

1 Samuel 24 – Love Your Enemy

October 16, 2022

Background

1. Not every opportunity is God's will.

When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi." 1 Samuel 24:1 (ESV)

Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. 1 Samuel 24:2 (ESV)

And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself.... 1 Samuel 24:3a (ESV)

...Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.
1 Samuel 24:3 (ESV)

And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.' "... 1 Samuel 24:4a (ESV)

...Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 1 Samuel 24:4 (ESV)

And afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.
1 Samuel 24:5 (ESV)

He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed."
1 Samuel 24:6 (ESV)

So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul.
And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way. 1 Samuel 24:7 (ESV)

- Just because God provides an opportunity does not mean it is God's will for me to take advantage of the opportunity. Sometimes what looks like a God-given opportunity is actually a test of my heart.
- I am to honor and respect those God put in leadership over me, even if I do not agree with them.

We ask you, brothers, to respect those who labor among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. 1 Thessalonians 5:12–13 (ESV)

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

Hebrews 13:17 (ESV)

- If David felt convicted about disrespecting a murderous king when all he did was cut off the corner of his robe, I should feel convicted if I find myself speaking divisively or disrespectfully toward church leaders who are simply doing things differently from the way I would do them.

“You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people.” Exodus 22:28 (ESV)

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)

See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no “root of bitterness” springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled;

Hebrews 12:15 (ESV)

2. A soft answer turns away wrath.

Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, “My lord the king!”.... 1 Samuel 24:8a (ESV)

...And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. 1 Samuel 24:8b (ESV)

A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

Proverbs 15:1 (ESV)

- In a tense relationship, I am to be gentle with my words. I am not to raise my voice and belittle people.

And David said to Saul, “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Behold, David seeks your harm’? Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, ‘I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD’s anointed.’

1 Samuel 24:9–10 (ESV)

- In a tense relationship, I am to be overly gracious and assume the best of people, not harsh and assume the worst. My words are should subdue, not inflame.

Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body. Proverbs 16:24 (ESV)

The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, but gracious words are pure. Proverbs 15:26 (ESV)

See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. 1 Samuel 24:11 (ESV)

May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you. 1 Samuel 24:12 (ESV)

Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." ... Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:19, 21 (ESV)

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD. Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)

As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.' But my hand shall not be against you. 1 Samuel 24:13 (ESV)

- Tense relationships reveal the sinfulness of my own heart. They don't create sinfulness in my heart.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. Romans 12:18–21 (ESV)

- As a Christian, I am to be known for going out of my way to do good deeds for people that are hard for me to love. I am to overcome evil with good works.

After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! 1 Samuel 24:14 (ESV)

May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand." 1 Samuel 24:15 (ESV)

3. A soft tongue breaks a bone.

As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, "Is this your voice, my son David?"... 1 Samuel 24:16a (ESV)

...And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 1 Samuel 24:16 (ESV)

With patience a ruler may be persuaded, and a soft tongue will break a bone. Proverbs 25:15 (ESV)

He said to David, "You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil. And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands. For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 1 Samuel 24:17–19 (ESV)

And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 1 Samuel 24:20 (ESV)

Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house." And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

1 Samuel 24:21-22 (ESV)

Applications

1. **If God opens an opportunity, that doesn't always mean it is God's will for me to take that opportunity, especially if it involves getting something I want the wrong way.**
2. **I am to respect those God put in leadership over me. If David honored a murderous king, I should honor the Christian leaders God put over me.**
3. **In conflicts, I am to use my words graciously, not to belittle or insult.**
4. **It is God's job to take revenge. As a Christian, I am to be known for loving my enemies, not for how I get even.**
5. **When I am irritated in a relationship, that frustration reveals the sinfulness in my heart. It doesn't create sinfulness in my heart.**
6. **Soft words break bones and persuade hearts. Harsh words stir up anger.**
7. **Jesus is the ultimate example of kindness and grace to an enemy.**

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 1 Peter 2:22-23 (ESV)

Life Group Questions

1. Read 1 Samuel 24. What is one thing you didn't understand from the message? What from the message stuck out as important?
2. David's opportunity to kill Saul was a test of his heart. How does knowing that financial opportunities, dating opportunities, and divorce opportunities are not necessarily intended to reveal God's will but to test our will, change how you look at opportunities?
3. David was convicted over the disrespect he showed toward Saul by cutting off the corner of his robe, even though he was an evil king. What does this tell us should be our attitude toward leaders God puts over us in the church? (see 1 Thes. 5:12-13) In our government? (see Romans 13:1-5)
4. Read 1 Samuel 24:8-15. How did David's words and actions de-escalate conflict rather than make it worse? What can we learn from his words and actions to help us in our conflicts?
5. Read Romans 12:19-21. As Christians, what do these verses teach us about how Christians handle conflict differently from the rest of the world?
6. **Extra Credit:** Read 1 Samuel 24:13. This verse speaks about how relational conflicts reveal sin in our hearts. They don't create sin in our hearts. How does this change how you handle relational difficulties and your anger at others?