



### David – Renaissance Man 1 Samuel 21-22 - Cave Life

#### I. INTRO

- A. I'd like to begin this morning by asking you to do something you might not want to do. I'd like to ask you to recall the most disappointing or painful season of your life. (It might be now??) What is your perspective of where God was?
1. Did it bring you closer to God?
  2. Did it push you away from God?
  3. Or, is that painful season or moment still buried deep in your soul?
- B. We are in a series on the life of King David. Today we're in 1 Samuel 21-22. David is on the run from Saul and he's still confused about his circumstances (20:1). He feels like he has done everything "right" and he is only beginning to see that perhaps the hand of God is involved in his circumstances.
- C. I would like to take a quick look at these chapters and then back out and offer you a quick, big-picture (global) look at the "theology of suffering."
1. *"[Jesus] learned obedience from what he suffered."* --Hebrews 5:8
  2. *"We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."* --Romans 8:28
- D. Review – We began our series in 1 Sam 16 with a prophet named Samuel being prompted by God to begin a search for King Saul's replacement. God directed Samuel to a household in Bethlehem and, ultimately, to David who was anointed as the future king of Israel. David was probably between 10-13 at the time.
1. At his young age David posed no threat to King Saul and he begins to split his time between the palace where he played music for the depressed (demonized) King Saul and his father's house where, as the youngest son, he tended sheep.
  2. (1Sam 17) David defeats Goliath - probably between 15-17 years of age.
  3. (1 Sam 18) For the next 8-10 years things are tenuous between David & Saul because of Saul's fear and insecurity. Meanwhile, David enjoys enormous military success and is made a commander in Saul's army.
  4. Along the way David marries Saul's daughter Michal. She loves David, but for Saul it's a way to keep tabs on David.
  5. 1 Sam 18-20 are really about Jonathan, who is about 12 years older than David, and they form a covenant friendship (wingman). Their friendship is built around authenticity, integrity, true servanthood, and doing whatever it takes to usher in the presence of God (not a political party). The same kind of relationships we are all called to.

E. Let's take a quick look at 1 Sam 21-22 and then back out and take a global look at a *theology of suffering*.

1. 1 Sam 21-22 speak primarily of a confusing and confounding wilderness experience for David. He does some really dumb stuff in chap 21!
2. He lies to the chief priest at Nob (a village, or colony, of priests and their families), which eventually gets them all killed.
3. And then David escapes to the Philistine city of Gath, which was Goliath's hometown – and he takes Goliath's sword with him!
4. David ends up feigning madness to escape (we don't know how long he stayed)
5. This brings us to 1 Samuel 22. I'd like to read the first two verses and pray...

*“So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father's household heard of it, they went down there to him. <sup>2</sup> Everyone who was in distress [bitterness of soul], and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.”*

6. The Cave of Adullam is where David bottomed out emotionally and spiritually. While we don't know this from the text there are (at least) two psalms that were written by David while he was in the cave -- Psalms 142 and 57.
  - a. **Psalm 142** is a prayer of authentic and humble complaint and desperation. He is at the end of his spiritual and emotional rope. This psalm shows us David on his face before God.
    - 1) Part of the maturing process in the life of Christ followers is navigating the dark, dreary, depressing, and discouraging times in our life.
    - 2) Life circumstances and (sometimes) the consequences of our actions place us face down on the floor – humbled, broken, and sobbing. Have you been there? I have.
  - b. **Psalm 57** shows us David moving from his face, to his knees, and then to his feet – from protest, to petition, to praise.
7. But before we expand on a theology of suffering it is essential that we see Adullam's Cave as a foreshadowing of the establishment of the kingdom of God through the gospel.
  - a. This man David, in all his complexities, gifts, talents, flaws, and brokenness, was the one through whom God would bring the ultimate King – Jesus, who was also born in Bethlehem and can be traced through the lineage of David.
  - a. Here at the cave we see a picture of Jesus in his humiliation and the birthing of His subversive “church” in the wilderness.
  - b. David is being persecuted by a King that God has already rejected in favor of David, a man who, like the coming Jesus, was a *“man after God's own heart”* (Acts 13:22; cf. 1Sam 13:13-14).
  - c. So, here we have the true King, holed-up in a cave that literally means “refuge” (like the church is called to be), and the refugees from Saul's false Kingdom —

those in distress, discontented, and in debt rally around this little church in the wilderness and around this prototype of Jesus Christ in his humiliation.

- d. The Cave of Adullam is a place of rest, protection, and safety with the true King in their midst.

F. With the rest of our time this morning I'd like to step back from these verses and quickly lay out a "Theology of Suffering". How and why does God use suffering to grow and mature us?

## II. BODY

A. This morning I would offer you **Four Thoughts On Suffering**.<sup>1</sup> In order to see and embrace the value of suffering in this world we must aspire to have...

1. An elevated view of God.
2. A realistic view of ourselves
3. A growing understanding of God's grace through Jesus.
4. A growing understanding of how God ordains suffering.

B. Ready?

1. **An elevated view of God, which embraces His sovereignty, wisdom, and goodness.** (This has not been automatic in my life, but has grown over time)

- a. The sovereignty of God is the biblical teaching that all things are under God's rule and control, and that nothing happens without His direction or permission.
- b. Here is a verse that helps us to see this: *"I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted."* --Job 42:2
- c. Here's the tension we grapple with: God is in full control, AND we make choices.
  - 1) Consider Joseph: Did his brothers sell him into slavery? Yes, and they were responsible and accountable. Was God using all of it for the salvation of His people? Yes, He was sovereign.
  - 2) Consider Jesus: Did Jewish and Roman leaders crucify Jesus? Yes, and they were responsible and accountable. Did God ordain the murder of His Son for the salvation of His people before the world began? Yes, God was sovereign over that.
- d. In the end, God's sovereignty and our responsibility remain a mystery.

2. **A humble view of humankind, which includes our sinful tendency and limited perspective.**

- a. "The subject of sin is vital knowledge. To say that our first need in life is to learn about sin may sound strange, but...it is profoundly true. If you have not learned about sin, you cannot understand yourself, or your fellow-[humans], or the world you live in, or the Christian faith. And you will not be able to make head or tail of the Bible. For the Bible is an [explanation] of God's answer to the problem of

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<sup>1</sup> David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham AL, studied 75 key biblical texts regarding suffering that led him to five conclusions, which have been abbreviated and adapted here. For more information go to: [secretchurch.org](http://secretchurch.org)  
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human sin and unless you have that problem clearly before you, you will keep missing the point of what it says.” –J.I. Packer <sup>2</sup>

- b. *“Every inclination of man’s heart is evil from childhood”* --Genesis 8:21
- c. *“There is no one who does good, not even one...no one righteous”* --Romans 3:10-12

### 3. **A growing understanding of God’s grace through the suffering of Jesus for our salvation.**

- a. Salvation comes to us by grace (alone). *“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ - by grace you have been saved...”* --Ephesians 2:4-10
- b. God saves us through the suffering of Jesus. It’s not advice, but news.

### 4. **A growing understanding of how God ordains suffering for the Christian.**

- a. The word “ordains” is used intentionally. God doesn’t just “permit” suffering as if it’s out of His hands, He ordains (or, assigns) it.
  - 1. **To refine our faith.** *“See, I have refined you, though not as silver I have tested you in the furnace of affliction.”* --Isaiah 48:10
  - 2. **To reveal His glory.** *“And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”* – 1 Peter 5:10
  - 3. **To teach us to rely on God.** *“...We despaired of life itself. <sup>9</sup> Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God...”* -- 2 Corinthians 1:8-9
  - 4. **To bring us to repentance.** See Paul’s conversion in Acts 9
  - 5. **To lead us to our reward in Him.** *“We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair <sup>9</sup> persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. <sup>10</sup> We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body.”* --2 Corinthians 4:8-10
- a. All of these purposes have one common end – that we would, more and more, find our comfort and joy in Jesus. (don’t tap-out...)
- b. “I hope in some way I can take my wheelchair to heaven. With my new glorified body I will stand up on resurrected legs, and I will be next to the Lord Jesus. And I will feel those nail prints in his hands, and I will say, ‘Thank you, Jesus!’ He will know I mean it, because he will recognize me from the inner sanctum of sharing in the fellowship of his sufferings. He will see that I was one who identified with him in the sharing of his sufferings, so my gratitude will not be hollow. And then I will say, ‘Lord Jesus, do you see that wheelchair over there? Well, you were right. When you put me in it, it was a lot of trouble. But the weaker I was in that

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Randy Alcorn. *If God Is Good: Faith in the Midst of Suffering and Evil*, Multnomah 2009: 63 from Packer’s *God’s Words: Studies of Key Bible Themes*, Baker 1998.

thing, the harder I leaned on you. And the harder I leaned on you, the stronger I discovered you to be. I do not think I would ever have known the glory of your grace were it not for the weakness of that wheelchair. So thank you, Lord Jesus, for that. Now, if you like, you can send that thing off to hell.” -- Joni Erickson Tada, who has spent most of her life in a wheelchair due to paralysis

### III. CONCLUSION

A. I'd like to close with one more Bible passage – Job 42:1-6

*Then Job replied to the LORD:*

<sup>2</sup> *“I know that you can do all things;  
no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*

<sup>3</sup> *You asked, ‘Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge?’  
Surely I spoke of things I did not understand,  
things too wonderful for me to know.*

<sup>4</sup> *“You said, ‘Listen now, and I will speak;  
I will question you,  
and you shall answer me.’*

<sup>5</sup> ***My ears had heard of you  
but now my eyes have seen you.***

<sup>6</sup> *Therefore I despise myself  
and repent in dust and ashes.”*

B. The word *despise* is a poor translation. It means to recoil from, or to pull back. Job is speaking not of his worthlessness but of turning away from self-absorption. Job repents—he recoils from himself and he chooses the Lord.

C. When your calamity comes, may the Lord give you the grace to affirm the sovereignty of God, let your tears flow freely, and let God himself be your treasure and your joy.