

The Power of Loyalty

1 Samuel 24:20-22; 26:1-2,7-12,21-25

Introduction

David spared Saul's life, despite Saul's attempt to kill David.

Question: Does it appear to you that sometimes when we have personal righteousness and are loyal to God and that we are not rewarded?

This lesson shows that we can trust God to reward us appropriately for being faithful to Him.

Question: Who are the people in your life to whom you are loyal?

Question: Where did this loyalty come from?

Background: David had prayed that the Lord would vindicate him and give him opportunity to prove to Saul that he wasn't an outlaw who was trying to kill him and seize the throne. After all, Saul was not only David's king, but he was also his commander and his father-in-law, and regardless of Saul's evil attitude, David never considered Saul to be his enemy.

God answered David's prayer when Saul and his troops came to find him.

Saul led 3,000 men to search for David in the wilderness. Saul entered a cave in which David was hiding. David was able to cut off a small part of the king's robe. After the king left the cave, David called out to the king from a safe distance. David showed Saul the piece of his robe. David told Saul that he had been close enough to kill him but instead took only a piece from his robe.

TREACHERY INTENDED (1 Sam. 24:20-22; 26:1-2)

In vs. 16-19 of this chapter Saul seemed sincere and had great intentions to allow David the throne. Saul made promises of doing better.

Lots of people make promises and go to programs – tape note cards on mirrors.

The problem is not trying to do better but being regenerated.

Jesus said in John 15:5 “Without me you can do nothing”

Saul was sincere but he lacked the ability to keep his word.

Saul described three possible levels of life:

1 - the divine level, where we return good for evil;

2 - the human level, where we return good for good and evil for evil;

3 - the demonic level, where we return evil for good.

Saul admitted that David was a godly man who, by not slaying him, returned good for evil. But Saul was possessed by demonic forces and did evil to the one man who could have destroyed him.

In these verses Saul made David swear that he wouldn't wipe out his family when he became king.

David had made a similar covenant with Jonathan (20:14–17, 42) and he was willing to make the same promise to Saul.

How tragic that Saul's own sins destroyed his family, all but Jonathan's crippled son, Mephibosheth, whom David adopted (2 Sam. 9).

Because David knew God's calling and believed God's promise, he was able to be so bold before Saul and his army. It was indeed a holy boldness that came from a heart that was right with God.

Vs. 1-2 = David had already been in Ziph. The men of Ziph had betrayed him once before in Chapter 23
Why would he go back to Ziph?

We don't know but we do know what he was think and feeling at this time by reading Psalms 54

Question: Why did Saul keep chasing David?

Men are interested in thoughts, but God is more interested in our Hearts.

Personally – I am reminded this week that we live in a fallen world and Evil is persistent.

We are to love evil people but you cannot trust evil people no matter how sincere they sound.

TRUST APPLIED (1 Sam 26:7-12)

The Lord must have instructed David to go to Saul's camp that night, because He sent a deep sleep upon Saul and his men. Saul and Abner, who was Saul's captain (14:10) and cousin (v. 50), were sleeping at the heart of the camp, surrounded by the wagons and baggage.

Abishai was sure that it was God's will that he kill Saul and put an end to his selfish rule and his relentless persecution of Israel's true king, but David stopped him.

David had settled this matter in the cave (24:1-6), and there was no need to consider it again. He had also seen what the Lord did to Nabal.

David was sure that Saul's life would end at the right time and in the right way, either by natural death or by a judgment from God, and then the throne would be his.

This second time God had seemed to give David an opportunity to get rid of his enemy. This was not an opportunity. It was a test for David to prove whether he would take things into his own hands or wait on the Lord

Question: How did David's actions show the New Testament teaching about treatment of one's enemies?

Question: Can you recall a time when you were tempted to get even with someone?

Personally – I can recall times when I was angry with someone and plotted ways to return evil to them. In the end it came of no good and the person that was hurt most was me. Leave it to God to judge the evil person.

LOYALTY REWARDED (1 Sam 26:21-25)

Saul doesn't know it, but he is about to die and this is his epitaph.

Do you wonder what it must feel like to be late in life and headed to your eternal destiny and say "I have been a fool".

Question: What if we lived each day like it might be our last?

Lesson Application

Early on David gained the reputation of a great warrior, he was also known as a man after God's own heart. This conflict was shown in the test for David and his real character.

Saul wanted to kill David so David was forced to live in the wilderness, but David didn't take 2 chances to kill Saul to show that Saul was wrong about him.

David in this lesson show clearly the New Testament teaching that when we are hurt, your normal reaction is to get even. David shows clearly that we should give good for evil.

One of the all-time greats in baseball was Babe Ruth. His bat had the power of a cannon, and his record of 714 home runs remained unbroken until Hank Aaron came along.

The Babe was the idol of sports fans, but in time age took its toll, and his popularity began to wane. Finally the Yankees traded him to the Braves. In one of his last games in Cincinnati, Babe Ruth began to falter. He struck out and made several misplays that allowed the Reds to score five runs in one inning.

As the Babe walked toward the dugout, chin down and dejected, there rose from the stands an enormous storm of boos and catcalls. Some fans actually shook their fists. Then a wonderful thing happened. A little boy jumped over the railing, and with tears streaming down his cheeks he ran out to the great athlete. Unashamedly, he flung his arms around the Babe's legs and held on tightly. Babe Ruth scooped him up, hugged him, and set him down again. Patting him gently on the head, he took his hand and the two of them walked off the field together.

Personally - Let us pray this week that when the opportunity comes that God will give us courage to give back good for evil and we can be a positive witness for him.