

GOING DEEPER STUDY (July 6, 2025) PERSONAL OR GROUP STUDY

Last Sunday those of us here at Grace voted for, and then celebrated, Dr. Rev. Gregory Wagenfuhr as our next head of staff (he will be arriving mid-August and taking the lead September 1).

This morning we return, for a few weeks, to the life of David (1 and 2 Samuel). Israel's first king, Saul, looked the part when chosen, but failed horribly when it came to integrity, humility, and obedience. God chose David to replace Saul as king. But Saul would not step aside. His fears (paranoia really) led to years of misery for him, for his family, and for David too.

Even though it was absolutely clear God had chosen David to be king, his life was anything but easy. The most powerful man in Israel wanted him dead. David was a marked man. Saul sent thousands of trained soldiers to hunt him down and kill him.

I was raised to believe that if you did what was right ... good things would come your way. I was raised to believe that if you sought God and served God ... you would be blessed in return. A cursory reading of David's songs and poems (many recorded in the book of Psalms) reveal the opposite. David had to run and hide simply to survive. David could have taken shortcuts, an easier path to the throne, but he did not ... and he would not. Are we willing to do what's right even if we know it means potentially years of added trouble? Will I choose to obey God even if His way isn't a shortcut, but the long, difficult, way?

Ordinary People Extraordinary Lives: No Shortcuts (1 Samuel 24:1-22)

^{24:1} When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, 'Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.' ² Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. ³ And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. ⁴ And the men of David said to him, 'Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, "Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you."' Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁵ And afterwards David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. ⁶ He said to his men, 'The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the Lord's anointed.' ⁷ So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way.

⁸ Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, 'My lord the king!' And when Saul looked behind him,

David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage. ⁹ And David said to Saul, 'Why do you listen to the words of men who say, "Behold, David seeks your harm"? ¹⁰ Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, "I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed." ¹¹ See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it ...' (verses 12-15 omitted) ¹⁶ As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' And Saul lifted up his voice and wept ...' (verses 17-22 omitted)

WHAT DOES IT SAY?

1. What do these verses tell us about Saul? About David?
2. What do we learn about the men who were with David?

WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

3. What does, "I will give your enemy into your hand" mean?
4. What does, "he is the Lord's anointed" mean? verse 10

WHAT IS GOD SAYING TO YOU?

5. What is one of your favorite Hollywood movies about someone outnumbered, hunted, and yet you root for them to win?
6. What kind of shortcuts would make life easier for us, but would require us to compromise what is right?
7. What stories in the Bible provide examples of those who did not take the shortcut, did not compromise, even at great cost?
8. What shortcuts are you offered in your relationships, your finances, your integrity, your faith?
9. Why would someone not take the easy way, the shortcut?
10. What does God offer to help us make the difficult choice, take the long way, reject the shortcut? Consider Matthew 4:1-11
11. Does obedience to God always bring an immediate blessing?
12. What steps can you take today to help you when you are tempted to take the next shortcut?

As we spend time praying, remember that prayer is meant to be a natural part of our day. Prayer is a conversation: talking to God and listening to God. Thank God for the strength to face hard times and to make difficult choices. Ask God to help you do what is right even if it makes your life harder. God will help you, because He loves you.