

Commentary on 1 Samuel 26, by Chuck Smith 12.15.21

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December memory verse, Isaiah 9:6 (NKJV) For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

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The wilderness of Ziph actually lies between Hebron and the area of the Dead Sea, a very vast, barren area.

And the Ziphites came to Saul to Gibeah, and they said, David is hiding himself there in the wilderness of Ziph. So Saul went down with three thousand of his men seeking David. And Saul pitched there his tents, or his camp. David was staying in the wilderness, and he saw how Saul came to him. And David sent out his spies, and learned that Saul indeed had come. And so David arose, and came to the place where Saul had pitched: [Now that wilderness area is such that there's just a lot of places where you can hide, and a lot of places where you can observe the movements of others without being seen yourself.] and David saw the place where Saul was lying, and Abner the captain of his host nearby: and Saul lay in the trench, and the people were pitched around about him. And David answered and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Who wants to go with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go down with you ([1Sa 26:1-6](#)).

Now again as I have said so often, I admire David, I admire the courage of this guy, I admire the daring. Here is Saul out to get him, and so David is looking over the camp, he sees where Saul is lying down. He's so daring he's gonna sneak down into the camp of Saul at night. Rather than just running the other direction and making as much distance as he can between him and Saul, he's just got that adventuresome spirit, and he says, "Who wants to go with me down to the camp here tonight?" Abishai says, "I'll go with you."

So David and Abishai came down into the camp: and [they were all sound asleep,] Saul was lying there, and his spear was stuck in the ground beside him: And Abishai said to David, [All right David, look at that. Lying there on the ground,] let me take this spear and run him through, I won't even hit him the

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second time. God's delivered your enemies into your hands. And David said, Who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed, and be guiltless ([1Sa 26:7-9](#))?

Now I have to have great respect for David's respect for the anointed of God, even though the anointing of God had, for all practical purposes, been lifted from Saul. Still David had such a high regard, and respect for the fact that God's anointing had been upon his life, that David refused to touch him. Because God had said in the law, "Touch not Mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm"([1Chronicles 16:22](#)).

Now God places a protection really, around His anointed servants. That's just one of the fringe benefits of the ministry. There's a lot of hardships in the ministry. It isn't all glamour and excitement, and drama and thrilling experiences. There's a lot of heartaches in the ministry, there's a lot of hard experiences in the ministry. Dealing with people isn't always the easiest thing in the world. There are a lot of situations in which there seems to be absolutely no way out, and you just don't know what to do, what to say, you're at a loss. You're not infallible; you can make a lot of mistakes. The Lord knows I've made my share of them. But one of the fringe benefits is that He stands with you. As I stand here to minister the word of God, I don't stand alone, the Lord stands with me. It's wonderful to know that protective power of God upon your life, and surrounding your life.

Now there are a lot of people who feel they know much better how to run the church than I do. Now let me confess, I don't know how to run the church, and I don't pretend to know how to run the church. I do my best to get my orders from the Lord. But there are some people who feel that they are like the Lord. That they can give me the orders, and they seek to conform me into their image.

But there are people who write and try to tell me how the services ought to be conducted, what we ought to be doing. And it's sort of sad because I see that when a person once gets their mind bent towards criticism that it grows, and grows, and grows and it becomes like a cancer. It soon overwhelms them and they become so critical of everything. We have people that come and say, "Well, why don't you do this in your services? Why don't you do that?" and all these ideas of what we ought to be doing. In reality, nearby there are churches that are doing those very things, why don't they go to those churches where they are doing those things if that's what they want the church to do? You see I must follow the Lord, and the leading of the Lord, and if you want a lot of shouting, and a lot of demonstration, there are churches that have these kinds of things, I suggest you find one.

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Touching the anointed of God should never be considered as something that should be light. David had a high respect, he wouldn't touch Saul. He said, "Look, God is gonna take care of him." That's the proper attitude. If he is God's servant, God is gonna take care of him. Paul said, "Who are you to judge another man's servant? Before his own master either stands or falls, and God is able to make him to stand."

Now if I were serving you then I should be taking orders from you, but I'm serving the Lord, and my responsibility is to the Lord. Someday I'm gonna stand before Him and give an account of myself, and of my ministry to Him. Therefore, I've got to listen to Him, because I'm gonna be accountable and answerable to Him one day.

So David said, "God's gonna take care of him some way or other. God is gonna smite him, he's gonna fall in battle, God'll take care of him. I don't want my hand to be against the anointed of God. I don't want to be guilty of that."

The Lord forbid [he said,] that I should stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou the spear that is at his bolster, and the cruse of water, and let's get out of here. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from Saul's bolster; and they got away, no man saw it, or knew it, neither did they wake up: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them. Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill that is far off; a great space being between them: David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king ([1Sa 26:11-14](#)).

Now David got a great way off and called. There's an interesting thing about that country, and that is that there is a tremendous acoustics of some kind that you can hear for miles. I was pointing it out to the people when we were up on the Herodian. There were children that were at least three quarters of a mile away that were playing out there. I said, "Listen to those kids." You could hear them; you could hear them as they were playing. You could hear them calling to each other and all. When they had gone up to the top of the Herodian, as we were going up the hill, I saw some caves about half way up the hill. I was curious what might be in those caves. So I, rather than walking up the road to the top of the Herodian, walked around the side of the Herodian to explore these caves which I found to be big cisterns there in the side of the Herodian, and some interesting ruins of the walls. But the people were up on the top, and I could hear them just talking to each other in their conversations, though I was half way down the mountain. So I started talking to them, and we could converse back and forth over an area of four hundred feet in normal voice, without yelling, or lifting our

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voices, we could converse at a distance of over four hundred feet very clearly. There's something about the atmosphere or whatever, but sound really is conducted very easily over there. You can actually hear for miles.

So David went over to the other mountain, just a great way off, and they cried back. You could hear him, sound transfers so well in the atmosphere or whatever that it's really amazing. People wonder how in the world could Jesus ever talk to five thousand people, but the way the acoustics are there, there isn't any real problem at all to address large multitudes of people without public address systems. It's really something that is quite unique and interesting. I've always found it extremely interesting. So David went over to this mountain and he called back, "Abner." Abner said, "Who is it that's crying unto the king?"

And David cried to the people and to Abner, saying, Don't you answer Abner? And David said to Abner, Are you not a valiant man? and who is like unto you in Israel? and why have you not kept the lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. It's not good what you have done. As the Lord liveth, you ought to be put to death, because you have not kept your master, the Lord's anointed. And now look where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was there at his bolster ([1Sa 26:14-16](#)).

So David is sort of chiding Abner the chief general of Saul, saying, "Hey you know your job is to guard the king, and you aren't doing a good job. You ought to be put to death. Someone came in to destroy the king, and you were just sound asleep. Look where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water."

Saul [of course waking out of his sleep] said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It's my voice, my lord, O king. And he said, Why does my lord pursue after his servant? what have I done? for what evil is in my hand ([1Sa 26:17-18](#))?

Now David, I think one of the phrases of David all the way through was, "What have I done?" Always saying, "What have I done?" He seemed to always be getting in trouble, you know, and always really for not very much, but, "What have I done?" So when he went down to the camp where his brothers were fighting against the Philistines, and Goliath came out, and David began to say, "Hey, why you guys hiding? Why doesn't one of you fight him?" His brother started getting on his case, and he said, "Hey, what have I done? I only asked a few questions." And here with Saul, "What have I done that you would pursue me like this?"

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Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the Lord has stirred you up against me, then let the Lord receive an offering: ["Let's offer a sacrifice and let's get it over with.] but if it's the children of men, that has stirred you up against me then let them be cursed; for they have driven me out from abiding in the inheritance of the Lord. Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the Lord: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, and as a partridge you've chased me in these mountains. Then said Saul, I have sinned: return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and erred exceedingly ([1Sa 26:19-21](#)).

Now here is a confession of Saul, and Saul, if David's phrase was "What have I done?" Saul's phrase was, "I have sinned." But he never repented. He only declared a fact. This is sort of tragic. So many people do that today. They say, "Oh, I have sinned." but they don't change. It's more than just the confession of guilt that is necessary. It's the turning from the sin, which is important. "Except thou repent," Jesus said, "you're gonna perish." Repent means to turn. So it isn't just saying, "Oh, I have sinned." It's turning from your sin, which is so important to the Lord.

Here is Saul again, and many times on many occasions whenever he was faced by Samuel the prophet, he'd say, "Oh, I have sinned." But there wasn't any sign of repentance. "I have sinned, I have played the fool, I have erred exceedingly." This is Saul's confession. Of course it's a very tragic confession. It's the truth, he did play the fool all through his life he played the fool. He was a man who was endowed by God with many natural talents and abilities. He was a man who was given every opportunity by God, but yet a man who blew his opportunities of really being a servant of God. He is a man who failed to do the work of God, though he had all that he needed to be a marvelous king over Israel, he became exalted and lifted up with pride, and played the fool, and erred exceedingly. So his autobiography, "I have sinned, I've played the fool, I've erred exceedingly."

So David answered and said, Behold the king's spear. let one of your young men come over and get it. And the Lord render to every man his righteousness and his faithfulness: for the Lord delivered you into my hand today, but I would not stretch forth my hand against the Lord's anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much set this day in my eyes, so let my life be much set by [in your eyes, or] in the eyes of the Lord, and let him deliver me out of all tribulations. Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and thou shalt still prevail ([1Sa 26:22-25](#)).

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Saul underneath knew that someday David was gonna take the throne. He was trying to protect the throne and to pass it onto his own children. But yet in his heart, he knew that God had anointed David, and that David was God's anointed king. "Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and still prevail."

So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place ([1Sa 26:25](#)).