**The Lord’s Rewards** *R. Giglio 11/5/21*

Last week we looked at Abigail of Maon. She was the wife of a foolish wealthy man named Nabal who almost got his whole clan slaughtered by David and his men for insulting him and denying them an invitation to the sheep-shearing feast.

Abigail courageously stepped in and used her wisdom to diffuse the hostile situation and make peace. We learned that it there is more wisdom and glory in overlooking an offense and making peace than there is in acting out in vengeance, anger and bitterness.

This week’s chapter is very much like chapter’s 23 and 24,

In Chapter 23 David was hiding in the wilderness, and the Ziphites, once again go to Saul and tell him that David is hiding there.

In Chapter 24 Saul went into a cave to use the bathroom. David and his men were hiding in the cave. David could have killed Saul then and there, but he but spared his life.

In this chapter the Ziphites tell Saul where David is again. Saul goes there to try to find him and kill him, and David once again spares Saul’s life.

**1st Samuel 26 “**The Ziphites went to Saul at Gibeah and said, “Is not David hiding on the hill of Hakilah, which faces Jeshimon?”

*(This inspired the writing of Ps. 54);*

***Psalm 54:1*** *“For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A maskil of David. When the Ziphites had gone to Saul and said, “Is not David hiding among us?” Save me, O God, by your name; vindicate me by your might.”*

**2**So Saul went down to the Desert of Ziph, with his three thousand select Israelite troops, to search there for David. **3**Saul made his camp beside the road on the hill of Hakilah facing Jeshimon, but David stayed in the wilderness. When he saw that Saul had followed him there, **4**he sent out scouts and learned that Saul had definitely arrived.

**5**Then David set out and went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner son of Ner, the commander of the army, had lain down. Saul was lying inside the camp, with the army encamped around him.

**6**David then asked Ahimelek the Hittite and Abishai son of Zeruiah, Joab’s brother, “Who will go down into the camp with me to Saul?”

“I’ll go with you,” said Abishai.

**7**So David and Abishai went to the army by night, and there was Saul, lying asleep inside the camp with his spear stuck in the ground near his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying around him.

**8**Abishai said to David, “Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won’t strike him twice.”

**9**But David said to Abishai, “Don’t destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless? **10**As surely as the Lord lives,” he said, “the Lord himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.

<pause>

**11**But the Lord forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let’s go.”

**12**So David took the spear and water jug near Saul’s head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the Lord had put them into a deep sleep.

**13**Then David crossed over to the other side and stood on top of the hill some distance away; there was a wide space between them. **14**He called out to the army and to Abner son of Ner, “Aren’t you going to answer me, Abner?”

Abner replied, “Who are you who calls to the king?”

**15**David said, “You’re a man, aren’t you? And who is like you in Israel? Why didn’t you guard your lord the king? Someone came to destroy your lord the king. **16**What you have done is not good. As surely as the Lord lives, you and your men must die, because you did not guard your master, the Lord’s anointed. Look around you. Where are the king’s spear and water jug that were near his head?”

**17**Saul recognized David’s voice and said, “Is that your voice, David my son?”

David replied, “Yes it is, my lord the king.” **18**And he added, “Why is my lord pursuing his servant? What have I done, and what wrong am I guilty of? **19**Now let my lord the king listen to his servant’s words. If the Lord has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, people have done it, may they be cursed before the Lord!

They have driven me today from my share in the Lord’s inheritance and have said, ‘Go, serve other gods.’ **20**Now do not let my blood fall to the ground far from the presence of the Lord. The king of Israel has come out to look for a flea—as one hunts a partridge in the mountains.”

**21**Then Saul said, “I have sinned. Come back, David my son. Because you considered my life precious today, I will not try to harm you again. Surely I have acted like a fool and have been terribly wrong.”

<pause>

**22**“Here is the king’s spear,” David answered. “Let one of your young men come over and get it.

**23The Lord rewards** everyone for their righteousness and faithfulness.

The Lord delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed. **24**As surely as I valued your life today, so may the Lord value my life and deliver me from all trouble.”

**25**Then Saul said to David, “May you be blessed, David my son; you will do great things and surely triumph.” So David went on his way, and Saul returned home.”

Two things we want to look at;

1. Saul’s Condition
2. The Lord’s Rewards

***Saul’s Condition***

It’s very possible that Saul, along with the spiritual deception he entangled himself in, is also suffering from a severe psychological condition, perhaps even Paranoid schizophrenia.

Paranoid schizophrenia or (schizophrenia with paranoia as doctors now call it), is a common form of mental illness.

Schizophrenia is a kind of *psychosis*, which means your mind doesn't agree with reality. It affects how you think and behave. This can show up in different ways and at different times, even in the same person. In many cases it shows up as intense fear of something or someone, and often invokes a reaction of aggression and even violence toward another person.

Mental illness is a sad and serious subject. Especially for those who have loved ones who suffer with it. I do not take it lightly, nor do I pretend to be able to diagnose it properly, but Saul shows signs of both paranoia, and schizophrenia in his dealings with David. He goes from one extreme emotion to another, often in the same conversation.

David sees this. Whether because he has compassion on Saul, his respect for Saul’s title or he can clearly see the deception and evil; David again does not take the opportunity to kill Saul.

David in his wisdom, makes the following statement;

**1st Sam 26:19“**Now let my lord the king listen to his servant’s words. If the Lord has incited you against me, then may he accept an offering. If, however, people have done it, may they be cursed before the Lord!”

David is saying, If The Lord is indicating that I am guilty of something, I will own it. I will make an offering, I will make amends. However,

If this is being driven by a false narrative, and people (not the Lord) are accusing me of past or present wrong-doing, *“may they be cursed before the Lord”.*

David knew in his heart that he had done nothing against Saul or the kingdom of Israel,. But he was willing to listen IF (and only if) the accusation is coming from the Lord.

If, however the accusation is coming from deceivers and agitators who want to destroy the people of God or the purposes of God, let them be cursed BY God for their actions.

Today’s society is filled with accusers and agitators. They often target our country, the church, Christian leaders and Christians in general. They incite hate and aggression toward these, often in the name of justice. They can deceive media, *weak-minded* leaders even other Christians to take up their cause, but are more interested in condemning and cancelling, then they are in restoring or rectifying.

Our response should be as David’s was;

*“If the Lord has incited you against [us], then may He accept an offering.”*

(i.e. repentance, contrition, even restitution)

*“If, however, people have done it, may they be cursed before the Lord!”*

Evil has consequences, The Lord will repay.

### 2nd Timothy 4:14 “Alexander the coppersmith did me great harm; the Lord will repay him according to his deeds.”

**Romans 12:19“**Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord.”

Evil and Deception have consequences,

*But, Righteousness and Faithfulness have rewards.*

**1st Samuel 26:23-25“***The Lord rewards* everyone for their righteousness and faithfulness. The Lord delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed. **24**As surely as I valued your life today, so may the Lord value my life and deliver me from all trouble.”

**25**Then Saul said to David, “May you be blessed, David my son; you will do great things and surely triumph.”

David was Faithful Regardless, and the Lord rewarded him for it. He became King, was blessed, did great things and triumphed, just like Saul said he would.

*How about us?*

Because we don’t like to consider our approach of seeking God as “pursuing rewards”, we don’t always talk about the *rewards of the Lord*, but they are certainly worth mentioning.

Righteousness and Faithfulness have rewards!

* It does not cost money to come to church, worship God and experience fellowship with God and others.
* God does not force you to work, or earn your keep in the kingdom of God.
* As far as righteousness, we can’t emphasize enough that your own conduct and behavior is not what earns your salvation, it is a free gift of God, by grace through faith.

In fact everything we do is by Grace. Grace basically means “free gift”.

It’s not by giving money, volunteering to serve or staying faithful to God that we are saved. It’s simply by Grace.

But, does that mean the rewards also come freely, without righteousness and faithfulness?

Won’t we experience all the rewards and blessing that God has for us even if we are NOT faithful to him with our Time, Money and Devotion?

The answer is *No*.

Gifts are different than Rewards. They are not the same.

* + **Gal. 6:7-9“**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. **…** **9**Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest ***if*** we do not give up.”
	+ **Luke 6:38** “Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. *The amount you give will determine the amount you get back*.” (Jesus)
	+ **Col. 3:23-24** “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.”

My utmost hope is that you all have received the *free gift* of Salvation, which is given to us freely simply by believing and receiving the sacrifice that Jesus made for us on the cross.

But I also Hope, that you are experiencing the rewards that he has for you as well.

The rewards that come from ;

* Giving – your money and resources to the Lord’s work faithfully.
* Serving – Volunteering and giving your time toward the purposes of the Kingdom of God on a regularly basis.
* Seeking – Regularly seeking Him, by your time in the word, in prayer and earnestly pursuing His will in your life.

If you are not doing these things diligently and wholeheartedly, You are short-changing yourself and forfeiting some of the rewards that I believe God wants to give. But you must diligently seek him in righteousness and faithfulness.

One last scripture;

**Heb 11:6** “he who comes to God must believe that He is, and *that* He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”

Does that mean He does not reward those who don’t seek Him?

…*It sure sounds like it.*

Let’s trust Him, love Him, serve Him and diligently seek Him by being faithful to Him in all things, Our Time, Money, Attention, Devotion and everything else in our lives.

**“He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”**

**So, Let’s seek Him with all our hearts.**