

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

What Are You Saying?

I Samuel 27:1-12 & I Samuel 28:1-2

Intro: At the end of **ch26**, David & Saul part ways 4 the last time. They'll never cross paths again. We know this b/c the book bears it out; but David didn't know this, at least not at that time. It seems the life of a renegade is starting 2 wear on David & you really can't blame him. Being constantly hunted, regularly tracked & often attacked by Saul; being exposed 2 the elements; making exciting escapes & attempting daring assaults; all of this makes 4 a thrilling, action packed story but in real life – it takes a toll on people. It's exhausting physically, mentally & emotionally.

In **ch26**, David was able 2 walk into Saul's camp w/o fear b/c his faith fed his imagination. He was able 2 imagine all the ways **YHWH** could deal w/ Saul & that allowed him 2 act in confidence. Now it seems that David has stopped thinking on the adequacy & sufficiency of God & is now focusing almost entirely on his immediate dilemma.

1- This shouldn't come as a big surprise 2 us. David has already been toying w/ the idea of a forced exile (**26:19b**). It was bad enough when it was only David but now he has 2 wives & 600 men w/ their wives & families. The logistics of just feeding that crowd had 2/b mind-boggling. But we need 2 understand that this is much more than physical or mental fatigue. It wasn't just that David was tired of running from Saul. Truth is, David's **tired** of trusting in the Lord!

David had every reason 2 stay in Israel & continue 2 trust the Lord 4 His **divine protection & provision**. David was **the** anointed king of Israel & he knew **YHWH** would eventually give him the throne. This truth had been confirmed 2 him by Samuel, Jonathan, Abigail & even Saul himself! In fact, w/in 3 years, David's exile will end & he'll be ruling the tribe of Judah in Hebron but he didn't know that. It takes **faith & patience** 2 receive what God has promised & David seems 2/b wavering on both counts. When we start 2 look at God thru our circumstances instead of looking at our circumstances from God's perspective, we trade **faith, patience & courage** 4 **fear, depression & discouragement**.

If Saul had ordered David 2 leave Israel, he'd never have agreed 2 it. Why leave now? B/c he's **convinced himself** it's the best move. "**Saul's gonna 2 kill me. There's nothing better 4 me but 2 escape 2 the Philistines.**" Really? There is nothing better in Israel among God's people than among the pagans? Isn't the **love, kindness, goodness & mercy** of the Lord **something better**? **Saul will despair**- but it sounds like David's beat him 2 it. It appears that despair & discouragement have become more powerful enemies against David than Saul ever was. But, **David has a plan**.

2-4- Last time David sought refuge w/ Achish in Gath, he barely escaped w/ his life. This time, David is welcomed in Gath b/c **1)** he & Achish now have a common enemy (**Saul**); **2)** he comes w/ 600 men that Achish could use as a mercenary army. By all appearances, David's plan seems 2/b successful b/c it says that Saul, "**sought him no more.**"

5-7- David has a petition-David asks that a small town be given 2 him & his men out in the countryside somewhere. The rationale he offered was more 4 elbow room in Gath & less drain on the expenses 4 the royal court. David & his entire entourage could have upwards of 2000 people: that's a lot of mouths 2 feed & a lot of bed rolls in the streets. Achish sees the wisdom in this & happily grants David's request but David is actually deceiving the king. David didn't want 2 stay on Gath b/c he needed the freedom 2 operate his own independent agenda w/o being 2 closely observed &/or investigated by Achish & his officers. So David & Co. took up residence in Ziklag, **23ml south of Gath?**

8-12- David has a practice- It seems in Ziklag, David was having his cake & eating it 2. He & his men became desert raiders who raided desert raiders. Like a privateer attacking & plundering pirates. He had a license 2 raid! But here's the thing: David was attacking the people that Joshua & his successors failed 2 exterminate when they entered the land. David would attack them, carry off their livestock & goods & bring Achish the king's share of the spoils. But, David would tell Achish that the plunder came from Judah or families associated w/ Judah. Achish fell 4 the ruse hook, line & sinker. He really **believed in** David & he was thrilled w/ David's traitorous tactics b/c that would mean that every red-blooded Israelite must really despise this new Philistine convert. There was 1 grim stipulation: David had 2 **execute** every human captive, he couldn't risk anyone ratting on him & blowing his cover about what was really going in Ziklag & the frontier. Thus, all witnesses must be eliminated. So far so good: David is able 2 help Israel while both duping & currying favor from Achish king of Gath. Things couldn't be going any smoother!

28:1-2- Uh-oh! Now, **David has a problem**- he was so successful at making a fool out of Achish unwittingly insists on making a traitor out of David! Achish wanted this trusty & very effective Davidic army 2 march w/ Gath in the upcoming massive Philistine assault on Israel. David was happy 2 lie 2 Achish about his activities but now he is forced 2 live the lie! David's response is purposefully ambiguous. What is he saying? Nothing! He can't, in all honesty, say yes & he dare not say no. All he can do is throw out a little braggadocio 2 Achish & buy himself some time until he can figure out a way 2 keep from being gored on the horns of **this**, his most current dilemma.

This isn't a complete story; it's only part of a story (**ch29**). There's enough tension here 2 hold our interest but the 1 aspect of this short story that makes it so fascinating & difficult is the fact that it's **God-less: text doesn't mention God at all**. It doesn't specifically tell us what God's doing in this scene nor does it inform us of His divine point of view. How should David's actions be evaluated here? Carefully, humbly & **in light of other Scripture**. You see, God's people **can learn godly truths & receive godly direction**, even from a God-less text!

1) The **Value of true security** - David's convinced his only security rests in Philistia. Sure, he has a lot more people 2 think about but his own words betray how far his faith has fallen. When he says, "**I shall perish**" (**caphah: swept away**); same word he used 4 Saul in **26:10b**. Now, David's convinced he w/b "swept away" by Saul. Contrary 2 **YHWH's** record of deliverance & protection; contrary 2 **YHWH's** promise via Samuel, Jonathan, Abigail &

Saul; David is certain he will soon be “swept away.” Yes, David’s under great pressure here, but it’s odd, at this point in his life, that he looks 2 the Philistines 4 his security rather than 2 YHWH. David is pursuing a substitute security!

David shares this problem w/ all God’s servants. We also must be aware of the subtle dangers of leaning on something other than (>) the everlasting arms. “How do I avoid deceiving myself w/ a substitute? How do I lean on the Lord?” Answer: by talking 2 yourself; talking truth 2 yourself; by speaking 2 yourself the truth about your God.

In vs1, David wasn’t just speaking in his heart, he was speaking 2 his heart. He was talking 2 himself & what he kept saying 2 himself determined his actions. What we say 2 our heart has a tremendous power 2 shape our thinking, our actions, even our destiny. If you tell yourself, “God doesn’t care about me” or “I deserve better than this,” it will make a difference in your life. If you say, “God loves me & I don’t have 2 earn His love” or “I’m grateful 4 every blessing I have,” it will also make a difference in your life. I’m not talking about the power of positive thinking or positive confession (at best: superstition, at worst: witchcraft). All of us propagandize our souls (talk 2 ourselves). It’s crucial that we feed our souls true propaganda, especially about the adequacy & sufficiency of our God!

The idea of soul talk is represented in Scripture. Jesus spoke of a farmer whose barns & bank accounts were full in Lk 12:16-19. There’s an entire life style /world view in vs19, worthless as it may be (vs20). What about the prodigal? He suffered the dire consequences of his foolish life style until the day he came 2 himself & said... (Lk 15:17). Man was created a triune being: body, soul & spirit. The body= flesh: it can’t be trusted. Fleshly lust will always lead you into sin, it will blind you 2 the truth & sin will destroy your life. But, if you know Christ as Savior, your spirit is alive: quickened by the Spirit of God, nourished by the Word of God, challenged by the will of God, satisfied by the presence of God & excited about the kingdom of God! Both body & spirit are constantly pushing their own agendas. Where does that leave the soul? The soul is the swing vote! If you truly want 2 avoid being deceived into accepting a false substitute 4 the security of the Lord, you must be careful what you speak 2 your heart.

2) The Value of godly wisdom- It wasn’t that David wasn’t thinking b/c he was. He was thinking of all the mouths he had 2 feed & keep safe; he was thinking of all the trouble Saul could still cause 2 prevent that provision & safety. So David hatched a plan & his scheme is successful, his decision is vindicated, his thinking is spot on. He figured if he moved 2 Gath, Saul would give up looking 4 him & he did! David’s plan worked; mission accomplished! & David’s petition worked: in Ziklag, he enjoys some freedom along w/ his security. & David’s deception worked: he can now attack Israel’s enemies while telling Achish he’s attacking Israel’s territory. It was a masterpiece of a plan. It might not have been faith-full, but it was successful. But Prov 14:12 warns, “there is a way that seems right 2 a man...”

You see, David’s scheme worked 2 well. Achish became such a believer in David & his men that he insisted that they fight alongside his troops in the Philistine offensive against Israel. Here, David’s plan had brought him 2 a point where he’s risking his kingship over Israel. He’d never live it down if he fought w/ Philistia against Israel. On the other hand, if he refused 2 comply w/ the king’s command, he may find Achish better equipped 2 dispose of him than Saul!

What's the lesson 4 us here? The will of God 4 us involves **more** than escaping from Saul. I'm not saying David wasn't stressed or that his exile from Israel wasn't painless but the danger from Saul wasn't nearly as nasty or potentially damaging in the long run as being dubbed **a traitor!** We are myopic servants: we can only see what's right in front of us. But God sees from our current situation 2 our final situation & all possible scenarios in between. God was using the difficulties in David's life 2 make him a man of God & prepare him 4 the throne but David decided 2 go his own way & solve his own problems & in so doing, he almost lost out on his promised future.

How do we avoid missing out on God's plan 4 our future? There's no formula or 5 step program that will produce the kind of discernment we need in our lives. Prov 3:5-6 – it doesn't say we shouldn't **use** our understanding, just don't **lean** on it. We're supposed 2 **lean** on the Lord & **use** our understanding. Unfortunately today, many Christians want 2 **lean** on their understanding & just **use** the Lord when it doesn't work out (**emergency**). There's no instant insight, no quick fix. You must ask the Lord 4 wisdom & then ingest the wisdom He has already provided in His Word. It's not enough 2 simply read the Word (a good start), we must read it & then live it, allowing truth 2/b borne out in our lives. We must learn the value of godly wisdom, knowing that our Teacher is more merciful & patient than Achish or Saul.

3) The **Value of grace**- 4 the last 12 chapters, David has been a paragon of faith, a model servant of **YHWH** & now we see him calculating & ruthless. A raider is 1 thing but a butcher – that's 2 much. We know why **YHWH** rejected Saul but how can He still back David in light of this wholesale slaughter? This is where God's grace comes in.

David's made of the same stuff as all God's people. The Bible never presents God's servant as being lilly-white so they'll be attractive 2 us. Understand: God doesn't have any clean material 2 work w/. The Potter only has sinful clay 2 make vessels of. We shouldn't criticize the Potter 4 using sinful clay; we should marvel that He stoops 2 work w/ such stuff. As long as you hold 2 the idea of human worthiness, you'll never understand the Bible. God does accept us as we are but He insists on making us into who He wants us 2/b. Is God working in your life? are you cooperating w/ His work or are you, like David, trying 2 work it all out 4 yourself? **There is a way that seems right 2 a man...** 😊