

DAVID AND SAUL

(1 Samuel 16:14 – 26:25)

Purpose: To teach the strength of humility.

In the book of Samuel, in the Old Testament of the Bible, we read of a king who had done a very foolish thing.

King Saul, the ruler of the land of Israel, had turned his back on God. Because of this, an evil spirit had come to dwell in the king. It tormented the king and made him very sad.

King Saul didn't want to eat, he didn't want to sleep. His servants failed to please him.

King Saul was a good example of how miserable a man can be when he chooses to leave God out of his life.

The people of Israel were quite concerned about their ruler, and some of them felt that music might make the king feel more like himself again.

Someone suggested David, the son of Jesse, who was known to make beautiful music on his harp.

David was a shepherd boy, and much of his boyhood life was spent out in the fields, caring for his father's sheep.

David was brought before the king and sure enough, when David played on his harp, the evil spirit left King Saul and a feeling of peace came over him.

The Bible tells us that Saul was refreshed and was well again. David became a great favourite in the court of the king.

David was also pleasing in the sight of God because he trusted in God, and sincerely believed if God was with him no man could stand against him. Remember the story of David and Goliath...

...how the giant from the Philistine army dared anyone from the land of Israel to come out and fight with him?

And how David went out to meet that giant, armed with only a slingshot and his faith in God? The Bible tells us he took five smooth stones from a brook and put one of them in his sling...

...and sent the stone whirling through the air.

The stone hit the giant right in the middle of the forehead.

And the mighty Goliath, the pride of the Philistine army, fell to the earth and was slain.

The Philistines had been very confident of their victory over the Israelite nation, but now their champion was dead and they no longer wanted to fight.

Yes, David had won a great victory – not in his own strength, but in the strength of the Lord. And the people of Israel loved the shepherd boy for the service he had done to his country.

But King Saul was unhappy about David being so highly praised. He was jealous of such popularity, and the more the king thought about it, the more angry he became.

The beautiful music was no longer a source of comfort to the king. His heart was filled with hate.

One day the king decided all of this had gone far enough. He knew of a way to put a stop to it.

And David narrowly escaped death when Saul hurled his spear at him with all of his might.

Realizing now that King Saul hated him enough to kill him, David knew he must run for his life.

And he fled from the presence of the king before the guards could be told to stop him. But where?

Where could David go to escape the ruler of the land?

The wilderness might not have appealed to some people, but to a shepherd boy that was the place to go.

And together with a few of his loyal friends, David hid from the king in a cave in a hillside.

But King Saul had made up his mind that David would have to be slain, and preparations were soon being made to track the shepherd boy down.

But finding David proved to be more than the king could do, and he returned to the palace empty handed.

When the danger of the moment was past, David fell on his knees to thank God for protecting him. And he asked his heavenly Father to guide and direct him in the days that were to follow. God told David to make certain preparations to form a little army.

And David did as God had told him to do. He gathered together 600 men. The men were all sizes and shapes, and dressed in all kinds of armour.

No one would ever have guessed that these men could stand against the army of King Saul.

Saul's army was well-armoured and highly trained.

And the king's army far outnumbered David's 600 men.

And Saul felt sure of victory as he viewed his troops. All the odds were in his favour. This time, David would not get away.

But in order to defeat an enemy, you must find him. And the king was having great difficulty doing that very thing. After a while the king was tired, and he wanted to rest. And he chose a cave to sleep in...

...the very cave that David and his men were hiding in. Imagine such a thing! The king walked right into their hiding place!

The king was very tired, and before long he was sound asleep.

Little did the ruler realize that David and his men were watching him.

What an opportunity for them! Here was their enemy lying helpless at their feet.

David's men eagerly anticipated what was about to take place.

They looked to their leader, who was already drawing his sword. It was only right that the honor of killing Saul would be his.

But to the amazement of his men, instead of killing Saul, David simply cut off a part of Saul's robe. David didn't want to kill Saul, but he did want the king to know that his life had been spared.

On another occasion, David's men informed him that Saul and his men were sleeping by an open campfire.

And this time, they begged their leader to kill the wicked king. David searched his heart to know what the Lord would have him do.

One of David's men started to handle the matter himself. He knew what to do, even if his leader didn't. But David stopped him, saying the king must not be slain.

Instead of killing the king, David wanted Saul to know that once again his life had been spared.

The king's own spear and his water jug were taken so the king would know someone had been there.

When King Saul and his men awakened from the deep sleep God had caused to fall upon them, they heard the shouts of David's men.

Across the way, they saw David and his men mocking the king with the king's own spear and his water jug.

Saul was humiliated. What a soldier he had turned out to be! Once again, David could have killed him.

But David had done what he felt the Lord would have him do. And we read in the book of Psalms how David felt in his heart:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." (Psalm 121:1-2)