

# Enemies in Ministry

by David Guzik

---

*David's reaction to his enemies, particularly Saul, teaches us the importance of having a godly reaction, mourning and weeping for them, and focusing on the people of God.*

**Duration:** 46:43

**Scripture:** 2 Samuel 1:1-3

**Topics:** "Conflict Resolution", "Christian Love"

---

## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of loving and serving others, even in the face of conflict and criticism. They share their personal experience of dealing with conflict and how they chose to respond with love and good words. The speaker encourages listeners to have a soft heart towards their enemies and to bear up bravely under conflict, without bitterness or anger. They also discuss the challenge of controlling one's own tongue and not taking everything people say about you too seriously. The sermon references Benjamin Franklin's quote about controlling one's tongue and relates it to the theme of the sermon. The speaker then introduces the biblical story of David in Second Samuel chapter one, highlighting its relevance to the topic of conflict and ministry. The sermon ends with the speaker starting to read from the beginning of Second Samuel chapter one, setting the stage for further exploration of the chapter in future sermons.

---

## Transcript

At the missions conference just a few weeks ago in Marietta Chuck said something and it's a theme He said many time before but I had never heard it from him or remembered hearing it from him in exactly these words before But he said, you know what you want to do is find the flow of the Holy Spirit and and get in it You know, and that's that's what we're doing. We're just finding what the flow of the Holy Spirit is. Well What I want to talk to you about this morning is something that I think Often Hinders the flow of the Holy Spirit in our life and in our ministry I know it has in mind and it's something that we universally deal with this is the great thing about this this message is because it It touches everybody who ever does ministry and I guess I don't I'm not good at titles for messages or anything but what I want to talk to you about is is a Conflict with others and and how you can Prevent it from waylaying you in the ministry because you all have it and There's just something about when you feel attacked when you feel betrayed when you feel that you're the object of gossip It has a way of presenting a challenge before us That I think is one of those just it's a it's a path Two paths in the road in front of us and it'll really affect the way with it.

We see ministry from that point on And to me 2nd Samuel chapter 1 it speaks about this in a very powerful way. Oh there's so much in this chapter to To focus on or to talk about let's just start reading at the beginning of it It came to pass after the death of Saul when David had returned from the slaughter of the Amalekites And David had stayed two days in Ziklag then on the third day behold it happened that a man came from Saul's camp With his clothes torn and dust on his head So it was when he came to David that he fell to the ground and prostrated himself and David said to him Where have you come from? So he said I've escaped from the camp of Israel then David said to him. How did the matter go? Please tell me and he answered the people have fled from the battle many of the people are fallen and dead and Saul and Jonathan his son are dead.

Also We're all familiar with the life of David. And of course one of the things that sticks out almost unfairly So vividly in our mind about the life of David is his great Fall with with Bathsheba and that time of scandal and compromise in his life But it's helpful for us to remember that that was not the first time of significant Compromise or you might say backsliding however, you want to call it It wasn't the first time that the light Spiritual light and David's life had been diminished I can see at least two very specific previous occasions where it had and this is the second one of those two where it comes Out of it where David was very discouraged from this this period of many years where he was living as a fugitive from Saul And he grew so discouraged that he said there's nothing better than for me to live among the Philistines Can you imagine saying that and and I mean we've said similar things ourselves so we can't imagine it but there's Dave I mean nothing better. There's nothing nothing better between the Israelites and the Philistines nothing at all So I may as well go live among the Philistines at least there Saul won't hassle me And and I don't know maybe David thought he was gonna gonna stick it to Saul by doing that Saul rejoiced I'm sure when David went to live among the Philistines He felt David was disqualifying himself from reigning over Israel I mean who wants a guy who associated himself with the Philistines to reign over Israel? Well when David did this it got worse.

He didn't just go and live among the Philistines, but he lived as a very ungodly man he essentially made his Living as a robber during that time now. He wouldn't rob Israelite towns, but you know these other sort of various tribes and people groups that were said He basically go in there and his men is mighty men who were a bunch of tough dudes They'd go in and just kind of rough them up and take all their stuff and leave And it's like this roving biker gang over the Judean. You know a region there and You know David lived like this for a year all up until the point where when there comes to be a significant You know point of crisis between Israel and the Philistines, and they're gonna have this very significant battle David earnestly wants to enlist In the Philistine army and bring all his mighty men to fight on behalf of the Philistine you read it on the pages of 1st Samuel it's almost like you're rubbing your eyes.

You can't believe it and then you know sometimes you want to and I've even read some commentators They want to assign some great heroic motive to David You know he's going to be this fifth column in the midst of of the Philistine army and really turn on it And I don't believe that for a minute David was Disappointed when he was drummed out of the Philistine army And they wouldn't accept him and he went back to the city where they were living the city of Ziklag And you guys remember what happened there. It's a great great story. This is it's great preaching it preaches itself You need to spend time in this David goes back to Ziklag and what happens the city's absolutely devastated a Roving band of Amalekites have come and they did to David what David and his men had been doing to everybody else They took everything from the town They took all the women and children and all the possessions and they burned the city and you can just picture David coming you know Him and his mighty men riding You know across the the

wilderness and seen Ziklag off in the distance There's fires coming from Ziklag, and it's more than just the regular fires that come from the city There's something wrong there, and their pace quickens and when they get there they were totally broken David just about had a breakdown and his men were talking about killing him and Then it says a great passage there What is it in 1st Samuel 30 where it says that David strengthened himself in the Lord and that turned around everything everything? And he inquired of the Lord and God told him what they do, and they won a great victory over all that well Meanwhile this whole battle between the Philistines and the Israelites was going on at Mount Gerboa And that's a whole tragic situation where Saul and his sons died on the slopes of Mount Gerboa And and there that the king was dead Saul was gone and so was the crown prince Jonathan and now here in the passage.

I just read you David. Here's the news of this This man this messenger comes in and Amalekite comes And he runs to David and he comes after all this distance, and he comes and he tells David listen Saul's dead Jonathan is dead and to hear this news You just think of what would have David's reaction been? To hear that news well We'll get to that in a minute, but take a look first five So David said to the young man who told him how do you know that Saul and Jonathan his son are dead? The young man who told him said as it has I happened by chance on to be on Mount Gerboa There was Saul leaning on his spear and indeed the chariots and horsemen followed hard after him now when he looked behind him He he saw me and called to me, and I answered here I am and he said to me who are you so I answered him. I am an Amalekite He said to me again, and please stand over me and kill me for anguish has come upon me But my life still remains in me so I stood over him and killed him because I was sure that he could not live After he had fallen and I took the crown that was on his head and the bracelet that was on his arm And I brought them here to my lord so you can picture this Amalekite before David right here's the crown Here's the bread here.

They are I took them off of Saul's dead body, and I finished him off It was a mercy killing he asked me to do it And so I did it because he was going to die anyway I Could talk about this for like this. It's just so many interesting things I Just love talking about the Bible to me it's absolutely the most interesting thing and it's so full of the life and the truth of God, but You know when you get into this a little bit you find out the Amalekite was lying He did not kill Saul Saul was already dead first Samuel 31 5 Says that Saul's armor-bearer saw that he was dead and then the armor-bearer killed himself The Amalekite was lying All he did was come upon. He was the first one to come upon Saul's dead body And he grabbed that crown and he grabbed the bracelet And he thought I will go to David the man that Saul has persecuted for these many many years And I will present the crown I will present the bracelet to David and David will be so happy to hear that Saul is dead And David would have a rich reward for the man who killed his torment David would love and praise.

I'll get a huge reward for this This will be my glory and so he doesn't just bring the the bracelet in the crown But he lies he makes up this story. I finished him boy. Did he have something to learn but look at verse 11 This is this is the real point.

I wanted to get at I'm just talking about the rest of it because it's so interesting but first verse 11 therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them and so did all the men who were with him and They mourned and wept and fasted until evening for Saul and for Jonathan his son For the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel Because they had fallen by the sword. There's there's something here That we need to learn from you know when you realize all that Saul did to David and how David never mistreated Saul It's a fascinating study through first Samuel to see how Saul With such Brilliance with such wickedness Sought to destroy David He tried to open out front attack sending assassins to his own home

He tried the devious things of trying to get David implicated as a traitor David was promoted. He was a I don't know what rank you would call him He was a leader in the Israeli army Saul stripped him of his career Stripped him of his home stripped him of his wife Stripped him of all security all safety made David live as a fugitive For something like we don't have the time span exactly something like 15 to 20 years David lived as a fugitive from Saul I Think about this Saul took from David what we would probably consider the best years of his life That time from approximately about 20 to 40 Those years were stolen From David by Saul and he had to live like a criminal On the run his life and cause it.

Do you know what kind of stress that would put upon you? living with that daily stress and Saul up until the end hated David Without a cause you remember those dramatic confrontations where David had opportunity to kill Saul but one was within that cave where was Saul was, you know doing his business and and David had the opportunity to strike him down right there and he didn't David even felt guilty that he cut off part of Saul's robe What a tender conscience And then later on when David snuck into the camp at night and he put the spear by Saul's head and all of that You know David again, he's just showing Saul I'm innocent before you and Saul knew it and Saul testified to it but but there was just this insane jealousy and fear of David within Saul and He tried to kill him and David never ever Deserved it in the slightest David was nothing but loyal and honorable towards Saul and Saul hated him for all that he had I don't know about you, but in my life in ministry, I have had enemies. I Have had you know people rise up to oppose me, you know I've gotten the letters like you have you know, I'm gonna bring you down. You're horrible and this and that all the other stuff Yeah, I have had my enemies.

I've had you know, the Judas's or the Ahithophel's You know the people who stabbed you in the back and all of that and I mean we could have a very entertaining It wouldn't be very edifying, but it'd be very entertaining We could go through and just share all of our horror stories and such because you know, we all have them But I have to tell you I've never ever had anybody come close to treating me like Saul treated David not even close I've never had somebody actually wants to physically well you know, I don't think they've ever actually wanted to physically kill me and You know, I've never had somebody want to take everything from me that Saul took from David and I'll say the other thing is Most the time in these conflicts that I've had I have sinned in some way towards that person Maybe not to begin with but but oftentimes in my reaction to them and I've had to go to them You know, it's one of the situations where they have been 99% in the wrong and I was 1% in the wrong But I had to humble myself before them and apologize for my 1% because that's just what you do And all of that what that isn't even the case with David David was just blameless before Saul and Saul knew it Now considering all of that that whole big picture What do you think David's reaction would be upon learning that Saul was dead? Ding dong the king is dead Hooray you throw a party. I mean it's over all these years of living as a fugitive I can get my career back. I can get my home back.

I can get my family back I can live in one place and just enjoy my I can be a normal person again All these things that were stolen away from me from by an ungodly Unrighteous man who hated me without cause I can get it all back now And yet when he heard that Saul was dead he mourned He mourned that that is something very special Now if you look at it closely in verses 11 and 12, it's even better than that he said therefore David took hold of his own clothes and tore them and So did all the men so did all the men who were with him Now Saul ripped them off, too You know those were men Who should have risen to prominence? years before I mean if from an outward view just You hate to say this, but if you were to you know push the Lord out of the equation David should have been king a long time before this and his mighty men should have been around him You know reigning in Israel a long time before this and and and

those mighty men knew that and they saw that They certainly had reason to feel that that they should be happy when Saul was dead But they weren't they saw their leader do this and then they did it They mourned as well, and what did they do they mourned and wept and fasted until evening This wasn't just oh wow Saul's dead Hmm bummer all right. Let's go take the throne I Mean this was real it was from the heart they fasted they wept For Saul and for Jonathan his son for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel. I think I Think that's the key to it.

You know Saul Saul was a real enemy of David It was out of nothing, but pure jealousy hatred spite and ungodliness That Saul took all these things from David and Saul was utterly unrepentant to the end, but this shows us That when we have hatred and bitterness Towards those people who attack us We choose it It's not forced upon you We'd like to think that Our reaction to our enemies is something forced upon us by our enemies or opponents themselves, and it's not We choose it David chose to have the godly reaction So they followed this great example of David and when they mourned they didn't just mourn for Saul They didn't just mourn for Jonathan, but as I mentioned before I think the key to it Was that they mourned as it says in verse 12 for the people of the Lord and for the house of Israel You see David's sorrow was first for Saul then for Jonathan But more than that it was for the people of God as a whole because they were in a desperate dangerous place they had been led by an awful leader for 10 or 20 years and Now that leader was gone Which was even worse because now it could lead to total anarchy and the Philistines could not just dominate the Israelites But they could totally overwhelm them David knew that it was a horrible place that the people of God read and that's where his heart went I want you to notice where David's heart is not in verses 11 and 12 His heart is for Jonathan for Saul for the people of God his heart and mind are not upon himself That's just not in the equation You know when David heard this news this was life-changing News for David that this throne that he had been anointed to sit upon This throne that he had waited for some 20 years to come and take now it was vacant Now it was the time for him to fulfill that thing that started when Samuel first poured that oil over his head Now it might be fulfilled with the crown set upon his head But David had no thought of himself at that time. He thought about Saul He thought about Jonathan and he thought about the people of God now, isn't it true that our our bad Reactions to our enemies or our opponents It's almost always it's it is always written. It's himself.

You're thinking about yourself And might I say that that we do have enemies guys And I don't mean just in a hyper spiritual sense of you know, of course that the spiritual enemies that we face I Mean that there are people who really will oppose us Who really are enemies and really are Wicked people who will strike out against us. You will face those in the ministry And sometimes we want to sort of slough it off and I I don't think we should You know, it's a remarkable thing that Jesus said he said love your enemies. I Remember walking around on a college campus once and there was a sign or a poster on a you know On one of those bulletin boards and it said something like this.

It said Enemies are friends Whom we choose not to understand Now Jesus would never say anything that foolish You know that what that saying was saying was that you don't really have any enemies Your enemies are really your friends and you just don't understand them. No, you have enemies and Jesus didn't say pretend like your enemies don't exist pretends like you don't have any enemies What did he tell you to do? Love them pray for them Yes You are my enemy. You are my opponent You're wicked.

You're out against me and my response to you is to love you to pray for you To keep my heart utterly right towards you no matter what you might do towards us or to towards me. I Think of it again in that in that passage that was mentioned earlier in the conference of Joseph where Joseph had this dramatic statement before his brothers and I think sometimes we miss the the Amazing part of the first part of that

sentence where he says you meant it for evil, but God meant it for good Joseph isn't minimizing what they did one bit you meant you're evil guys You meant it for evil I'm not going to try to say that it was really something nice That just didn't work out or something that no you intended it for evil. We all know it.

That's true But God meant it for good. That's the higher truth, isn't it? That's the overarching principle there, but it recognizes both of them. So David was was confronted with all of this news and Verses 13 through 16 described what he did with the Amalekite and that's a great story You know that Amalekite thinks well now I'm really going to come into my own now I'm really going to get it.

He sure came into his own David had him executed. He just killed this guy He he touched the Lord's anointed I would never do it David said but this guy did And then in verse 17 if you take a look there It says then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son And he told them to teach the children of Judah the song of the bow Indeed it is written in the book of Jasher By the way, just as a side point You know when the Bible mentions books like that that aren't in there Sometimes people want to act like there's something missing in our Bible because you know You won't find the book of Jasher in the table of contents Don't think that for a minute. In fact, I think I've heard Mormons try to use that line with me They'll they'll say you say well, we don't need the book of Mormon.

We have the Bible and they say well You know, the Bible is an incomplete book I mean look at it talks about the book of Jasher here and we don't have the book of Jasher And so the Bible is incomplete one nonsense. It's a completely Unjustified leap of logic to say that just because the Bible mentions a book that somehow that book was inspired Scripture it needs to be in our Bibles That's just a completely Illogical leap that that's beside the point. Let's look at the song of the bow verse 19 Again, remember the context and who David is singing about The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places how the mighty have fallen Tell it not in gas proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon Bless the daughters of the Philistines rejoice less the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph All mountains of Gilboa let there be no dew nor rain upon you nor fields of offerings for the shields of the mighty are cast away the shield of Saul not anointed with oil From the blood of the slain from the fat of the mighty the bow of Jonathan did not turn back and the sword of Saul Did not return empty Saul and Jonathan were beloved and pleasant in their lives and in their death.

They were not divided They were swifter than eagles. They were stronger than lions Oh daughters of Israel weep over Saul who clothed you in Scarlet with luxury who put ornaments of gold on your apparel how the mighty have fallen in the midst of the battle Jonathan was slain in your high places. I'm distressed for you.

My brother Jonathan. You've been very pleasant to me Your love to me was wonderful Surpassing the love of women how the mighty have fallen and the weapons of war Perished I think we are so used to phoniness in our day and age Insincerity where people say things that they really don't mean That it's almost hard for us to believe that David really meant this but he did He really meant it and when you think about how he meant it It's unbelievable to see how David's heart was towards this man who dedicated his life to ruining his life Look at what he says about Saul The beauty of Israel is slain on your high places. Who does he mean? Can you imagine David calling Saul the beauty of Israel and Then he says I don't want anybody to rejoice over the death I don't even want the Philistines to rejoice over the death of Saul Nobody should rejoice and then he wants everybody to mourn He wants the mountains and the fields to mourn for Saul He tells the mountains of Gilboa and the fields of offerings no rain upon you No, you should be in mourning as well Then he praised Saul as a mighty Warrior and let me tell you especially in the

latterly years of David's Saul's life.

That's a compliment that Saul almost didn't deserve Saul was not a man of great courage Saul what was a very disturbed man Was a man beside himself in his last years, but David praised him as a mighty warrior He complimented the personality and the loyalty of Saul when he said Saul and Jonathan were beloved and Pleasant in their lives and in their death. They were not divided You know here Saul loyal to the end Fighting right alongside his son and then he called the daughters of Israel to mourn and he praised Saul for all the good that he did for Israel guys. That's a heart That's a heart that can let go of The wrongs that have been done against us.

Oh How we need to do it You just can't hold on to them You have to let them go You have to be able to just forgive people and not let your mind Close like a trap on all those wrongs that have been done to you all the ways people mistreated all the lies That they said about you. You just need to let it go. I Think Lloyd in one of the earlier sessions.

He mentioned Maybe it was just in conversation that great book by Charles Scourge and lectures to my students. Have you seen that one? Have you read it? You know the chapter in there That's more meaningful to any other that the chapter that has maybe saved my sanity in the ministry Is a chapter in lectures to my students called the blind eye and the deaf ear. Do you guys know that one? Rocky, do you know that? It's a great message.

He says there's some obscure passage in Ecclesiastes where it talks about, you know Don't listen to everything that your servants say about you and Spurgeon gets up and you can just see him lecturing before his students You know in his pastor's college and he says I've often spoken before you that Every minister should have one blind eye and one deaf ear and that that is often the best eye and the best ear that you Have I said well, I thought I would spend this time today explaining to you What exactly I meant by that he goes on in this brilliant discussion of how? Well, he applies it to many points, but you know, you just can't listen to everything people say about you You can't take it all so seriously. You can't grab on to it. You have to turn a deaf ear towards it Benjamin Franklin said this I've always Had this stick in my mind.

He said you can't control your own tongue and it's in your mouth How can you hope to control the tongues of other people you can't? There's that you can't do it People will talk they're going to talk what you can't do is you can't let your heart become hardened and bitter towards them And Remember yesterday when Brian was speaking about the love that we need to have for the people and how we need to serve them well It sometimes starts out very easy to love the people But you will find that love challenged at different points along the way right the devil does not want you to love them and so Experiences will come along where you feel totally burned totally hurt Totally betrayed by people within the body, and what does it make you want to do it makes you want to say? I will never open up to anybody else again. I will not love them I will not give myself to them and just as Brian said yeah, I will preach I will be their preacher But I won't be their pastor now I'm going to set this guard around my heart, and I'm going to protect myself Listen you you have just escaped the nature of Jesus there Spurgeon said He said it would be better to be hurt a thousand times than to live a life of perpetual suspicion And it's true You know whatever advantage you think you're gaining by having this protective attitude We say I'm not I'm never going to let them hurt me like that again You're giving up far more than you ever think you're gaining You're really hurting yourself, and yes I know you open up your heart to the people and it will be stepped upon at times. I know that you know that It's going to happen But can you imagine somebody giving forth love and grace and forgiveness? Towards people and having it trounced upon time and time again.

Well, I guess that's Jesus isn't it Isn't that Jesus towards us and towards others, so that's the kind of nature That's the kind of character that he's trying to work within us And so we're just called to bear up bravely under this kind of conflict and to have a heart That is that is just free from this bitterness from from this anger towards people You know how it is your mind just can't get off of it You rehearse in your head over and over again the things you want to tell those people You can be very eloquent telling them off in your head can't you and and it may never happen in real life But you spend a lot of time a lot of energy a lot of a lot of spiritual energy goes into that doesn't it you Telling them off and you setting it right and you being the writer of every wrong and everybody knows how right right right you?

Are and you're right and they're wrong and you know what and then it's just you and your wife in the church And she's not so sure about you either Because it's just everything's gone. You've just run all the people off And you didn't want it to be that way, but it it flowed out of this business of you being hurt and You not responding to it rightly I? Guess I'm saying is you have to forgive them you have to open up your heart and say No matter what they did to me It measures nothing compared To what I did to God And he forgave me I'm the man who was forgiven ten million dollars from God and in comparison to what God has forgiven me this man has Owned me ten dollars, and so I will forgive now if you cannot do that Your future in ministry will always be clouded.

I'm not saying there will never be any good times I'm not saying there will never be any blessing All but there will always be a hindrance to what the Holy Spirit wants to do there always be this sort of block in you Because Satan knows just how to push that button in you and it'll come up from time to time again And you'll find yourself hardening yourself towards more and more people and you know you may never reconcile with that person I'm not saying you'd necessarily reconcile with them because they may remain Completely unreconciled to you let's remember Saul and David never got it together did they?

There was never this you know tears and hugs, and I'm sorry David for everything of course There was an occasion just like that on one of these times when when David could have killed Saul But he didn't Saul is totally repentant that the tears are flowing down his face, and he's a goat David You're more righteous than I and and you've done it all and I've been such a fool and all of that And I believe Saul meant it for about five minutes And then it was gone But at the end there was no reconciliation, but here in this example of David you see how David could keep a totally soft warm tender heart towards Saul Even though Saul hated his guts and continued to do so Until he died how tragic for Saul to die in that Unreconciled horrible conflict against David, but you know what it didn't hurt David Because David kept a soft heart towards it all and here's the other aspect about it is that David Absolutely Needed this You know I had never thought that never had that thought before of what Brian mentioned yesterday in his message that That Saul was David's hero And you hear him talking from that kind of focus there in the song of the bow at the end he's still his hero And almost we should say deservedly so Because Saul in all his ungodliness was a mighty Instrument of God in David's life think of the life of David What made him a man after God's heart?

Now I don't think it was this whole business with Saul Because God picked out David as a man after his own heart when David Loved him and served him and communed with him in total obscurity as a shepherd.

I think it was David's Personal communion with the Lord that made him a man after God's heart There's this David up in the shepherds field, and it's just him in the Lord And it's that depth of relationship with the Lord in the secret place when nobody's looking That's what made David a man after God's own heart, but

what made David? Trained him prepared him to be the greatest king Israel ever had Do you want to know what a great king? David was over Israel. He was so great that God's going to give him an encore I Mean as far as I'm concerned for my reading of scriptures in the millennial earth God is going to have David reign over Israel again. I mean, I really believe that God's going to let him do it again I'm the millennium What made David a king and a great king it was this whole business with Saul It was these many years so that finally when David sat enthroned over Israel He was the man God wanted him to be a man after his heart And and a man of God sitting on that throne that trained in God's difficult school of leadership And it was really Because of Saul and David's response to what Saul did As hard as it is to see and as harder it is except in our own life Saul was a gift to David and I guess David understood that somewhere along the line Spurgeon in that great chapter of lectures to my students the blind eye and the deaf ear He speaks of a guy that used to write him an anonymous letter every week I don't know it from the way.

He described it seems like it went on for several years Every week Spurgeon would get a letter from this guy and in the letter the guy would point out every mistake he thought Spurgeon made in the sermon and Some of the mistakes he thought were perhaps doctrinal Some of them were stylistic. He thought he wasn't pronouncing words correctly and some of them He thought were just sort of on speaking manner, but he thought that Spurgeon quoted the hymn Nothing in my hand. I bring only to thy cross.

I cling he thought he was quoting that way too often He's wrote something like this this Spurgeon. We know your hands are empty. You know think of another way to illustrate it How would you like to get that every week? How would you like to get that letter every week You know Spurgeon said he said my only regret was that the guy was anonymous And I never had the chance to thank him And I said I didn't agree with him on every point I mean, it's not like you just read it and said well, whatever you say is true, but he said that man helped me He helped me become a better preacher Well, obviously many attacks that come against us are much much fiercer than that But we still have to deal with them the same way We have to have hearts so full of love so full of grace and forgiveness towards others If we don't I think it will consume us in the ministry and it will hinder us in what God wants to do in our congregations You know God's looking for men who just have simple hearts before him Soft and tender hearts towards him and his people and these things have a way of building up that very very thick callous upon So to make it through and to See God's work done through a time of conflict like this.

You need to keep the very soft heart Especially towards those who attack you, you know, the very practical way to do this is to pray for them You just pray you make a dedicated aim to pray for them. And I know your your first prayers will be like some of those What do they call me in Precatory Psalms of David, you know, Oh Lord break their teeth in their mouth, you know That's a vivid image, isn't it? and You know your prayers may be like that to begin But I promise you if you keep praying for that person your heart will warm towards them And you will really begin to care for them That's why Jesus said to pray for your enemies to pray for those who spitefully use you That's a very practical way that you can begin to put it in action and even as I'm speaking You may have very vividly in your mind one or two people who just fit this profile exactly Well, you need to do this. I mean you must do this You cannot pass this by So you need to keep that soft and tender heart But I'll tell you one other thing you need in this time of conflict not so to end with this Point though not that I'm going to end real soon, but just the kind of creature thing Is that you also need to have what I would call the the hardened face the face like flint You know that great passage in Isaiah 50 where it describes, you know The Messiah set my face like flint to do what the Lord wanted me to do is the whole context of it there What you need to have a hardened face now not hardened towards God, of course and definitely not hardened towards the people The idea of the hardened face there isn't

that you're insensitive or or unloving but that is you're utterly focused and this this is something that I think God has taught me about these times of conflict or Difficulty in the ministry is as much as anything Satan wants to use those to get us off Focus know those three things that Brian spoke of yesterday.

You need to love the people you need to serve them And you need to bring them good words Satan wants you to do anything, but those three things anything He wants you to obsess about the people who hurt you. He wants you to play politics He wants you to manipulate things behind the scenes He wants you to do all this all that all the other thing But anything he can get you to draw your focus off of those three things He will use and in a time of conflict don't we want we want to draw back from the people and not love them We don't want to serve them we don't feel like doing anything and preaching the word that you know We just do the best we can but we can hardly study in times like that. Do you see what Satan's trying to do? It's not just that the conflict but it's what the conflict pushes you away from Then it's a double victory for Satan He's got you and this whole business of despair and conflict But in the other aspect he's gotten you to the place where you're not doing what you must Absolutely do you start obsessing over everything living this life of continual suspicion and fear You know the movie one pastor recommended to me in a time when I was going through this In my ministry is the movie the cane of mutiny Old movie from like the 50s or the 60s and it has this Cab I can't even remember the Humphrey Bogart played the characters captain who's going nuts and And his men kind of had to take over the ship from him and and the whole business of him Going nuts was displayed by the fact that he would obsess on small things He had two silver balls that he liked to twirl around in his hands And he was being questioned you know in this thing and and he what he wanted to obsess on was the strawberries They had a whole can of strawberries in the in the mess and Somebody had snuck in and took some of the strawberries and there he is when he's just totally flipping out on the witness stand He's there.

You know Rolling around these two metal balls in his hand because it was a strawberry. That's what it was it was the strawberries I've been like that in the ministry Yeah, it's like you're flipping out you're obsessing over this thing which is a big picture It's a small thing isn't it there you have the strawberries You got to see the movie. It's really instructive for how leadership cracks up.

Oh, but But to get our focus off of loving the people serving them and bringing them good words Well, that's that's a high victory for Satan so what I what I learned to do is When a season or a time of conflict would come I would absolutely dedicate myself To loving the people serving them and teaching them all the more They're saying bad things about me. Let them see by my conduct that it could never be true Let them hear the best messages that they've ever heard from me Let them feel so loved so served so fed That that God just touches their hearts, so it's not enough just to have the soft heart towards your enemies I really think you need to have focus the focus of that face like Flint. I will not stop Loving them serving them and bringing them good words.

I will not be shaken from that I I wish that there was a way that we could do ministry and not go through these things I guess in my flesh. I wish that You know in my flesh, I want a life of just unending comfort and ease that's what I want I just wanted all to be easy all the time and You know that's not how it is that's not God's plan for us and his plan for us really is better it really is good and We can receive these things as gifts from the Lord perhaps Unwelcome gifts, but when we receive them the right way The glorious thing is that God will use them to bless our ministries and to bless our own walk with him our own communion with him and that's the sweetest of all So father that's our prayer how we need your help Lord and I I Pray for my brothers here this morning. I I don't know particular situations Lord, but I know we all know what it's like being in the ministry, and we just have this sense Lord that It's not uncommon for many

of us to be troubled by a time of conflict Well Lord won't you bring your grace to troubled hearts then this morning and? have us Lord just be absolutely determined to keep a soft heart towards those who attack us and Lord to keep our face hardened towards the focus that you've given us in ministry that nothing can shake us from it and Lord we need your help.

We need your comfort. We need your strength these things drive us Lord to the brink of despair And so Lord won't you uphold us and give us the strength? The resources to do what is right and honored before you in difficult times Do it Lord for the sake of your people even if it's not for our sake and that we love you and praise you in Jesus name Amen

---

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/6/SID6840.mp3>  
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/david-guzik/enemies-in-ministry/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**