

Life of David

by Alan Redpath

The sermon explores the life of David, emphasizing the importance of faith, integrity, and waiting on God's timing amidst trials and temptations.

Duration: 44:26

Scripture: 1 Samuel 24:12, Psalm 37:7, Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28, 2 Corinthians 12:9, Ephesians 6:12

Topics: "David"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher begins by referencing the story of Peter in the 12th chapter of Acts, where he was imprisoned and about to be beheaded. The preacher then transitions to the story of David and his men hiding in a cave while their enemy approaches. David's men urge him to take advantage of the opportunity to kill their enemy and end their troubles, but David refuses, saying it would be wrong to harm his master. The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and following His will, even in difficult situations.

Transcript

Dr. Alan Redpath entitled this address, Lessons from the Life of David, and this is part one. Shall we look to God in prayer a moment? Will thou write thy word, to which we have listened upon our hearts, and grant, O Lord, today in the midst of the battle, the warfare, not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places, that today we may be found wearing all the armor of God. And now speak, Lord, for thy servant-hearers.

Speak just now, some message to meet my need, which thou only dost know. Speak now through thy holy word, and make me see some wonderful truth thou hast to show to me. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. Now would you open your Bible this morning with me, please, at 1st Book of Samuel, in the 24th chapter. 1st Samuel, chapter 24.

In the four morning hours of this week, I believe that God would have us consider together four different incidents which occurred in the life of David, and which in the hand of God, though at the time they occurred they seemed to be moments of tremendous testing and even moments of adversity, were nevertheless used in the hand of God to make him. A man after God's own heart. We consider, therefore, these incidents in the life of a man for whom God had a great purpose.

He was chosen to be king. Already he had known the anointing of the Spirit. He had been set apart for this great task of leadership and authority.

But he was now, at this moment, in this particular portion which we are about to consider, being put through the crucible. Being put through a period of fiery trial and testing and discipline, that God might prepare him and fit him for his destiny. And when you think about this, you recognize at once that we are considering the story of any one of us here today.

For God has a great destiny for his people, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ, destined to reign through all eternity with our Lord. But, in this life, put through the crucible of testing, the fire of discipline, trained to be prepared and to be equipped and fitted for that which is God's great purpose for us. As Peter says in his letter, that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.

And if you consider the life of David, you will recall that from the very beginning, almost immediately after having been anointed by Samuel for the task of leadership, the test, the pressure was put on him. A pressure which increased, a test which deepened. No sooner had he emerged through one testing than he was subjected to another, and each one of them deeper, more subtle, more severe than the one which preceded it.

And that is always God's way with those whom he is fitting for his presence. The test begins. Satan's attacks come, and they're relentless and never ceasing.

And every victory that is won on one particular level simply becomes the testing ground for the next attack on a deeper level. And here in this chapter, and again in the 26th chapter of Samuel, we find David exposed to perhaps one of the most subtle attacks that were ever made upon him. For here in this 24th chapter, the first book of Samuel, which if I had time I would read, but to save time I will just comment upon, David is presented with a golden opportunity, a wonderful chance to get rid of his enemy.

Thor is attacking him, chasing him, determined to kill him. Thor, eaten up with jealousy, determined to slay David, is attacking him relentlessly. And here David has a magnificent opportunity to get rid of him, to make a grab for the throne which God had promised him, to end this period of testing and suffering, and incidentally to make life a lot easier for himself, for his family, and for 600 men who had committed themselves to be his followers.

A terrific chance to take the heat off, to get out from under the pressure, to free himself from the situation which was seeming to be increasingly impossible. To get out of the jams, and to get quickly to the place which God had promised him, and the reign of Israel. Now you remember this story, it's quite dramatic, it's really quite thrilling.

Let me remind you, here at this point David and 600 men, fleeing from the attacks of Thor, are in a region called En-Gedi. A mountainous region, quite near the western shore of the Dead Sea. En-Gedi means the haunt of a wild goat.

Strange place for a man of God to be in, but then God puts his people in very strange places, very unusual places, quite extraordinary. The haunt of a wild goat. And here's a man, who God has purposed to be king, is now in the haunt of a wild goat.

He's really in a jam. And at this particular moment, suddenly Thor appears on the scene with 3000 trained and equipped men. Picked men, determined ruthlessly upon the murder of David.

It's a very hot day, and the 3000 men walk on, while Thor, for a moment, gets out of the heat of the sun and seeks refuge in a cave. Coming out from the glare of the sunshine, he's quite oblivious of the fact that there are 600 pairs of eyes glued on him. And he walks into the shadow of the cave and stands there, mopping his brow.

I have every sympathy with this. It must have been desperately humid and desperately hot. And inside that very cave, lies David and 600 men.

And restlessly, they watch the enemy approach. And then they turn to David, and I can imagine them, because they whisper a suggestion to him, in the fourth verse of this chapter. The men of David said to him, Behold the day of which the Lord said unto thee, Behold, I will deliver thine enemy into thine hand, that thou mayest do to him as it shall seem good unto thee.

In other words, putting it in modern language, David, here's your chance. Here's your opportunity. Here's the moment why we've been waiting for it.

How we've waited for this for ages. Here's your chance to rid us of our enemy. To finish this wretched life of being a fugitive.

To place us in a position of preeminence. To get us in the place that you said one day we're going to share with you. The place of authority.

Now then, come on now, do something about it. And those 600 men watch and hold their breath, while their leader gets up from the back of the cave, stealthily walks through the darkness towards the light, with his knife in his hand, and they all wait for the blow to strike. One blow, and the enemy's dead.

And instead of a blow in clawed back, David very stealthily creeps up behind him, takes a few inches off his coat, and returns to his men. And I can imagine them thinking, if not saying to themselves, what sort of a leader is this? Here's an opportunity for us to be free from all this kind of life, to get the thing that God has said we're going to have, to make a grab for it, and to end all our problems. What a fool to miss a chance like that.

But you notice David's answer, in the sixth verse, The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord. And so David somehow has checked himself, controlled himself, and even more amazing, he manages to control 600 rough, rugged, undisciplined, untrained followers. For the seventh verse says, So David stayed his servants with these words, and suffered them not to rise against thought.

And you recall that the story continues by telling us that David leaves the cave, and follows Saul, and shouts after him, holds up before his eyes his little bit of his coat, and proves to him that he isn't really seeking to kill him at all. He isn't going to do him any harm. And this says to him in the 14th verse, Who do you think you're chasing? I'm just as helpless as a dead dog in the fleet.

Who are you running after? And in the 12th verse, this tremendous statement, The Lord judge between me and thee, and the Lord avenge me of thee, but mine hand shall not be upon thee. And if you turn over your Bible two pages in the 26th chapter, you find Saul again with 3,000 men still on the attack. His attacks

are relentless.

He's never letting David alone, and he's back again on the same thing in spite of the fact that David has obviously showed his mercy. And here in this chapter, there's an even more subtle situation developed. For you notice that here's David, and he discovers Saul and his army asleep.

Warfare must have been a very leisurely business, there wasn't any sentry on duty apparently. And David spots them there lying fast asleep, and he has alongside him Abishai, one of his trusted companions. And so David and Abishai stealthily go down the valley and walk into the camp where Saul and Abner are found asleep.

And stealthily they creep up to Saul with his sword alongside him. And in verse 8, Abishai says to David, In other words, David, if you feel a bit squeamish about doing this thing yourself, if you don't feel too happy about getting your revenge, let me do it for you. Just stand back and I'll do it.

And I promise you it'll only need one shot. Just one shot, one stroke, and his head will be off. You won't need to watch me do it, just once and I'll finish the whole business.

So David, quite appreciate your principles, quite appreciate you don't like to handle the situation yourself, but just let me undertake for you. And once again there comes the same tremendous answer, the Lord forbid, verse 11, that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed. The same reply.

And then they take Saul's spear with them and his water bottle and they withdraw. And relieve the tension of that moment by hollering at the camp, waking them all up, shouting at Abner and asking him what sort of a captain he thinks he is, to leave his king in danger of death, sound asleep, slackness on duty. And so you see, on these two occasions, this man, for whom God has a tremendous purpose of blessing, whom God of purpose should be king, misses two superb opportunities to end all the attacks of the enemy.

To get out from under the pressure, to relieve himself from the situation, from the jam in which he's found, to break free from all of this and to grab the throne and to enter into the thing, the very thing that God has promised. After all, when there's a chance of getting your own back, you ought to take it. After all, God helps those who help themselves, doesn't he? After all, surely if there's an opportunity to get even with somebody, well it's only reasonable to do it.

And if you're in a jam and there's no way out, and you're in such a horrific situation that you begin to say to yourself, I think God has undertaken more than he knew, and he can't get me out of this unless I take the initiative, it's up to me to act. Well now, let's just look at this a moment. Because you see, once again, I think, you and I can put ourselves right in the center of this picture.

The attacks of the enemy upon the child of God are relentless. He isn't interested in attacking flesh and blood, he's interested in attacking the nature of God dwelling within the believer. This is his enemy.

Not you, you're incidental. But the attack of the enemy is upon the life of Jesus Christ, indwelling the child of God. And from that attack, Satan never takes a vacation.

He will bury his methods and his tactics, but he's always at the job. And time comes sometimes when the attacks are so terrific that you're beginning to say to yourself, now I must do something about this. I really must act.

I can't just sit here any longer. I must do something about it. And maybe Satan has used somebody else or some human instrument, and well you've been misunderstood and attacked unjustly, and there's a terrific opportunity presented to you right in your lap to get your own back, and to prove that you're right and he's wrong.

Now, how does a man of God react to this? You know, all through life God is far more concerned about you than about your work. He's tremendously concerned about the man, and about the reactions of the man. This is what God is after all the time, the manufacturer of a saint.

And therefore, I want you to notice from this narrative in the first place here, the principle which David has learned. The principle which David has learned. He knew that Paul was rejected by God, and yet he also knew that at that point Paul was the Lord's anointed.

And though everybody else might say to him, David, you must love your friends and hate your enemies, somehow David has learned this principle. Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that spitefully use you. He's learned that principle.

And if he'd slain Paul at that minute, if he'd taken things into his own hands and taken the initiative, how disastrous it could have been. This was God's responsibility. God had put him into this situation.

God had allowed him to be there. Only a little while before this, Jonathan had come to him and strengthened his hands in the Lord and reminded him of the promises of God. And if David was to take this situation into his own hands and out of the hands of God, anything might have happened.

How easy to take the initiative. How desperately hard to wait for God. Conditions are absolutely unbearable and intolerable, but my friend, they're much worse if a man takes the initiative and gets away from the place of resting in and waiting for the Lord.

Desperately hard to learn to practice the lesson that Jesus practiced when he said of him, when he was reviled, he reviled not again, but committed himself to him that judges righteously. Desperately hard to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. Very hard for David to say, the Lord judged between me and thee.

The Lord avenged me of thee, but mine hand shall not be upon thee. In other words, God has put me into this situation for a reason that I don't understand, but he knows and he understands. He's a great purpose for my life and he's allowed this thing to happen.

And therefore, I'm not going to lift one little finger to help God out. I'm going to wait upon the Lord. I'm going to wait upon him.

My soul waits thou only upon God. And not merely am I going to take this line with those who attack and with my enemies, not merely am I going to take this, but I am going to refuse to allow anybody else to intervene and seek to take up the case on my behalf. My soul waits thou only upon God.

You remember that tremendous verse in the 130th Psalm where David, speaking of the same thing, says, My soul waits upon the Lord more than they that watch for the morning. That's a tremendous thing. Have you ever had a sleepless night? A night when you've tossed and turned and you'd have done anything to see the first glimmer of light come through the window.

You get up and you walk around your bed, make a cup of tea or do something, coffee perhaps, and you, you know, you just relax a little, try to relax, and there's no sleep and there's no rest and the night just drags on. Oh, the awful desire that sung, soon the morning shall dawn. Now David says, my soul's going to wait upon the Lord more than they that watch for the morning.

And with all the pressures upon me and with all the situation in which I'm absolutely helpless, my one responsibility is in this situation to learn not to panic, not to be afraid, but to wait upon God who's allowed it to happen. The principle that David learned. Have you learned that? Not to get your own back.

Not to fight back. Not to vindicate yourself. Not to speak to somebody else and ask them to take up the case on your behalf.

But to learn to wait upon God. The principle that David learned. But will you notice here in the second place in this story the power that David has liberated here? What's the result of his reaction? Here's this man in his training ground.

Here's this man with all the pressures being put upon him, and he's learning to leave the situation in the hand of God and to refuse to take the initiative himself. What's the effect? Just suppose he'd given way. Just suppose, just suppose that day in that cave he'd taken the knife and done the thing.

I tell you that from that moment the sun would have gone out of his heart. And the joy would have gone. And that sense of the presence of the Lord with him would have departed.

And for the rest of his day he'd have lived all his life under a shadow. Under a sense of shame. Under a sense of guilt and of failure.

And he'd never have been able to recover from it. Just you look over in your Bible with me a moment to the second book of Samuel for an example. And in the second book of Samuel and in the 16th chapter.

Second Samuel chapter 16. You remember this incident. David of course by now is king.

But at this particular time Absalom has rebelled against him. He's going through a time of severe casting because of the sin which had occurred in his life. And now David is running and fleeing from the city.

And we read in chapter 16 of second Samuel. In verse 6 he casts this man Shimei. Casts stones at David and all the servants of King David.

And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And thus said Shimei when he cursed. Come out, come out thou bloody man, thou man of Helium.

The Lord hath returned upon thee all the blood of the house of Saul. In whose stead thou hast reigned. Shimei that's a lie.

What's this man saying to this king, this man of God who's going through this time of suffering. He's saying to him David it's your own fault. You brought it on yourself.

This is because of the way you treated Saul. Because of what you did years ago to him you're suffering from it now. That's a lie.

But it could have been true. It could have been true. And if there's anything a man of God in preparation for the service of the king has to avoid.

It's taking action in any situation which for the rest of his life will leave a shadow upon his name. I know that the Lord restores the years that the locust had eaten. I know he does but it's never the same again.

And just in one moment with the pressure of the enemy upon a child of God. That Christian can take action, can do something, can take the initiative. Can seek to get out from the burden, away from the crisis, out from the situation.

Takes the initiative instead of waiting upon God. And he'll carry the shadow all the rest of his life. And one day somebody will say something like that to him.

And when Shimei said that to David. He could lift up his heart to God and say Lord listen to that man. You know what he's saying it isn't true.

I wasn't guilty. You know how I treated Saul. You know I didn't react like that.

But it could have been true. All the rest of this man's life could have been lived in the service of the Lord. With a shadow and a cloud over him.

For the rest of his day. God grants that that may not happen to any of you here today. But because of action you have taken under pressure.

Because of retaliation. Because of taking the initiative. Because of getting away from the place of resting in the Lord.

And waiting for him to vindicate. For the rest of your days you go through life. Under a cloud.

It could have been true. The music could have left his soul. The joy could have gone out of his heart.

And the song. The lift of a life that's right with God. Could have ended if he'd just done one thing at that point.

Out of God's will. But wait a minute. Not only what would have been the effect on David.

What would have been the effect on his men. These 600 people who look to him for leadership. My what would have happened to them if he at that point had done the wrong thing.

Glance back in your Bible to the first book of Samuel and the 30th chapter William. And verse 10. First Samuel chapter 30 and verse 10.

Because it seems to me that there's an evidence here. That David's behavior to Saul was beginning to become part of the behavior of his followers. David pursued says verse 10 of chapter 30.

David pursued he and 400 men for 200 abode behind. Which was so faint they could not go over the brook Peter. And they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David.

And gave him bread and he did eat. And they made him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs.

And two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten his spirit came again to him. For he had eaten no bread nor drunk any water three days and three nights.

Hey who taught David's men. Those rugged undisciplined rough men. Bloodthirsty men.

To behave to an enemy like that. They found him in a field. They brought him to David.

They gave him bread and he ate. They made him drink water. They gave him a piece of cake of figs.

And two clusters of raisins. In other words this great band of ruffians. Have learned kindness.

And they've learned love. And they've learned gentleness. Where have they learned it from? There's only one place they could have done.

From the example of the man they trusted. Oh if David had taken the initiative and got his own back. And acted out of the will of God.

The whole tone and spiritual standard of those who followed him. Would have just crashed. But because David acted in that situation in a way which glorified the Lord.

Then the whole standard of spiritual life of those 600 men was raised. And something of the love in David's heart for his enemies. Got hold of these men.

And they began to live on the same principle. But most of all. What would have happened to Saul.

If David had reacted as he did. If he hadn't reacted as he did. Look at the effect on Saul.

Look at it. First Samuel chapter 24. Verse 16.

It came to pass when David had made an end of speaking these words unto Saul. That Saul said is this thy voice my son David. And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

And he said to David thou art more righteous than I. For thou hast rewarded me good. Whereas I have rewarded thee evil. Verse chapter 26.

Look at it again. In verse 21. Then said Saul I have sinned.

Return my son David for I will no more do thee harm. Because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day. Behold I have played the fool.

And I have erred exceedingly. Verse 25. Then Saul said to David blessed be thou my son David.

Thou shalt both do great things. And shalt also still prevail. Can you get behind that in your imagination a moment? Here's this man mad with jealousy.

Determined on murder. Ruthlessly set to destroy David. A man, mark you, listen, who's had exactly the same spiritual opportunities as David had.

A man who at one time had known the anointing of God upon him. At one time was chosen to be king. A man with the same chances, same opportunities, same privileges.

But this man has rejected the principles of God. Principles of life. And he's chosen his own.

And now he's bent on murder. And he's absolutely setting himself to the destruction of David. But suddenly one day that man's heart is melted.

And there's one thing that's melted it. It's love. Love.

And for a month as he felt the impact of a man who's learned to love. And learned to care. And learned to wait upon God.

And learned not to move out of the will of God no matter what the pressure may be. Paul has suddenly felt the impact of that life. And his heart is broken.

And for a moment, for a moment there's a pathetic remembrance of better days. A confession of sin. An acknowledgment that he's been fighting against God and the thing hopeless.

Hopeless struggle. And like a flash of lightning he suddenly sees he's been a fool. I've played the fool and I've erred exceedingly.

And I've seen suddenly this man because he's felt the impact of the warmth and the glow and the fire of the love of God in a man's heart. This man finds himself released from the pressure of the enemy in his own soul. And he thinks out his position and he sees what a fool, what a mess he's made of life.

What a tragedy his life has been. But he's so held in the grip of his wretched passion and sin that he can't shake it off. So my friends you get these lessons this morning.

There's only one thing that'll melt an unbeliever today. And I tell you we live in days that are simply desperate in the relationship of men who are without God. They're so blinded and so indifferent and so careless to the things of the Lord that only one thing melts a heart.

And it's when someone meets a man not simply orthodox in his doctrine. Not simply who's right in his views about the Bible but a man whose heart is melted by the love of God. It's love that melts the ice.

It's love that brings conviction. That's why Calvary has such a magnetism. Maybe some of you have heard this story.

Of a true story of a certain sergeant in the American army. Whose behavior and treatment of his men so astounded the colonel in charge. Italian, my regiment, they all treat their men like dirt.

But you're kind to them. You never bawl them out. You don't swear at them and you don't curse at them and they all respect you.

How do you do it? Oh sir, he said, that's quite a story. He said, as a matter of fact sir, I used to behave just like everybody else did. But he said, you know, one day about a year ago.

A fellow came into my base, a training base it was, training for active service, for warfare. He came into our billet one night, a new recruit, only a chap of 19. And the first night he was there he knelt down beside his bed to pray and I swore at him.

And I said, what do you think you are, in a Sunday school, you're in the army, get up. And the man stayed down on his knees. So I didn't bother about him.

But the next night he did the same and I swore at him and again, cursed him, right and left, but it didn't make any difference. And the third day we were out on a route march, 30 miles. Mud, filth, dirt, and came back all filthy, absolutely covered with mud.

All over the head to foot. Before we got to bed this man knelt down to pray again. And I got mad.

When he said, I got one of my dirty, filthy boots and I hurled it at him and I hit him on the head and I called him everything I knew. And I said, get up. And he stayed down and he kept on praying.

So I got the other boot. And that boot went just exactly at the same place and hit him on the same spot. And knocked him on the back of his head and I hollered at him and I said, get up.

But he stayed down. Oh, I thought, what's the use? And I went to bed. The next morning I woke up, looked across and he was still praying.

Been up ever since. But when I got out of my bed I found my boots alongside my bed, polished as they'd never been polished before. And I went to that man and I asked him in secret.

And he told me that one day he had been born of the Spirit of God and the love of God had been shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost. That melts a heart. Nothing else.

Nothing else. May I ask you just to notice. This man for a minute, take a glimpse at him.

This man who's let passion and sin run wild. This man who suddenly he's met the impact of love. And he admits, I played the fool and I've erred exceedingly.

But what's the use of saying that if he's going to live just exactly the same as he's always done. What's the use of a moment when God suddenly breaks into a man's heart and shows him that he's a sinner and he admits it and then he goes back to live just the same. What's the use of tears and confession if I don't follow through.

May I say this to you. And remember it. That emotion.

Emotion. Which doesn't lead to action. And obedience.

Only hardens my heart. And leads to further sin. And there's one thing, one thing friends.

To respond to what we call an invitation at a meeting. It's another thing to carry it through. One thing to be emotionally aroused and disturbed about truth.

It's another thing to translate it into terms of obedience. And I look at these two men and I put them alongside me and alongside front of you in your mind this morning for a moment. Here's Saul.

Same opportunities. Same privileges. Same chances.

He is dazed in the same position. Both of them having to do with the same God and the same principles of life. And David accepts them and begins to live on the principle of absolute trust and total obedience.

And Saul rejects the principles and demands his own way. And the one man ends in hell and the other in heaven. And of course that's how eternity is settled for every one of us.

A series of choices. Either in submission to the will of God or in rejection of it. May I say, because it's quite possible even in a service like this, it's never too late to stop fighting against God.

Never. It's never, never too late to begin real submission to his will. Oh, how near to repentance Saul came when he met real love.

The principle that David learned. The power that he liberated. Oh, if he tried to get his own back.

If he jumped out from under the pressure. If he'd released himself as he could so easily have done from the jam in which he found himself. Think of the effect of his own life, the awful shadow.

Think of the effect upon those who followed him. Think of the effect upon his enemies. It was love, love, that had learned to wait upon God and refused to act out of the will of God that made such a mighty impact.

Upon all with whom he met. But I must ask you one question and then answer it. What intrigues me is, how does David learn to live like that? Oh my, if I could only learn that lesson.

How did he learn it? Well, you know, that's what intrigues me about reading the story of David, because you see, you read the history in books like Samuel, but you read the inner dealings in the book of Psalms. Turn with me a moment to the 57th Psalm. Psalm 57.

You notice the heading at the top of this psalm? David complains of his dangerous case. I should think so. He encourages himself to praise God.

A psalm written when he fled from Saul in the cave. Here we are. And here's what's happening in David's heart.

Here's his inner dealings with God. Here's the thing that's taking place between this man and his Lord at this moment of the history of his life. Listen.

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me. My soul trusteth indeed, yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpassed. I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me.

He shall send from heaven and save me from the reproach of them that will swallow me up. Thela, just think of that. Put the word in it.

God shall send forth his mercy and his truth. My soul is among lions, and I lie even among them that are set on fire. Even the sons of men whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongue a sharp sword, you see.

Oh, he's saying, Lord, I'm in the midst of enemies that are far too strong for me. I tell you they're bent on swallowing me up. Lord, this is a terrific situation.

But is he panicking? No. Oh, no. I would say not simply hear the principle that David has learned.

And the power which David has liberated. But the place which David has loved. In the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge until these calamities be overpassed.

And with his enemies all around him. And with this stall constantly on the attack. And with the pressure of the situation just absolutely overwhelming.

He refuses to act himself. And he lies down and rests in the shadow of the wings of the Lord. Assured that the God who performeth all things for him will send from heaven.

And save him from the reproach of those that would swallow him up. Just think of that. Oh, friend.

You know, it reminds me. It reminds me of Peter. In the twelfth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, you remember? Why, next day to be beheaded.

Have his head cut off. Same thing had happened to James. And he has Herod ready to do it for him.

Any minute now Peter's through. And he's going to be slain. The next morning it's going to happen.

And is he in prison? Boy. Iron gate. Four quaternions of soldiers.

Inner war. In between two soldiers bound with chains in the inner prison. My word, he's right in there.

No hope. What's he doing? Sleeping. And he's the only Christian in Jerusalem asleep.

The priests are all awake praying for him. Having a night of prayer. But prayer was made of the church unto God for him continually.

One Christian. The man for whom they were praying. Sound asleep.

And the next day his head going to get cut off. Oh, I want to know how to live like that, don't you? Do you know how he did it? I'm going to ask him when I get to heaven. But I'm sure I'm right.

Excuse me. I think I'm right. But when I get to heaven I'm going to ask him.

It's one of the first things I'm going to do when I... Oh, if we ever recover from the sheer joy of meeting Jesus. But just to go and meet Peter and ask him. Was I right? Why did you go to sleep that night? And I think he's going to answer me why.

Just a few weeks previously the Lord and I had a personal talk. Yes, I know. And I want to know what took place in that too.

But he said, do you remember that Jesus said, and I told everybody he said, When you were young, Peter, you girded yourself and went whither you would. But Peter, when thou shalt be old, another will gird you and lead you where you would not. And that night as I was thinking in my prison cell, shut in there due to be beheaded the next morning with the soldiers all round me and chained up.

What a jam to be in. As I was thinking to myself, I was thinking about Jesus. Thinking about our last little talk together.

And suddenly I remembered. He said, Simon, when thou wast young, something happened. Simon, when thou shalt be old.

But Lord, that was only a few weeks ago. I'm not old yet. Well, I'm going to go lie down and go to sleep because Herod can't touch me.

Nobody can touch me. Jesus says one day, I'm going to be old. So he lies down under the shadow of the wings of the Lord and goes sound asleep and everybody else having a terrific night of prayer for his deliverance.

And he's absolutely calm in the presence of God. I think John Wesley catches that. Charles Wesley catches it when he says, Jesus, lover of my soul, let me to thy bosom fly while the nearer waters roll, while the tempest still is high.

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide till the storm of life is passed safe into the haven guide. O receive my soul at last. You see? Get it now? You come through with me? The principle that he led waits only upon God.

The power that he's liberated, the power of love, all possible because of a place that he loves. And the soul that's among deadly enemies, surrounded by all foes, lies down in the promises of God. And because he learns to do that and you learn to do that, out of that place, the shadow of his wings, there comes power to control others, power to impart that to others, power to bring conviction to ungodly men.

Because I've learned to lie down in the promises of God. And in conclusion, I just say this to you, to ask you to think it out. One man, David, living under the authority of heaven, a life of faith and obedience, is in authority over all else.

Saul refuses the authority of heaven and therefore is a slave to everything else. Which are you? Which are you? May the Lord teach us this word today in our hearts. Shall we pray together? Father, we come to thee and have to acknowledge that often we are thy rebellious children.

Often, Lord, we've proved by our behavior that we don't really trust thee. How often we've tried to take the initiative and how often we've tried to deliver ourselves, how often we've fought back when we should have waited upon thee. How we thank thee, Lord, that in the immediate situation of every one of us here today, thou art more concerned about our deliverance than anybody.

And thou hast the answer. We trust thee, Lord Jesus, that our reactions may in all ways glorify thee and out from our lives the love of Jesus may shine. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with every one of us now and until our Lord shall come back again and then forevermore.

Amen.

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