

## Trusting The LORD

1Samuel 24:1-22

*I will always remember an experience I had being considered for a pastoral position in the Muskoka area not long before coming here.*

I had been to two different interviews and I had been to the church to preach.

The first interview went fairly well, the second was a little tougher, and the sermon I thought was ok.

After that I thought the search committee would tell me in a reasonably short period of time whether or not they would continue with the process and bring it to the congregation for further consideration.

I was wrong about that.

I was months before I heard anything.

*At the time I was teaching part time at Fanshawe College and I remember feeling burdened with the need to choose between pursuing a full-time job at the College and going into pastoral ministry.*

I remember waking up one morning convinced that I needed to quit at the College and be all in on going to the church in Muskoka.

That's what I did and providentially I got a phone call from the church that evening telling me they did not want to continue the process.

Needless to say that was not how I thought that was going to go.

Instead of moving up north I found myself back on construction sites and not long after that I found myself having to work out of town and only seeing my family on the weekend.

I remember feeling pretty discouraged at the way things had worked out and had no idea what was going to happen next.

Eventually, the LORD worked things out and through a series of events we ended up here, but at the time in the middle of it all, I found it a challenge to trust in the LORD.

Does that ever happen to you?

[I think if we are honest we have to admit that it happens to all of us at times. Thankfully God is incredibly gracious to us and despite our weaknesses He keeps His people from day to day and continually shows us why He is so very trustworthy. We can see that in our text this morning. Turn again to the book of **1Samuel 24:1-22**. Here we find David once again on the run from King Saul and even though his life is in danger he resolves to put his trust in the LORD and in so doing has some important lessons for us. The first is this...]

**Point #1 – Trusting God is hard when the wrong thing seems like the right thing. (V. 1-7)**

One of the common schemes of the devil is to make sin appear like it is a good thing and that is an easy trap to fall into.

Chapter twenty four picks up right where chapter twenty three left off.

King Saul had been chasing David in order to kill him and he was extremely close to catching him when word came of an attack on the land.

According to verses one and two when he was finished chasing off the Philistines he heard where David was and once again went after him.

The place he ends up is, according to commentators, a place with very rocky terrain and a number of large caves.

The shepherds in the area made good use of the natural terrain to provide shelter for their flocks some even building stone walls at the mouth of caves to act as pens for their animals.

With that in mind we read this in **verses 3-4.**

Most translations say that Saul went into the cave to 'relieve himself' meaning use the bathroom.

It is a translation of a Hebrew expression which literally translated reads 'he covered his feet'.

It can also mean he went into the cave to take a rest and escape the heat of the day.

Either way he enters the cave thinking it is a safe and secure place and puts himself in an extremely vulnerable position.

He has no idea whatsoever that the man he is trying to hunt down and kill happens to be in that very cave with his men.

We need to appreciate that their being with David is putting their lives at risk.

We also need to appreciate that being on the run for your life foraging in the wilderness is a pretty miserable situation from day to day.

It's pretty clear from verse 4 that they are willing to endure these things because they believe God will eventually save David and those around him.

In walks Saul and he is completely at their mercy. I would be so easy to sneak up behind him and end his life and once he is gone their troubles will be over.

It totally makes sense especially when we consider Saul's pursuit of David is totalling unjust and evil.

It seems like killing the king is the right thing to do, it seems like God wants him to do it since of all the caves he could have walked into he walked into this one.

David does sneak up, but instead of killing Saul he simply cuts off a piece of his robe.

Then we read this in **verses 5-7.**

Not only does David keep himself from killing Saul, but he is deeply convicted for even cutting off a piece of his robe.

Why is that when it seemed like the obvious thing to do is strike down his enemy?

In verse 6 he calls Saul his master and then twice refers to him as “The LORD’s anointed”.

Meaning that this man, wicked as he may be, has been set over God’s people by God and, therefore, only the LORD has the right to take him out.

David will not take into his hands what belongs in God’s even though it would be so easy to do it.

Why? Because in this moment he is trusting the LORD.

[Jesus did this better than anyone else. It would been so easy for Him to speak a word and put all is enemies to death. What does the Bible say? It says in 1Peter, “When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly.”]

Christians should stand out dramatically on this point.

Our culture has lost any sense of what it means to live under the authority of God especially in matters of life and death.

Politicians, doctors, nurses, and the majority of Canadian citizens think they have the right to kill unborn children.

They think they have the right to manipulate DNA and create human embryos whenever it pleases them.

Our society believes if you are terminally ill or struggle with emotional sufferings then it is better for you to end your life.

I know suffering can be great, far greater than I realize. I know may people think it is the right thing, but it is not.

Human beings brothers and sisters are not God, and we only pave the way to eternal suffering when we pretend to be.

[That is not who we should be as believers. We shouldn’t be people who govern ourselves based on what is easy in any given moment, but rather we should entrust ourselves to the LORD. In order to do that well we need to be convinced of another lesson we find in this text. We need to know that...]

**Point #2 – Trusting God means believing He will make things right. (Verses 8-15)**

When wicked people have power over us it may seem hopeless at times, but the LORD will account for every wrong either in this life or the one to come.

After Saul leaves the cave having no idea of what just happened, David comes out to speak to him.

The fact that the terrain was rocky and that David likely has the high ground afforded him some protection, but this is still a substantial risk and I believe a further act of faith on his part.

You see, he knows it is not his place to kill Saul, but it is exactly the right thing to tell him the truth.

He shows humility before and submission to King Saul in verse 8 calling the king his “lord” (Adonai-master) and bowing before him with his face to the ground.

He goes on to say this in **verses 9-11**.

First he makes his case that whatever Saul has been told or whatever Saul may think, he will not harm the king.

That would be clear enough just by showing the king that he was behind him in the cave, but he has more evidence he has the piece of cloth he removed from the king’s robe.

That means he was within arm’s reach with a weapon sharp enough to cut cloth and go unnoticed which means it was more than sufficient to take Saul’s life.

David is basically saying, “Look if it were true that I was bent on killing you, you would be dead.”

His conclusion is that he is not the one who has wronged the king, but it is the king that is wronging him by ‘hunting [him] down to take [his] life.’

Now look at what he says in **verses 12-15**.

He has the courage to tell Saul to his face that what he has done and what he is doing is evil and the reason he is doing evil is because he is by nature an evil doer.

His point seems to be that he could have given Saul what he deserved, namely to die for the wicked things he has done, but he has not.

What does he do instead? He calls on the LORD. He does this emphatically.

He says, “May the LORD Judge between you and me” once in verse 12 and again in verse 15.

He says, “May the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me.”

In verse 15 he says, “May he [the LORD] consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me...”

What is he asking for? He is asking for and also declaring his faith in God’s ability to sort things out rightly.

It is that trust that keeps him from taking matters into his own hands.

[It is sort of like playing sports with a good referee versus a bad referee. If you have a good referee and get elbowed in the face during a hockey game and the one who did it gets a penalty or even kicked out of the game you can rest in that. On the other hand if you get elbowed multiple times and the ref doesn’t seem to care you are much more likely to try and seek your own justice with an elbow or a fist.]

Here is where the rubber meets the road in terms of knowing good theology and applying it to our lives.

Do we believe that God knows all things?

Do we believe that God is powerful enough to do all that He pleases?

Do we believe that God is just?

If we believe all three of those things then we have to believe that He will account for every wrong committed against us.

Of course that also means he will account for every wrong we have done as well.

Listen, no one gets away with anything it is all accounted for.

*That happens either through the cross or through eternity in hell.*

That should be a very sobering thought to us all.

Those who have done evil to us will stand before Almighty God and if they don't know Jesus as their saviour they will suffer under His wrath for all eternity.

If we can even begin the scratch the surface of what that means in our hearts and minds then instead of harboring bitterness and resentment (which are from the devil) we would have pity in our hearts for the fate of those poor souls.

On the other hand those who admit their evil, turn to the cross of Christ by faith, and believe that He conquered death through a real bodily resurrection are forgiven by the LORD.

Don't think for an instant that those sins are not accounted for. Jesus' suffering under the wrath of God accounted for them all.

Don't ever make light of the cross by thinking that those who have wronged you cannot be forgiven through the shed blood of our glorious Saviour!

[God's people are not to be a vengeful people. We are to be a people who delight in and call attention to the glorious grace of God by rejoicing in His grace and trusting in His justice. That brings us to one more lesson about trusting the LORD from this text this morning. That can be hard when the wrong things seems like the right thing, trusting Him depends on believing that He will make things right, and finally...]

**Point #3 – Trusting God never reduces our need of wisdom. (Verses 16-22)**

Rather than turning people into fools—as some might say—faith is the strongest foundation possible for a person to live and think rightly throughout all of the life.

*Saul has been walking deeper and deeper into wickedness and rebellion against God, but even as far down the road as he is he still has moments of repentance.*

We can see that here in **verses 16-21.**

I'll be honest, based on how Saul has behaved over the last few chapters this response is a refreshing surprise.

I would expect him to order his men up the hill and attack even if he was at a severe disadvantage because of the terrain.

He does something very different. He confesses his sin.

The NIV translated the end of verse 17 as "I have treated you badly" the NAS translated as "I have dealt wickedly with you."

He is saying something much more than "oops I made a mistake."

He is saying what he has done is evil.

He also confesses that David has done what is good despite his evil.

He rightly asks in verse 19 "when a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed?"

No way, the normal way things go is if you have a chance to take out your enemy you do it.

Why? Because if you don't your enemy will come back and try to take you out again.

Saul knows this and he is rightly confessing that David has been incredibly kind towards him.

He even takes it another huge step further admitting that David will in fact be king and pleads for David to make an oath in the LORD's name to be kind to his family after he is gone.

This all sound fantastic.

It sounds like Saul is really sorry and he is finally willing to submit to God's plan of transferring the kingdom away from him to David.

It sounds like everything can get back to the way it was before Saul started going off the deep end.

David can go home to his wife, Saul's daughter.

He can sit once again at the king's table and serve once again in the army.

All of this seems good, but look at how David responds to Saul's confession in **verse 22**.

No problem making the oath regarding his descendants, but he does not entrust himself or his men to the appearance of Saul's confession and repentance.

Instead, he takes his men to one of the strongholds they had established.

Why does he do that? Because he is exercising wisdom.

He has seen this TV show before and no doubt hopes that it is sincere but is wise enough to know that the fruit of genuine repentance is born out over time.

Do you see? His faith does not make him into a fool. Just because he truly trusts in the LORD to do the right thing does not reduce his need to make wise choices.

[We can see this a number of times in the life of Jesus. Remember when the Devil was tempting Him? He took Jesus to the highest point of the temple and said, "Through yourself down for it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." Did Jesus believe that? Absolutely, more than anyone else ever could! Did He jump? No, why because He was wise enough to know that it was wrong to put God to the test.]

We need to trust the LORD brothers and sisters.

That is the only way for us to be saved, by faith.

That does not take away from the need to listen to your doctor or look both ways before you cross the street.

Never let anyone convince you that believing the Bible makes you into a fool who is unwilling to ask or face difficult questions or make you into a reckless individual.

True at times trusting God will compel us to take risks, true we may look foolish to the world for loving Christ more than our own lives, but none of these things are foolish they are incredibly wise.

It is wise to give up a temporary shack to live in an eternal mansion.

It is wise to give up treasure you cannot keep for that which will never diminish and can never be taken away.

It is most wise to trust in the One who conquered the grave and lives and reigns in heaven with all authority and power forever.

Far from being the absence of wisdom faith is the only sure foundation for wisdom.

### Do you trust the LORD today?

That can be hard at times but if we trust Him we will seek to do what is right no matter how good doing what is wrong might appear.

If we trust Him we will trust Him to make things right.

And, if we trust Him we will seek to live according to His wisdom. May it be so in us for God's glory and our joy.