

Trials in the Wilderness

Now that we are starting our third week of homework together, I hope you've gotten into the swing of things and found that your time in the Word of God is habit forming! I know these weekly homework assignments are long and cover a lot of material, but each passage has such important lessons for us to learn as we seek to be women after God's own heart.

After last week's lesson, did your heart just go out to poor David? It is hard not to just fall in love with him! He is so wise, sincere and heroic! His first impulse is always to do the right thing. His whole world turned upside down in a brief matter of days. Despite those tumultuous events, David still turns to the Lord as his first source of comfort and counsel. This week we will join David in his exile, be a witness to King Saul's wrath, go to battle with David as he defends the people of Israel, and waits obediently on the Lord for the appropriate time to be made King of Israel. It will be an exciting week of study. God bless you with wisdom and discernment as you spend time in his Word. He delights to see you diligently at work!

David in the Cave at Adullam

David flees from Gath and finds refuge in the Cave of Adullam. When he gets there I'm sure he is exhausted, hungry, and distraught. He has lost his position, his wife and home, his friend and he has played the mad-man to escape the Philistines of Gath. David has hit rock bottom. There is nowhere to go, no one to help him.

As you start your homework, ask God to reveal his word and eternal truth to you as you study the words of David's heart.



Read Psalm 142. David wrote this psalm when he was in the Cave of Adullam.

David is completely and utterly alone. There is no one there to console him or hear his complaint.

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*¹I cry aloud to the LORD;
I lift up my voice to the LORD for mercy.*

*²I pour out my _____ before him;
before him I tell my _____.*

- Circle to whom David cries aloud
- What is David seeking?
- Fill in the blanks above.

As you read these words, imagine David pouring out all the emotions and fears pent up in his heart like a drink offering before the Lord. David had not asked for the anointing he received and all that it entails. He has faced many hardships since receiving it – and many blessings, too – but it's the hardships weighing on him now. One can only imagine the thoughts, fears and losses David has just come through and that have brought him to this point. What does David do? He prays, he pours them all out before the Lord. The Lord is the only one who can help David.

In verse 3 how does David describe his spirit?

How do you think he is feeling?

Who are the men who have hidden a snare for him?

He is utterly exhausted to the point he knows that Saul's men who are pursuing him will do everything they can to catch him. He points out that no one is concerned for him or there to protect him. Where a bodyguard would have stood to his right ready to protect and defend him, he tells the Lord there is no one. Only the Lord who knows [his] way can see what snares and dangers are around him. He has no refuge, no place of safety, nowhere to rest.

Who does David say is his refuge? (v.5)

David, the mighty warrior who defeated Goliath, won amazing military victories, and was immortalized in the refrain "*Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands*" confesses what to the Lord? (v. 6)

Why does he need help? (v.6)

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Who will gather around David and why? (v.7)



The Lord answers David's prayer as we see back in 1 Samuel 22: 1-5. Turn there and read that passage. Who does the Lord send to David first?

Who comes next?

The people of Israel were under great pressure and distress due to the reign of Saul. Saul had overtaxed them and mistreated them. Saul himself was insanely jealous of David and pursuing him with armies. Talk about misappropriation of resources! Their taxes and military were being used to pursue a personal vengeance against a national hero rather than protecting the people against the Philistines raiding their borders, stealing their livestock, enslaving some of their people, and killing others! (Take a peek at 1 Sam 23: 27-28 and 1 Sam 30.) It is no wonder that David so quickly came to have 400 men under his leadership.

Why do you think David left his family in Moab?

Saul Kills the Priests of Nob

In our lesson today we will see the madness of King Saul lead him to destroy a sacred city of God, its inhabitants, and the priests of the Lord. Even Saul's men are reluctant to take a stand against the Lord, but not all of them. Saul's madness leads him into not only utter defiance of the Lord, but also into open rebellion with the massacre of those sanctified to serve God in a holy sanctuary.

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Read 1 Samuel 22:6-23 and answer the following questions.

What three things does Saul accuse his men of doing in verse 8?

♥ Describe some of Saul's deluded conclusions.

What does Doeg the Edomite tell Saul?

What does Saul accuse the high priest Ahimelech of doing for David?

Are any of these accusations based on truth?

♥ Why do you think Saul's men did not obey the command to kill the Priests of the Lord?

Who did kill the priests? Who else did he kill?

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Saul's insane rage against the priest led him to destroy everything in Nob. He placed the entire city under the ban declaring it to be utterly destroyed. It is ironic that Saul did this to the priests of the Lord of his own design, but failed to follow through on a ban placed upon the Amalekites. Only God could put a city or people under the ban and it was a judgment in instances of idolatry and rebellion against God. In this case who has rebelled against God? _____

♥ Saul destroyed Israel's priesthood. What is the significance of this act?

Who does it say escaped Nob? Where did he go?

Abiathar, by the grace of God, made it to David's camp. According to 1 Samuel 23:6, he brought with him the ephod, and containing within its folds would be the Urim and Thummim. These were the instruments used by the High Priest to consult the Lord¹.

What is David's response to Abiathar's explanation of his presence at the camp?



Read Psalm 52. David expressed the emotions contained in his heart at the slaughter of the priests of Nob in this Psalm.

Verse 7 helps us identify who David is talking about in this psalm. (Hint: it is not Doeg the Edomite!). Complete verse 7:

*"Here now is the man
who did not make _____ his stronghold
but trusted in his great wealth
and grew strong by _____ others!"*

Who do you think David is describing? _____

¹ Exodus 28:29-30

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What does verse 1 say this mighty man does?

What does he love? (v3)

How does this connect with 1 Samuel 22: 6-13?

What does Psalm 52:5 say God will do surely do?

Despite David's current circumstances how does he describe himself in Psalm 52:8-9?

How do you reconcile that description with his current circumstances?

♥ Contrast David's actions (reflecting his way of life) in verse 8-9 with Saul's actions in 2-4.

♥ How can we apply this truth in times of our own difficult circumstances?

David Saves Keilah

This chapter begins with David being told the Philistines were attacking the city of Keilah and taking all their food stores (looting the threshing floors). It amazes me that David, on the run from Saul and having put together a small band of warriors to protect themselves against the king, consider it their responsibility to protect and defend an Israelite city. They don't wait for Saul to come to defend the city. David is already concerned for the people of Israel and he isn't yet king.



Read 1 Samuel 23:1-6.

¹ When David was told, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors," ² he _____ of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?"

The LORD answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah."

Did you notice the first thing David does upon hearing about the Philistine raids? He turns to the Lord. Evidently time spent in the cave has drawn David closer to God and he has effectively learned where to seek counsel.

In verse 3 his men show reluctance to go defend Keilah because they fear going there and fighting the Philistines. Life was hard enough keeping safe from Saul. But going to Keilah meant being open to two enemies – the Philistines and Saul's men. David's men were fearful of going into battle against Saul's men, how much more so would they be afraid to engage in battle with a Philistine army that was better armed and superior in number. David's men don't seem to think that David's plan was inspired by the Lord. It would be difficult for them to believe that God wanted them to fight a battle where it appeared defeat was inevitable.

Verse 4 tells us that David *"inquired of the Lord again"*. Why do you think David inquired again?

David was very successful in Keilah. What were the results?

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Read verses 7-13 and complete the following verse:

"⁷ Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "_____ has handed him over to me, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars." ⁸ And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

♥ What do you think of Saul's statement concerning God? Look back at the events of Chapter 22:6-23 and look ahead to 23: 14. Where do you think God is in all this?

What does David do in (Chapter 23) verses 9-13?

How do you think David felt when he heard that the people of Keilah would betray him?

Finish reading Chapter 23. David has a special visitor come to him in Horesh:

"¹⁶ And Saul's _____ went to David at Horesh and helped him find _____ in God.

According to verses 16-18 what does Jonathan do and say to David?

♥ After being betrayed in Keilah, soon to be betrayed by the Ziphites, and being pursued almost moment by moment without respite by Saul, why do you think God sent Jonathan at this time to David? What was the message that God was trying to get through to David?

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Saul and his men were in very close pursuit of David, separated by a mountain. How do verses 26- 27 describe the timing of Saul breaking off his pursuit of David? What do you think was God's role in this event?

Where does David go live at this time?

How many men does he have with him now? (See verse 13)

David Spares Saul's Life

In our passage today David, pursued and vastly outnumbered by Saul's army, finds himself in a God-given situation that will reverse David's situation. But what first appears to be the easy answer to all his troubles is actually a test of his courage and obedience to do the right thing. All of our scripture passages this week reveal a period of severe testing in the wilderness. God often brings his people in a wilderness (for most of us it is a figurative wilderness) so that we can come to rely and trust in Him rather than trusting in our own understandings of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Today's lesson is yet one more test of David's ability to keep his eyes focused on God's will and not the "wisdom" of the world.



Read the events of 1 Samuel 24: 1-22 and answer the following questions.

How many men does Saul have? _____ And David? (23:13) _____

Look back at a statement made by Jonathan in 14: 6. *Perhaps the _____ in our behalf. Nothing can hinder the LORD from saving, whether by _____ or by _____.*" How does this statement coincide with the events of Chapters 23 and 24?

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♥ What is it that David has done (or almost done) that leaves him “conscience-stricken”?

♥ What does “conscience stricken” signify? What does John 16:8 say on this topic?

In a flash of a moment David went from almost killing Saul to just cutting away a piece of Saul’s cloak (for which I think he even felt guilty over that act!). His conscience was pricked by the Spirit of God, which prompted a change of behavior in David for which he was required to show great restraint. This had to be an enormous effort in submission to obedience and trust in God’s faithfulness to uphold David’s innocence. Although the following verse wouldn’t be penned until hundreds of years later, David submitted to an important command of God.

Read and paraphrase Romans 12: 17-21.

Even the act of cutting off a corner of Saul’s robe carries symbolic significance. David taking away part of Saul’s robe “signified the transfer of power from the house of Saul to the house of David.”² The damage done to Saul’s robe also rendered it unwearable according to Torah regulations³ which specified that the robes of the Israelites have tassels as visible reminders to be obedient to God’s law and as a sign of being consecrated to God. Those tassels were a required visible sign of compliance to the covenant with God. By removing a corner of Saul’s royal robe David invalidated Saul’s claim to be kingship.⁴

If David had followed through on his first inclination when he had Saul at a disadvantage in the cave, what evil would he have committed in repaying Saul’s evil?

² NAC

³ cf. Num 15:38–39; Deut 22:12

⁴ NAC

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Verse 7 says that David *rebuked* his men. The Hebrew word is shaca (Shaw-saw) which means to tear apart, rip up, to pierce through, upbraid⁵. I don't think this was just a gentle chiding. David's men were probably dumbstruck that David wouldn't take the opportunity seemingly handed to him on a silver platter. These men had been pursued and hunted unrelentingly by Saul who wanted to see all of them dead. And yet David refuses to kill Saul. Not only that, he verbally tears his men apart for their desire to see Saul killed in this manner.

What is that David tells them in verse 6:

Describe the events of verses 8-15:

To whom does David leave judgment between himself and Saul?

What does Saul acknowledge in verse 20?

♥ Verse 22 says that Saul returned home but David and his men went back into their stronghold. Why do you think David didn't return home with Saul to the life he had been forced to leave behind?

♥ Think back this week over the events and the psalms we've studied, and reflect on how David revealed himself to be a man after God's own heart. What traits particularly stand out to you? How do Saul's actions magnify David's character traits?

⁵ Strong's Talking Greek and Hebrew Dictionary