

Message #66**I Samuel 28:1-6**

For the past couple of years, since NFL players kneel for the National Anthem, I have refused to watch NFL football. I will not have it on in my home. Now I used to love watching football. When we were in school in Grand Rapids, back in the 80's, I used to love Monday Night Football. I would spread my books out in front of me and have the game on as I studied. I really enjoyed the commentators Don Meredith and Howard Cosell. I don't think any commentators have ever reached their level. Don Meredith used to sing a Willie Nelson song that he wrote in 1950, when the game was about over and a team had won: "Turn out the lights, the party's over, they say that all good things must end; call it a night, the party's over and tomorrow starts the same old things again."

When we come to I Samuel 28, we come to the point in Saul's life, when that song is very applicable. It is time to turn out the lights on the life of Saul; his life frankly is over.

By the time we get to this story, David must have been near the end of his rope. At this point in his life he must have wondered where in the world all of this is heading:

- 1) He had been living in the land of the Philistines for 16 months (27:7).
- 2) Before that, he had been living in a cave.
- 3) Ever since Samuel anointed him to be the next King of Israel, nothing has gone right –
I Sam.16
- 4) In the past he did experiencing some victories - he beat Goliath; he killed many Philistines; he married the king's daughter; but that must have all seemed like a distant memory.
- 5) Saul wanted David dead - the one leader who should have loved David, hated David.
- 6) For the past 16 months he has been living in Ziklag, a Philistine city, pretending to be on the side of the Philistines.
- 7) **Now the Philistines want David to fight for them against Israel.**

David must have thought life cannot get much crazier or any worse. But the truth is, this story is not about David's feelings. This is a story about God's sovereign will and the truth is, even though it looked like and felt like David was at the end of his road, it was really Saul who was at the end of his road.

What this story turns out to be is a story about killing Saul and exalting David. Saul reigned for 40 years but his time was up. It was too late to repent. One writer called this the "darkening shadows of retribution."

What we see here is this:

WHEN YOU ARE WHERE GOD WANTS YOU TO BE, THERE WILL BE SOME DIFFICULT AND NEGATIVE THINGS IN YOUR WORLD, BUT THOSE THINGS WILL BE USED BY GOD TO LEAD YOU TO GREATEST BLESSINGS AND PROMOTION.

When this chapter opens, David has no clue as to what is happening. He does not know the mind of God or the will of God. **God is about to kill Saul. This entire Philistine episode is not about depressing David or blessing the Philistines, it is about killing Saul and promoting David.**

David has absolutely no idea as to what God is doing. When you first look at this, you could not even begin to see what God is doing here. But David stays the course and he just remains faithful to God and in the end of this, Saul will be dead and he will be king.

Perhaps you are depressed and at the end of your road. You are boxed in and nothing seems to be working right. Remember, God is still sovereign in your life and world. He is still calling the shots and if you have been faithful to God and you are where you should be doing what you should do, then trust God because the course you are on is one of promotion and blessing. Stay faithful and watch God work.

Now this section is all a build up to the execution of Saul. All of this is a prelude to that. There are five parts to this story:

PART #1 – The Philistines demand that David and his men go with them and fight for them against Israel. **28:1-2**

More than likely, due to the fact that Achish thought David was doing things that made him “odious among his people Israel” (27:12), he decided to attack Israel. Achish considered David to be a real key to him getting victory.

Of all of the negatives David has ever had to face for his faithfulness, this had to have been the most depressing. David had been in the land of the Philistines for 16 months (27:7). He has been run out or chased out of his own land for doing nothing wrong. Finally he was living in Ziklag, where some resemblance of a normal life existed, but that was about to change.

There are times when faithful members of churches are chased out. There are times when faithful men are kicked off boards and faithful ministers are asked to leave churches. This happens. It happened to David. But David stayed faithful to God.

David had been carrying on a secret mission. He pretended to be a mercenary soldier for Achish. What he was actually doing was fighting and destroying Israel’s enemies—the Geshurites and Girzites had been enemies since the days of Joshua; the Amalekites (27:8) had been the enemies since the days of Abraham.

David had been defeating them and turning much of the booty and spoils over to Judah (30:26-31). David would give just enough to Achish to make him think he was really on his side and Achish believed it (27:12).

But now a new problem arises. **Achish wants David and his men to go with him to destroy Israel.**

According to **verse 2**, David gives Achish a very ambiguous answer. He says to Achish very well you will know what your servant can do.

Now Achish takes this to be a real positive. In fact, he thought it was such a positive that he actually made David his bodyguard.

Of course we would ask what would David do if he had to make a choice between the Philistines and Israel? This is a no brainer. David would drop the Philistine in a moment. That was his track record.

I think this text contradicts those commentators who claim that David had no right to go to the land of the Philistines. I believe this again shows that God was in every bit of this. While David was in the land of the Philistines, he was not only helping Israel, he was also building a false sense of security for the Philistines.

The Philistines are thinking Saul is weak and we have David on our side so we will be able to attack Israel and destroy her. That is exactly what God wanted the Philistines to think because He was about to sovereignly move and use this very circumstance to kill Saul. God will sovereignly get David out of this mess before the fighting even starts (29:3-5).

We must never underestimate the sovereignty of God in our lives even when we feel like a loser and even when others think we are a loser. There are times we will feel totally out of place. It may be on our job; in our home; in our school; in a relationship or even in church. The truth is you may be exactly where God wants you to be. Stay faithful. God may be using you more than you know and you may be certain of the fact that God is looking out for you and He will protect you and keep you from doing anything that would harm Him or His name.

PART #2 – Samuel's status is given in direct connection to Saul. **28:3**

Now when you first read this verse, it appears to be totally out of context. The discussion is about Achish, David, the Philistines and Israel and in the middle of this we get this seemingly odd statement about Samuel.

Samuel was dead and had been dead for some time (25:1). All of Israel had been saddened by this. At some point, Saul had removed mediums and spiritists from the land of Israel, which is precisely what the Law of God demanded (Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:31; 20:27; Deut. 18:10).

A medium (obot) and a spiritist (yidde onim) were supposedly those who could contact the dead or some channel through whom the dead could speak (Is. 8:19). These were people who tried to get information by contacting the Satanic world. They did not get it from God.

Grammatically the conjunction “and” that shows up in the middle of the verse is a waw consecutive, meaning it is a sequence of action. So in view of the fact that Samuel was dead, Saul decided to remove mediums and spiritists.

God specifically stated in Leviticus 20:6 “As for the person who turns to mediums and to spiritists to play the harlot after them, I will also set My face against that person and will cut him off from among his people.”

God detests the Satanic world and if any of His people dabble in it or contact it, they are destined to disaster.

It would appear that Saul did not do this because he had a heart that wanted to obey God. He was not a righteous, stable man, whose objective in life was to protect the purity of Israel. He had his own agenda and as soon as he knew Samuel was dead and gone, he went and consulted a witch.

Just because a person does what is right or supports something that is right does not mean the person is right. External actions are not indicative of an internal heart.

PART #3 – The Philistines are camped in one spot and Saul is camped in another spot. **28:4**

As near as we may determine, the camps are 5-7 miles apart. The Philistines were camped on the SW side of the valley of Jezreel in Shunem about 70 miles north of Gath. Saul and his forces were at Gilboa, camped on the SE side of the valley of Jezreel.

PART #4 – Saul is greatly afraid of the Philistines. **28:5**

Saul was greatly afraid and his heart was terrified. Frankly, he should be greatly afraid and terrified. He is on the verge of being killed by God. He has never really repented of anything. He has actually tried to destroy the one person who was right with God and time had run out for him to make amends. It was too late. God’s Spirit was no longer upon Saul and he lost all sense of security.

When you are faithful and doing God’s will, there will be a very real sense of security that you will have that is not phony. You know God is watching you and protecting you and using you. But when you are not faithful, you are very insecure because you do not know what God will do next.

PART #5 – Saul inquires of God but God will no longer answer Saul or reveal His will to Saul. **28:6**

When people get scared, they tend to turn to God. But God may not let them turn to Him. There are people who think God must help anyone at any time. That idea is not found in the Bible.

Saul was terrified and now he decides he wants to turn to God. At one time Saul had the ability to prophesy the word of God (19:23), but now God had stopped revealing anything to him.

In the O.T. economy, God revealed His will through revelatory dreams, such as in Joseph's case and through the Urim and Thummin, which was worn by the High Priest or direct revelatory information given to prophets.

Saul could consult with any of these sources but God would not answer.

The mention of the revelatory options such as dreams, Urim and the prophets, indicates that Saul had an intense desire to know God's will. But he was at a point where God would no longer reveal anything to Saul. He did that with Israel and He can do it with us.

Think of what Saul had done. He was jealous of David; he had killed priests; he was a liar; and he expects God to reveal things to him. This is a joke. God would never reveal anything to Saul. Saul had rebelled long enough and God was fed up.

When God is working in your life and when God is using you, do not ever take it for granted. Keep yourself on track. Keep yourself clean because God can shut you down.