

# NORTHWEST COMMUNITY EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

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Sermon manuscript

Sermon Series: God's Life-Transforming Work  
(Studies in the life of David)

## David: Growing During Difficult Times – 1 Samuel 18-29

**I. Introduction.** David gave me my passage to preach: 1 Samuel 18-29.

- A. This section begins just after David kills and conquers Goliath and ends just before King Saul's death.
- B. Nine of the twelve chapters deal with Saul's attempts to kill David.
- C. It is during this difficult time that David develops into a godly leader.
- D. We can grow in the Lord through trials and difficulties. David is an example for us today.

**II. David's Journey to be King Begins - His Anointing.**

A. Israel's first king was Saul. He reigned 42 years.

1. The Lord commands Saul to totally destroy the Amalekites.

Samuel said to Saul, "I am the one the LORD sent to anoint you king over his people Israel; so listen now to the message from the LORD. This is what the LORD Almighty says: 'I will punish the Amalekites for what they did to Israel when they waylaid them as they came up from Egypt. Now go, attack the Amalekites and totally destroy all that belongs to them.'" **1 Samuel 15:1-3**

- a) Saul did defeat the Amalekites, but he did not totally destroy them as he was told to do.
- b) Saul took plunder and King Agag alive from the battle (1 Samuel 15:9).
- c) The plunder taken was "everything that was good."

2. Saul does not obey God's direction for his life. Samuel said to Saul,

"You have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you; if you had, he would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out a man after his own heart and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the LORD's command." **1 Samuel 13:13-14**

- a) Another will be king.

B. The Lord directs Samuel go to Jesse to anoint one of his sons who will be king. The youngest son, David, is brought before Samuel.

Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; this is the one." So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David. **1 Samuel 16:12-13a**

### III. Two Different Hearts.

#### A. Returning home after David's victory over Goliath.

When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with timbrels and lyres. As they danced, they sang:

"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?" And from that time on Saul kept a close eye on David. **1 Samuel 18:6-9**

1. Saul realizes that he is not getting the credit, the nation's attention or full honor. David is.

- a) Saul is instantly angry, and his anger is burning, hotly emotional and raging.
- b) Saul's attitude is fueled by his jealousy and envy which quickly becomes an uncontrollable rage.
- c) Saul's heart is deeply affected.

2. Saul becomes obsessed with killing David.

3. Saul's heart was tested again and again, and he fails the tests again and again.

4. God sees and knows the heart.

The LORD does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." **1 Samuel 16:7**

5. God weighs the heart and sees a person's potential and character.

- a) God weighs the things that are really important.
- b) When God weighed Saul's heart, He found that it was corrupted, selfish and fleshly.

#### C. David's Heart. *David his tens of thousands.*

Samuel said to Saul, "But now your kingdom will not endure; the LORD has sought out *a man after his own heart* and appointed him ruler of his people, . . ." **1 Samuel 13:14**

1. Israel notices David's successes, and people are beginning to be drawn to him.

2. But David's heart, as we will see, is tested again and again throughout this journey.

3. David is successful in the tests again and again (most of the time).

4. God weighed David's heart.

5. It was a heart that longed for and desired God's heart.

### IV. Choosing to Walk the Path of Life with Jesus.

A. Like Saul and David, our choices effect the path we walk in life.

B. When difficulties come, there is a "fork" on the path that we need to consider.

C. We can choose to grow through the difficulties or choose not to grow.

D. Decisions made and attitudes harbored in the heart determine our path ahead.

1. Many of David's difficulties became opportunities to grow in character and leadership.
2. David's example is helpful for anyone dealing with difficulties and wanting to grow in character during difficult times.
3. David was a man after God's own heart.
4. It is God he trusts in for His guidance and help.
5. David's God is the same God you and I can trust in today as difficulties evade our lives.

## V. David's Path of Growth

- A. Life's challenges were David's opportunities for growth during difficult times. Let's look at the path that prepared David to be King of Israel.

1. Attempts made to undermine David's life.

- a) Attempting to murder David.

The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully on Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the lyre, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice. **1 Samuel 18:10-11**

- b) Using older daughter Merab to bring about David's demise.

Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD." For Saul said to himself, "I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!" **1 Samuel 18:17**

- c) Using younger daughter Michal to bring about David's demise.

Now Saul's daughter Michal was in love with David, and when they told Saul about it, he was pleased. "I will give her to him," he thought, "so that she may be a snare to him and so that the hand of the Philistines may be against him." So Saul said to David, "Now you have a second opportunity to become my son-in-law." **1 Samuel 18:20-21**

- d) Placing David in a dangerous situation.

When Saul's servants told him what David had said, Saul replied, "Say to David, 'The king wants no other price for the bride than a hundred Philistine foreskins, to take revenge on his enemies.'" Saul's plan was to have David fall by the hands of the Philistines. **1 Samuel 18:24-25**

- e) If you were David, what would be natural reactions to have in these situations?
- f) Fear. Uncertainty. Manipulated. Betrayed. Blamed. Unappreciated. Misunderstood.
- g) Threats of death, relationship snares, jealousy, envy and anger were all used against David.
- h) Negative situations became opportunities to build godly character in David's life.

2. Meeting the needs of the group.

Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find. . . . David asked Ahimelek, "Don't you have a spear or a sword here?" **1 Samuel 21:3, 8**

- a) David faced multiple needs to give protection, provision and necessities for his men and their families.
- b) Remember this group has no support. They are fugitives.

- c) What would be natural reactions to have in this situation?
- d) Lacking faith. Lack of trusting God. Inadequate. "I am poor." "I am needy." "I can't provide."
- e) David asks Ahimelek for help.
- f) Lacking needed provisions is an opportunity to build godly character and faith.

### 3. The group that gathers around him.

David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him. **1 Samuel 22:1-2**

- a) The men gathered around David were not people that were "put together" (initially).
- b) These men were the **"3 D's:" Distress. Debt. Discontent.**
- c) If you are building a team, you wouldn't ask the **"3 D's"** to sign up.
- d) But this is what God gave David.
- e) These men needed to be elevated to the level of the leaders and warriors they would become.
- f) David invests in these men through teaching, training, discipling, and leading.
- g) God gives everything you need one step at a time.
- h) What is needed for the next step is present and available.
- i) You just need to discover what you have to take the next step with.
- j) David developed the **"3 D's"** into the men who became warriors and heroes of Israel.
- k) The list of David's mighty men is found in **1 Chronicles 11:10-11, 26-47.** (33 men are listed).

### 5. David grows in leading people.

When David was told, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors," he inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" The LORD answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah." But David's men said to him, "Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!" Once again David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him, "Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand." So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah. **1 Samuel 23:1-5**

- a) David received the Lord's direction about attacking the Philistines and saving Keilah.
- b) However, David's men were afraid to go attack the Philistines.
- c) David seeks the Lord a second time.
- d) David is assured, and his men are affirmed to step out to attack the Philistines.
- e) David's men grew to believe that "With God's help, we can do this."
- f) The attack is successful.
- g) The group saved Keilah.

### 6. Nabal – 1 Samuel 25:2-38.

- a) He was wealthy. He had 3000 sheep and 1000 goats.
- b) He had a beautiful and intellectual wife, Abigail.
- c) Nabal was harsh and evil in his dealings.
- d) David and his men guarded Nabal's men, sheep and goats.
- e) Nabal lost nothing as a result of David's protection.
- f) David sends men to Nabal to ask for provisions.

Nabal answered David's servants, "Who is this David? Who is this son of Jesse? Many servants are breaking away from their masters these days. Why should I take my bread and water, and the meat I have slaughtered for my shearers, and give it to men coming from who knows where?" **1 Samuel 25:10-11**

g) David reacts at what Nabal said:

David said to his men, "Each of you strap on your sword!" So they did, and David strapped his on as well. About four hundred men went up with David, while two hundred stayed with the supplies. **1 Samuel 25:13**

One of the servants told Abigail, Nabal's wife, "David sent messengers from the wilderness to give our master his greetings, but he hurled insults at them. Yet these men were very good to us. They did not mistreat us, and the whole time we were out in the fields near them nothing was missing. Night and day they were a wall around us the whole time we were herding our sheep near them. Now think it over and see what you can do, because disaster is hanging over our master and his whole household. He is such a wicked man that no one can talk to him." **1 Samuel 25:14-17**

- h) Abigail listens to the servant, comprehends what is going to happen and intervenes to avoid the pending disaster.
- i) Abigail meets David's need despite what Nabal said.
- j) Abigail, by her actions and grace, prevented disaster from happening to the men under Nabal.

7. It is the difficult situations and the various tests along the journey that are used to build godly character. **(This is true today)**

## **VI. Necessities to Grow in Difficult Times.**

**A. Close, trusted fellowship with a believer of like-precious faith (Jonathan). 1 Samuel 18:1; 23:16-18.**

- David and Jonathan had a trusted fellowship with one another.
- Fellowship is a partnership, a sharing and a communion with one another.
- It is sharing what we have in common through Christ which is the basis of our fellowship.
- It is a fellowship with three active participants communing together (you, me and Jesus).

**B. Allow spiritual leadership to affirm with moral, spiritual and relational guidance during troubling and uncertain times (Samuel). 1 Samuel 19:18.**

- During uncertain times, we need a trusted source for spiritual guidance.
- David was never taken out of his circumstances.
- David was given the truth.
- We need a person who will speak the truth to us.

**C. God is Sovereign. He calls and grace-gifts people. When God calls, He makes a good decision. 1 Samuel 24:5-6; 26:9-11**

- The person called and grace-gifted may not always walk worthy of the calling God has given.
- If the individual becomes resistant, fleshy, bitter and will not receive correction, this is not God's will for that individual.

- However, the individual is still called and grace-gifted by God even though he/she is not at the level of that calling and gifting.
  - Let God deal with the situation.
  - God is Sovereign over your life. Trust in Him!
- D. Prayer for encouragement, guidance, knowledge and wisdom gives open communication with God and direction in His purposes for one's life. **1 Samuel 23:9; James 1:2-5.**
- Facing trials are tests of faith.
  - During the time of trial, we may need wisdom from God to proceed through the test.
  - God gives wisdom generously as we pray for it.
- E. Develop a tender heart that the Lord can communicate to by teaching, guiding, affirming, correcting, rebuking and training in life and service. **1 Samuel 24:5-6; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Psalm 51:10**
- David had a tender heart to hear God.
  - Respect for God and the things of God help develop a tender heart.
- F. With a humble, receptive heart, receive wisdom for life and service (Abigail). **1 Samuel 25:30-31**
- Without a humble attitude, the knowledge and wisdom needed for life can be missed.
  - Abigail spoke wisdom into David to prevent the loss of the men under Nabal.

## **VII. Difficulties and Your Heart.**

“David had served God's purpose in his own generation” **Acts 13:36a**

- A. Difficulties are normal in life.
1. I wish I could say that walking with Jesus is without problems, struggles and difficulties. (I cannot!)
  2. The heart is forged in the furnace of struggle, difficulties, stress and challenge.
  3. The heat from difficult experiences creates different outcomes in different people.
  4. Our attitudes, reactions and spoken words reflect where our heart is.
  5. Serving God's purpose in our generation, as David did in his, will not be a path of promotions and blessings.
  6. Our path may be similar to David's path, one with challenges and difficulties.
- B. Spiritual growth generally does not happen during times of blessing and ease.
1. Spiritual growth happens when you and I are tested.
  2. It happens when we must walk by faith and trust in God.
  3. Walking by faith often means we are going through something that we haven't been through before.
  4. It is something new.
  5. It is something where we have to hold on to God and His promises.
  6. It is something where we place our trust in God.
- C. Be a person after God's own heart.

After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.' **Acts 13:22**

1. David made it through his journey because he had a heart after God's own heart.
2. A heart seeking God's heart is at the place where it can grow in the character of Christ.
3. We are invited to grow in Christ, even if we are going through difficult, uncertain times.

D. A Psalm of David during his difficult, testing time:

1. Psalm 57.
2. The setting of this Psalm is David's flight from Saul.
3. David is either in the cave at Adullam (1 Samuel 22:1) or En Gedi (1 Samuel 24:1).
4. In both cases, David is a fugitive running for his life.
5. Follow along as I read Psalm 57:

Psalm 57 (NIV)

For the director of music.  
To the tune of "Do Not Destroy."  
Of David. A miktam.  
When he had fled from Saul into the cave.

1 Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me,  
for in you I take refuge.  
I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings  
until the disaster has passed.

2 I cry out to God Most High,  
to God, who vindicates me.

3 He sends from heaven and saves me,  
rebuking those who hotly pursue me—  
God sends forth his love and his faithfulness.

4 I am in the midst of lions;  
I am forced to dwell among ravenous beasts—  
men whose teeth are spears and arrows,  
whose tongues are sharp swords.

5 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;  
let your glory be over all the earth.

6 They spread a net for my feet—  
I was bowed down in distress.  
They dug a pit in my path—  
but they have fallen into it themselves.

7 My heart, O God, is steadfast,  
my heart is steadfast;  
I will sing and make music.

8 Awake, my soul!  
Awake, harp and lyre!  
I will awaken the dawn.

9 I will praise you, Lord, among the nations;  
I will sing of you among the peoples.

10 For great is your love, reaching to the heavens;  
your faithfulness reaches to the skies.

11 Be exalted, O God, above the heavens;  
let your glory be over all the earth.