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1 SAMUEL 24:8-22

1 Samuel Series

[PRAYER] Lord, we ask that you would calm our hearts. In this moment make us very aware of your presence and make us very aware of our need for you. We know that your word is very powerful when our hearts are open to it. So we just take this moment to be in a receptive mode. To listen to what you have to offer us, to teach us about ways that we might think and act differently in response to your word. Lord, we know that this is a very sacred time and reverent time, and we're anticipating your speaking as we look at your word today. In Jesus' name, amen.

When someone is under pressure it reveals a lot about who they are, how they respond. Christians think differently than non-Christians when it comes to this particular issue. Christians think differently about the pressures that they're under, but I don't think all Christians do. I think Christians should be thinking differently about the pressures that they're under, but they don't always do that. That's why I'm intrigued by David because he's under pressure in this moment.

Some of you experience the pressures of the past of some kind of something that has happened in your life or you had some difficult experience or some trauma or some abuse or those kinds of things have really impacted how you live today. And then some of us it's just the pressure of having lost your keys or you're in traffic or you have to turn a paper in on Friday and then that pressure raises some challenges that need to be addressed in ways that are hard. So then the way that we deal with those pressures is very important. We need to know how to deal with it.

I'm convinced that Christians think differently. The reason I say that is because when we look at God's word, we see verses like this one: *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (how?) by the renewing of your mind.* That means as Christians that we are going to change the way that we relate because we're going to relate differently. We're going to respond to people in ways that have to do with our thinking. The way that we think is different as Christians than non-Christians. The *renewing of your mind.* This was written to the Romans. This was written to Christians who were believers already. They needed to change the way they think.

Another verse we see is the one in 2 Corinthians 10:5. In fact while I was on my vacation I read 2 Corinthians. That's the next book we're going into. That's just a preview of what's yet to come after we get through 1 Samuel. It's just a beautiful book. But in this book it says – *taking every thought captive.* The idea here is that, yes, we're Christians, but just because you are a Christian doesn't mean that instantly everything is different. We have to work toward thinking differently.

That's one of the reasons that I really like the story of David because he's under pressure. He's under pressure and we get to see how he thinks and how he responds.

Scott Turansky - Calvary Chapel Living Hope

I think today there's a lot of people who think wrongly. Let me give you some examples. Here we have two different kinds of mentalities that I think people experience today.

On the one side there's perceived weakness. I say perceived because it's just perceived. It's not real weakness, but they perceive themselves as being weak. Why? Because they've experienced so many bad things in their life that they view the world as a dangerous place. They view the world as a bad place. So they are always saying things like this: "The weather is bad today, so I feel bad." As if the weather can somehow make them feel bad. Or "my child made me angry." They do a lot of blaming. These are the people that do a lot of complaining, negative thinking. These are the people who don't take responsibility for themselves. They're basically saying that life situation and other people determine how I feel and how I live.

It's a bad mistake, I think, that people make. It's a victim mentality that creates a lot of challenges and these people end up being unhappy people. It's an unhelpful way to think. It's bad thinking, I would say, if we look at it theologically.

There are people on the other side who have perceived strength. These are the angry people. They think they're strong because they're angry. It's not real strength, but it's perceived strength. These are the people that have to fight because the world is unfair. "People deserve my anger," they say. "My anger is justified." They have this black-and-white thinking. If something is wrong, then they have the right to express themselves or they want to lash out in anger. That anger then becomes power because people stand up for themselves. I just think that's a mistake and those people then end up being unhappy people because they're relying on worldly kinds of thinking, being conformed to this world. That's how the world thinks.

Christians think differently than non-Christians. When you get saved, something happens to your thinking. Your thinking gets redeemed. I'll say we're relationally redeemed. I like those words. We gain emotional balance when we start thinking the way God wants us to think. We're able to have more tools for handling relationships like we're going to see David using in this situation today. We don't react to life and others as much. We enjoy a depth of peace and joy and love that God wants us to have. We have a greater freedom of mission because even though we're challenged, even when we have the pressures on our lives, we have something that other people don't have. We have something that is the key to unlocking those pressures that we experience so that even in the midst of them we can care for others. That's what we're going to see in the life of David today.

Now in the story in 1 Samuel 24 that we started last time I was with you we talked about how David felt guilty because his conscience prompted him. He had been in the cave where Saul had gone in to go to the bathroom and Saul unknowingly took off his robe, put it down, and went in the back to do his business, and David went off and cut off part of Saul's robe. And then *he felt conscience-stricken*, the Bible says, that his conscience pricked him that he had done the wrong thing. He had a very sensitive heart to the Lord.

I say that Christians think differently than non-Christians and I do believe that's true, but we can't call David a Christian because he lived pre-Christ time. But he was godly in his thinking

and the way that he responded in his thinking. I really like how he handled himself under pressure where he's being abused, mistreated, he's running for his life. How he handles himself in the midst of that is stunning.

So I do think we can pause for a moment and say our lives are a challenge with either minor challenges that we have in the moment or major challenges we have in the past. We can say yes we experience those challenges, but God would have us to think differently.

So David cuts off the part of Saul's robe and Saul then unknowingly puts his robe back on and goes out of the cave. We pick up the story in verse 8. It says this: *Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.*

We're going to see in this story that David uses a tool. A tool that all of us can use in our relationships with other people. I want you to know this is a tool that Christians have because we understand God and we know that God made people a certain way. We can take the same idea of conscience that David knowingly applied to himself in the cave and he was conscience-stricken. Now he's going to use this idea of appealing to conscience with Saul and he's going to do it in a particular way.

I'm going to show you this slide a little bit later that's going to give a number of aspects of what this appeal is all about. Appealing to conscience. But I wanted to show it to you now so you know the points I'm taking that make up this appeal to conscience come out of the story with David. Remember that I just read that he says to Saul, *"My lord the king!"* and he *bowed himself prostrate* before the king. Thus I say in this appealing to conscience that one of the things we want to do is treat the person with respect and demonstrated value of the other person. The rest of these truths are going to be found in the passage as we go through. But I want you to see in the passage itself it's revealing the way that David did this. I think that's why he had success in it.

I'm going to show you a New Testament passage that illustrates the same thing because this isn't just taken from an Old Testament. It's something that is a truth, a tool that you can use, young people, when you are with someone else. Parents, you could use it with kids. It could make your relationships more influential. Even in your marriage relationship if you're married you could make it more influential. This is a tool that God has set up for us in dealing with all kinds of situations. So as I continue to read the story, I'm going to draw some ideas out here about the appealing to the conscience that we can then use. So I'll come back to this slide in just a moment.

Let's continue reading the scripture and the verses that are present here. Verse 9, the next verse says – *He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'? This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lay my hand on my lord, because he is the Lord's anointed.'"*

Part of what makes the appealing the conscience work is the element of surprise kindness. Surprise kindness. In this case not killing him was kind. But surprise kindness is something that

happens sometimes with someone else and it pricks their conscience because then they feel bad. I'll show you more about that.

In fact let me illustrate it by giving you some more elements of the appealing to conscience. It shares truth. That's what David did. He went and he just said, "Look, I'm not trying to kill you like you're imagining that I am." It focuses on the other person's actions. When I say focusing on the other person's actions you'll see what I mean by this in a little bit because it's focusing on the person. It's not saying you're a bad person. It's focusing on the actions that they did to keep it confined to what they're doing. In the appeal to a child you might say something like, "What just happened isn't like who you really are. I know." That's appealing to conscience. "I know you're better than what you just did," in other words. That's appealing to conscience.

It's the action that he focused on. Then he awakens this empathy inside of Saul. You'll see as I read on Saul is going to feel bad because of what has been revealed to him. It's awakened this empathy inside of Saul. He does surprising acts of graciousness or kindness. He acknowledges God's will. We'll see that in a minute. And he removes blame from self.

Let me explain this part to you. Every one of us inside of our hearts has a scale. This scale is balanced by guilt on one side and blame on the other. If two people are fighting, then the one person who's fighting can look at the other person and blame them because they're fighting too. So because they have blame there, they can justify their own anger. But what happens when the other person apologizes? See, when the other person apologizes and says, "Okay, I want you to forgive me for this," then what it does is it removes the blame. Now the person who is angry, what are they left with? It tips the scale and the guilt comes down and then this appeal to conscience starts to work because God created us all with this conscience.

Even Saul who's very corrupt at this point has a conscience and David is appealing to that conscience. So it's tipping down here. And Saul is going to feel guilty. So that's what I mean when I say removes the blame from self. By removing that then by apologizing (in this case, revealing to Saul that he didn't do anything wrong), then the guilt starts to fall down on Saul and he is able to make an adjustment in what he's doing. A very important part of this appealing to conscience and then he turns the application to him. In other words to Saul, "Look, here's what you need to do."

Let me continue in the passage so you can see this worked out in the Bible verses themselves. In 1 Samuel 24:11 it says – *"See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion."* He's removing the blame. Since Saul had imagined that David was trying to take over the throne, trying to usurp the kingdom from Saul, and he's now removing all of that from Saul's imagination so Saul is stuck with his own guilt and has to address that.

"I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life. May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you."

So what David is doing is he's appealing to the conscience of Saul and it's really interesting how he does that because it has a tremendous affect on Saul. He continues by saying this: *"Against whom has the king of Israel come out? Who are you pursuing? A dead dog? A flea? May the Lord be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand."*

So this ends David's appeal. His soldiers were suggesting that he go out and kill Saul, fight him. He doesn't do that. It's very tempting to go out and fight with someone. This is another approach that David uses, a different approach, and he's doing it to appeal to the conscience that Saul has. And it worked.

In fact let me show you the response that Saul has when David gives his appeal. *When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud.* I have seen this so many times that when a child apologizes to a parent that the parent is touched. Or when a parent apologizes to a child, the child is touched.

He wept aloud. *"You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly."* Do you see what's happening in the tipping here? Now he's experiencing the guilt. Now he's having to look at himself. He can't be blaming David anymore because that blame has been removed. *You have just now told me about the good you did to me; the Lord delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands. Now swear to me by the Lord that you will not kill off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family."*

So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

Saul was intent on killing David before the episode took place. He had just taken a break before pursuing David in order to kill him. But after this interaction, Saul turns around, he relents, and he goes back and he does the right thing. He leaves David alone. It's really a powerful move that David makes. For a man who's under tremendous pressures, who's being mistreated, abused, to turn around and give kindness like this, it's just a God thing. Because Christians think differently than non-Christians, or at least they can.

In fact in the book of Romans we have the same illustration of appealing to conscience. I want to show you this in Romans 12:14-21. In the verses preceding this it talks about honoring one another. Remember that's a piece of the puzzle here is to respect the other person and honor them.

But he continues on in verse 14 and says this: *Bless those who persecute you.* In other words, when someone is persecuting you, you do something kind to them that they wouldn't expect. *Bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice* instead of cursing other people. When they have a victory you're going to rejoice with them. *Mourn with those who mourn* instead of

prodding them because now they're down. *Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position.* And of course when you think you're right, that's everybody else is of low position. *Do not be conceited.*

Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. That's because you want to have a clear conscience yourself, you see, in doing this. *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.* You can't control how other people are going to respond. Other people are mean, they're abusive, they're unkind. But the way you respond is really important. If it is possible, you notice, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath. Here's where the conscience fits in because God is the one who created the conscience in every person. Even the person that seems to not have a conscience has one. So he's saying leave room for God's wrath; *for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay."* Anger is a form of revenge. So we're getting revenge on someone by telling them off. What he's saying here is leave room for God's wrath and let God be the one to judge that person on their own heart and respond to them, *says the Lord.*

On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, give him a surprising act of kindness by feeding him; if he is thirsty, give him a surprising act of kindness by giving him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." The sign of heaping burning coals, however you describe this (and you can describe it in a number of ways) has the idea of touching him in the heart. The person in their heart is motivated inside because of some kindness you've done to them. *Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*

Now I want to suggest that this is the operating principle of Christians. We typically respond this way. If we look at how Jesus and even Paul who wrote these words acted, they didn't always respond by returning kindness. Sometimes they were abrupt. Sometimes Jesus was pretty strong and firm with people. Sometimes He called them names. "You hypocrites," He would say to them. Sometimes Jesus was very dramatic with people. I'm not suggesting we always do this every time, I just think it is our *modus operandi*. It is our typical way of responding. There are other choices that we have, but this is a great one that we're appealing to conscience because God can do something amazing in a person's life when we do that. That's what it means to appeal to conscience.

But you might say how is that different than shaming someone or putting a guilt trip on them? I think that's an excellent question. It certainly is one I address as I'm working with parents because parents don't want to put a guilt trip on their kids, or sometimes they do and they don't know then how to appeal to the conscience. So let me contrast it with the blaming or the shaming or the guilt trip. Shaming focuses on the person and not on the action.

Remember on the appeal to conscience I said focus on the other's action. But the shaming says, "You're a bad boy." If you say to someone "you're a bad boy," you're shaming them. It's a mistake. That's not how we are to treat children. We value children. We have respect for children, just as in the appeal there. Even though we are firm with them and we say, "What

you're doing is wrong," we're focused on the action, not on the person. Shaming you is this disgust, which is a form of intense anger against someone. It's just disgust. That's not the attitude that exists in the appeal. It's a shaming kind of an attitude. Shaming says "you never," "you always" because those are words that characterize the person whereas the appeal basically says what your actions don't characterize who you are. I know that you can change and I wish that you would change and reconsider the way you're treating me right now. That's what the appeal is all about. Shaming says you'll never get it right. Shaming is name-calling.

So those are some significant differences between the two that we have to consider. Most importantly I want you to realize that Christians think differently than non-Christians. It is such a privilege for us to have Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. God wants to do great things in our lives. He wants to help us to grow.

I want you to think about this perception of the conscience or this appealing to conscience in three different ways. One, I want you to think about your own self. That is how is your conscience doing. Because you want to be like David and have such a sensitive conscience that he is a man after God's own heart.

The second thing is how he uses this appealing to conscience with someone else. Think about how you treat people and how you can use this tool to increase your relational effectiveness with other people. It's a truth that is in God's word that's so powerful because it's designed to be used with people that God created. Even if they're not even Christians. Even if they're not doing the right thing. It's a great tool.

Thirdly I want you to think about it in terms of how you work with your heavenly Father. Because God doesn't shame us, but He does appeal to our conscience. He calls us to something different than where we are right now.

So if you're not a Christian today, then you're going to be convicted by the Holy Spirit to feel guilty. I need something different than what I have right now, and that is a good feeling. You have to know it doesn't feel good. It is a good feeling because it prompts you toward repentance or change. Repentance is a very positive and beautiful word that reflects change. We all need to change and become more like Christ. It starts with accepting Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior because a powerful thing happens on the inside.

I know that most of you are Christians, so we have to realize that as Christians we are not exempt from the problems that non-Christians have if we're thinking in a worldly way. Because we're being conformed by the worldly thinking and we need to renew our minds. This is one example of renewing our minds. I'm convinced that people get stuck in a victim mentality and it corrupts everything that they do, so they're complaining and negative about everything. They can't escape their own thoughts because their thoughts are captivating them instead of taking every thought captive. The people have an angry mentality so that every time they turn around anger is the solution. If somebody does something wrong, they respond with anger because they are captivated by it. It's important for us to be able to make the change, to be able to adjust the thinking as God has designed for us.

I would encourage you to think about how God would use this idea of conscience to change the way you operate. Not just give you another tool, but even at the core of who you are that you are asking the Lord to speak to you and to convict you. Because along with the conscience inside of the human heart is the Holy Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is powerful.

One of the tasks that the Holy Spirit has is to confirm that you are a child of God, to express value for who you are. Sometimes we determine the value of something by how much someone is willing to pay for it.

I saw some amazing artwork in the last couple of weeks. Some of the beautiful things we saw just not even for sale it's so valuable. But then did go into some places and see paintings and I'm thinking, "Why would somebody pay \$300 for that or \$3,000 for that? I wouldn't want to put that in my house!" Why is it for that price? Because someone is willing to pay that.

We can often measure the value of something by the payment that is being offered. Which gives us insight into our own lives as Christians because Jesus Christ considered us valuable enough to pay a price for us so we could enjoy salvation. He gave His life for us. A tremendous value for us so that we can go away feeling valued. God wants us to feel valuable. He values us. He treats us with respect. But He also points to us in our hearts those areas that need to change. So one of the roles of the Holy Spirit in our lives is to convict us of sin.

If you're sitting here and God has brought on some idea into your mind, that's okay. Allow it to come. Maybe God is prompting you to make it right, to get rid of the blame that you have and to apologize to someone or to have a different approach or to do something. That's great. That means God is working in your life. It's not a bad feeling. It's a good feeling. You might not like it, but it's moving you to a place where your mind is being renewed and you're having a clear conscience. It's one of the most beautiful things we can have is a clear conscience before the man and before God. So we're working to develop that renewed mind in our own lives.

I trust that God will use this in your own heart, that God will speak to you and allow you to have a new renewal. Because Christians do things differently than non-Christians, at least they have the opportunity to do that.

Would you stand with me and let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we come before you and thank you for giving us the freedom to have a clear conscience by accepting your redemptive gift of salvation. Lord, we're grateful for the privilege of knowing you personally and for salvation and that you cleanse our conscience. Lord, I just pray now for each person here that you not only give them the ability to see you and understand you, but you do that deeper work inside the heart to provide the freedom that you offer through a clear conscience. Give us the wisdom to know how to use this tool of appealing to conscience in the lives of others that we meet and others that we're in conflict with. Lord, give us the freedom to have more tools than we typically have. Teach us to have a renewed mind and rely on you. We ask in Jesus' name, amen.