

Contents

Daily Study Questions	2
“Saul: Israel’s First King”	9
“The Statute of David for the Sharing of the Spoil”	13

1st Samuel—

“Alas, how many once bright Christians have been spoiled through wanting to be like the people of the world around, even as did Israel in demanding a human king! And how insidious is the temptation to lean on that which is seen and human instead of resting on the invisible God! It is a temptation to which we are all prone; but to yield to it invites a harvest of regrets.”

—J. Baxter Sidlow, *Explore the Book.*

Other Helpful Links:

Additional Commentary:

http://preceptaustin.org/1_samuel_commentaries.htm

Adam Clarke Commentary:

<http://www.studylight.org/com/acc/view.cgi?book=1sa>

Matthew Henry's Commentary:

<http://www.studylight.org/com/mhc-com/view.cgi?book=1sa>

David Guzik’s Commentary:

<http://www.studylight.org/com/guz/view.cgi?book=1sa>

Daily Bible Study

Thursday, October 12, 2006



Passage for today: **1 Samuel 22**

Questions to Ponder

- 1.1 Samuel 22 offers yet another vivid contrast in the character of young David and Israel's first king, Saul. Take some time to observe and write out the actions of the future king, David, and the present king, Saul, that take place in this chapter. Take note also as to how they each handle people and to what kinds of men follow them? What do these observations tell us about the hearts of these two leaders?
2. One thing worth zeroing in on in this chapter is how David deals with the Abiathar when he shares the news of the death of Ahimelech and the other people of Nob. What *was* David's response to hearing of the deaths of the priests and the people of Nob? What does his response say to us about the character of David?
- 3.1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." David knew well the depth of God's mercy. In fact, we find in Psalm 32 that he wrote, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." How do we see David being quick to confess his sins in this passage? Do you see this same type of heart in Saul? Explain.
4. Saul was a king who lived for himself and knew nothing of repentance. David, on the other hand, possessed a heart that was consistently quick to confess his sin to the Lord in order to find forgiveness. Today, do you find yourself seeking to justify sin as Saul did or do you find yourself eager to confess your sins so as to be holy and free to commune with the Lord? Explain.

Daily Bible Study

Friday, October 13, 2006



Passage for today: **1 Samuel 23**

Questions to Ponder

1. We see further in this chapter the vast difference in David and Saul concerning what the driving forces of each man's life really were. To begin your study, seek to list the actions of Saul and the actions of David in this chapter. What were Saul's actions driven by? What were David's actions driven by?
2. Take a few minutes to read and ponder Romans 8:6-8. How might this passage help to make sense of what we see happening here in 1 Samuel 23?
3. In this chapter, whose life looks more appealing to you? One lives in a castle and has all the riches of life and yet lives chained by his jealousy to another man's every move. The other lives in caves and on the run, and yet we see him communing with the living God and being used to minister to the oppressed. What we see going on spiritually in each of these men is significant for us. Their actions reveal what their hearts are seeking after and the same can be said of you and me. What does Saul seem to be seeking in these chapters we have been reading? What does David seem to be seeking? What does this say to you today about what it is that you are to be seeking in your own life?
4. Saul was imprisoned by his obsession to see David taken down. He was unable to serve the Lord because he had yet to die to his own desires. Might there be a person in your life today whose life holds your attention more than the Spirit of God? Explain. How is the Lord calling you to respond?

Daily Bible Study

Saturday, October 14, 2006



Passage for today: **1 Samuel 24**

Questions to Ponder

1. What we see flow out of David in this chapter is a bi-product of his relationship with the Lord. We see him exhibit mercy in a way that most would not. Think for a moment how much Saul's hardness and sin had affected David's life. In considering how tough Saul had made it on David, we can gain a better understanding of just how meek and submitted to God David really was in his dealings with Saul. David was described as being one who would do all the Lord's will. Showing mercy was a huge part of that. How is mercy exhibited by David in 1 Samuel 24?
2. Take a minute to read and ponder Matthew 5:43-48. How can Jesus' words in this Matthew passage be applied to what we see happen in David's dealings with Saul in our text for today? What effect did David's loving actions toward Saul have on Saul? on David?
3. Someone once said that a Christian is in one of three areas concerning seasons of trials. They are either coming out of trials, in the midst of trials, or are headed into trials. In other words, we all either have had, are having or will have to deal with Saul-type people and situations in our walks with Christ. In your own life can you think of a situation or a person who might be similar to what king Saul represented for David? Explain. After seeing how David handled his opportunity to "put an end to his problem"; and then reading Christ's words concerning such situations, what is the Lord speaking to you concerning the person or trial you might be facing or will soon face?

Daily Bible Study

Sunday, October 15, 2006



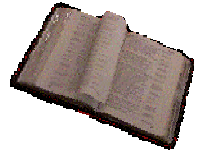
Passage for today: 1 Samuel 25

Questions to Ponder

1. How do we see the Lord intervene in this chapter? Take a few minutes to write out the sequence of events that take place here in the life of David. What roller-coaster of emotions do we see David deal with?
2. In this chapter David was visited by Abigail who, by the mercy of the Lord, softened David's heart and reminded him of who he was in the Lord. Why do you think the Lord sent Abigail to stop David? What do you think caused David to forget who he was and who he was promised by God to become? How important is it in our own lives to always remember *Whose* we are and *who* we are in Him when others wrong us spitefully? Explain.
3. In Ephesians 4:26, the apostle Paul quotes part of Psalm 4:4 which reads, "Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your own bed, and be still." How do we see David acting in anger and headed for sin in this chapter? Do you think he was justified in his anger? What about his intended actions? Explain.
4. In your own life, when was the last time you were headed for sin in anger? Did the Lord intervene? If you recognized the Lord's intervention, did you heed to it? Think for a moment of your own heart today. Could there be in your heart any action that you plan or desire to do out of anger? Explain. Read the second part of Psalm 4:4 again. What is the Lord calling you to do with Your anger today?
5. How do we see the Lord cause all things to work together for good for David concerning his ordeal with Nabal? How might things have been different if David had not turned away from his angry intentions? Any applications?

Daily Bible Study

Tuesday, October 17, 2006



Passage for today: **1 Samuel 28-29**

Questions to Ponder

1. In chapter 28, what things do we see the Lord do in Saul's life? In chapter 29, what things do we see the Lord do in David's life? What do these things tell us about Saul? About David? About the Lord?
2. Take a few minutes to read and ponder the following passages: Ex. 22:18; Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9; 1 Samuel 15:23; Galatians 5:19-21. What is God's view concerning what Saul did in chapter 28? How might these verses help us to understand the weight of Saul's sin? Understanding the fact that God is the same yesterday, today and always, how might these passages apply to us today?
3. What are some examples of things that you see in the world around you today that might fall into the category of witchcraft, spiritualism or sorcery? Think about Saul's situation for a moment and compare it to your own life. A very tough question to consider is: Have you ever consulted or considered consulting a source other than God in order to gain insight, provision or direction for your life? Explain.
4. What we read about here is a very serious matter with very serious consequences. Not only can Satan use religious systems, idols or symbols (that we might think harmless) to destroy our lives, but the matter is gravely offensive to God. Take a moment to consider the passages that you read from question 2 and also the passage here concerning Saul. Might there be anything in your life that you are relying on other than God for direction or provision? In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul includes *sorcery* among a list of evidences of the works of the flesh. He then proceeds to explain that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. After this, he lists evidences of the Spirit and says, "If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit." What might the Lord be calling you to remove from your life today in order to free you and cleanse you to walk in the Spirit?

Daily Bible Study

Wednesday, October 18, 2006



Passage for today: **1 Samuel 30-31**

Questions to Ponder

1. These final two chapters of 1 Samuel complete a most edifying and humbling comparison of the works of God in the lives of two men—David and Saul. One's life could be compared to a building built on sand that was smashed to rubble by the waves of life. The other to a high-rising skyscraper being built upon an unmovable foundation that extends into the depths of the earth. In these last two chapters, how do we see David's heart turn to the Lord? How do we see Saul's heart turn once again and finally to himself?

2. What is the significance in David's victory over the Amelekites? What is the significance of Saul's death and defeat at the hands of the Philistines? When David and his men defeated the Amalekites, how is David displayed as a man of fairness and compassion?

3. Take a few minutes to consider the life of Saul. What significant things did he do for Israel? What actions or remarks of his would you say are remembered most as his defining moments?

4. Now think for a moment of your own life. What significant things do you want to be remembered for? What actions or remarks of yours will go down in history as your defining moments? What characteristics do you want to be remembered for?

5. Most people, when they really consider it, want to end their lives well. David is one of the people in the Bible who we have to look at that we could mostly say ended well. What things about David, to this point in your study of 1 Samuel, jump out at you the most as being things you want your life? Today, how do you find yourself being molded by God into the person he has called you to be in Christ Jesus?

Introductory Notes

Saul, the first king of Israel, is one of the most striking and tragic figures in the Old Testament. If we are at all sensitive as to the supreme values and vital issues of human life, the story of Saul will challenge us. In some ways he is very big; in others very little. In some ways he is commandingly handsome; in others definitely ugly. He began so reassuringly, but declined so disappointingly, and ended so wretchedly, that the downgrade process which ruined him becomes monumental to all who will give heed. We note the three main places of his career—(1) his early promise, (2) his later decline, (3) his final failure.

His early promise (ix.-xii.).

Never did a young man give fairer promise or find brighter possibilities greeting his young manhood. To begin with, he was distinguished by *a striking physical superiority*. He is described as “a choice young man, and a goodly; there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he; from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people” (9:2). He had health and height and handsomeness; and while the physical is not the more important part of a man, such splendid physique as Saul had was a wonderful possession. It gave him the initial advantage of being immediately prepossessing.

Second; young Saul showed certain *highly commendable qualities of disposition*. We note his *modesty* (9:21; 10:22). We note his *discreetness* (10:27). We mark his *generous spirit* (11:13). And there were other fine qualities too—his considerateness of his father (9:5), his dash and courage (11:6,11), his capacity for strong love (16:21), his energetic antagonism to such evils as spiritism (28:3), and his evident moral purity in social relationships.

Third, there were *special equipments* which God gave him when he became king. We read, “God gave him another heart” so that he became “another man” (10:6, 9). Again, “the Spirit of God came upon him” so that he “prophesied” (10:10). Such expressions cannot mean less than that Saul became inwardly renewed and was under the special guidance of the Holy Spirit. Nor is this all: he was given a “*band* of men whose hearts God had touched.” (10:26). He also had that trusty counselor, the inspired Samuel, at his side. To crown all this, God signalled the beginning of Saul’s reign by granting a spectacular military victory which set the new king high in the confidence of the people. (11:12).

This was the young Saul of fair promise. Extraordinarily rich in natural endowments, and specially equipped by supernatural conferments, the future seemed bright indeed. His call to the kingship was an opportunity 9

in a million, coming to a man in a million. He was called to kingship, and he was constitutionally kingly. He was called to *theocratic* kingship, and God supernaturally equipped him for that. What scope for glorious cooperation with God! What opportunity to bless men! He betrayed none of the symptoms of vain-glory which others, less gifted than himself, have betrayed when suddenly elevated. His ascension to Israel's throne was indeed a morning of fair promise.

His later decline.

Alas, Saul's early promise is a morning sky soon overcast with sullen clouds. Defection, declension, degeneration, disaster—that is the dismal downgrade which now sets in, until this giant-hero drops as a haggard suicide into ignominious death.

The first defection occurred early. See chapter 13. It was an act of *irreverent presumption*. The Philistines were arrayed against Israel. Saul was bidden to wait for Samuel at Gilgal. When Samuel did not seem to be coming before the appointed time expired, Saul, in willful impatience, violated the priest's prerogative, and foolishly presumed to offer up with his own hand the pre-arranged sacrifice to the Lord. We can allow for Saul's anxiety. Yet he violated the obedience to the voice of God through the prophet which was a basic condition of theocratic kingship. Samuel's rebuke was, "Saul, thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of Jehovah."

The next default follows quickly. See chapter 14. It is an act of *rash willfulness*. Using Jonathan as his instrument, God spreads confusion among the Philistines. Israel's watchmen report what they see. Saul calls the priest, to ask God guidance, but with stupid impatience cuts short the enquiry and rushes his men off without guidance. He also rashly imposes death-sentence on any man who should eat food that day (verse 24), with the result that his men are too weak to follow up the victory (verse 30), and that his hunger-smitten men sin by eating flesh with the blood (verse 32), and that Jonathan comes under the death-sentence through ignorance, and is only rescued by the intervention of the people (verses 27, 45).

But in chapter 15 comes still graver failure. It is a blend of *disobedience and deceit*. Saul is told to destroy utterly the vile Amalekites; but he spares the king and the best live-stock. Then he equivocates to Samuel. He slips blame for the booty on to the people. He even pretends the booty is for sacrifice to Jehovah. Samuel's rebuke begins, "When thou was little in thine own sight..." Alas, humility had now given place to arrogance. Samuel see right through the sham to the real—"Wherefore didst thou not obey?" "Thou hast rejected the word of

Jehovah.”

From this point the decline is steep. “The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul” (16:14) and “an evil spirit” troubled him. He gives way to a petty jealousy until it becomes a fiendish malice—against David. Thrice he tries to kill him. Then he hunts him for months on end, like “a partridge in the mountains.” He gives way to the basest in himself.

Twice David spares Saul’s life, and twice Saul promises to leave off his blood-thirsty hunt. He knows that in seeking to slay David he is actually fighting against God. He admits, “I know well that thou shalt surely be king” (24:20); yet, even after this, he resumes his dastardly pursuit. Well does Saul say of himself, “*I have played the fool*” (26:21).

His final failure.

The last tragic act in the mournful drama of this man is depicted in chapters 28 to 31. His downgrade course at length brings him to the witch of Endor, as an embittered and desolate-hearted fugitive from doom. This giant wreck of a man who once enjoyed direct counsel from heaven now traffics with the underworld. We need not dilate on the nocturnal consultation, nor on Saul’s battlefield suicide the following day. There is no need here to pick on details. It is enough to know the stark fact, the final plunge—witchcraft and suicide! Saul is no more.

He lies a corpse, with lovely Jonathan. How are the mighty fallen! How is this son of the morning brought to shame! Yes, Saul—Saul of early promise, but of later decline and final ruin, you have “played the fool”!

And as we see this man Saul come from such heights to such depths, do we not ask what it was which lay behind his fearful self-destruction? It was *self-will*. Saul’s two besetting sins were presumption and disobedience to God; and behind both of these was impulsive, unsubdued *self-will*. We may trace the four progressive stages of this ruinous self-ism in Saul: first, self-sensitiveness, then, self-assertiveness, then self-centeredness, increasingly issuing in self-destructiveness.

“He being dead yet speaketh”

In sad and awesome tones the voice of Saul still speaks, and we do well to heed. First, he preaches to us that *the one vital condition for the fulfillment of life is obedience to the will of God*. Let us mark this well—Saul was called to *theocratic* kingship; so is each one of us. Every human personality is meant to be a *theocratic* power. It was never intended that the last word should be with *him*. He was anointed of God to be the executer of a will higher than his own. He was to be human and visible vice-regent of Israel’s divine and invisible King, Jehovah. He could only truly rule the subject beneath him to the extent in which he

obeyed the supreme King above him. So is it with ourselves. We are not the independent proprietors of our own beings. We are God's property. He has made us kings and queens over our own personalities with their gifts and powers and possibilities; but our rule is meant to be theocratic, not an independent, self-directed monarchy. We are meant to rule for *God*, so that our lives and personalities may fulfil His will and accomplish His purpose. When we obstinately rule independently of God our true kingship breaks down; we lose the true meaning and purpose of life. In greater or lesser degree we "play the fool."

But Saul teaches this further and kindred truth, that *to let "self" get the upper hand in our life is to miss the best and court the worst.* The Philistines were not Saul's worst enemies. His worst foe was himself. Every man who lets "self" fill his vision till it blinds his inner eye to what is really true and Divine is "playing the fool." The downgrade process in our life may not be as outwardly observable as it was with Saul, simply because we do not occupy as conspicuous a position, but we are just as really playing the fool, and our ultimate corruption is just as certain.

There are many other lessons, of a mere incidental kind. We see that advantages are not in themselves the guarantee of success. Saul had many, yet he failed ingloriously. We dare not lean on them. We see also that wonderful opportunities do not in themselves crown men. Nor even do special spiritual equipments immunize us from the possibility of getting out of the will of God, and "playing the fool." Again, a man plays the fool when he neglects his best friends, as Saul neglected Samuel; or when he goes on enterprises for God before God sends him, as Saul did; or when he disobeys God in small matters, as Saul at first did and then went on to worse disobedience; or when he tries to cover up disobedience by a religious excuse, as Saul did, or when he allows jealousy and hate to master and enslave him, as Saul did. Oh what warnings this man utters to us! God help us each to say, and really to mean it,

Take my will and make it Thine;
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my intellect, and use
Every power as Thou shalt choose!

--Sidlow, J. Baxter. *Explore the Book.*

The Statute of David for the Sharing of the Spoil

June 7th, 1891

by

C. H. SPURGEON

(1834-1892)

Note: This is the last sermon Charles Spurgeon ever preached at the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London. He struggled with illness for most of 1891. He finally went to Mentone on the French Riviera to try to rest and recover, but he succumbed in January 1892 and never made it back to his pulpit.

"And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart. Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day. And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the Lord"—1 Samuel 30:21-26.

Those who associate themselves with a leader must share his fortunes. Six hundred men had quitted their abodes in Judaea; unable to endure the tyranny of Saul they had linked themselves with David, and made him to be a captain over them. They were, some of them, the best of men, and some of them were the worst: in this, resembling our congregations. Some of them were choice spirits, whom David would have sought, but others were undesirable persons, from whom he might gladly have been free. However, be they who they may, they must rise or fall with their leader and commander. If he had the city Ziklag given to him, they had a house and a home in it; and if Ziklag was burned with fire, their houses did not escape. When David stood amid the smoking ruins, a

penniless and a wifeless man they stood in the same condition. This rule holds good with all of us, who have joined ourselves to Christ and his cause; we must be partakers with him. I hope we are prepared to stand to this rule to-day. If there be ridicule and reproach for the gospel of Christ, let us be willing to be ridiculed and reproached for his sake. Let us gladly share with him in his humiliation, and never dream of shrinking. This involves a great privilege, since they that are with him in his humiliation shall be with him in his glory. If we share his rebuke in the midst of an evil generation we shall also sit upon his throne, and share his glory in the day of his appearing. Brethren, I hope the most of us can say we are in for it, to sink or swim with Jesus. In life or death, where he is, there will we, his servants, be. We joyfully accept both the cross and the crown which go with our Lord Jesus Christ: we are eager to bear our full share of the blame, that we may partake in his joy.

It frequently happens that when a great disaster occurs to a band of men, a mutiny follows thereupon. However little it may be the leader's fault, the defeated cast the blame of the defeat upon him. If the fight is won, "it was a soldiers' battle"; every man at arms claims his share of praise. But if the battle is lost, cashier the commander! It was entirely his fault; if he had been a better general he might have won the day. This is how people talk: fairness is out of the question. So in the great disaster of Ziklag, when the town was burned with fire, and wives and children were carried away captive; then we read that they spoke of stoning David. Why David? Why David more than anybody else, it is hard to see, for he was not there, nor any one of them. They felt so vexed, that it would be a relief to stone somebody, and why not David? Brethren, it sometimes happens, even to the servants of Christ, that when they fall into persecution and loss for Christ's sake, the tempter whispers to them to throw up their profession. "Since you have been a Christian, you have had nothing but trouble. It seems as if the dogs of hell were snapping at your heels more than ever since you took upon you the name of Christ. Therefore, throw it up, and leave the ways of godliness." Vile suggestion! Mutiny against the Lord Jesus? Dare you do so? Some of us cannot do so, for when he asks us, "Will ye also go away?" we can only answer, "Lord, to whom should we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." No other leader is worth following. We must follow the Son of David. Mutiny against him is out of the question.

Through floods or flames, if Jesus lead,
We'll follow where he goes."

When a dog follows a man, we may discover whether the man is his master by seeing what happens when they come to a turn in the road. If the creature keeps close to its master at all turnings, it belongs to him. Every now and then you and I come to turns in the road, and many of us are ready, through grace, to prove our loyalty by following Jesus even when the way is hardest. Though the tears stand in his eyes and in ours; though we weep together till we have no more power to weep, we will cling to him when the many turn aside, and witness that he hath the living Word, and none upon earth beside. God grant us grace to be faithful unto death!

If we thus follow our leader and bear his reproach, the end and issue will be glorious victory. It was a piteous sight to see David leaving two hundred men behind him, and marching with his much diminished forces after an enemy who had gone, he scarce knew where, who might be ten times stronger than his little band, and might slay those who pursued them. It was a melancholy spectacle for those left behind to see their leader a broken man, worn and weary like themselves, hastening after the cruel Amalekite. How very different was the scene when he came back to the brook Besor more than a conqueror! Do you not hear the song of them that make merry? A host of men in the front are driving vast herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, and singing as they march, "This is David's spoil!" Then you see armed men, with David in the midst of them, all laden with spoil, and you hear them singing yet another song; those that bring up the rear are shouting exultingly, "David recovered all! David recovered all!" They, the worn-out ones that stayed at the brook Besor, hear the mingled song, and join first in the one shout, and then in the other; singing, "This is David's spoil! David recovered all!"

Yes, we have no doubt about the result of our warfare. He that is faithful to Christ shall be glorified with him. That he will divide the spoil with the strong is never a matter of question. "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

The old truth by which we stand shall never be blotted out.

Engraved as in eternal brass
The mighty promise shines;
Nor shall the powers of darkness rase
Those everlasting lines."

We are certain as we live that the exiled truth shall celebrate its joyful return. The faith once for all delivered to the saints may be downtrodden

for a season; but rejoice not over us, O our adversaries: though we fall we shall rise again! Wherefore we patiently hope, and quietly wait, and calmly believe. We drink of the brook Besor by the way and lift up our heads.

This morning I want to utter God-given words of comfort to those who are faint and weary in the Lord's army. May the divine Comforter make them so!

I. I shall begin by saying, first, that FAINT ONES OCCUR EVEN IN THE ARMY OF OUR KING. Among the very elect of David's army heroes who were men of war from their youth up—there were hands that hung down, and feeble knees that needed to be confirmed. There are such in Christ's army at most seasons. We have among us soldiers whose faith is real, and whose love is burning; and yet, for all that, just now their strength is weakened in the way, and they are so depressed in spirit, that they are obliged to stop behind with the baggage.

Possibly some of these weary ones had grown faint because they had been a good deal perplexed. David had so wrongfully entangled himself with the Philistine king, that he felt bound to go with Achish to fight against Israel. I dare say these men said to themselves, "How will this end? Will David really lead us to battle against Saul? When he could have killed him in the cave he would not, but declared that he would not lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed; will he now take us to fight against the anointed of God? This David, who was so great an enemy of Philistia, and slew their champion, will he wax on their behalf?" They were perplexed with their leader's movements. I do not know whether you agree with me, but I find that half-an-hour's perplexity takes more out of a man than a month's labour. When you cannot see your bearings, and know not what to do, it is most trying. When to be true to God it seems that you must break faith with man, and when to fulfil your unhappy covenant with evil would make you false to your Christian professions, things are perplexing. If you do not walk carefully, you can easily get into a snarl. if Christians walk in a straight line it is comparatively easy going, for it is easy to find your way along a straight road; but when good men take to the new out, that by-path across the meadow, then they often get into ditches that are not in the map, and fall into thickets and sloughs that they never reckoned upon. Then is the time for heart-sickness to come on. These warriors may very well have been perplexed; and perhaps they feared that God was against them, and that now their cause would be put to shame; and

when they came to Ziklag, and found it burned with fire, the perplexity of their minds added intense bitterness to their sorrow, and they felt bowed into the dust. They did not pretend to be faint, but they were really so; for the mind can soon act upon the body, and the body fails sadly when the spirits are worried with questions and fears. This is one reason why certain of our Lord's loyal-hearted ones are on the sick list, and must keep in the trenches for a while.

Perhaps, also, *the pace was killing to these men*. They made forced marches for three days from the city of Achish to Ziklag. These men could do a good day's march with anybody; but they could not foot it at the double quick march all day long. There are a great many Christians of that sort—good, staying men who can keep on under ordinary pressure, doing daily duty well, and resisting ordinary temptations bravely; but at a push they fare badly: who among us does not? To us there may come multiplied labours, and we faint because our strength is small.

Worst of all, *their grief came in just then*. Their wives were gone. Although, as it turned out, they were neither killed nor otherwise harmed; yet they could not tell this, and they feared the worse. For a man to know that his wife is in the hands of robbers, and that he may never see her again, is no small trouble. Their sons and daughters also were gone: no prattlers climbed their father's knee no gentle daughters came forth to bid them "Welcome home." Their homes were still burning, their goods were consumed, and they lifted up their voice and wept: is it at all wonderful that some of them were faint after performing that doleful miserere? Where would you be if you went home this morning, and found your home burned, and your family gone, you knew not where? I know many Christians who get very faint under extraordinary troubles. They should not, but they do. We have reason to thank God that no temptation has happened to us but such as is common to men; and yet it may not seem, so; but we may feel as if we were specially tried, like Job. Messenger after messenger has brought us evil tidings, and our hearts are not fixed on the Lord as they ought to be. To those who are faint through grief I speak just now. You may be this, and yet you may be a true follower of the Lamb; and as God has promised to, bring you out of your troubles, he will surely keep his word. Remember, he has never promised that you shall have no sorrows, but that he will deliver you out of them all. Ask yon saints in heaven! Ask those to step out of the shining ranks who came thither without trial. Will one of the leaders of the shining host give the word of command that he shall stop forward who has washed his robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, but who

never knew what affliction meant while here below? No one stirs in all that white-robed host. Does not one come forward? Must we wait here for ever without response? See! instead of anyone stirring from their ranks, I hear a voice that says, "These are they which came out of great tribulation." All of them have known, not only tribulation, but great tribulation. One promise of the New Testament is surely fulfilled before our eyes—"In the world ye shall have tribulation." When trouble came so pressingly on David's men they felt their weakness and needed to halt at the margin of the brook.

Perhaps, also, *the force of the torrent was too much for them*. As I have told you, in all probability the brook Besor was only a hollow place, which in ordinary times was almost dry; but in a season of great rain it filled suddenly with a rushing muddy stream, against which only strong men could stand. These men might have kept on upon dry land, but the current was too fierce for them, and they feared that it would carry them off their feet and drown them. Therefore, David gave them leave to stop there and guard the stuff. Many there are of our Lord's servants who stop short of certain onerous service: they are not called to do what their stronger comrades undertake with joy. They can do something, but they fail to do more; they can also bear certain trials, but they are unable to bear more; they faint because they have not yet come to fulness of growth in grace. Their hearts are right in the sight of God, but they are not in condition to surmount some peculiar difficulty. You must not overdrive them, for *they* are the feeble of the flock. Many are too faint for needful controversy. I have found a great many of that sort about lately: the truth is very important, but they love peace. It is quite necessary that certain of us should stand up for the faith once delivered to the saints; but they are not up to the mark for it. They cannot bear to differ from their fellows; and they hold their tongues rather than contend for the truth. There are true hearts that, nevertheless, cannot defend the gospel. They wish well to the champions; but they seek the rear rank for themselves. And some cannot advance any further with regard to knowledge; they know the fundamentals, and feel as if they could master nothing more. It is a great blessing that they know the gospel, and feel that it will save them; but the glorious mysteries of the everlasting covenant, of the sovereignty of God, of his eternal love and distinguishing grace, they cannot compass—these are a brook Besor which as yet they cannot swim. It would do them a world of good if they could venture in; but, still, they axe not to be tempted into these blessed deeps. To hear of these things rather wearies them than instructs them: they have not strength enough of mind for the deep things of God. I would

have every Christian wish to know all that he can know of revealed truth. Somebody whispers that the secret things belong not to us. You may be sure you will never know them if they are secret; but all that is revealed you ought to know, for these things belong to you and to your children. Take care you know what the Holy Ghost teaches. Do not give way to a fainthearted ignorance lest you be great losers thereby. That which is fit food for babes should not be enough for young men and fathers: we should eat strong meat, and leave milk to the little ones.

Yet these fainting ones were, after all, in David's army. Their names were in their Captain's Register as much as the names of the strong. And they did not desert the colours. They had the same captain as the stoutest-hearted men in the whole regiment; they could call David "Master " and "Lord " as truly as the most lion-like man amongst them. They were in for the same dangers; for if the men in front had been beaten and had retreated, the enemy would have fallen on those who guarded the stuff. If the Amalekites had slain the four hundred, they would have made short work of the two hundred. They had work to do as needful as that of the others. Though they had not to fight, they had to take care of the stuff; and this eased the minds of the fighting men. I will be bound to say it was a great trial to them not to be allowed to march into the fight. For a bravo man to see the troops go past him, and hear the last footfall of his comrades, must have been sickening. Who could pleasantly say, "I am left out of it. There is a glorious day coming, and I shall be away. I shall, until I die, think myself accursed I was not there, and hold my manhood cheap that I fought not with them on that glorious day "? It is hard to brave men to be confined to hospital, and have no drive at the foe. The weary one wishes he could be to the front, where his Captain's eye would be upon him. He pants to smite down the enemies, and win back the spoil for his comrades.

Enough of this. I will only repeat my first point: fainting ones do occur even in the army of our King.

II. Secondly, THESE FAINTING ONES REJOICE TO SEE THEIR LEADER RETURN. Do you see, when David went back they went to meet him, and the people that were with him. I feel very much like this myself. That was one reason why I took this text. I felt, after my illness, most happy to come forth and meet my Lord in public. I hoped he would be here; and so he is. I am glad also to meet with you, my comrades. We are still spared for the wax. Though laid aside a while, we are again among our brethren. Thank God! It is a great joy to

meet you. I am sorry to miss so many of our church-members who are laid aside by this sickness; but it is a choice blessing to meet so many of our kindred in Christ. We are never happier than when we are in fellowship with one another and with our Lord.

David saluted the stay-at-homes. Oh, that he might salute each one of us this morning, especially those who have been laid aside! Our King's salutations are wonderful for their heartiness. He uses no empty compliments nor vain words. Every syllable from his lips is a benediction. Every glance of his eye is an *inspiration. When the King himself comes near, it is always a feast day to us! It is a high day and a holiday, even with the faintest of us, when we hear his voice. So they went to meet David, and he came to meet them, and there was great joy. Yes, I venture to mend that, and say there is great joy among us now. Glory be to his holy name, the Lord is here! We see him, and rejoice with joy unspeakable.

David's courtesy was as free as it was true. Possibly those who remained behind were half afraid that their leader might say, "See here, you idle fellows, what we have been doing for you!" No; he saluted them, but did not scold them. Perhaps they thought, "He will upbraid us that we did not manage to creep into the fray." But no; "he giveth liberally, and upbraideth not." He speaks not a word of upbraiding, for his heart pities them, and therefore he salutes them" My brethren, God has been gracious to us. All hail! " David would have them rejoice together; and give praise unto the most High. He will not clash their cup with a drop of bitter. Oh, for a salutation from our Lord at this good hour! When Christ comes into a company his presence makes a heavenly difference. Have you never seen an assembly listening to an orator, all unmoved and stolid? Suddenly the Holy Ghost has fallen on the speaker, and the King himself has been visibly set forth among them in the midst of the assembly, and all have felt as if they could leap to their feet and cry, "Hallelujah, hallelujah!" Then hearts beat fast, and souls leap high; for where Jesus is found his presence fills the place with delight. Now, then, you weary ones, if you be here, any of you, may you rejoice as you now meet your Leader, and your Leader reveals himself to Von! If no one else has a sonnet, I have mine. He must, he shall be praised. " Thou art the King of glory, O Christ! All heaven and earth adores thee. Thou shalt reign for ever and ever."

III. Thirdly, FAINT ONES HAVE THEIR LEADER FOR THEIR ADVOCATE. Listen to those foul-mouthed men of Belial, these wicked

men: how they rail against those whom God has addicted! They came up to David and began blustering—"These weaklings who were not in the fight, they shall not share the spoil. Let them take their wives and children and begone." These fellows spoke with loud, harsh voices, and greatly grieved the feebler ones. Who was to speak up for them? Their leader became their advocate.

First, do you notice, *he pleads their unity*? The followers of the son of Jesse are one and inseparable. David said, "Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us, who hath preserved us." "We are all one," says David. "God has given the spoil, not to you alone, but to us all. We are all one company of brothers." The unity of saints is the consolation of the feeble. Brethren, our Lord Jesus Christ would refresh his wearied ones by the reflection that we are all one in him. I may be the foot, all dusty and travel-stained; and you may be the hand, holding forth some precious gem; but we are still one body. Yonder friend is the brow of holy thought, and another is the lip of persuasion, and a third is the eye of watchfulness; but still we are one body in Christ. We cannot do, any one of us, without his fellow; each one ministers to the benefit of all. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of thee." We are all one in Christ Jesus. Surely this ought to comfort those of you who, by reason of feebleness, are made to feel as if you were very inferior members of the body: you are still living members of the mystical body of Jesus Christ your Lord, and let this suffice you. One life is ours, one love is ours, one heaven shall be ours in our one Saviour.

David further *pleaded free grace*, for he said to them, "Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the Lord hath given us." He did not say, "With that which you have conquered, and fairly earned in battle," but "that which the Lord hath given us." Look upon every blessing as a gift, and you will not think anyone shut out from it, not even yourself. The gift of God is eternal life; why should you not have it? Deny not to anyone of your brethren any comfort of the Covenant of grace. Think not of any man, "He ought not to have so much joy." It is all of free grace; and if free grace rules the hour, the least may have it as well as the greatest. If it is all of free grace, then, my poor struggling brother, who can hardly feel assured that you are saved, yet if you are a believer, you may claim every blessing Of the Lord's gracious covenant. God freely gives to you as well as to me the provisions of his love; therefore let us be glad, and not judge ourselves after the manner of the law of condemnation.

Then he pleaded *their needfulness*. He said, "These men abided by the Stuff." No army fights well when its camp is unguarded. It is a great thing for a church to know that its stores are well guarded by a praying band. While some of us are teaching in the school or preaching in the street, we have great comfort; in knowing that a certain number of our friends are praying for us. To me it is a boundless solace that I live in the prayers of thousands. I will not say which does the better service—the man that preaches, or the man that prays; but I know this, that we can do better without the voice that preaches than without the heart that prays. The petitions of our bed-ridden sisters are the wealth of the church. The kind of service which seems most commonplace among men is often the most precious unto God. Therefore, as for those who cannot come into the front places of warfare, deny them not seats of honour, since, after all, they may be doing the greater good. Remember the statute, "They shall part alike."

Notice that David *adds to his pleading a statute*. I like to think of our great Commander, the Lord Jesus, making statutes. For whom does he legislate? For the first three? For the captains of thousands? No. He makes a statute for those who are forced to stay at home because they are faint. Blessed be the name of our Lord Jesus, he is always looking to the interests of those who have nobody else to care for them! If you can look after your own cause, you may do so; but if you are so happy as to be weak in yourself, you shall be Strong in Christ. Those who have Christ to care for them are better off than if they took care of themselves. He that can leave his concerns with Christ has left them in good hands. Vain is the help of self, but all-sufficient is the aid of Jesus.

To sum up what I mean: I believe the Lord will give to the sick and the suffering an equal reward with the active and energetic, if they are equally concerned for his glory. The Lord will also make a fair division to the obscure and unknown as well as to the renowned and honoured, if they are equally earnest. Oh, tell me not that she who rears her boy for Christ shall miss her reward from him by whom an apostle is recompensed! Tell me not that the woman who so conducts her household that her servants come to fear God, shall be forgotten in the day when the "Well dones" are distributed to the faithful! Homely and unnoticed service shall have honour as surely as that with which the world is ringing.

Some of God's people are illiterate, and they have but little native talent.

But if they serve the Lord as best they can, with all their heart, they shall take their part with those that are the most learned and accomplished. He that is faithful over a little shall have his full reward of grace. It is accepted according to what a man hath. We may possess no more than two mites, but if we cast them into the treasury, our Lord will think much of them.

Some dear servants of God seem always to be defeated. They seem sent to a people whose hearts are made gross and their ears dull of hearing. Still, if they have truthfully proclaimed the Word of the Lord their reward will not be according to their apparent success, but according to their fidelity.

Some saints are constitutionally depressed and sad; they are like certain lovely ferns, which grow best under a constant drip. Well, well, the Lord will gather these beautiful ferns of the shade as well as the roses of the sun; they shall share his notice as much as the blazing sunflowers and the saddest shall rejoice with the gladdest. You Little-Faiths, you Despondencies, you Much-Afrays, you Feeble-Minds, you that sigh more than you sing, you that would but cannot, you that have a great heart for holiness, but feel beaten back in your struggles, the Lord shall give you his love, his grace, his favour, as surely as he gives it to those who can do great things in his name. Certain of you have but a scant experience of the higher joys and deeper insights of the kingdom, and it may be that you are in part faulty because you are so backward; and yet, if true to your Lord, your infirmities shall not be reckoned as iniquities. If lawfully detained from the field of active labour this Statute stands last for ever, for you as well as for others: "As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike."

IV. Now, fourthly, FAINT ONES FIND JESUS TO BE THEIR GOOD LORD IN EVERY WAY. Was he not a good Lord when he first took us into his army of salvation? What a curious crew they were that enlisted under David! "Every one that was in debt. and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him, and he became a captain over them." He was a captain of ragamuffins; but our Lord had not a better following. I was a poor wretch when I came to Christ; and I should not wonder if that word is near enough to the truth to describe you. I was a good-for-nothing, over head and ears in debt, and without a penny to pay. I came to Jesus so utterly down at the heel, that no one else would have owned me. He might well have said,—"No, I have not come

to this—to march at the head of such vagrant beggars as these." Yet he received us graciously, according to his promise, "Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." Since then, how graciously has he borne with us! We axe not among those self-praising ones who have wrought such wonders of holiness; but we mourn our shortcomings and transgressions; and yet he hath not cast away the people whom he did foreknow. When we look back upon our character as soldiers of Christ, we feel ashamed of ourselves' and amazed at his grace. If anybody had told us that we should have been such poor soldiers as we have been, we should not have believed them. We do not excuse ourselves: we are greatly grieved to have been such failures. Yet our gracious Lord has never turned us out of the ranks. He might have drummed us out of the regiment long ago; but here we are still enrolled, upheld, and smiled upon. What a captain we have! None can compare with him for gentleness. He still owns us, and he declares, They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels."

Brethren, let us exalt the name of our Captain. There is none like him. We have been in distress since then: and he has been in distress with us. Ziklag Smoked for him as well as for us. In all, their affliction he was afflicted. Have you not found it so? When we have come to a great difficulty like the brook Besor he has gently eased his commands, and has not required of us what we were unable to yield. He has not made some of you pastors and teachers, for you could not have borne the burden. He hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence. He has suited the march to the foot, or the foot to the march. How sweetly he has smiled on what we have done! Have you not wondered to see how he has accepted your works and your prayers? You have been startled to find that he did answer your feeble petitions. When you have spoken a word for Jesus, and God has blessed it, why you have thought, "Surely there is a mistake about this! How could my feeble word have a blessing on it?" Beloved, we follow a noble Prince. Jesus is the chief among ten thousand for tenderness as well as for everything else. How tenderly considerate he is! How gentle and generous! He has never said a stinging word to us ever since we knew him. He is that riches which has no sorrow added to it. He has rebuked us; but his rebukes have been like an excellent oil, which has never broken our heads. When we have left him, he has turned and looked upon us, and so he has cut us to the quick; but he has never wounded us with any sword except that which cometh out of his mouth, whose edge is love. When he goes away from us, as David did from those two hundred who could not keep up with him, yet he always comes back again in mercy, and salutes us

with favour. We wonder to ourselves that we did not hold him, and vow that we would never let him go; but we wonder still more that he should come back so speedily, so heartily, leaping over the mountains, hastening like a roe or a young hart over the hills of division. Lo! he has come to us. He has come to us, and he makes our hearts glad at his coming. Let us indulge our hearts this morning as we take our share in the precious spoil of his immeasurable love. He loves the great and the small with like love; let us be joyful all round.

There is one choice thing which he will do, that should make us love him beyond measure. David, after a while, went up to Hebron to be made king over Judah. Shall I read you in the second book of Samuel, the second chapter, and the third verse? "And his men that were with him" (and among the rest these weak ones who could not pass over the brook Besor), "and his men that were with him did David bring up, every man with his household; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron." Yes, he will bring me up, even me! He will bring you up, you faintest and weakest of the band. There is a Hebron wherein Jesus reigns as anointed King, and he will not be there and leave one of us behind. There is no kingdom for Jesus without his brethren, no heaven for Jesus without his disciples. His poor people who have been with him in faintness and weariness shall be with him in glory, *and their households*. Hold on to that additional blessing. I pray you, hold on to it. Do not let slip that word—"*and their households*." I fear we often lose a blessing on our households through clipping the promise. When the jailer asked what he must do to be saved, what was the answer? "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." You have heard that answer hundreds of times, have you not? Did you ever hear the rest of it? Why do preachers and quoters snip off corners from gospel promises? It runs thus: "Thou shalt be saved, *and thy house*." Lay hold of that blessed enlargement of grace, "and thy house." Why leave out the wives and the children? Will you let the Amalekites have them? Do not be satisfied without household salvation. Let us plead this word of the Lord this morning:—O thou blessed David, whom we have desired to follow, who has helped us so graciously even unto this day, when thou art in thy kingdom graciously remember us, and let it be said of us, "and David went up thither, and his men that were with him David brought up (they did not go up of themselves) every man with his household; and they dwelt in the cities of Hebron;" "*Every man with his household*." I commend that word to your careful notice. Fathers, have you yet seen your children saved? Mothers, are all those daughters brought in yet? Never cease to pray until it is so, for this is the crown of it all, "Every man with his household."

