

Third Presbyterian Church
Midweek Bible Study
I Samuel - Chapter 21
Fear Makes You Crazy

1 Samuel 21:10-22:2 (NIV) That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish, king of Gath. [11] But the servants of Achish said to him, "Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances:" 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'?" [12] David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. [13] So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard. [14] Achish said to his servants, "Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me? [15] Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?" [22:1] David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. [2] All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him.

1. From the Exegetical study in the sermon, in your own words what does: **2 Timothy 1:7** For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind, really mean?
 - A. If I am led by the Spirit of God, does that mean I don't have fears any longer? Explain.
2. The sermon states when we are led by fear, we do not have a sound mind. Agree or disagree and why?
3. How has fear negatively affected your behavior and faith in the past? How did you overcome?
4. Discuss the reality of the following: When led by the spirit of fear we often run back into situations God has already delivered us from and killed. Because fear makes us equate familiarity with safety.
5. One of the reasons church attendance is vital is the "safety of fellowship." Explain what this means in the context explained in the sermon and discuss if you agree.
 - A. Why in the church abnormal behavior attacked instead of investigated? How does this behavior make church an unsafe space?
6. How can we be more sensitive to people God sends to help save us from the real enemy and not attack them?
7. Give example in your life where God has allowed you refuge in your own "Cave of Adullam."
 - A. Did you know your cave was only temporary? What signal did God give you that it was time to leave your cave and how did this experience grow your faith in God?
8. Explain what is meant by the "Ministry of Presence." how does that help us in a time of need?
9. Why is separation the first tactic that Satan uses when we are faced with a storm?
 - A. How do we encourage one another no matter what continue to be in fellowship with other believers?
10. Share your main takeaway from the sermon and the lesson?

The Immediate, Desperate Flight of David from Saul: A Picture of Desperation and of God's Deliverance, 21:1–22:5

(21:1-22:5) Introduction— Hardship, Fact of— Adversity, Result of— Hopelessness, Caused by— Helplessness, Caused by: at some point in life, all human beings face desperate situations. Sometimes the circumstances are so distressful that they cause unbearable pain and agony and there seems to be no way out, no solution or answer. The hardship, the adversity just erupts and we feel helpless and hopeless. Emotionally we may suffer anguish, anxiety, and all kinds of physical and emotional difficulties such as headaches, ulcers, heart attacks, depression, and psychotic disorders. Our lives become dramatically changed and are often left shattered and in ruins.

From this point on to the end of First Samuel, David was to live a life of severe hardship and adversity. He was now a fugitive, fleeing for his life. The king himself was charging David with a capital crime and was fiercely pursuing him, determined to execute David. Remember that David had just been warned by Jonathan to flee, to hurry and not delay in making his escape from Saul. This is the beginning of David's flight as a fugitive, an exile that would last about ten years. This is: *The Immediate, Desperate Flight of David from Saul: A Picture of Desperation and of God's Deliverance, 21:1–22:5*.

1. David fled to the High Priest Ahimelech at Nob: seeking the help of God's servant (v.1-9).
2. David fled to the Philistine king, Achish: deliverance from life-threatening fear (v.10-15).
3. David escaped to the cave of Adullam: A time of deep anguish and of crying out to the LORD in prayer (v.1-2)
4. David sought to take care of his parents: the believer's clear duty (v.3-4).
5. David was guided by the LORD through the prophet Gad: God's guidance through the trials of life (v.5).

1. (21:1-9) Seeking, Help from Ministers— Help, Seeking from Ministers— Ministers, Duties— David, Flight from Saul— David, Sins and Weaknesses of— Ahimelech, High Priest of Israel— Showbread or Holy Bread, Use of— Deception, Example of, David: David fled from Saul to the High Priest Ahimelech at Nob, seeking the help of God's servant. During the prior week, Saul had made several attempts to kill David. Barely escaping the last attempt, David was now fleeing for his life. In desperation he fled to the one person he felt might be able to help him, the High Priest Ahimelech. David was hungry and needed a weapon, but most of all he needed the counsel of the High Priest in seeking the guidance of the LORD (22:10).

Note that the Tabernacle had been relocated to Nob after the destruction of Shiloh (4:2-3; Jeremiah 7:12). Nob was a town about two miles northeast of Jerusalem and about three miles southeast of Gibeah, which was the capital of Israel during Saul's kingship. Over eighty-five priests were serving at the Tabernacle during this time (22:17-18). The ephod and the table of the showbread or holy bread are mentioned in connection with the Tabernacle at this time, but not the Ark of God (22:6, 9). Apparently the Ark was still at Abinadab's house at Kirjath-Jearim, where it remained until David brought it to Jerusalem (7:1; 2 Samuel 6:2-3). The Tabernacle with the altar and other furnishings had escaped the destruction of Shiloh and were moved to Nob, where Ahimelech was now serving as High Priest.

Samuel could no longer help David; neither could Jonathan. There seemed to be no person who could help him, for it was the king himself who was threatening his life. But perhaps—just perhaps—help could be found from one person and in one place: the High Priest at the house of God. Thus David's flight from Saul's fury led him to seek the help of God's servant:

1. The response of Ahimelech to David's arrival was unexpected (1 Samuel 21:1). Ahimelech trembled with fear when he saw that David was all alone, that no one else from the king's court was with him. This was most unusual, for David was the commander of the royal guard for King Saul. Ahimelech became suspicious of a breach, a broken relationship between David and Saul. No doubt he had heard about the recent events at the religious center at Naioth where the lives of the young prophets had been endangered by David's presence.

2. Note the lie, the deception of David that was to lead to tragic results (1 Samuel 21:2; 22:9-19). David descriptively gave a reason why he was alone: he said he was on a secret mission for the king and that his men were to meet him at another location. This was a gross deception, a lie born out of desperation and need. David,

extremely hungry, felt he could not tell Ahimelech the truth lest the High Priest refuse to help him, fearing reprisal from Saul. But even more than this, David needed the counsel of Ahimelech in seeking the guidance of God (22:10, 15). He felt he could not run the risk of the priest's refusal to help him seek the LORD as to what he should do next. Consequently, David lied and deceived the priest in order to secure his own health. David was failing to cast himself totally upon the care of God, not trusting God to move upon the priest to help him.

But note this possibility as well: perhaps David was attempting to protect Ahimelech by lying to him. If Ahimelech did not know the truth that David was attempting to escape Saul's pursuit, then the priest could claim ignorance. He could not be justly charged with helping David escape, for he would not be aware that David was charged with a capital crime.

3. David requested food of the High Priest, asking for five loaves of bread or for whatever other food he could find. The priest had no ordinary bread, only holy bread, and this posed a problem. Holy bread was to be eaten only by priests (Exodus 25:23-30; Leviticus 24:5-9). However, the priest told David that his men could have the bread if they had obeyed the military purity law, that of having abstained from sex during the past three days (Exodus 19:15; Leviticus 15:16-18).

David assured the priest that his soldiers were holy, ceremonially clean. He personally required them to maintain an active, holy relationship with the LORD. And although they were not with him at this particular moment, he knew that they were obeying his command to maintain their purity before the LORD. Hearing this, the priest gave David the holy, consecrated bread that had just been removed from the table of God's Presence and replaced with hot bread.

Jesus Christ used this experience of David to teach a wonderful truth: meeting needs and preserving life always take precedence over religious ceremony and ritual. David did not break the law to indulge a lust but to meet a genuine need. God's great concern is always to make sure that human needs are met, not the needs of religion and religious beliefs, nor religious practices, rituals, ceremonies, rules, and regulations. Jesus taught that human need and compassion are always to take precedence over religious rules (Matthew 12:2-4; Mark 2:25-26).

4. Note that Saul's chief, supervising shepherd was at the Tabernacle at the same time David was (1 Samuel 21:7). David was later to say that he felt uneasy about the chief shepherd's presence, fearing that he would report David's whereabouts to Saul. Tragically, David was correct. Doeg was to be the cause for the murder of all eighty-five priests serving the Tabernacle at that time. This will be seen in the next chapter (22:6-23).

5. In addition to his request for food, David asked for a weapon (1 Samuel 21:8-9). He stated that he had left without his sword because the king's mission was urgent. Accepting David's word, the priest informed him that Goliath's sword was there, the very sword that David had earlier dedicated to the LORD and left at the Tabernacle. It was wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod; therefore if David wanted it returned, he could take it. Based upon David's response, he was excited, for apparently among swords, none could compare to the sword of Goliath.

Thought 1. Ministers must always be available to help people, to meet their needs. This is the very purpose for the existence of ministers, the very reason the LORD has called them to serve Him. They are to go forth ministering even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many (Matthew 20:28). The minister is to deny himself and take up his cross daily, following the LORD in meeting the needs of people.

But this command to meet the needs of people is not given just to ministers. We are all to serve others, reaching out to help wherever help is needed. If a person has a need, we are to give whatever aid we can and meet that need. In God's eyes, we are all to be ministers, serving one another and meeting the desperate needs of this world.

- ⇒ When people need food, we are to feed them.
- ⇒ When people are sick, we are to visit them.
- ⇒ When people need clothing, we are to provide clothing.
- ⇒ When people are homeless, we are to shelter them.
- ⇒ When people are financially destitute, we are to do what we can to provide jobs.

- ⇒ When people are involved in accidents, we are to rescue them.
- ⇒ When people are emotionally disturbed, we are to counsel them and encourage them.
- ⇒ When people are dying, we are to comfort them.
- ⇒ When children are orphaned, we are to adopt them or provide foster homes or some other means of suitable care and oversight for them.
- ⇒ When people are widowed, we are to provide friendship for them.
- ⇒ When people are living in sin and wickedness, we are to share the truth of righteousness and coming judgment with them.
- ⇒ When people are gripped by unbelief and rejection of God and are doomed to live eternally separated from God, we must share the gospel with them.

When there are so many needs, so many people throughout the world who are living in desperation and fear—we must reach out and minister to them. This is the command of God's Holy Word:

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matthew 5:7).

"Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

2. (21:10-15) Fear, Deliverance from, Example of— Deliverance, from What, Fear— David, As a Fugitive: David fled to King Achish who was the Philistine king ruling from the capital city of Gath. David hoped that King Achish would give him refuge and sanctuary from King Saul. At first, King Achish saw great advantage in David's becoming a mercenary soldier for him; thus he gave David sanctuary. But what happened next gives a glimpse into the fear, distress, and pressure David was constantly under during these days:

1. The officials of Achish became suspicious of David and felt that he was a threat to the Philistines (1 Samuel 21:11). They too saw great advantage in having David on their side as a defector and a mercenary fighting against the Israelites. But the officials were suspicious of David and began to whisper that he might turn against them when fighting with the Israelites broke out. Note that the officials referred to David as the king of Israel and that they were aware the Israelites considered him to be a hero. Of course, this only intensified the Philistines' fear of David.

2. David became aware of the whispering suspicion against him and fear gripped his heart. Convinced that his life was in jeopardy, David planned a unique strategy of escape (1 Samuel 21:12-15). Note that this experience provides the background for Psalms 34 and perhaps Psalms 56. David's strategy was to pretend that he was insane. This he did by walking around drooling saliva and abusing public property by making marks and writing graffiti on the doors of the city gates.

Convinced of David's insanity, King Achish strongly objected to a madman's being in his presence and serving in his army. He had David removed from the royal court and most likely driven from the city. In that day and time an insane person was thought to be under the influence of some powerful spirit or god; consequently, the insane person could not be harmed lest the gods be provoked.

Thought 1. David tells us in Psalms 34 that it was the LORD who delivered him through this crisis. No matter what the crisis is, the LORD will deliver us, providing a way for us to escape the crisis or to overcome and conquer it. The LORD delivers us through all our problems and troubles, and He saves us from the grasp of all enemies who threaten us. The Word of God declares that the LORD will always save and deliver us:

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

"Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us" (2 Corinthians 1:10).

"And the LORD shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen" (2 Timothy 4:18).

3. (22:1-2) Anguish, Deliverance from— Distress, Deliverance from— Fear, Deliverance from— Crying Out to God, Example of— Prayer, Example of: David escaped to the cave of Adullam after leaving Gath and fleeing from the Philistines. After settling down at the cave, David's brothers and his father's household came to join him at the cave, fearing Saul's reprisal against them. This meant that David's older brothers deserted Saul's army and became fugitives just like David.

Eventually a force of 400 men rallied around David, men who were distressed, indebted, or just disgusted with the way Saul was running the government. As Matthew Henry said, these were "men of broken fortunes and restless spirits." David was now a fugitive, and men in similar circumstances saw in David a great leader who represented the future of the nation. That is why, by the hundreds, they began to flock to him and link up with him, building the power base that was to serve the nation throughout the years of David's reign (2 Samuel 23:8-9; 1 Chronicles 11:10-41).

Thought 1. Psalm 142 tells us that an overwhelming sense of loneliness, of being forsaken, of having no man to help him gripped David's spirit during the early days of living in the cave. But he cried unto the LORD in deep anguish of spirit, and the LORD heard him.

When we are in distress and trouble, facing trial and temptation, in deep anguish and agony, facing all kinds of afflictions and problems—there is great hope. We can cry out to the LORD in prayer and He will hear us. The LORD will answer our prayer and meet our need. No matter our distress or anguish, if we turn to the LORD and cry out for His help, He promises to meet our need.

"Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

"And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Luke 11:9).

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).

"Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms" (James 5:13).

Thought 2. Psalm 142 gives a graphic description of the deep anguish and agony of soul that David was experiencing while living in the cave of Adullam.

"I cried unto the LORD with my voice; with my voice unto the LORD did I make my supplication. I poured out my complaint before him; I showed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me. I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O LORD: I said, Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low: deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name: the righteous shall compass me about; for thou shalt deal bountifully with me" (Psalms 142).

4. (22:3-4) Parents, Duty Toward— Believer, Duty to Parents— David, Family of: David took responsibility for his parents and sought to take care of them, even during his days as a fugitive. This is clearly seen in the events that happened. After some time in the cave at Adullam, David moved to Mizpah and asked the king of Moab to grant sanctuary to his parents. Remember that David's great-grandmother was Ruth who was from Moab (Ruth 4:13-22). Probably for this reason the king of Moab granted the request. Note that the parents stayed in Moab as long as David was hiding out in a stronghold or fortress in the land of Moab. Just where the stronghold or fortress was located is not stated, but it obviously gave David a secure and safe place to hide from the pursuit of Saul.

Thought 1. The lesson for us is clear: we must take care of our parents. David set a dynamic example for us in the care of his parents. Despite his own distressing circumstances—a time of extreme trouble—David did not forget nor ignore his parents. He made sure they were taken care of and looked after, being protected and provided for.

When our parents are aged and unable to care for themselves, we are to provide for them. We are to make sure they have housing, food, clothing, and whatever medical help is available and needed. No person must ever forsake his parents in their hour of need. This is the clear teaching of God's Holy Word: **"For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death" (Matthew 15:4).**

"For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death" (Mark 7:10).

"Children, obey your parents in the LORD: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:1-3).

"Rebuke not an elder, but intreat *him* as a father; *and* the younger men as brethren" (1 Timothy 5:1).

"But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God" (1 Timothy 5:4).

5. (22:5) Guidance, of God, Example of— God, Guidance of, Example of— David, Guidance by God: David was guided by God through the prophet Gad. For some reason it was unwise for David to remain in the stronghold or fortress. Just why is not stated, but God wanted David to leave Mizpah and return to Judah. Therefore the LORD sent the prophet Gad to give David these very instructions. As a result, David left the fortress and returned to Judah, setting up camp in the forest of Hereth. Being a military genius, David knew that the forest would provide both an excellent camouflage and many hiding places for protection against any large, mobilized force launched by Saul against him.

Note, this is the first mention of the prophet Gad who was now to join forces with David and become his own personal prophet. Gad was later to provide music for the temple services, write a history of David's kingship, and rebuke David for taking a census of the Israelites (2 Samuel 24:11-25; 1 Chronicles 29:29; 2 Chronicles 29:25).

Thought 1. Just as God guided David, so God will guide us. Day by day, hour by hour, moment by moment—God promises to guide us...

- in making decisions
- in being tested and tried
- in facing difficult circumstances
- in facing trials and problems

- in confronting temptations and seductions
- in combating opposition and abuse
- in suffering disease or accident
- in facing death and the loss of loved ones
- in being perplexed and bewildered and not knowing what to do next
- in learning how to meet the necessities of life—food, housing, and clothing
- in learning how to become secure and gain a sense of fulfillment and purpose

We desperately need the guidance of God. In fact, a moment of time is never experienced when we do not need His guidance. And the wonderful news is just this: God will guide us. This is the wonderful promise of His Holy Word:

"Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, To give light to them that sit in darkness and *in* the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Luke 1:78-79).

"Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (John 8:12).

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13).

Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible - Commentary - The Preacher's Outline & Sermon Bible – 1 Samuel.