

"The Eyes of the Lord are on the Righteous"

Call to Worship: Psalm 56

Hymn Insert- *Blessed be the Name*

1st Scripture: Psalm 34

Hymn #80- *How Firm a Foundation*

2nd Scripture: 1 Samuel 21:10-15

Hymn #79- *Though Troubles Assail Us*

Introduction:

Having inquired of the Lord at Nob, and having obtained bread and a sword for the journey, David flees, once again, so as to avoid being killed by King Saul. This time, David heads some 30+ miles west, to the coast of the "Great Sea," or what in modern times, would be called the "Mediterranean Sea." In a very daring move, David seeks refuge in Gath, a city of the Philistines.

Perhaps, David had hoped that they would not recognize him there, after all, David was responsible for the death of many of their kinsmen. Remember, David had killed the Philistine champion, Goliath, leading to a great slaughter of the Philistines (by the Israelites). [Read 1 Samuel 17:51-54; also 18:17---regular battles; 18:25-30...etc]

Needless to say, brethren, David was taking a great risk here, in seeking refuge in Gath. This could very well be a fulfillment of the modern day phrase, "that would be like jumping out of the frying pan and into the fire," if David were recognized for who he was. And, it also could be another golden opportunity for God to reveal His sovereign power, in the shielding and protecting of His anointed servant.

I. The Eyes of the Lord are on the Righteous

And so, David flees to Achish, the king of Gath, with the hope that he might find refuge under his care. Certainly, Achish, would not be too anxious to do Saul any favors, by delivering

David over to him. But the servants of Achish immediately recognize David, and that, in a way that would magnify David's greatest fears. [Read verse 11].

"Well, look at what we have here! Isn't this David, the great king of Israel; that great conqueror, of whom the Israelites sang to one another, 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands'"? Now brethren, what takes place from this point on, seems almost comical to us, but rest assured, it was not comical to David at all! In fact, the two Psalms that we read before, give us a clear understanding of David's thought life during this time...He was terrified. If he was afraid of what Saul would do to him, he was probably ten times more afraid of what the Philistines would do. He had caused them a lot of military grief, hadn't he? He was probably the Ace of Spades on their enemy hit list! Can you imagine what it would have been like, if say, six months after 9/11, 2001, Osama Bin Laden had been found strolling around near the Pentagon, hoping not to be recognized as "Osama Bin Laden?" And then, he is immediately recognized and taken into custody? Actually, he would probably have been treated more gracefully than David would have been treated. We can be certain that the Philistines, were no major proponents of anti-barbaric practices. And so, in verse 12, we read, "Now David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath." Let me translate that for you into the, "New American English Reality Language": "David sunk in a pit of fear and anxiety, and he dreaded having to now face the king. He knew, not only that he was a dead man, but that more than likely, he would die a very slow and painful death, once the king realized that he had the "great Israelite antagonist" in his custody!" And so, David got a little taste of his own Gethsemane here, though he was certainly not preparing to bear the sins of the world. Once again, he was cast into the unknown, although he could at least be pretty certain that death would be the end result. His prayers in the Psalms, and his overwhelming praise to God for the non-coincidental deliverance that takes place, confirm this.

And so, as the soldiers recognize David, and begin to question him concerning his identity, rather than lying (which they would see right through at this point), and rather than saying, "Yup, that's me...I am the great Israelite who has slaughtered ten thousands...particularly of your kinfolk," David throws himself into the mercy of madness. He pretends to be out of his mind, in their presence. And, in a very real sense, you could see why they would believe his act, because, after all, what in the world would he be doing gallivanting in Philistine territory? So,

David begins to scratch on the doors of the gate, while allowing saliva to spill down out of his mouth and onto his beard...and perhaps, he moans a bit as well? And the servants then bring him to the king, in this pitiful condition. And Achish, rather than itching for revenge or commanding his servants to lop off David's head or something of that nature, is rather taken back in disgust over the scene. He is repulsed by David, kind of like the woman jumping up and down on the table, as the mouse scurries around on the kitchen floor....type of repulsion. "Can't you see that the man is mad? Why did you bring him here to me? Do I have need of madmen to scurry about in their madness in my presence? Should I let him into my house? What if he damages something or infects us with some kind of disease or something. Get him out of here...far from here! I don't want him!" David's desperate "insane" plan works! He is grossed out of the custody of his captors and free to go! Or, on a better analysis, and in keeping with what David acknowledges in the Psalms, God had delivered David from out of the hands of his enemies. God calmed a volatile situation, by instilling a fear of contamination and "grossed out-ness" into the heart of Achish. And Achish was so blinded by his repulsion of David, that he missed a golden opportunity to destroy his enemy...one who had caused, and one who would later continue to cause, great harm to his people. God brought about this amazing deliverance, didn't He, brethren? What would it have taken for Achish, to, at a minimum, command his guards to thrust a sword into David's heart, and to cast him into some dumping ground somewhere? But God was with David, as He is with all of His children, and he turned the heart of Achish away from harming David!

II. Conclusive Thoughts

Brethren, I want to spend the remainder of our time this morning, pondering two great applications that we can take from these most recent events.

1) First, I want you to consider the fact that this is the same David, who boldly faced the giant, Goliath, with but a sling and a stone, and prevailed. The entire Israelite army was terrified of Goliath, but David faced the giant with great boldness, and an unwavering confidence in God. But David's faith was not always that strong, was it? He did not always see beyond the immediate circumstances and into the throne room of God, did he? There were times, such as

the time recorded in our text, when David became short-sighted, and grew quite anxious in the presence of his enemies. There were times when the trials began to wear on him, to the point that he could hardly determine if God were really *for* him. There were times when he felt empty, lost, and without any hope.

You see, brethren, here is the point that I am trying to make here: David was just like us! David, indeed, had moments of great boldness and courage, but David also had moments of great fear, weakness and anxiety. Like Peter, one moment he could say with all sincerity, "Lord, I will stand with You to the end; I will die if necessary, but I will not budge in my commitment to You!" And then, in but a short time, he could deny that he even knew the Lord, three times. You see, brethren, sometimes we view the great men and women of God in the past, as if they were super-human, but they were frail dust, just like us. Their faith wavered at times; they struggled with remaining sin, with doubts and fears...just like us. Indeed, they had momentous occasions, where they took giant leaps of faith, but their frailty and humanity blared through at various times, as well. Brethren, David grew afraid...indeed, terrified, at times, as well! [Job, Elijah, David, Jeremiah 20:7-18...etc]

All this, brethren, to simply say, "We are not alone in our experiences of trials, sufferings, fears and sorrows." Others have walked that same path, and others walk that same path with us today. You are not alone, and God's grace will carry you through!"

Stay the course; pour forth your hardships, hurts and agonies, to God in prayer, and continue to wait upon Him. Remain faithful. The two Psalms that we read earlier (Psalm 34 & 56) confirm that that is exactly what David had done during this great time of trial that he faced. And such trials, like the Apostle Paul's "thorn in the flesh," will inevitably lead us to lean more upon the grace and power of God; they will keep us humble, so that the power of God will remain on us. Should we always have the boldness of slaying a Goliath with David, we would indeed grow proud, and forget that the success of all of our labors is to be wholly attributed to Christ...and to Christ, alone!

2) When David had escaped; when Achish/Abimelech harmlessly thrust him out, David greatly rejoiced in the deliverance, which he knew God brought to pass. [Read Psalm 34 again]. You see, brethren, there is a great difference; an incomprehensible difference, between the trials

we face (whatever depth of threat and difficulty exist therein) and the trials which the unsaved face. And we are so prone to viewing us all, as being in the same boat, ready to incur the same results. But that is by far not accurate. Indeed, the substance of the trials might be the same, but it can only be said of the Christian, that "the angel of the Lord encamps around them!" In verse 7, we are told, regardless of our fears and sorrows, that "the angel of the Lord encamps all around those who fear [God]. And He delivers them." We are surrounded by angelic helps, brethren, at every moment. We might not feel it; we don't see it, but the angelic hosts surround and protect us, ensuring that God's course for and with us, is directed right according to plan. And that course *will be* painful at times, but it is by that very pain, that we will be made more like Christ, unto the production of the fruit of righteousness! "The righteous cry out, and The Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles!" (vs. 17). "The eyes of The Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their cry!" (vs. 15). When the far more powerful Assyrians, conquered many a nation, and took over the surrounding strongholds of Judah; when they surrounded Jerusalem, and spoke evil against Hezekiah and his God, boasting in the great feats he has already accomplished, what did Hezekiah do? He laid it all out before God, and pled for help! There was nowhere else to turn. From every outward standpoint, Jerusalem was done! But God stepped in, and the unexpected happened for Jerusalem *alone*, because God was with her! [Read 2 Kings 19:35-37]. ***But such is not the case for the unbeliever [Psalm 34:16].

Brethren, if God is for us, who can be against us! [Close with Psalm 23]

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25