



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor
April 9, 2017

1 SAMUEL 21-22

1 Samuel Series

[PRAYER] Father, we lay our hearts open to you now bare before you. That's hard because the vulnerability that we expose in our lives to you often reveals things that need to be adjusted or changed. We thank you that you come in and you empower us to make those changes. We thank you for the Holy Spirit who speaks to us, who confirms that we're your children, who empowers us with power itself so that we can address the issues that need to be addressed in our lives. Lord, teach us what it means to rely on you fully, every day of our lives. As we now look at your word, we ask that you would energize us today so that we would have what we need for the challenges that we will face. Many of those challenges we don't even know what they are yet. But we're going to face challenges this week and we ask that you would be speaking to us and encouraging us this morning from your word. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today we're going to talk about fears. Fears make you act crazy. It comes from this story. Some of you know this story and we're going to read it today about how David goes in and he gets into the enemy camp and then to get out of there he acts crazy. So that's where the whole story comes from.

Fears make us act crazy. But as I was pondering this whole subject, I'm thinking what are the fears that we have? Some of you would say fear of public speaking, fear of flying. I understand those things. I'm talking about horror fears. Horror fears that we all share in our lives. I made a list of them that I think will be helpful for you. I want you to take a look at this list. This is the application list that I'm going to show you at the end of our time today. But there are a whole bunch of fears that we end up with in our lives that cause us to act crazy. We do crazy things. And those crazy things that we do get us further into trouble or they wreck our hearts inside and we become a mess inside.

I'm not going to go through all of those, I just put those up there and I'll show the same slide to you even more completely with some stuff at the bottom later as an application. But I want you to be touched as I was this week by real fears that we experience so that you can emphasize with the foolish things that David does.

You've got to get this. David so far in our story has been the exemplary hero. He takes care of his sheep and we say, "Aw, isn't he doing such a good job taking care of those sheep." Then he boldly goes in and conquers Goliath and we go, "Wow, that's really great." And then Saul's throwing spears at him, but he doesn't retaliate. We say, "That is commendable. I really like him." But now in chapter 21 we come to see some flaws in David's character. We see some mistakes that he made as a result of fear.

As we do then we're going to learn some practical things about us. I think we can emphasize with the pain that he's experiencing because the pressure comes on and he's going to be under significant pressure and then he does crazy things. We do crazy things. Right? Crazy things like worry about stuff because we're afraid. We worry and worry and worry. Or maybe we complain. Some people do crazy things and they just complain, complain, complain. Or maybe we get angry because we're afraid. There's all kinds of things we do when we're afraid.

What we need to do is learn how to run to the Lord. When we run to the Lord, as David is going to do in the midst of all of this, good things happen and out of this now we're going to gain some practical applications for our own lives. We want to be like David – a man after God's own heart. He's going to fail a couple times here. He's going to make a couple of mistakes, but even in the midst of all of this God is doing some good things in his life.

Here's where we are in the story. The suspicions of Saul being a lunatic or a crazy guy are now being confirmed. Jonathan has confirmed this is true. David runs for his life and as he's running for his life, he's lost his place in the palace, he's lost his wife, he's lost contact with his friend, and he's fearing for his life and he's running for his life. He's going to make two bad decisions.

Mistake number one that he's going to make is that he lies. Notice in 1 Samuel 21. It's going to result in a terrible consequence for him, for the situation. But let's read the story. The first thing he does is he lies. 1 Samuel 21 – *David went to Nob, to Ahimelek the priest. Ahimelek trembled when he met him, and asked, "Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?"* David is on the run. He's received this clear signal from Jonathan that his dad is going to try to kill him, so he's trying to get away. Now David is going to make up a story here. Notice what he says to Ahimelek the priest.

David answered Ahimelek the priest, "The king sent me on a mission and said to me, 'No one is to know anything about the mission I am sending you on.' As for my men (he didn't have any men, he's all alone), I have told them to meet me at a certain place. Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find."

David has left the royal palace so quickly that he doesn't have food and he doesn't have the weapons that he needed, so he's coming to try to find those. He goes to this city of Nob, this wilderness area. There's a place, Nob, where there's a seminary, a large family of priests. Eighty-six priests in all. He goes there.

Ahimelek is in charge and he's going to ask him for food and weapons. Ahimelek is suspicious of David because why would a guy be going out there by himself. Here's a general in the army traveling alone, probably on the Sabbath day given the things that we'll see later taking place. It just doesn't make sense to him. So he goes forward.

Now I don't know if you can read this map, but I'm going to show you this map several times because it kind of outlines the different paths. We're at number two up there. One is at the top. Two, David travels to Nob and receives Goliath's sword. Then we're going to follow the green line over to Gath, then to Adullam today, and then down here to Moab and back. So we're

covering a lot of territory. This will guide you through the process of how he's trying to get away from Saul. So I'll refer back to the map as we go forward.

Ahimelek is obviously suspicious of David and what he's trying to do. So he challenges David and David explains himself to the priest by lying. I want to suggest to you that lying always occurs under pressure. It may be the pressure to be liked by someone, so you exaggerate the story or put yourself in the story a little bigger than what you actually were in that story. The pressure to be liked. Or it might be the pressure to get out of trouble, to avoid a consequence. So some people lie to avoid consequences because the pressure that's there. They don't want to pay the consequence, so they lie to get out of it. Or maybe it's something like lying to get something that you couldn't get otherwise.

Although I do think that if David would have told Ahimelek this story he probably would've been given the bread. But he chooses to lie anyway and he tells Ahimelek that he's on a secret mission. So he's lying to receive something that he wouldn't be able to get otherwise.

Verse 4 – *But the priest answered David, "I don't have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here—provided the men have kept themselves from women."* So if you guys are really on a mission and this is a serious mission, then I will make an exception and give you the bread that's coming off of the showbread table. But if you're just living life here, then I'm not giving it to you, is what he's saying here.

David replied, "Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men's bodies are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!" So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the Lord and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.

I don't know which one of the fears that David was experiencing here, but he's under pressure and he lies in order to get what he wants. In the midst of that lie it is true that Ahimelek is going to break the rules for him, in essence, and give him the bread. The table of showbread was in this special place and there were twelve loaves placed on the table of showbread, hot bread placed there every Sabbath day. When they replaced the old bread they took it off and the priest could eat that consecrated bread (that now he's going to give to David). So that's what's taking place.

I think David is making a serious error here. He's able to trust God for the Goliath. He's able to trust God for the killing the bear and the lion. But he can't trust God in the midst of this situation.

Here's what I think he's doing and I want to have some sympathy here because I feel like I'm in the same kind of David place sometimes because God is taking David into some new areas of trust and faith. We can trust God on Sunday, but can we trust Him on Monday? So God is taking David into the other places of life and David has got to learn how to trust God in these other places. That's not easy. You may be facing a rather significant challenge right now that you've never experienced before. God is taking you into some new place and will you go in there with all these fears that are going to cause you to act crazy or will you be able to trust the Lord? That's really the question here. That's what David is learning. Because David isn't ready to be

the king yet. He's got some things to learn before God will give him that privilege and that responsibility.

In verse 7 we have a parenthetical verse, but it's an important one because we need it later on in the story. So I'll tell you a little bit about the story just so you understand the verse. Verse 7 says – *Now one of Saul's servants was there that day, detained before the Lord; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul's chief shepherd.*

So there's another worshiper here besides David. His name is Doeg. He's the chief shepherd of Saul. We aren't told why he's there. There are a number of reasons to appear before a priest. It may have been some kind of a ritual cleanse he needed, or be inspected by the priest, or something like that. We don't know why. But he was there. But here's the thing that we need to understand now about what's going to happen later in the story. Doeg is a really bad guy and the story is a terrible one at the end that I'm going to read to you. He ends up killing eighty-five of these priests. Killing them and their families. No conscience we'll see. He just steps up here and kills all these guys. But here he seems to be worshipping the Lord.

I think there's a little bit of Doeg in each of us that we need to guard against. The idea that we can come and do rituals before the Lord and then kind of go and live our own lives some other different way. Doeg is a bad dude. I think we need to be careful in our relationship with the Lord that it doesn't become something that's just ritualistic, but it's really an intimate, personal relationship with God that transforms who we are. It comes down to the very core of our being. We'll come back to Doeg in a little bit.

Let's go on to verse 8. *David asked Ahimelek, "Don't you have a spear or a sword here? I haven't brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king's mission was urgent."*

The priest replied, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one." David said, "There is none like it; give it to me."

So next David asks for a weapon as he's running away from Saul. He's on a path now. He's just passing through here. He's just trying to get food and a weapon. I don't know why Goliath's sword is here. It may have been put here like a museum piece there with the priests. They'll watch it and take care of it. So the sword is there and David takes that sword.

Verse 10 tells us that he continues on in his path. *That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath.* So he follows the green line from Nob all the way over here to Gath, which notice is over there on the side where the Philistines are. They lived over on the coastal area there. They were great warriors and they had several key cities. Gath was one of those cities. So David went over to Gath.

I don't know why he's doing it, but this is his second mistake that I want to point out. The mistake that David is making here is that he's running to the enemy camp for comfort. He's running to the enemy camp for comfort. "I'm going to go hang out with these people and Saul

won't be able to find me. I'll go be with the Philistines." It's really a crazy idea. I think fear causes us to do all kinds of crazy things.

Notice what happens in verse 11. *But the servants of Achish said to him, "Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances: "'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'?"*

I think he thinks he's not going to be recognized when he goes over there. He'll be viewed as a sojourner or maybe he'll be a mercenary or something in their camp. He'll have a job there or he'll be able to do something there. He's getting some sense of he thinks safety by getting away from Saul. Maybe getting some comfort of some kind of being there, but he's doing the wrong thing. He's going to the enemy camp to do it. It's a mistake.

Proverbs 4:14-16 reminds us of that and it says this: *Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers. Avoid it, do not travel on it; turn from it and go on your way. For they cannot rest until they do evil; they are robbed of sleep till they make someone stumble.* Fear warps our ability to see straight, warps our sense of direction. So then we start making errors. We start ending up in places where we shouldn't be.

It's a twenty-five mile run from Nob all the way down to Gath. That's where David is now. He's going into the enemy camp. You're not going to find comfort in the enemy camp. You might find some comfort, but it will get you into big trouble. When you're afraid, what are you going to do? Go to the bar? You're going to go back to old friends that you know are not good for you. You know they're not going to encourage you in the right direction. Or maybe it's not about going to a place. Maybe it's about something you do inside of your house. Maybe you run to an old habit to worrying or complaining or whatever it is. You go to something inside to do some soothing of this problem and it just makes things worse.

That's what happens to David. It's going to make it worse for him. I would suggest that's what happens in our lives when we start trying to find comfort in the enemy camp. You can't go there. You have to learn how to trust the Lord in the midst of our fears. David is learning that, but we're not quite there yet.

Verse 12 continues this story when it tells us David's response when he heard the men saying, "Oh we know the song about him. *Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.*" That really scared David. Verse 12 says – *David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath.*

By the way, Gath should ring a bell in your mind. Gath is the town where Goliath was from. This has got to be the craziest place to go hide out. When you're carrying Goliath's sword and you go there and you know the cousins are all around and they've heard the story, they knew who this guy is. Well that's why I say fears cause us to act crazy.

But the idea of craziness comes into verse 13 and so on. It says – *So he pretended to be insane in their presence* (or, as someone told me earlier today, maybe the pressure was getting to him so

bad he was starting to act insane); *and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.*

So he's afraid. He's believing his life is threatened. He's on the run. He goes over to this place and now he's in deep trouble. So he acts like he has OCD. He's making marks and other marks and he's acting like he's deranged. He's got spit coming down his mouth. So I'm sure he would've wet his pants if he thought it made the deception that much better. This guy is trying to show that he is crazy.

I love Achish's comment in the midst of this. Funny comment that's placed here. *Achish said to his servants, "Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me? Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?"* So what Achish is saying is this: "Look, the guy is crazy. Don't I have enough lunatics on my staff that you got to bring another one on here?" I like Achish's comment.

The neat thing is here in the next verse, verse 1 of chapter 22, it says – *David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam.* He escaped to this cave. I even wonder as I'm pondering this, did the idea of acting insane come from God? So he got this idea from the Lord? I don't know. All I know is that fears cause us to act crazy and that's what ends up happening here. He makes a serious mistake.

Look at verse 1. It says he *left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam.* So if you see on our green chart here from Gath we go a little bit east of Adullam, and in this cave good things start to happen and he starts to regain his composure. He just needed to get there where he could spend some time and pull things together. We're going to see that he's going to pull things together in just a moment.

One of the things that I'm impressed with David is that he keeps the conversation with God going, even when he's making mistakes. I think that's what makes him different than other people. He keeps the conversation with God going.

Do you know that as we look at all the wanderings of David there are nineteen psalms (I counted nineteen, that's my number) that were written during this time when he's running. Nineteen psalms. I'm going to share with you one of them and I'm going to read it to you. It's the one from Psalm 57 and it has the prescript to it that tells us when it was written. *For the director of music. To the tune of "Do Not Destroy."* So if you know the tune then you'll be able to sing it. *Of David. A miktam. When he had fled from Saul into the cave.*

Here's what he says: *Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. If you compare this to the fear he was in and now he's in the cave. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed. I cry out to God Most High, to God, who vindicates me. He sends from heaven and saves me, rebuking those who hotly pursue me—God sends forth his love and his faithfulness. I am in the midst of lions; I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts—men whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth. They spread a net for my feet—I was bowed down in distress. They dug a pit in my path—but they have fallen into it themselves.*

My heart, O God, is steadfast, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and make music. Awake, my soul! Awake, harp and lyre! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise you, Lord, among the nations; I will sing of you among the peoples. For great is your love, reaching to the heavens; your faithfulness reaches to the skies. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; let your glory be over all the earth.

There's a contrast between the fear that he experienced when he's running, lying, going to the wrong company, and this kind of talk where he says I'm going to trust the Lord, I'm going to run to the Lord. We need to learn how to do that in our lives. There's no one who's beyond fears. There's no one who's beyond sin. *We all have sinned*, the Bible says. David had this ability of coming back to the Lord.

Let's go back to verse 1 again. It says – *David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. Now he's getting his act together. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. He's going to protect his family who are probably going to be victims of Saul's insanity. So they come down to the cave. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.*

From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, "Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?" In other words he's still trusting the Lord in the midst of this. God is working in the midst of the situation.

So follow the green line back below the Dead Sea over here to Mizpah. He goes to Mizpah and he plants his family over there to protect them from the challenges that they will no doubt face otherwise.

Verse 4 – *So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold. But the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah."* So David left and went to the forest of Hereth. So he comes back up the green line, up there to somewhere in the wilderness of Moab. We don't know exactly where, but it's where he's camped out.

Verse 6 – *Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul was seated, spear in hand, under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing at his side. He said to them, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse (that's David) give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today."*

Verse 9 – *But Doeg (this is the same Doeg we already talked about) the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, "I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelek son of Ahitub at Nob. Ahimelek inquired of the Lord for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine."*

Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelek son of Ahitub and all the men of his family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king. Saul said, "Listen now, son of Ahitub."

"Yes, my lord," he answered. Ahimelek has no idea of what's going on.

Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?"

Ahimelek answered the king, "Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair."

But the king said, "You will surely die, Ahimelek, you and your whole family." Then the king ordered the guards at his side: "Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me." But the king's officials were unwilling to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord. They had a conscience. "I'm not going to do this. I don't care if you're the king and you're telling me to do it, I'm not going to do it because it's wrong." So the officials said no.

The king then ordered Doeg, "You turn and strike down the priests." So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.

But one son of Ahimelek son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled to join David. He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. Then David said to Abiathar, "That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your whole family. Stay with me; don't be afraid. The man who wants to kill you is trying to kill me too. You will be safe with me."

Well that part of the story is very tragic and sad and disappointing. It touches David. He realizes he made a mistake. Two mistakes in this passage we saw. One is he lied, which created this whole mess. And the other thing he did is he went to the enemy camp to try to get comfort. All to satisfy the fears that he was experiencing in his life.

I think we need to evaluate in our own lives what do we do when we're afraid. Because when we're afraid that's when we mistreat other people. It's when we're afraid that we do things that are counterproductive for ourselves. We get ourselves into deeper problems and we need to know how to handle those things and how to respond to them.

I'm going to share with you some verses that also come from some other psalms. Each of these psalms have prescripts that tell us they took place during this time. But this is really God's solution to deal with the fears that we experience.

In Psalm 34:4 David says – *I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.* We need to learn how to run to the Lord. We need to learn how to seek Him. That’s what that verse says.

Psalm 56:3, another psalm written during this time says this: *When I am afraid, I put my trust in you.*

Look at the fears that are up there. The fear of failure. The fear of rejection. The fear of being judged by someone, the fear of loneliness. The fear of uncertainty. The fear of loss of freedom. The fear of disappointment. The fear of getting hurt. The fear of inadequacy. That’s the fear of not being able to meet up to the challenges that I’m about to face. I don’t know if I’m adequate for that, so there’s this fear of inadequacy. The fear that something bad might happen. Those are real fears. Those are core fears. Those are things we all need to be able to address in our lives.

I’m grateful for the story of David because he’s a real guy and he has some real challenges here. God is going to teach him some things that he’s going to need in order to be king. The same lessons we need in order to be able to move forward to wherever God wants us to be in our lives. We have to learn how to deal with the fears in our lives.

Let’s pray.

[PRAYER] Lord, sometimes the fears we experience are debilitating. They hinder us from being able to see straight and navigate life properly. They distract us. They hinder us from being able to get things done or progress. They cause us to make bad decisions to hurt people. They do all kinds of bad things in our lives. We need a plan. Lord, thank you for showing us David and the model that he provides for us. The things that he learned in these difficult situations to trust you. That is a hard thing to do sometimes, Lord, to trust you, but we ask you to teach us how to do that more so we aren’t plagued by the fears that tie us down and hold us back. Teach us how to be bold, to take risks in your name instead of being paralyzed by fear. Lord, we ask for your direction in each of our lives. Teach us what it means to serve you and to love you with all of our hearts. Take us into those new areas that we may be experiencing this week with a confidence that you are there and that you are present in our lives when we get in that place. Not just when we get out of it, but when we are in it. In the midst of the struggle, you are there. Lord, do a deep work in our lives, we ask, so that we don’t have to fear. We can trust you in who you are. In Jesus’ name, amen.