

1st Samuel Chapters 26-27 – John Karmelich

1. Today's lesson is called "God's will and circumstances".
  - a) One of the great questions Christians wonder is, "Am I doing God's will for my life?"
  - b) I've spent a bunch of lessons on this topic. I'm not through yet. ☺
  - c) One of the ways people like to discern "God's will" is by looking at the circumstances of their lives: If things are going well, we logically assume God is blessing us and we are doing God's will. If things are going badly, we logically assume God is "mad at us" for some reason and we are not doing God's will.
  - d) Before I comment on that concept, first let's get back to the fundamentals of "God's will".
    - i) God gave us a brain and expects us to use it. In the morning, it is not necessary to ask God, "Lord, is it your will for me to get up and go to the bathroom?" ☺
    - ii) That fact has to be balanced with the idea that God wants us to pray for His Will to be done. It is a prayer-line of the Lord's Prayer. (Matthew 6:10).
    - iii) I do believe God does "guides us" as we regularly pray that prayer. It is not an audible voice, but as we make decisions going through life, God guides us by our thoughts and actions.
    - iv) I further take the view one does not have to "strain heavily" to hear the voice of God, as if God is not capable of speaking louder than background noise. ☺
    - v) I am also leery of others giving me messages from God as if God has lost my phone number. Those messages can happen, I just take them with a grain of salt.
    - vi) I am also a big believer that one should regularly read through the bible. That is a major method of discerning God's will. Nothing, repeat, nothing we do is God's will if it violates some principal of Scripture.
  - e) Which leads me back to "God's will and circumstances".
    - i) Just because circumstances are going well for the moment, does not necessarily mean it is God's will. If those favorable circumstances violate some biblical law or principal, it is not "God's will" no matter how wonderful it looks. Often those good times are just tests to see how we will react.
    - ii) The same goes with negative circumstances. Often those too are tests of God to test our maturity.
  - f) Which actually leads us back to 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel.
    - i) These chapters are full of good and bad circumstances and have examples of "God's will" being done and not being done. We'll read of King Saul, David and even one of David's men being in situations where they think "God's will" is being done. The big-lesson of this chapter is simply to "check" circumstances with the bible to see if it is "God's will" for us or simply some sort of test.
2. Chapter 26 is mainly another shining moment in David's life where he is doing God's will.
  - i) He is under stress as King Saul is trying to kill him.
  - ii) David handles the situation "God's way" and his life is spared.
- b) Chapter 27 is an example of "Don't let this happen to you". ☺
  - i) After successfully standing up to Saul by submitting to Him, David and his men run in fear to a Philistine city to live. There, they get into all sorts of trouble.
  - ii) By Chapter 28, after a 16-month period of living there, a Philistine king asks David to fight the Israelites. Fortunately God intervened in Chapters 29-30 and that never had to happen. More on that in the next few lessons.

3. We have now spent chapter after chapter of David on the run from King Saul.
  - a) In many ways, the same story seems to go on forever about King Saul being jealous of David rising to power, David on the run and Saul trying to kill him.
  - b) Sometimes you wonder why God didn't summarize much of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel by saying, "And David grew in maturity and faith as he spent years of his life running from Saul".
    - i) Instead, we get pages of details of David on the run, Saul trying to get him, David refusing to kill Saul when he had the chance.
    - ii) That continuing story is repeated here in Chapter 26.
    - iii) In Chapter 27, we have the second story of David fleeing to a Philistine city in order to escape Saul.
  - c) The question of the moment is, "Why give us all of these details?"
    - i) For starters, "life" works that way. It is rare that we have some sort of trial or problem that just magically goes away in 24 hours. Usually the dilemma's we face go on for years. Just like David had to spend years dealing with the trials of Saul, so we have to spend years of our life dealing with pain and suffering.
    - ii) The kind of problems that go away in a few moments or a few days don't draw us that close to God. The kind of problems that go on for a long time keep us close to God to give us strength and maturity during such situations. That is why we read of all of these details of David's struggles as an example for us to follow.
    - iii) Next, you have to remember that God is preparing David to be a king one day. In the back of David's mind, he understood that, but I don't think he realized until late in his life how all of these struggles are "tests" in order to mature David and develop greater trust in God.
    - iv) That is the application for us. It usually isn't until we get hindsight that we realize that all the struggles we go through are for the purpose of maturing us as believers in God. Sometimes those pains and struggles go on for years. What we have to remember is that since God loves us, He has a purpose for our life and wants to mature us. If we are going to spend eternity with God, then God wants us mature us to develop a better dependence upon Him for our lives and not our "own wits".
  - d) OK, time to cover two chapters. I better get moving. ☺
4. Chapter 26, Verse 1: The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?"
  - a) We last read of the Ziphites in Chapter 23. Basically, this is a Jewish family that trusted in Saul and not in David. They tattle-taled on David's whereabouts in Chapter 23 and are now doing it again here in Chapter 26.
    - i) When the Ziphites disclosed David's location in Chapter 23, it inspired Psalm 54, as the title even mentions the Ziphites.
    - ii) Here, the Ziphites are mentioned again. There is no further reference to this group. We never read of God punishing them for turning in David.
  - b) If you remember the last we read of Saul was in Chapter 24. (We're now in Chapter 26.)
    - i) Chapter 25 was an interruption to the continuing fugitive story to tell the story of how David met one of his wives.
    - ii) At the end of Chapter 24, Saul vowed not to kill David. Now here in Chapter 26, the Ziphites are telling Saul again of David's whereabouts so Saul could hunt down David to kill him.
    - iii) That tells me word was out around Israel that Saul still wanted David dead.

- iv) God was “behind the scenes” making it possible to get David on the move again. We’re setting up the scene for a big showdown between David and Saul in a specific location. If it wasn’t for the Ziphites “tattle telling” on David, he and his men would never have moved to the location where God wanted them to be.
  - v) My point here is often “rotten things happen to us for a purpose”. I’m sure David hated the Ziphites for this, but it was all part of God’s plan for a bigger event.
5. Verse 2: So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand chosen men of Israel, to search there for David. <sup>3</sup> Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the desert. When he saw that Saul had followed him there, <sup>4</sup> he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had definitely arrived.
- a) So now we read of King Saul going out to desert country in Israel with a 3,000 of his best soldiers. I’m sure King Saul instructed them how David was trying to revolt against him and his orders were to kill David. We learned in Chapter 23 that David had 600 men with him. David was staying one step ahead of Saul and David’s scouts discovered Saul’s location before Saul’s men could discover David’s location.
  - b) One of the simple things to point out here is that Saul was camped out in the open by the road. For protection, Saul “circled the wagons” by having all of his troupes surround him for Saul’s own protection. Saul remembered the last time how David snuck up on him in his cave (I wonder if Saul is still wearing his torn robe?) Saul managed to forget how he vowed not to kill David, but feared losing the throne more than his vow to David.
6. Verse 5: Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him. <sup>6</sup> David then asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, "Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?" "I'll go with you," said Abishai.
- a) In Verse 5, David spotted the three thousand-man campground where Saul was. Saul was in the middle. David decides in Verse 6 to go into the camp to meet Saul.
  - b) Think about how dangerous this was from David’s perspective:
    - i) These three thousand men were ordered to kill David. They could have seen David coming as a threat and killed him on the spot.
    - ii) Yet David decided, “I’m going in”. If David just wanted to send a message to meet with Saul, David could have sent a messenger.
    - iii) We also get a hint of “David the leader” here. Not only does he decide to go himself, but he also wants to take someone with him. This is David saying, “I’m sick of being on the run. I’m going to go face Saul. Who’s coming with me?”
    - iv) The volunteer to go with David was Abishai.
      - a) We’ll read a lot more about him in 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel. David had a few “generals” of his army. The main leader is a man named Joab. Another general was Joab’s brother Abishai. Joab will be the more renown of the two.
      - b) Remember that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel were not compiled until after the death of David, and probably after David’s son Solomon was also dead. Joab was the more famous of the generals. Joab lived a lot longer. Thus Abishai is remembered as “Joab’s brother”.
      - c) The only thing we read of Abishai here is his bravery in his willingness to go with David to face Saul.

7. Verse 7: So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.
- a) David and Abishai snuck into Saul's camp. Apparently, everyone was asleep.
  - b) David and Abishai got to the spot where Saul was sleeping.
    - i) Let's jump to the second sentence of Verse 12. It says, "They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep."
    - ii) This is the same Hebrew term of "sleep" that was used of Adam when he was put to sleep to take out a rib to make Eve. (Genesis 2:22) If God puts you to sleep, don't figure on waking up no matter how loud the alarm clock is! ☺
    - iii) Remember when an army is surrounding a king, there should be guards wide awake to protect the camp. God "arranged it" so that everyone was asleep.
  - c) This is the same God that "allowed" the Ziphites to tattletale on David's whereabouts. Now God arranges for everyone to be asleep so David could go right up to Saul.
    - i) My point here is that God is working in the background of our lives. We don't always understand the big picture, but "good things and bad things" are often being arranged by God for some greater purpose for our lives.
8. Verse 8: Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won't strike him twice."
- a) This would make a great scene of a movie.
    - i) Imagine a very quiet scene with lots of men snoring, and the sounds of crickets in the background.
    - ii) Here is one of David's right-hand men, probably whispering to David, "Look David, God made it possible for us to sneak into the camp right up to Saul. I can kill Saul with one thrust of my spear. I won't need a second effort. Come on David, just give me the word. In fact David, you don't have to say a thing. Just let me go and we'll end this right now."
  - b) Imagine how tired all of David's men were from being on the run.
    - i) Imagine how tempting this was for David himself to bring this to an end. After all, God did say David would be king one day. This appears to be "God's will" for David to strike him down on the spot.
    - ii) David didn't even have to do the dirty work. He could have simply said nothing and Abishai would have killed him.
  - c) This leads us back to determining "God's will" for our lives based on circumstances.
    - i) Just because a circumstance falls in our favor, does not mean it is "God's will". David's right-hand man assumed it was "God's will" to kill Saul because of the circumstances. The important moral here is circumstances never comes before biblically based values.
    - ii) To kill Saul must have been a tremendous temptation not only to David's men but also to David himself. We tend to think of Satan's temptations as horrible sinful things staring us in the face. Temptation usually involves something that is visually appealing or it appeals to our egos. If something were not appealing in the first place, it wouldn't be a temptation.
    - iii) For example, a wonderful job with lots of money may not be what God wants for us. Sometimes, such things are designed to be temptations with God saying, "Trust me, I have something better in mind."

9. Verse 9: But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the LORD's anointed and be guiltless? <sup>10</sup> As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish. <sup>11</sup> But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."
- a) Let me paraphrase David: "Look Abashi, if God wanted Saul dead, God could strike Saul dead at any time. It's not my place to kill a king, especially one anointed by God. God never told me to kill Saul and I don't intend to start now, no matter how tempting it is."
    - i) This gets back to my point about "Circumstances never comes before biblically based values." The "biblically based value here" is one of the 10 commandments of "You shall not kill" (Exodus 20:13). It would be one thing if David killed Saul in self-defense. That is not the situation here.
    - ii) David's assistant (Abishai) thought it was "God's will" to kill Saul because they had successfully snuck into the camp without anybody waking up.
  - b) The point here is that God allowed David to sneak into the camp to test David. God wanted to see how David would react, and David past the test with flying colors.
    - i) The point for you and me is don't assume when things are "going right" that it is God's will to do something, that would violate the biblical principals we live by. "Things going right" may simply be God testing us.
    - ii) Remember that God tests us in order to mature us. God wants us to grow in our relationship with him and that comes by testing.
      - a) Right after the "10 commandments", God said through Moses, "Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning." (Exodus 20:20 NIV).
  - c) The last part of Verse 11 is David telling his assistant to take Saul's spear and water jug and get going. The reason for that will be clear in the next set of verses.
10. Verse 12: So David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.
- a) Here is the reference to the fact that God himself caused everyone to sleep.
  - b) This reminds me to comment on the topic of miracles:
    - i) One of my favorite mottos is, "If you can believe the first sentence of the bible, then you can handle the rest of it." If you can believe that a single God created the heavens and the earth, (Genesis 1:1) then you can handle a worldwide flood, you can handle the resurrection from the dead, and you can handle the fact that God caused 3,000 men to be in a deep sleep so that no one was awake this whole time.
  - c) This verse again reminds us that God sometimes allows miracles for the purpose of "testing" and not just healing.
    - i) We tend to think of miracles as cancer-victims being cured or some bible story of incredible circumstances. Here we read of a miracle for the purpose of testing David. The point is that God can do the same for us!
  - d) So why did David take the spear and water jug? The text just mentioned the fact twice in Verses 11-12. Why is that so important?
    - i) First of all, there are some nice word-pictures here. The "spear" is symbolic of death. I'm sure David recalled how Saul several times tried to kill David with that same spear. "Water" represents life, especially since this is desert country.
      - a) Therefore, we have pictures of "life and death" being taken from Saul.

- b) David is being trained to be a king. A king makes “life and death” decisions all the time. This subtle word-picture is designed to be a prophecy of how the kingship is being transferred from Saul to David.
    - ii) There is a practical reason as well for David to take these things. We’ll read of that in the next set of verses. To summarize, David will show Saul the spear and jug that David “was there” and didn’t kill Saul when he had the opportunity.
11. Verse 13: Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away; there was a wide space between them. <sup>14</sup> He called out to the army and to Abner son of Ner, "Aren't you going to answer me, Abner?" Abner replied, "Who are you who calls to the king?" <sup>15</sup> David said, "You're a man, aren't you? And who is like you in Israel? Why didn't you guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy your lord the king. <sup>16</sup> What you have done is not good. As surely as the LORD lives, you and your men deserve to die, because you did not guard your master, the LORD's anointed. Look around you. Where are the king's spear and water jug that were near his head?"
- a) In these four verses, we have David “taunting” Saul’s top bodyguard Abner.
    - i) Here we read of David now leaving the scene. Remember Saul’s men were camped out in an open field. David went across to the top of hill where all of Saul’s men could hear David. Then David started this “public taunting” of Saul’s top bodyguard.
  - b) OK, why did David do this? I’ll give you a clue, it was not to gloat. ☺
    - i) Remember that David’s life was still in danger. There were still 3,000 men with Saul who’s job it was to kill David and David’s men.
    - ii) What David is doing is publicly showing how it was “God’s will” for David to sneak into the camp. The jug and spear were simply proof that David was there.
    - iii) What David is trying to do is “convict” Saul’s army of guilt by failing to protect the king. That feeling of guilt might get Saul to drop the orders to kill David.
  - c) What is important to note here is David’s boldness.
    - i) David had the boldness to personally go into the camp and trust God that Saul would not kill him. David, “embolden” by God, now has the “boldness” to go stand on a hillside opposite of Saul’s army and state how God lead him to victory!
      - a) Remember that Saul had 3,000 soldiers and David had only 600 men with him. David was embolden with the Spirit of God and didn’t worry about the odds against him.
    - ii) “Boldness” is a spiritual power. The early Christian church prayed for boldness under the threat of persecution (Acts 4:29-31). Paul mentioned his boldness in several of his letters (e.g., 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 3:12, Philippians 1:20).
    - iii) Christians tend to lack boldness. We lack boldness as we fail to pray for boldness. Boldness is the ability to overcome one’s fears to take a stand for what is right. People want to be liked by others. We also fear being hurt. Taking a stand for God means to over-come such fears and preach or live for Jesus in boldness.
12. Verse 17: Saul recognized David's voice and said, "Is that your voice, David my son?" David replied, "Yes it is, my lord the king." <sup>18</sup> And he added, "Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of? <sup>19</sup> Now let my lord the king listen to his servant's words. If the LORD has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, men have done it, may they be cursed before the LORD! They have now driven me from my share in the LORD's inheritance and have said, 'Go, serve other gods.' <sup>20</sup> Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the LORD. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea--as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."
- a) In the first sentence of Verse 17, Saul “gets convicted” and calls David “his son”.

- b) This is the same Saul who keeps trying to kill David and in the past has called David lots of derogatory names. At one time Saul pledged his daughter to marry David. In Saul's anger, Saul gave his daughter to another man "as if David is dead" (1st Samuel 25:44).
- c) We'll get back to Saul in a moment. The rest of this paragraph is a speech by David.
- d) David gives a speech here in order to convince Saul to stop chasing him.
  - i) Many of you should have a sense of déjà vu here. In Chapter 25, Saul tries to kill David. David secretly cuts part of Saul's robe, David escapes, David then publicly states how he could have killed Saul, and then Saul "repents".
  - ii) In that sense, Chapter 27 "parallels" Chapter 25.
  - iii) There are lots of reasons for this. A big part of it is because God is raising David to be king and God is constantly testing and maturing David.
  - iv) The speech itself is important as it teaches us about David's character. We are reading of a "mature" David who is trusting God at the moment.
- e) What is noticeable is David is giving Saul "an out". That means that David is giving Saul a way where Saul can stop chasing David and have an excuse and not have to take the blame in front of his soldiers.
  - i) David is saying in a sense, "One possibility that you Saul are trying to kill me is that God has incited you (Saul) to do this because of some sin in my (David's) life." If I (David) have done something sinful, then I will present a sin-offering to God as required in the bible."
    - a) By David offering this statement, David is giving Saul an opportunity to stop chasing him and "blame God". Saul could then say, "It wasn't my fault I was chasing David, God made me do it because of some sin in David's life".
    - b) Of course this wasn't true. This is just David giving Saul "an out" so he wouldn't have to take the blame in front of his men.
    - c) It is also another subtle example of what is not "God's will". David knew better, but David offered this opportunity to Saul to give him an "out".
  - ii) The other "out" David gives is the possibility of "bad advice". David's other statement in this paragraph is that some men have given Saul bad advice. This is the statement in Verse 19, "men have done it". David is giving Saul an opportunity to back out of killing Saul because he listened to bad advice.
  - iii) Did David know that Saul himself is to blame? Of course.
    - a) This shows humility on David's part. I don't know if he respected Saul as much as David respected the office of the king of Israel.
    - b) This was also "practical" on David's part as to not get himself or his men killed. Giving Saul "an out" was an opportunity to save a life.
    - c) The point for us is to have tact. The easy thing would be to have a big ego and say, "This is your fault Saul!" The humble way is to find a tactful way to peacefully resolve the situation.
- f) The last sentence of Verse 19 says, "They (Saul's army) have now driven me (David) from my share in the LORD's inheritance and have said, 'Go, serve other gods.'"
  - i) This is important to understand. David is saying in a sense, "Look, I've had it being on the run. I can't take this anymore. I'm on the verge of moving out of Israel and being in a land of pagan gods". I can't be a fugitive anymore".
    - a) That temptation did overcome David, as we'll read in Chapter 27.

- ii) Perhaps that is what emboldened David to make this speech in the first place.
    - a) Sometimes when our back is to the wall, when we've "had it", is when we have our boldness. It could be David saying, "I can't take being on the run another day. It's time for me to face Saul and tell him I'm not to kill him. If I get killed in the process, so be it!"
  - iii) I have found that often, God gets us to the point where he wants us after we have exhausted all other options. I can tell you of great miracles God has pulled once people have exhausted every other option and then "had" to trust God.
    - a) There is a Christian buzz-term called "surrender". It is to say something like, "Father, I don't know what else to do in this situation. I've tried every other option. It's now 100% in your hands". That is often where God is saying, "Great, I've been waiting for you to say that!" In such situations, God gets 100% of the credit because there are no other options.
    - b) The "trick" is learning to surrender one's will to God before having to sink to that bottom level. Was that the situation here with David? Could be! I get the impression he's "had it" with being on the run and that embolden David to take a stand for God.
  - g) Let's finish the paragraph. The last sentence says, "The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea--as one hunts a partridge in the mountains."
    - i) A flea is an insignificant insect. It is David saying "Saul you're wasting your time and the time of this army trying to catch me. Not only am I not guilty of treason, but it's a waste of your resources".
    - ii) A partridge is a bird that walks much more than it flies. You can kill a partridge by chasing it a few times. It gets tired. You can then kill it with a stick.
      - a) David's point here again is that "he's had it (tired). Like a tired partridge that can't fly anymore is David's sense of "had it" at this point.
13. Verse 21: Then Saul said, "I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have erred greatly."
- a) Notice in Verse 21, we don't read of Saul crying, or any emotion for that matter.
    - i) Saul verbally repented, but there is no sense of action following that statement.
  - b) One of the big-picture ideas of 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel is that Saul is a picture of the "flesh". That means he represents our old human nature. What is taught throughout the bible is that our old sinful nature is "incurable" (Jeremiah 30:12). This is also Paul's point in Romans 7:24. That in order for God to change us, we have to be 100% dependant upon God because our human nature cannot be made better by self-discipline.
    - i) Several times in 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel we read of Saul "repenting" of his sin, but then his actions never follow. In a matter of chapters, we'll read of Saul's tragic death. That also is a word-picture of what eventually happens to our human nature.
14. Verse 22: "Here is the king's spear," David answered. "Let one of your young men come over and get it. <sup>23</sup> The LORD rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness. The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the LORD's anointed. <sup>24</sup> As surely as I valued your life today, so may the LORD value my life and deliver me from all trouble."
- a) David's response: "Nice try Saul, but you lack credibility!" ☺ David asked that Saul send one of his men to go retrieve Saul's spear. That means that David was unwilling to go back into Saul's camp and give it to him personally.
  - b) This was a subtle sign of David's victory to ask Saul's man to come fetch his spear.



- c) Note that David didn't give back the water jug. That may be "nothing", or as water is a symbol of life, it may be symbolic of the soon to be fall of King Saul and the rise of David.
  - d) What is important in these verses is David gives God the credit.
    - i) Notice how the word "LORD" appears over and over again in these verses. It is David giving God credit for the victories. The Hebrew Word "Jehovah", which is the most holy name for God, is translated "LORD" in all capitals for emphasis.
    - ii) David is saying, "I didn't win because I'm better than you Saul. My victories are God's victories and not vice-versa. It was God's will for me to spare your life. It was God's will for me to sneak into the camp."
    - iii) This gets back to "boldness" for God. It's ok to brag if you are giving God the glory and not yourself. This is a case of being a public witness for God.
15. Verse 25: Then Saul said to David, "May you be blessed, my son David; you will do great things and surely triumph." So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.
- a) This is the last exchange of words between Saul and David.
    - i) Saul is going to die in battle in a matter of chapters.
  - b) David "went on his way". David did not go back to the palace with Saul.
    - i) This is David saying, "I still don't trust Saul".
16. Chapter 27, Verse 1: But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand."
- a) David is now moving to the land of the Philistines in order to keep himself and his men safe from Saul. In order to understand why David did this, one has to see the transition between the end of Chapter 26 and the beginning of this chapter.
    - i) David still didn't trust Saul, and rightfully so.
    - ii) David was tired of the pattern of, "Saul says he's sorry. Saul then gets angry at David again, and then David has to go on the run."
    - iii) David figures, "I'm tired of doing this same thing over and over again. I'm going to go live in the Philistine country until Saul dies and I become the king. I can't take this pattern anymore!"
  - b) What David failed to do is trust God from complete deliverance from Saul.
    - i) At the end of Chapter 26, David just had this great victory in front of Saul.
    - ii) The next thing we read of David moving to Philistine country!
    - iii) David did trust in God to deliver him from Saul in Chapter 26.
    - iv) In Chapter 27, David figured "God needs my help". ☺ I'll go live in safety in Philistine country where I know Saul won't hunt me down anymore.
  - c) One commentary I read pointed out, "If Saul had told David to go flee to the Philistines, David probably would have refused as David knew it was not God's will." (Guzik)
    - i) Notice Verse 1 says, David "thought to himself". That means the bad-idea of going to the Philistines came from David's heart, and not Saul.
    - ii) My point is "despair and depression" are more dangerous when we are alone.
      - a) A young pastor once asked Billy Graham what is the most important principal for a pastor to remember. He responded, "Do not forsake the gathering of the brethren" (paraphrase of Hebrews 10:25). The idea here is we often go "off the deep end" when we are alone with our thoughts.
  - d) What David (and us!) need to learn is that problems will not go away by running. That is what Chapter 27 is all about. It is not "God's will" to run away from our problems.

17. Verse 2: So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maoch king of Gath. <sup>3</sup> David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him, and David had his two wives: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail of Carmel, the widow of Nabal. <sup>4</sup> When Saul was told that David had fled to Gath, he no longer searched for him.
- a) Back in Chapter 21, David went to Gath. He pretended to be insane, and the king let him go. In Chapter 21, the king of Gath was "Achish the king of Gath" (1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 21:12).
  - b) Here we read of, "Achish son of Maoch king of Gath". Most likely, the guy here in Chapter 26 is the son of the king in Chapter 21.
  - c) David, his two wives, the six hundred men and their families all "settled down" in Gath.
  - d) Verse 4 mentions that Saul no longer searched for David there.
    - i) Maybe Saul figured that David was not a threat to him living in Philistine country.
    - ii) One also has to remember that the Philistines had a large army. Saul didn't want to engage them just for the sake of getting David.
18. Verse 5: Then David said to Achish, "If I have found favor in your eyes, let a place be assigned to me in one of the country towns, that I may live there. Why should your servant live in the royal city with you?" <sup>6</sup> So on that day Achish gave him Ziklag, and it has belonged to the kings of Judah ever since. <sup>7</sup> David lived in Philistine territory a year and four months.
- a) David is saying to the king, "Look your highness, thanks for letting me and the boys live here in your territory. Look, Gath is one of the "top cities" here, and we don't deserve this honor. Why don't you let me and my gang go live out in the country somewhere?"
  - b) David made this request for a number of reasons. Because David was Jewish, he knew that he wasn't trusted by this king, especially given the fact that David had a large army traveling with him. Further, the residents of Gath don't trust him.
  - c) By living out in the country somewhere, the King of Gath could then keep a good eye on David and see where his loyalty lies. David would be less of a threat to this king if David and his army were not in his "back yard".
  - d) You have to remember that the cities and territory controlled by the Philistines were part of The Promised Land. The town where David got, called "Ziklag" eventually became part of the Israel territory after David became king. Remember 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel was written (collected) years later after these events.
  - e) At this point, "everything looks peaceful".
    - i) David was safe from Saul. The Philistine king cooperated with David and gave him his own town where he could settle down with his wives. Verse 7 said that David was there 16 months, in peace.
    - ii) This gets back to my opening theme: Do not let circumstances determine "God's will". Just because things are peaceful, does not necessarily mean this is God's will for your life.
    - iii) Some of the commentaries on this section pick up on the idea that Satan is more than willing to leave us alone if we are not doing God's will at the moment. If we are not a threat to evil forces, why should "they" concentrate on us?
  - f) The good news is God loves us too much to leave us alone when we run away. If you are committed to serving Jesus, then I find God the Father "finds a way" to make us miserable when we are trying to run away from Him. Things maybe peaceful at first (it usually is), and then of course, trouble kicks in.
19. Verse 8: Now David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites and the Amalekites. (From ancient times these peoples had lived in the land extending to Shur and Egypt.) <sup>9</sup> Whenever David attacked an area, he did not leave a man or woman alive, but took sheep and cattle, donkeys and camels, and clothes. Then he returned to Achish.
- a) David attacked local tribes. He killed everyone as to not leave any witnesses.

- b) OK, Why did David do this? There is lots of speculation on this:
    - i) Going back to Moses, God commanded the Israelites to utterly destroy the inhabitants of the Promised Land (e.g., Deuteronomy 7:2, 12:2, 20:17). Part of the reason for this judgment upon them was for the sins of those pagan people (See Genesis 15:16). Therefore, David believed he was “following biblical orders” to finish the job his ancestors never did. This is why Verse 8 emphasizes the fact that these were people from “ancient tribes”.
    - ii) There may have been practical reasons as well. Desert tribes were marauders. This may have been a matter of survival in the wilderness.
    - iii) David probably brought some of the goods to Philistines to earn “good faith”. This is stated in Verses 10-12.
  - c) Was it right for David to kill every man, woman and child?
    - i) One could argue “yes” only by the fact God commanded these tribes to be judged, and God used David to complete that judgment.
    - ii) More likely, the answer is “no”. One thing to notice is that the whole time David was living here, the word “God” is never mentioned. There is no invoking of God’s name or any sign that David sought God’s will during this time. None of the Psalms written by David are mentioned as being penned during this time.
      - a) Remember that one of the reasons David killed everyone was to not leave any witnesses. This becomes more clear in the next set of verses as David lies to the King of Gath about who he raided. David is going to give the impression to the Philistines that he was raiding his own people.
    - iii) I always like to point out that God is Perfect, God will judge all people fairly. If some woman and children died just for being at the wrong place at the wrong time, God will judge them fairly accordingly for all eternity.
  - d) Now let’s get back to “God’s will” and circumstances.
    - i) It appears that God is “blessing” these raids as David wins every time. That does not mean this is “God’s will” for David to be doing these raids, let alone be living among the Philistines. This is not the case here.
    - ii) God is testing David and God is still blessing David because God’s promises to David (and us) are not conditional on our “goodness”.
    - iii) It is not “God’s will” for David to be doing these raids. This will compromise David’s integrity as we’ll read over the next set of verses.
20. Verse 10: When Achish asked, "Where did you go raiding today?" David would say, "Against the Negev (territory) of Judah" or "Against the Negev (territory) of Jerahmeel" or "Against the Negev (territory) of the Kenites." <sup>11</sup> He did not leave a man or woman alive to be brought to Gath, for he thought, "They might inform on us and say, `This is what David did.' " And such was his practice as long as he lived in Philistine territory. <sup>12</sup> Achish trusted David and said to himself, "He has become so odious to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant forever."
- a) David told “half-truth’s” to the King of the Philistines.
    - i) David said “where” he made his raid, but did not specify what tribe. David left the impression he was killing Israelites, when in fact he was killing foreign tribes.
    - ii) One of the 10 commandments is to “not bear false witness” (Exodus 20:16). That command includes not telling half-truths for the purpose of misleading people.
    - iii) The point here is David sinned. Despite the fact that David was winning victories over these tribes, David was not doing God’s will. It is never God’s will to violate biblical principals despite the “blessings around us”.

- b) Someone might argue, “Is it ok to lie to protect the lives of innocent people? After all, David’s lies spared the lives of his six hundred men.” I do believe some biblical laws have higher values than others and there may be some rare cases where lying can be appropriate in order to save the lives of others. My point here is David should not have been in this situation in the first place. Remember David killed everyone in site in order to protect his lies.
  - c) Why didn’t God punish David for this crime?
    - i) In a sense David did suffer. I don’t believe David lost his kingship because that was given as an unconditional promise to David. We’ll read all through 2<sup>nd</sup> Samuel of David’s problems. Some of those problems stem from David’s fault of taking matters into his hands when he should have been trusting God.
    - ii) Further, it was still God’s will for the Israelites to “get rid” of some of the ancient tribes, and God “used” David despite his sinful state. It doesn’t excuse what David did, it just shows how God’s will gets done even when we are at fault.
21. I’m going to “sneak in” the first two verse of Chapter 28 as they tie into this story:
22. Chapter 28, Verse 1: In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, “You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army.” <sup>2</sup>David said, “Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do.” Achish replied, “Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life.”
- a) My point here is that the King of Achish thought that David was a traitor to Israel. That King wanted to make David a leader in his army to attack Israel.
  - b) David was too afraid to state the truth that he has never attacked the Israelites. Therefore, David states another half-truth, by saying, “Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do.” David is saying essentially, “Ah, your highness, you’ll find out what my men are capable of doing”. David never says he will attack his people, just that David and his men are good soldiers.
  - c) “Luckily”, in Chapter 29, other Philistines decide David shouldn’t join this battle as they fear David might change sides. David never has to deal with this issue.
  - d) My point here is David is brought so low that the Israelites enemies trusted David more than the current King of Israel. David had to lie and kill people to protect that lie.
  - e) My “ending thought” gets back to God’s will and circumstances. Never assume one is doing God’s will solely based on the circumstances around you. David “ran away” from his fears, and 16 months later, the enemies of Israel now trust David more than the Israelites themselves!
  - f) Chapter 26 was about David doing God’s will despite the circumstances.
    - i) Chapter 27 was about David trusting in his circumstances and failing to do God’s will. Both the “positive” story of Chapter 26 and the “negative” story of Chapter 27 give us further examples of discerning God’s will for our lives.
23. Let’s Pray: Father, we serve You and therefore desire to do Your will. Give us discernment as we go through life just what is Your will for us at any given moment. For those big decisions, we ask that you “Bless it or block it” and then trust that You are guiding us with our own decisions. Keep us close You through prayer, through Your Word, and through accountability to other Christians. Further, give us boldness so that we can take a stand for You and be a shining witness for You with our lives. We ask this in Jesus name, Amen.