatest enemy defeat himself.

The devil was delighted to see Jesus suffer and die.

It was the devil that prompted Judas to betray the Lord.

He was happy to see the hatred and jealousy of the religious leaders and the crowd that yelled "crucify him!"

No doubt the devil believed He had won when Jesus gave up His spirit and died on the cross.

What he thought was his greatest victory turned out to be his greatest defeat because Jesus dying defeated the power of sin and death and hell for those that believe.

All the power of Satan to accuse God's people of their guilt is washed away in the blood of Calvary's lamb.

Jesus death is not where the story ends. No brothers and sisters He is alive and reigning in glory for the good of His people forever.

Not only do the devil's schemes come to nothing, but God used them to bring about his eternal ruin.

Because of this there is no better place to run for refuge than the cross of Christ.

Wealth, influence, power, self-esteem, or anything else in the whole creation that you can think of will not help you in a final sense.

We can find no hope or protection in those things, but if we stop looking to ourselves or other created things and look to the cross, there we find an indestructible refuge for our souls.

We may face many injustices while we live in this fallen world, but none of them will prevail because Jesus has overcome them all.