

Theme: David's time as a fugitive fleeing the madness and wrath of Saul show that real security is found in God, not our outer circumstances.

I. Intro - 'The Fugitive'

- A. Popular TV show 1963-1967; movie later
- B. Innocent man convicted of murder, forced to flee
- C. Spends his life on the run, trying to escape 'the law'
- D. Today - David is also a fugitive, fleeing unjust Saul
- E. How will David & Saul respond at this point in our story?

II. The Fugitive Flees

- A. David goes to the priests at Nob
 - David went to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. Ahimelech trembled when he met him, and asked, "Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?" 1 Samuel 21:1
 - 1. David knows Saul wants to kill him, so he flees
 - 2. His first stop is with the priests of Yahweh at Nob
 - 3. The priest fears & wants to know why David is there
 - 4. David is fearful and makes up a lie about a mission from the king - this will cause big problems later
 - 5. He asks for and receives bread & weapons (vv1-9)
 - a. Even though David is acting in fear and lying, Yahweh provides for him
 - b. He receives holy bread & Goliath's sword
 - 6. Even when we have failed Yahweh, He is gracious towards us and cares for us as His wandering children

B. David flees to the Philistines

That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath. 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'?" ¹² David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. 1 Samuel 21:10–12

- 1. David either hoping to go unnoticed or become a mercenary
- 2. Either way it does not work - the advisers are fearful
- 3. The advisers call David the king of Israel, a position he did not hold yet, but which Saul should have recognized.
- 4. To get out of this danger, David acts like a madman
 - David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. ¹³ So he pretended to be insane in their presence; 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. 1 Samuel 21:12–13
 - a. David realizes he has gotten himself into a mess
 - b. He acts insane - word can mean like a drunk man
 - c. The great irony is that David the fugitive is shrewdly feigning madness, while Saul the king is actually being controlled by madness!
 - d. It works - Achish just wants him gone! [vv14-15]

5. Out of this experience David writes Psalm 56 and Psalm 34, an acrostic poem of God's deliverance
This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.
⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.
⁸ Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him. Psalms 34:6–8
6. Once again, we see the kindness and faithfulness of Yahweh. Though David has acted unwisely, Yahweh is faithful to His covenant promises and delivers David. This is the Gospel!

C. David the fugitive flees from place to place

David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. ² All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him. 1 Samuel 22:1–2

1. David flees the Philistines to a wilderness cave
2. David's family has to flee and join him as well
3. His family is with him - a source of encouragement
4. But his troubles spread to his family - source of grief
5. Then David is joined by 400 distressed, debt ridden, discontented men - a motley crew it would seem!
6. A far cry from David's experience in 1 Samuel 16-17

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?" ⁴ So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold. ⁵ 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. 1 Samuel 22:3–5

1. David has to go to Moab to leave his parents (Great grandmother Ruth's ancestral home)
2. He then goes to a wilderness stronghold
3. The prophet Gad warns him that he must flee again
4. Map of David's wanderings
5. At this point it all seems hopeless. David is not the king, but rather a fugitive fleeing from place to place with a motley band of malcontents.

III. The Mad, Wicked King

A. Saul the king sits in regal splendor

Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul, spear in hand, was seated under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing around him. ⁷ Saul said to them, "Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds? 1 Samuel 22:6–7

1. What a contrast from David the fugitive!
2. Saul spear in hand; David had to borrow a sword
3. Saul surrounded by royal officials; David ruffians

4. Saul has lands to give to servants; David has no place to lay his head
5. Saul has armies of thousands; David a few hundred untrained vagabonds

B. Saul descends into further madness and wickedness

1. Saul imagines conspiracy all around

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. 1 Samuel 22:8

- a. Why would they know Jonathan made a covenant with David?
- b. How did Saul find out - unless they told him?
- c. They faithfully serve Saul - but he imagines they are not concerned for him
- d. David is fleeing for his life - but Saul imagines that David is about to kill him!
- e. Those playing the Game of Thrones are never secure, but are uneasy & imagine the worst and project their own sin onto others.

2. Saul accuses and slays the priests of Yahweh

a. Doeg the Edomite speaks up & accuses the priests

But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, "I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech son of Ahitub at Nob. ¹⁰ Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine." 1 Samuel 22:9-10

1. Doeg had seen David with the priests at Nob [21:7]
2. Doeg stokes Saul's worst fears of conspiracy

3. When we play the Game of Thrones, there will always be those who will stoke our fears and strengthen our sin

4. Saul accuses priests of conspiracy [22:11-13]

b. The priests reasonably show their innocence

Ahimelech 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? ¹⁵ 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." 1 Samuel 22:14-15

1. David is loyal to you - not conspiring against you!
2. David is your son in law & captain of the bodyguard!
3. I have done this many times for David before!
4. I have no idea about this whole matter

c. Saul orders the priests to be slain

But the king said, "You will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your father's whole family."... ¹⁸ 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. ¹⁹ 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. 1 Samuel 22:16, 18-19

1. Saul orders the whole priestly family killed
2. He is unwittingly fulfilling the word of Yahweh that predicted this [1 Samuel 2:27-36]
3. Those playing the Game of Thrones will ultimately fulfill Yahweh's word & plan no matter how hard they try to rebel against it!
4. The men of Israel refuse to do this! [22:17]

5. Doeg the Edomite will do it - and with relish!
 6. Doeg slays the entire family - and even its animals
 7. Saul has done to the priests of Yahweh what he refused to do to the Amalekites! He simply will not submit to Yahweh!
- d. Playing the Game of Thrones always leads to further sin & tragic consequences. The only path out is to repent and withdraw from the Game of Thrones!
3. Abiathar the priest escapes to David
- But Abiathar, a son of Ahimelech son of Ahitub, escaped and fled to join David. ²¹ He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. ²² 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 father's whole family. ²³ Stay with me; don't be afraid; the man who is seeking your life is seeking mine also. You will be safe with me." 1 Samuel 22:20–23
- a. One priest remains - and he goes to David
 - b. David accepts responsibility even though the majority of the blame surely lies with Saul & Doeg
 - c. Those submitted to Yahweh's Throne should never refuse to accept responsibility for their sin.
 - d. Saul blames the priests who are innocent, but David accepts blame even though the main sin lies with Saul, not David.
 - e. Those who hide their sin descend into further sin & madness, but those who confess & repent of their sin find forgiveness & freedom in Christ.

IV. The Stable Fugitive and the Unstable King

- A. The contrast between David and Saul in this story
1. Saul has all of the trappings of power, but feels threatened; David appears threatened but is protected by Yahweh
 2. Saul accuses, threatens & alienates those around him, while David is beginning to gather the seeds of a faithful band of loyal followers
 3. Saul is king but moving further from Yahweh, while David is a fugitive who is drawing ever closer to Yahweh
 4. Saul experiences outward favor but inward alienation from God; David experiences outward difficulties producing inward communion with God.
 5. The fugitive is stable in the wilderness, while the king is unstable while he sits on his throne!
 6. All of this foreshadows later wicked rulers like Herod and Pilate who rage against God's Messiah and people - Who are protected by God Himself!
 7. There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, "Thy will be done," and those to whom God says, in the end, "Thy will be done." All that are in Hell, choose it. - CS Lewis
- B. God's provision for David the fugitive
1. When David lacked food, God provided it
 2. When David lacked weapons, God provided Goliath's sword - a mighty weapon & reminder of God's protection in the past

3. God provided Gad the prophet & Abiathar the priest
4. The motley crew with David will become his mighty men who will faithfully serve him throughout his life, doing mighty exploits for David & God's people
5. In the stronghold of the cave David is learning that God is his real stronghold
I love you, O LORD, my strength. ² The LORD is my rock, my fortress and my deliverer; my God is my rock, in whom I take refuge. He is my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. Psalm 18:1–2
6. In the wilderness David is relearning that God spreads a table in the wilderness in the presence of our enemies

David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. ² All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him. ³ 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?" ⁴ So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold. ⁵ 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. 1 Samuel 22:1–5

V. A Table In the Wilderness

- A. God has prepared a table for us in our wilderness
- B. We have a table in the presence of our enemies
- C. Come & confess - & stop playing the Game of Thrones
- D. Come receive refreshment from God for your wilderness

The Fugitive

1 Samuel 21-22 (22:1-5)

May 15, 2016

Communion

Psalm 20:1-4

Teaching keywords: biblical characters; fear; anxiety and worry; anger; sovereignty of God; exile and return

May the Lord answer you when you are in distress; may the name of the God of Jacob protect you. ² May he send you help from the sanctuary and grant you support from Zion. ³ May he remember all your sacrifices and accept your burnt offerings. (Selah) ⁴ May he give you the desire of your heart and make all your plans succeed. Psalms 20:1–4