

1 Samuel 24:1-22

Wrong Is Never Right

Right and wrong are not determined by the circumstances we face. What is convenient is not always right. Sometimes it is easier to do the wrong thing. Occasionally our friends will mistakenly encourage us the wrong way. We must look past the immediate situation and see the will of God. We must block out the noise of other voices and listen to the Word of God. We must do right, even when doing wrong seems like a better idea.

I. David's _____ (1 Samuel 24:1-4)

- _____, in His providence, ordained that Saul be in that cave with David that day. God put David in this situation.
- God had never given such a promise to David (i.e. that David would kill Saul) nor had God commanded David to take matters into his own _____. (1 Samuel 15:26-28)
- "It is never right to do _____ in order to get a chance to do right."
- When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, each of the temptations looked like a good idea under the _____. In each case, Jesus looked past the circumstances and the noise of Satan's voice to see God's will and obey God's word. (Matthew 4:1-10)

II. David's _____ (1 Samuel 24:5-15)

- David's heart was so tender and humble before the Lord, that what we see as the prime example of integrity, David saw as a massive moral _____. (Psalms 34:18; 51:17)
- Even though Saul had wronged him in so many ways, David chose to let _____ settle the score and make things right. (Romans 12:19)
- David knew that anything good in his life was all of God. David had nothing to _____ about. (Psalms 34:2; 1 Corinthians 10:31; John 3:30)
- It takes humility to submit to the rule of God in your life and to do what is right even when doing wrong is _____ and seems _____.

III. Saul's _____ (1 Samuel 24:16-22)

- It is possible to be emotionally stirred but not experience heart _____. (Hebrews 12:16-17)
- Saul was _____ and a hypocrite.
- A hypocrite is concerned about _____ more than reality, But God wants us to be right inside and out. (Matthew 23:27-28)

Conclusion

God has never said that it will always be easy to do right. In fact, we have been warned in the Bible that it will sometimes be hard to do right. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12) We can't let the situation cloud our view of God's will. We can't let other voices drown out the word of God. We must do _____, even when wrong seems better.

PBC PRAYER POINTS

Shut-ins

Elsie Banks | Jane Haynes

Ongoing Health Needs

Connie Bladine | Pat Hill
Marvin Ragsdale | Vic Milam
Ann Whitley | Sophia Rambo
Betsy Grenevitch | Aaron McIntyre | Jim Tilson
Rhonda E. | Jimmy S.
Bryn Gleiser

Unsaved

Corey | B. B. | R.V. | Chris
Christy | Sarah |

Church Ministries

Sunday School | Children's Church | Frontline Children's Program | Teen Ministry | Outreach Programs | Music Ministry | Regular Services

Church Staff

The Chambers | The Riffels

Deacons

David Almand | David Bachman | Dean McAvoy
Austin Jones | Drew McIntyre

National Officials

President Joe Biden
Vice President Kamala Harris
Senators Ossoff & Warnock
Representative Jody Hice

Supreme Court Justices:

Ketanji Jackson | Neil Gorsuch | Clarence Thomas
Sonia Sotomayer | Elena Kagan | Amy Coney Barrett | Brett Kavanaugh
Stephen Breyer | John Roberts

State/Local Officials

Governor Brian Kemp
Lt. Governor Burt Jones
State House Rep. Tim Fleming | State Senator Brian Strickland | Rutledge Mayor Bruce Altnauer

Missionary Updates

Matt & Marla Hanna - Formerly in Taiwan

Praises:

- It appears that the search process they have been pursuing over the last year is finally narrowing down to one place: Katy, Texas.
- They were able to spend several week in Katy, TX during the month of June, preaching and ministering in various ways.
- The Hannas will be partnering with the Hawks and seeking to revitalize a BMM church plant.

Prayer Requests:

- Pray for Good News Baptist Church. It originally was planted by a BMM church planting missionary more than thirty years ago and is not yet fully independent. Pray for the Hannas as they await final approval from the board for this change of ministry.
- Pray that the Lord will provide the necessary increase in support for relocation to Katy, TX.

BIEMS

Praises:

- A BIEM missionary in the nation of Georgia says, "The youth group held a children's activity attended by nearly 100, mostly unsaved."
- BIEM's director for Ukraine, Eugene Buyko, and his family are now in the U.S. to speak in churches and help raise funds for war relief.
- Last week, 10 former Muslims in Turkmenistan were baptized on profession of their firm faith in Christ the Savior!

Prayer Requests:

- Praise God, we have enough donations of clothing and other items to ship a container to Ukraine. Leaving the container for the church would be a huge blessing but would cost another \$3,200.
- August is the final month of summer camps. Please pray for God to give energy to the staffers, salvation decisions, and spiritual growth.
- Pray for the nation of Georgia. A sudden shift in direction has resulted in new laws that could make Georgia a restricted-access nation.

Recent Requests

- Continue to pray for the Barrons. This is the week 5 of sickness in their family.
- Sophia R. came home from the hospital and now is in Utah for intensive rehabilitation.
- The Tilson's ask prayer for safe travels as several family members will be visiting the next few weeks.
- Aaron M. is still in the hospital. He has recovered from his respiratory infection but there may be an issue with his brain shunt. They will be doing surgery tomorrow to investigate.

1 Samuel 24:1-22

Wrong Is Never Right

American philosopher and Anglican theologian Joseph Fletcher published a book in 1966 entitled *Situation Ethics: The New Morality*. Fletcher proposed that instead of making decisions based on a fixed standard of right and wrong, right and wrong should be determined by whatever action will produce the most “love” in any given situation.

Situation ethics, in ethics and theology, [is] the position that moral decision making is contextual or dependent on a set of circumstances. Situation ethics holds that moral judgments must be made within the context of the entirety of a situation and that all normative features of a situation must be viewed as a whole. The guiding framework for moral decision making is stated variously as that of acting in the most loving way, to maximize harmony and reduce discord, or to enrich human existence.¹

There are several problems with this philosophy, but the biggest is the fact that it denies that God determines what is right and wrong and proposes that we determine it circumstantially. If we determine what is right and wrong, then we will naturally choose what is convenient and most beneficial in the moment for ourselves and those we are closest to.

Right and wrong are not determined by the circumstances we face. What is convenient is not always right. Sometimes it is easier to do the wrong thing. Occasionally our friends will mistakenly encourage us the wrong way. We must look past the immediate situation and see the will of God. We must block out the noise of other voices and listen to the Word of God. We must do right, even when doing wrong seems like a better idea.

I. **David's Opportunity**

1 Samuel 24:1-4 And it came to pass, when Saul was returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi. [2] Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel, and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. [3] And he came to the sheepcotes by the way, where was a cave; and Saul went in to cover his feet: and David and his men remained in the sides of the cave. [4] And the men of David said unto him, Behold the day of which the LORD said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee. Then David arose, and cut off the skirt of Saul's robe privily.

Note the situation that David was in. Saul had chosen 3,000 special forces to seek out and destroy David. They had chased him all the way to Engedi. It just so happened that Saul chose the very cave system that David and his men were hiding in for the place to stop and take a break. This was no accident because there are no accidents. **God, in His providence, ordained that Saul be in that cave with David that day. God put David in this situation.**

In this situation, David faced a genuine and severe temptation. David's men viewed this as God-given opportunity for David to eliminate Saul and finally take the throne. They saw it as a fulfillment of God's promise to David and so they encouraged David to seize the moment and kill Saul when he least expected it. **But God had never given such a promise to David nor had God commanded David to take matters into his own hands.** God had promised to take the throne from Saul and give it to another. He had not promised David that David would be the one to kill Saul.

1 Samuel 15:26-28 And Samuel said unto Saul, I will not return with thee: for thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD hath rejected thee from being king over Israel. [27] And as Samuel turned

¹ Sandra B. Rosenthal, “Situation Ethics,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, June 8, 2023.

about to go away, he laid hold upon the skirt of his mantle, and it rent. [28] And Samuel said unto him, The LORD hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbour of thine, that is better than thou.

Perhaps David remembered that story when faced with this temptation because his action was very similar. He crept up to where Saul was and cut off a portion of his robe and retreated. He severed Saul's robe just like Saul ripped Samuel's mantle. David did not hurt Saul in any way, though he could have and no one would have blamed him. But to do so would have been foolish and a sin against God.

It would have been foolish from a strategic standpoint because, if he had killed Saul, he and his men would have been trapped in that cave. It would have been 600 fighting their way out of a cave guarded by 3,000. They couldn't have hid forever in that cave. Eventually Saul's men would have come looking for Saul and when they found him dead, they would have searched the caves until they found and killed the ones responsible.

But more importantly, it would have been a sin against God. One of the ten commandments is "Thou shalt not kill." (Exodus 20:13) This is an absolute prohibition on the taking of innocent human life. Though we can hardly say that Saul was innocent, in this situation David could not have claimed self defense when Saul was unarmed and not an immediate threat. David was not yet the king, so he couldn't claim to be acting in an official government capacity executing justice. He would have been taking matters into his own hands again and he had learned that always results in disaster.

Bob Jones, Sr. said, "It is never right to do wrong in order to get a chance to do right." Certainly David could have made the case that dispatching Saul would have been best for everyone concerned, but it still would have been a sin.

When Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, each of the temptations looked like a good idea under the circumstances. Jesus was hungry, so Satan tempted him to turn stones to bread. The salvation of individuals depended on Jesus being recognized as God, so Satan tempted Jesus to prove it by jumping off the pinnacle of the temple, quoting scripture to support the suggestion. All the world should glorify Jesus, so Satan tempted Him with a quicker, easier route if He would just worship Satan. (Matthew 4:1-10) In each case, Jesus looked past the circumstances and the noise of Satan's voice to see God's will and obey God's word. That is how we must live our lives. We must do right, regardless of the situation.

II. David's Humility

1 Samuel 24:5-15 And it came to pass afterward, that David's heart smote him, because he had cut off Saul's skirt. [6] And he said unto his men, The LORD forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the LORD'S anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the LORD. [7] So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against Saul. But Saul rose up out of the cave, and went on his way. [8] David also arose afterward, and went out of the cave, and cried after Saul, saying, My lord the king. And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed himself. [9] And David said to Saul, Wherefore hearest thou men's words, saying, Behold, David seeketh thy hurt? [10] Behold, this day thine eyes have seen how that the LORD had delivered thee to day into mine hand in the cave: and some bade me kill thee: but mine eye spared thee; and I said, I will not put forth mine hand against my lord; for he is the LORD'S anointed. [11] Moreover, my father, see, yea, see the skirt of thy robe in my hand: for in that I cut off the skirt of thy robe, and killed thee not, know thou and see that there is neither evil nor transgression in mine hand, and I have not sinned against thee; yet thou huntest my soul to take it. [12] The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. [13] As saith the proverb of the ancients,

Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked: but mine hand shall not be upon thee. [14] After whom is the king of Israel come out? after whom dost thou pursue? after a dead dog, after a flea. [15] The LORD therefore be judge, and judge between me and thee, and see, and plead my cause, and deliver me out of thine hand.

It is astonishing that even after sparing Saul's life, David was convicted for having cut off a part of Saul's robe. **His heart was so tender and humble before the Lord, that what we see as the prime example of integrity, David saw as a massive moral failure.** This is the kind of tenderheartedness that God wants to see in us because it results in holiness and nearness to the Lord.

Psalms 34:18 The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.

Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

According to verse seven, David prevented his men from attacking Saul too. Apparently they were ready to do what David refused to and had not David intervened, they would have killed Saul. David used his influence to lead others to do what was right even when they really wanted to do wrong.

When Saul left the cave, David came out and called out to him. When Saul turned, David was bowing on the ground in a position of total submission and humility. He then addressed the King in the most respectful manner. David answered the false accusations against him with both his actions and his words. He was not seeking to kill Saul, as Saul believed and other's had said. If he had wanted to kill Saul, he would have done it just then. Even though God brought Saul within arms reach of David and there were people telling him to do it, David did not harm Saul. He showed the piece of Saul's robe as proof of his innocence.

Though David addressed Saul, his final appeal was to the Lord. "The LORD judge between me and thee, and the LORD avenge me of thee: but mine hand shall not be upon thee." Even though **Saul had wronged him in so many ways, David chose to let God settle the score and make things right.** Wicked people will do wicked things, but David would do what was right.

Romans 12:19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.

David's self assessment in verse fourteen is noteworthy. Even though he was in the morally superior position and was the God-anointed successor to the throne, he calls himself a dog and a flea. **David knew that anything good in his life was all of God. David had nothing to brag about.** Many people will say you have to make sure you get the credit you deserve, but our attitude should be that only God deserves any glory and He deserves all the glory.

Psalms 34:2 My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.

1 Corinthians 10:31 Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.

John 3:30 He must increase, but I must decrease.

There is a direct link between humility and holiness. If you are prideful and think that you can decide for yourself what is right or wrong depending on the situation, then you will end up doing wrong and excusing it. It takes humility to submit to the rule of God in your life and to do what is right even when doing wrong is easier and seems better.

III. Saul's Hypocrisy

1 Samuel 24:16-22 And it came to pass, when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. [17] And he said to

David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. [18] And thou hast shewed this day how that thou hast dealt well with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. [19] For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. [20] And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. [21] Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. [22] And David sware unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men gat them up unto the hold.

This is the closest Saul comes to being repentant, but even then he stops short of getting right with God. He admits David has acted righteously and mercifully. How could he do otherwise with 3,600 witnesses looking on? He even wept before them all, but sadly they were not tears of repentance. **It is possible to be emotionally stirred but not experience heart change**, just as Esau was distraught over losing his birthright but would not repent of his carnality.

Hebrews 12:16-17 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. [17] For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

The hypocrisy of Saul's speech becomes more apparent the closer you look. He said "I have rewarded thee evil" but he also implied that David still viewed him as "his enemy." He said, "The Lord reward thee good" but he did not offer to do good himself. He said he knew that David would be the king, but he did not volunteer to work with him. He asked for David's promise not to kill his family, but he did not give David such a promise. And in the end, Saul went home while David went back to the hold. He did not invite David back. We know that Saul was not truly repentant because in 1 Samuel 26 he again took 3,000 men and went after David.

Saul was pragmatist and a hypocrite. He did what was most convenient in the moment, and at this moment it was more convenient to save face by seeming to say and do what was right rather than to do what was truly right. It would have been right to fully repent and reconcile with David, but that would not have accomplished his selfish desire of destroying the one he viewed as a threat to his power, so he stopped short of that, choosing rather to create the impression that he had changed and now respected David. **A hypocrite is concerned about perception more than reality, But God wants us to be right inside and out.** We should not only look right, we should be right.

Matthew 23:27-28 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. [28] Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

Conclusion

God has never said that it will always be easy to do right. In fact, we have been warned in the Bible that it will sometimes be hard to do right. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." (2 Timothy 3:12) We can't let the situation cloud our view of God's will. We can't let other voices drown out the word of God. **We must do right, even when wrong seems better.**