

(1 Samuel) How God Protects

by David Guzik

The sermon explores how God protects David amidst Saul's jealousy and the importance of faith and community in times of distress.

Duration: 33:09

Topics: "Divine Protection", "Faith Action"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker focuses on the story of David and how he turned to God in times of distress. David pours out his heart to God in song and prayer, seeking deliverance from his enemies. He describes his attackers as those who lie in wait for his life and growl like dogs. Despite the danger, David takes action to escape and is ultimately spared. The sermon emphasizes the importance of seeking God's help and taking action in difficult situations.

Transcript

First Samuel, chapter 19. Now, we're going to be picking it up in the middle of the chapter at verse 11. Let me give you the two-minute summary of First Samuel up to this point.

There's this man and this woman named Elkanah and Hannah, and they can't have any kids, and so they cry out to the Lord and ask for children, and the Lord blesses them and gives them a baby boy. Hannah had promised that she'd give the boy unto the Lord, and so she does, and the boy grows up to be the great prophet and leader of the nation of Israel named Samuel. Samuel led the nation of Israel very well for many years, but after a while the people of Israel got kind of carnal and tired of Samuel's leadership, and so they said, give us a king just like all the other nations have.

So God said, that's the kind of king you want, that's the kind of king I'll give you. And so he gave him the king after man's own heart, a king named Saul, who was kind of the king from central casting. He looked the part, but he didn't have the kind of heart that God's king should have.

Saul did okay for his first years, but then he got proud and rebellious against the Lord, and finally God said, I'm taking the kingdom away from you. God then picked another man to succeed him, but it wasn't really a man, it was a boy, 12, 13, 14 years old. God anointed, through the prophet Samuel, a young shepherd boy named David to be the next king of Israel.

David started working a little bit for Samuel, playing his harp for him and soothing him with music, and then David went out and killed Goliath. That's when things got sticky, because Saul got very jealous from the fame and the acclaim that came David's way after he killed Goliath, and then Saul started getting very jealous and started trying to kill David. Jonathan, the son of Saul, became a great friend of David's and tried to patch things up between him and his dad.

It seemed to work for a little while, but then it all blew up, as we saw in the last section of 1 Samuel chapter 19, because Saul tried to kill David again by throwing a spear at him and trying to pin him to the wall when he was playing music for him in the palaces. David had to escape the palace, and now he's on the run. There you have it.

Let's go home now. I'm out of breath. So David had to flee the palace.

He's not welcome there anymore. He could get killed there. Well, if you're not welcome in the palace, where do you go? You go home.

Verse 11. Saul also sent messengers to David's house to watch him and kill him in the morning. And Michael, David's wife, told him, saying, If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed.

So Michael let David down through a window, and he went and fled and escaped. Now, during this time when Jonathan, the son of Saul and the friend of David, had tried to patch things up between them, Saul said, Okay, I'm sorry, I promise. You'll find this in verse 6 of 1 Samuel 19.

Saul said, As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed. Now, that was true. Saul never did succeed in killing David.

But if Saul were to speak more truthfully, he would have said, As the Lord lives, he shall not be killed, but that doesn't mean that I'm not going to try. And that's what he tried to do. He tried to pin him to the wall with a spear.

And then, on top of that, when David escaped from the palace, Saul sent messengers. Now, it says messengers there in verse 11. Look, these aren't guys delivering candy grams.

These are soldiers. These are hit men. These are assassins out to kill David.

And the messengers come to the house, and you can just picture the scene. David is one step ahead of these hit men, and he flees into the house. And he goes there, and he pours out his heart to his wife, Michael, and tells her everything that happened.

This is a conflict for Michael, because her father is King Saul. And so she's conflicted in her home. What's my father doing? What's my husband? Where is all this Lord? What are you trying to do in all this? And then Michael takes a look out the curtains out onto the street, and she sees these assassins, these hit men out there.

And so what does she do? Well, she saves the day. Look, it says here in verse 11, Michael, David's wife, told him, saying, If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed. She makes the right choice, first of all, by supporting her husband against her father.

It would have been a conflict of loyalties for Michael. Do I act in my father's interest? Do I act in my husband's interest? She made the right choice. But then she helped David by warning David.

She perhaps saw these assassins coming before he did, and she knew the character of her father better than David did. And so Michael wasn't surprised. He says, I know my father.

This is the kind of thing he would do. And so what did she do? She warned David, and David did well to receive this warning from his wife. You know that sometimes men are so hard-headed, or hard-hearted, that they never hear how God might warn them through their wives.

And God had a message for David through his wife. If David would have ignored this warning because he didn't like the source, he could have ended up dead. God had a message to David through Michael.

And David, we look at him and we say, Good job, David. You listen to your wife on this. At the same time, I think we should see that Michael spoke to David very wisely.

Look at what she says to him in verse 11, saying, If you do not save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed. She's really not telling him what to do. She's really not trying to control him in the situation.

She's saying, David, this is how I see it. If you don't save your own life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed. She might have said, David, here's the problem.

Let me tell you what to do. She doesn't do that. She might have said, David, I'm here to save your life.

Let me tell you what to do. She didn't do that. Instead, she simply told David, this is what I see.

Now it's up to you. I'm not going to save your own life. But the way I see it, if you don't save your own life tonight, tomorrow you'll be killed.

Michael was right in the way she put it to David. David was right in the way that he received it. And you know what resulted? The work of God was done.

David was spared. It's a beautiful thing. And look at this.

David says to himself, well, look, you know, this is right. I've got to escape. This is no time to wait around.

This is no time to delay. I need to escape. And so David, it says there in verse 12, so Michael let David down through a window.

He says, honey, here's my plan. I'm going to escape out this window, but I need your help. Michael says, sure, I'll help you.

As David decided on a course of action, Michael was there to support and to help him to put it into practice. And Michael's help was successful because David fled and escaped. So do you have the situation here? David's not welcome in the palace, is he? He could get himself killed there.

He's not welcome at his own home. He could get himself killed there. And so what does he do? He flees.

He's out running. He's escaping. His mind is spinning.

Where do I go? What do I do? Do you know what David did? He said, let's sing a song to the Lord. What? Yeah, that's what he did. Look, I'll prove it to you.

Keep your finger there in 1 Samuel 19 and turn to Psalm 59. Psalm 59. Look at the title of that psalm.

It says, Psalm 59, Isn't that beautiful? In a time of stress, in a time of despair, David could sing to the Lord. I hope you can too. I hope that you can have your heart cheered in the Lord by pouring out your heart to Him in song and in prayer, even at the darkest times.

Now, what does David do? What does he do in this song? Well, look, first of all, David takes his case before God. Look at verse 1. Deliver me from my enemies, O my God. Deliver me from those who rise up against me.

He cries out to God. God, help me. Then David describes his attackers.

He says in verse 3, They lie in wait for my life. Then in verse 6, he says, They growl like a dog. Verse 7, he says, They belch out with their mouths, their swords, or their lips.

I don't know, maybe David went out the window. He heard one of them belch really loud or something. I don't know.

He says, They belch out with their mouths, their swords, or their lips. These are what my attackers are like. And then in Psalm 59, David declares his own innocence.

In verses 3 and 4, he says, Not for my transgression, nor for my sin, O Lord, they run and prepare themselves through no fault of mine. In Psalm 59, David expresses his trust in God. Look at verse 8. In verse, he says, But you, O Lord, shall laugh at them.

Yeah, I know Saul's against me. I know these assassins are against me. I know circumstances are against me.

But Lord, you're going to have the last laugh. I know that, Lord. I trust in that.

And then in verse 10, he says, My merciful God shall come to meet me. You see the confidence of David? You see the joy of David? He has this joyful confidence in God. Matter of fact, in Psalm 59, David ends with this triumphant confidence in the Lord.

Now, remember, this is sung by a man who's on the run. He's not safe in the palace. He's not safe in his home.

Everything seems to be crumbling around him. But he says in verse 16, But I will sing of your power. Yes, I will sing aloud of your mercy in the morning.

For you have been my defense and refuge in the day of my trouble. To you, O my strength, I will sing praises. For God is my defense.

The God of my mercy. Isn't that beautiful? Friends, that's the heart of a man or woman after God's own heart. Trusting in him.

Loving him. Singing unto the Lord at a time like this. Now, that's David.

He's on the run. Where is he going? Well, we'll find out in a few minutes, but let's take a look at what it was back at his house. Back to 1 Samuel 19.

Now we're at verse 13. And Michael took an image and laid it in the bed and put a cover of goat's hair for his head and covered it with clothes. So when Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, He's sick.

You get the scene, don't you? Michael's thinking, David's on the lam. I need to give him some time to get a head start. So I'm going to stall.

I'll take one of these images and I'll put it on the bed and I'll do the thing like you did when you were a kid to try to fake out mom and dad and make you think you were there in bed when you weren't. And so I'll do that. And so the messengers bang on the door in the morning.

Let us in. We know he's in there. And they said, Well, he's sick.

You want to take a look? They take a glance. And the messengers say, Well, looks like there's some guy laying in bed. That's fine.

Now, we could go on to the next verse, but there's something significant here in verse 13. It says, Michael took an image and laid it in the bed. The translators of the New King James Version are being very kind to Michael when they translate that image because the Hebrew word there, teraphim, is translated other places in the Old Testament as household idols.

These were little statues that people would have to aid them in the worship of the gods. They would pray to the statues. They would sacrifice to the statues.

They would burn candles or incense before the statues. And this was part of their worship. And no person serving the living God should have any part of that kind of thing.

We take a step back and say, Michael, why do you even have these household idols? You have no business with these things. This has nothing to do with the worship of the true God. And it makes us see something about the character and the mindset of Michael is that she doesn't really have the relationship with God that she should.

Now, this is going to turn up time and time again. In the few other places that we see Michael later on in this chapter and then on into 2 Samuel, we're going to see that she just doesn't have the kind of relationship with God that she should, right? Mostly because she has a wrong image of God. She used these household idols.

Now, here she used it for a good purpose, I guess, to throw off David's pursuers. But by the same token, Saul doesn't really seem to be taken in by his daughter's deception. Take a look at what it says in verse 15.

Then Saul sent the messengers back to see David, saying, Bring him up to me in the bed that I may kill him. Oh, so he's sick, is he? Well, bring him to me bed and all. We'll send a stretcher.

We'll send an ambulance. But when he comes to me, he's mine and I'm going to plunge the knife into his heart. So look how Michael responds.

Verse 16, And when the messengers had come in, there was the image in the bed with the cover of goat's hair for his head. You can picture this, can't you? You know, Saul says, I don't care. Bring him back in his bed if you have to.

And so the messengers come and they burst open through the door and they charge over to the bedroom and they open up that door and they go, We'll get you now, David. And they pull the covers back and there it is. Just a household idol and some goat's hair.

They say, Wait, what's this? We're going to go tell King Saul. And they take the report back to King Saul. And then Saul confronts his daughter.

In verse 17, Then Saul said to Michael, Why have you deceived me like this and sent my enemy away so that he's escaped? And Michael answered Saul, He said to me, Let me go. Why should I kill you? Now, there's two sad things said in verse 17. The first sad thing is what Michael said.

Michael's lying about David. She's painting David as a cold-blooded murderer who basically stuck a knife to his wife's throat and said, If you don't help me escape, I'll cut your head off. Well, that wasn't how it happened at all.

But in protecting herself before King Saul, Michael lied about David. I don't think she had to slander David to protect herself. But that's what she did.

And that's sad. But the far sadder words in verse 17, far more sad than anything Michael might have said under fear or duress. Far sadder is what Saul said when he said those two words in verse 17.

My enemy. My enemy. Who's he speaking about? David.

You see what Saul says about David? My enemy. Now, friends, if Saul only had the eyes to see it, he could have seen that David was the best friend he ever had. David was there to serve Saul.

David was there to protect Saul. David was there to do whatever he could. Saul, do you need me to play music for you so that you can be soothed in your spirit? I'll do it.

Saul, do you need me to be the captain of one of your armies? I'll do it. Saul, do you need me to go out and lead in battle against the Philistines? I'll do it. Saul, do you need me to go out and kill a giant for you? I'll do it.

David's heart put him in a place where he could have been the best friend Saul ever had. But Saul, because he was in the flesh, because of his jealousy, he looked at David and he said, David, my enemy. Friends, sometimes that's how it is with us.

We make people our enemies. They don't make themselves our enemies. We make them our enemies.

And that's what Saul did. Saul created an enemy out of a friend. And it was within Saul's power to change it at any time.

But he wouldn't. Those are sad words in verse 17. Well, back to David.

David escaped from the house and he's running on through the night. Where's he going to go? You know, he sings this song. He expresses his confidence in God.

Lord, I'm trusting You. Lord, I believe You. But you know how it is.

You bring it before the Lord. You lay it before Him and you feel good, don't you? It's like, yes, yes. The Lord is going to take care of it.

Yes. Then a half hour, hour later, things just come flooding back on you again. And you've got to take it to the Lord again.

And David's just going up and down. He's an emotional wreck. He says, where do I go? I know where I'll go.

I'll go visit the prophet Samuel. That's where I need to be. I need to be with a man of God.

I need to be with somebody who can pray with me and protect me and be there for me. And so that's what David does. He goes and he escapes.

Verse 18, so David fled and he escaped and he went to Samuel at Ramah and told him all that Saul had done to him. And he and Samuel went and stayed in Naa. Oh, there's David just vents before Samuel.

Oh, Samuel, you know, what's the Lord doing here? Samuel, let me tell you what Saul... He threw spears at me. Not once, not twice, three different times. Samuel, he wants to kill me.

He sent assassins to my house. Lord, I don't understand what the Lord's doing through all this, Samuel. You anointed me a king and look at what's happening.

I guess it's not time yet, but why is it so hard, Samuel? Does God want me dead? Why is the Lord allowing this? So you know what Samuel said to David? He said, David, let's go have a prayer meeting. I'll tell you how this works out. Let's just keep going here and you'll see how it develops.

Verse 19, now it was told Saul, saying, take note, David is at Naa in Ramah. Ah, Saul gets the intelligence report, right? We found David. We've located him.

So what's Saul going to do when he finds out that David is at Naa? Well, he's going to be persistent. Verse 20, then Saul sent messengers to take David. Look, Saul, if there's anything to admire at him in this point, it's his persistence.

We can't admire the devil's work, but we can admire the devil's work ethic. He's working hard here and he's going to stick with this plan. And so he's going to get David.

Verse 20, then Saul sent messengers to take David and when they saw the group of the prophets prophesying and Samuel standing as a leader over them, the Spirit of God came upon the messengers of Saul and they also prophesied. Do you get the picture here? First of all, let me clarify when it says that they prophesied. The meaning of the word prophesied in the Bible isn't necessarily predicting the future.

It's not like these guys were saying, you know, well, I think this is going to happen tomorrow and I say this will happen next week and I say this will happen next month. That's not the idea behind the word prophesied. It can mean to speak in a spiritually prompted way.

It can mean to speak unto the Lord. It can mean to speak for the Lord. I believe that what was going on here was Samuel and the prophets as they were gathered together is what you had in front of you was what we would consider an on-fire prayer meeting.

There they are just pouring out their hearts to God and God's speaking to them and they're speaking to God and they're praising God and worshiping God and the Lord's speaking to them and it's just a beautiful on-fire prayer meeting. And there's Samuel leading the prayer meeting. David's there.

Samuel's disciples, the other prophets are there and they're all there together and then bursting in through the door come these messengers, these assassins from Saul and they look around the room and their

eyes fix on David and they say, oh, this is great. This is easy. You know, we might have thought David would be guarded by soldiers.

We might have thought David would have bodyguards around him. Look at him. He's just surrounded by a bunch of lily-livered prayer meeting people.

This is easy pickings. We'll just grab them and drag them out of here and then Saul will be happy and we'll be happy and everybody will be happy. And they burst in through the doors and they're ready to grab David and something happens to them.

The Spirit of God comes upon them. Maybe they just stopped dead in their tracks and they blinked and they sat down and they started praying too. They started praising too.

The Lord took one of them and spoke something through one of them. And they pray and they praise and maybe it goes on for an hour, a couple hours. It's a great prayer meeting.

And then the meeting's over and they're all hugging each other. They're all hugging David. Oh, bless you.

Well, we're going to go back home to Saul now. See you. Bye.

Bless you. Why did the Holy Spirit do this? These were not men who were seeking diligently after God. Longing to be filled with the Spirit.

It's not like, Oh Lord, meet us with Your Spirit today. No, they didn't have that thought at all. Then why did the Holy Spirit come upon them? It was because God was protecting David and this was the Lord's way of disarming those who came to capture David.

These men are disarmed. They can't do anything. And don't you see that the Holy Spirit was saying through all of this, He was saying it to the assassins.

He was saying it to Saul. I am in charge here. You can't lay a hand on My servant David.

I'm in charge. I'm going to send you men home empty handed. Instead of seeking to kill David, you should seek to be filled with the Spirit of God.

They went home empty handed. The Holy Spirit had let everybody know, I'm in charge here. You're not in charge.

So when they went home, what do you think happened? They made the report to Saul. Saul said, Wow, I guess the Holy Spirit really is doing something. We'll just leave him alone.

Not in your life. Look at verse 21. And when Saul was told, he sent other messengers.

I can just see the scene. The first guys come back. There's still tear marks on their faces.

It's been such a great prayer meeting. And Saul says, Oh, great! The assassins are back! Bring them in! Well, where's David? You must have already killed David, right? He's already dead somewhere. Well, no, not exactly.

We didn't get him. Oh, you didn't get him. Well, it must have been a fierce battle.

There must have been swords flying and seals and everything. Oh, he barely escaped, didn't he? Well, not exactly. Oh, well, was he guarded? Was he protected? What, you couldn't get through to him? Well, you see, we went in there.

Well, they were having a prayer meeting, Saul. And Saul probably thought, You, you wimps, you lily-livered people. You don't need cowards, incompetent people.

I'll send more people. And so that's what it says in verse 21. And Saul is told he sent other messengers.

And what? And they prophesied likewise. They come back the same way. You know? Tear marks down their face.

And Saul, you know, I don't know what happened. We went in there. We thought we had them, but it just didn't work out that way.

Saul's heart changed. No, look at verse 21. Then Saul sent messengers again the third time and they prophesied also.

Hello, Saul, are you getting the message? No, he's not. He's not. Because look at what he does in verse 22.

Then he also went to Ramah. Saul said, look, you guys are incompetent. You don't know what you're doing.

If you want something done right, you've got to do it yourself. Get out of my way. I'm going to get them.

You guys can't beat up a bunch of people in a prayer meeting. I don't know what goods you are. So Saul says, I'm going to get them.

Verse 22, he also went to Ramah and came to the great well. So he asked and he said, Where are Samuel and David? And someone said, Indeed, they're at Naoth and Ramah. Then he went there at Naoth and Ramah and the Spirit of God was upon him also.

And he went on and prophesied until he came to Naoth and Ramah. The Lord isn't even letting Saul get to the prayer meeting. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon him before he arrives.

And so, Saul bursts into the prayer meeting and he looks at David and he looks at Samuel and he looks at the other prophets. And what happens? Verse 23, The Spirit of God was upon him also and he went on and he prophesied until he came to Naoth and Ramah. He's already ready by the time he comes in the prayer meeting.

Don't you see what the Lord is saying to King Saul? He's saying, Hands off. Hands off, my servant David. I am in charge here.

My spirit is stronger than your flesh. I bet he's also saying to Saul, Saul, isn't it beautiful how you feel right now in tune with the Spirit of God? Saul, it could be like that for you all the time if you would surrender to me. Now, it would be enough if it ended right then.

But it doesn't. Look at verse 24. And he also stripped off his clothes and prophesied before Samuel in like manner and laid down naked all that day and all that night.

Therefore, they say, is Saul also among the prophets? Well, please, if somebody says we're going to have a 1 Samuel 19, verse 24 prayer meeting, don't have any part of it. There's nothing there for us. What's going on here? Well, first of all, you need to understand what happened.

It's probable, though not certain, but it's probable that Saul never stripped himself bare. The Hebrew word naked can just mean destitute of clothing, like what we would say just down to your undergarments. That's probably what it was.

The whole force of this was very important. Saul walked in there dressed like a king. And the Lord wanted to say something very powerfully to Saul and to everybody at that prayer meeting.

He wanted to say, take off your kingly robes. You're not acting like a king. I'm stripping you of your royal glory.

Don't you think that was humiliating for Saul? But the sense is that the Spirit of God was compelling him to do it. The Lord was saying something powerfully. This is extreme, isn't it? You bet it's extreme.

It's always extreme when God humbles us. That's why God counsels us to humble ourselves instead of making Him do it. 1 Peter 5, 6 says, Therefore, humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.

You humble yourself and let the Lord exalt you. Now, one of the things I think is starting to get in my mind through the years is that when man does something, even at its best, even doing the best we can, it's pretty lame when man does something. When God does something, man, that's great.

God really knows how to do it. And so the Lord says, Humble yourself and I will exalt you. Well, I'd rather do the work of humbling myself because I'll do the best I can, but even the best I can, it's not the most complete job, but I'll do the best I can.

But if the Lord exalts me, man, that's great. You know, God's going to exalt. Man, the Lord knows how to exalt His servants, so praise God for that.

Isn't that much better than having the Lord humble you because you tried to exalt yourself? Because the best job you can do in the world is exalting yourself. It's pretty lame. But if God humbles you, friends, He knows how to do it.

He knows how to do a complete job. And that's what He's doing to Saul right here. So I think we have two very powerful things to end with at this chapter.

First of all, we end with the idea that Saul's plan was completely frustrated. Completely. The Spirit of God made it loud and clear that he was in charge, not Saul.

And so when David came to Samuel, he said, Samuel, I need help. I need a sword. I need protection.

I need soldiers. I need a guard. The old prophet could have told David, David, listen, let me tell you something.

You need to go to the safest place I can think of. And David's thinking, oh great, it's a fortress. It's a barracks.

There's soldiers. You need to go to the safest place I can think of, David. And Samuel says, it's a prayer meeting.

Let's go. You know, and it's true. The safest place you can be is secure in the Spirit of God.

The safest place you can be is walking in the Spirit. You've got dangerous things all around you. Let's say you're at a fork in the road.

Right now in your life, do you go to the right or do you go to the left? And it's a dangerous place. You don't know which one's the right decision. What do you do? Friends, if you're at that fork in the road right now, you need to do everything you can to humble yourself before God, to submit to Him, to listen to God, to wait on the Lord, to worship Him, to serve Him.

Have your heart as right with God as you can possibly make it. Then you're at a safe place. Then you're safe then.

If you're walking in the flesh, if you're walking in self-will and pride, then it's a dangerous place to be. So, the safest place we can be is walking in the Spirit, in the center of God's will. But there's another thing to see here.

Look at Saul. Saul was greatly affected by the power of God, wasn't he? He prophesied. He greatly humbled himself before all these people.

Saul was very affected by the power of God. And I can just imagine, you know, you have a testimony meeting and Saul comes up. Let me tell you, he says, boy, I was going in, I was really mad at Dave and I was going to kill him.

But then the Spirit of God came upon me and I started prophesying. And then I just humbled myself before the Lord. I was so humbled.

God humbled me before Him. And wow! And Saul could go on and on about how affected he was by the power of God and the amazing experiences he had when he was affected by the power of God. But friends, don't you see that you can be affected by the power of God without being surrendered to the power of God? David, at that prayer meeting, was surrendered to the power of God.

Samuel was surrendered to the power of God. Saul was affected by it and he had a story to tell about his experiences. But there was no surrender, therefore there was no change of his life.

Friends, don't be satisfied with having experiences with the Lord. Say, Lord, I want to surrender to Your power so that You can change my life for Your glory. And He'll do it.

If you humble yourself into the mighty hand of God, He will exalt you in due time. Let's pray. Father, that's our prayer here this morning.

We simply come to You, God, and we say that You would show us how to humble ourselves and that we'd leave any work of exalting us. Lord, that's just Your job. It's Your business.

We don't even concern ourselves with it. Father, we ask now that in Jesus' name You'd help us to have that confidence in You that we'd surrender to You and not just be affected by the power of God, but surrender to it. Help us with that, Lord.

Help us to surrender to You and to Your power. In Jesus' name.

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