

1 Samuel 21-22

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[0 : 00] Okay, so we are carrying on through 1 Samuel chapter 21 and 22. Let's just take a moment and pray, and then we will crack into our study.

Father, we just want to thank you for this moment. We want to thank you that you've left us your words to look at, to study, to examine, to learn from, to preach from. We ask, Lord, that at this time your Holy Spirit would be present, that it would be your Spirit that witnesses to us, taking everything that is nutritious and nourishing us with it, and anything that is off, helping our memory to drop it. May our hearts be quiet and our minds open, as you teach us at this time. In Jesus' name, Amen. Okay, so 1 Samuel chapter 21. Before we go straight into the actual verses themselves, I'd just like to introduce the topic.

So throughout this passage, we are going to be looking at ethics. So we're talking about the moral principles that guide how we as individuals and as a church behave.

These things help us to decide what is right and what is wrong. On paper, you might think that as Christians, we would all have exactly the same answers to our moral obligations.

[1 : 38] It's a naive notion, though. When the rubber meets the road, are we consistent? Do we flex our position, you know, according to our mood or even the situation we're in?

What happens when two opposite principles collide? We're going to look into some of these things. What happens when you're so focused on one principle that you're even oblivious to the opposite angle?

There are obvious things in Christendom that unite us, but we've also found in recent years how easily divided we can be. But not all differences in opinion or positions are a bad thing.

You might be wondering how I'm going to get to this place through these passages. We'll see. So let's look at today's passage. So starting in verse one. Then David came to Nob.

You know, I'm going to pronounce that Nob. We call Job Job. So I'm going with Nob because I'm not going there. Right. So let's have a look at a map where on earth is Nob.

[2 : 47] So I've not brought my laser pointer with me today, I'm afraid. Top corner, you've got Nob. So next to a place called Jabez. In 2 Samuel, about chapter five, I think it is, Jabez will get taken over by David.

You'll know it as Jerusalem from that point onwards. But Jabez is where the Jebusites live at this moment in time. So David is in Nob. Just south of the Mount of Olives is a place called Bethany. It's a similar kind of distance. It's not on there, but that's the kind of range we're talking about from Nob. It's less than a day's journey because David travels from Bethany.

Jesus travels from Bethany into Jerusalem quite frequently during his time. Right. So we've got almost through a quarter of a verse.

Right. So then David came to Nob to Ahimelech, the priest. And Ahimelech came trembling to meet David and said to him, why are you alone and no one with you?

[3 : 58] Why on earth is this priest trembling? You know, David will learn in verse. Sorry, we will learn about David that he's unarmed. But he asked a good question, this priest.

Why is David alone? For those who haven't been paying attention throughout our studies in 1 Samuel, or perhaps you've missed a few. Or maybe you've got the memory of a goldfish like me, and maybe you've got the memory of a goldfish like me.

Or maybe, oh, look at that castle over there. So David is on his own because he's on the run. He is a fugitive. He hasn't really done anything wrong. Saul, unfortunately, has been bitten by the green-eyed monster and is jealous of David.

If, again, you're struggling to remember, Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands, it's caused friction. It's caused jealousy. So last week in chapter 20, Jonathan, that's

Saul's son, the would-be heir to the throne, was in fact trying to find out that Saul was trying to murder David.

So he shot his arrows beyond where David was hiding to communicate that Saul had it in for him. So David's with Ahimelech. David said to Ahimelech, the priest, The king has commissioned me with a matter and has said to me, No one is to know anything about the matter on which I am sending you and with which I have commissioned you, and I have directed the young men to a certain place.

[5 : 32] David's making this up. He's on his own because he's had to run away and become a fugitive. Joe, last week, alluded to when Ray covered the subject of lying a couple of years back.

His conclusion was that it was okay for a Christian to lie, but only in very specific circumstances, if it preserves life. He cited the examples of Rahab with the spies from Joshua 2, the Egyptian midwives of Exodus, not slaughtering the newborn sons.

And he also cited how God sent a false prophet to deceive King Ahab in 1 Kings chapter 22. In this situation, David is lying.

He's run away from home. He's got no weapons. He's got no food. And he's trying to do what he can to solve his problem. So verse three. Now then, what do you have on hand?

Give me five loaves of bread or whatever can be found. The priest answered David and said, there is no ordinary bread on hand, but there is consecrated bread.

[6 : 42] If only the young men have kept themselves from women. Five loaves. I think I know a story about five loaves. The young men, on the other hand, could be a figment of the imagination here.

Well, let's carry on. Let's see a bit more about this. So verse five. David answered the priest and said to him, be assured, women have been denied to us as previously when I left and the bodies of the young men were consecrated.

Though it was an ordinary journey. How much more then will their bodies be consecrated today? As I question whether these young men even exist, I would say that it's likely these men who don't exist have not been anywhere near a woman.

But it does suggest that the behavior of a small army can be a bit promiscuous. Verse six. So the priest gave him consecrated bread, for there was no bread there except the bread of the presence, which was removed from its place before the Lord in order to put hot bread in its place on the day it was taken away.

Consecrated bread, consecrated bread, bread of the presence. This is also known as the show bread. Leviticus chapter 24 verses five to nine says this.

[7 : 58] Take the finest flour and bake 12 loaves of bread using two tenths of an ephah for each loaf. Arrange them in two stacks, six in each stack on the table of pure gold before the Lord.

By each stack, put some pure incense as a memorial portion to represent the bread and to be a food offering presented to the Lord. This bread is to be set out before the Lord regularly, Sabbath after Sabbath, on behalf of the Israelites as a lasting covenant.

It belongs to Aaron and his sons who are to eat it in the sanctuary area because it is a most holy part of their perpetual share of the food offerings presented to the Lord.

So either David is in the tabernacle in the sanctuary or this has been removed from the sanctuary and the priest Ahimelech is maybe up to no good either.

It's possible that the tabernacle was destroyed when the Ark of the Covenant was taken by the Philistines. So we're not sure.

[9 : 10] So this little episode, so to speak, is cross-referenced by Jesus himself. So in Matthew chapter 12, verses 1 to 8, we get this.

At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath and his disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat. Now, when the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath.

So what's going on? Let's look at the law and how it applies to this situation. Firstly, you know, what the scriptures tell us about the Sabbath. You know, within the Ten Commandments, Moses is told the following.

So that's Exodus 20, verses 8 to 11. We'll pop back to Matthew in a second. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. For six days you shall labor and do all your work.

But the seventh day is a Sabbath of the Lord, your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male slave or your female slave or your cattle or your resident who stays with you.

[10:19] For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and everything that is in them. And he rested on the seventh day. For that reason, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

This is expanded a little bit in Exodus 31, verses 14 and 15. Therefore, you are to keep the Sabbath for it is holy to you. Everyone who profanes it must be put to death.

For whoever does any work on it, that person shall be cut off from among his people. For six days may be done. Sorry, for six days work may be done. But on the seventh day, there is a Sabbath of complete rest.

Holy to the Lord. Whoever does any work on the Sabbath must be put to death. We then have an example of someone breaking the Sabbath during Moses' time.

So that's Numbers 15, 32 to 36. Now, while the sons of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering wood on the Sabbath day.

[11:21] And those who found him gathering wood brought him to Moses and Aaron and all the congregation. They placed him in custody because it had not been decided what should be done to him.

Then the Lord said to Moses, the man must be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp. So all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, just as the Lord had commanded Moses.

So the Sabbath here is being treated very seriously. So going back to our Matthew passage.

Chapter 12.

At that time, I'm just going to repeat that early part of it. At that time, Jesus went through the grain fields on the Sabbath and his disciples became hungry and began to pick the heads of grain and eat.

Now, when the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on a Sabbath. You can see where they're going with this.

[12:26] They want to stone these boys to death. Verse three. But he said to them, have you not read what David did when he became hungry and he and his companions companions?

So they do exist. Jesus is testifying that they did. How he and his companions entered the house of God. So it was the tabernacle.

And they ate the consecrated bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, nor for those with him, but for the priests alone. Or have you not read in the law that on the Sabbath, the priests in the temple violate the Sabbath and yet are innocent?

It's a fair point. If on the Sabbath, the priests didn't work, everything would be very quiet in the temple. No tabernacle. So the priests are all right to work.

Let's see if we can find out why. So verse six. But I say to you that something greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, I desire compassion rather than sacrifice.

[13:32] Sacrifice. You would not have condemned the innocent. So Joe rightly pointed out using this first last week that they would not have condemned the innocent. Innocent.

The disciples have not done anything wrong. Despite what they are doing on the Sabbath. I desire compassion rather than sacrifice.

The sacrifices are mandatory. So what's he getting at? He's saying that compassion is more important. It is higher than sacrifice.

Therefore, what Jesus is teaching is that some laws are greater than others. What does that mean? OK, so 2 Corinthians chapter 3 verses 1 to 6 says this.

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some, letters of commendation to you or from you? You are our letter, written in our hearts, known and read by all people, revealing yourselves that you are a letter of Christ, delivered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.

[14:46] Such is the confidence we have towards God through Christ, that not that we are adequate in ourselves, so as to consider anything as having come from ourselves.

But our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant. Not of the letter, but of the spirit.

For the letter kills, but the spirit gives life. The letter kills, the spirit gives life. This is teaching that the new covenant is greater than the old covenant.

The spirit is better than the letter. The spirit is greater than the letter of the law. So Jesus is teaching that some laws are better and more important than others.

One of the key verses, in my opinion, to understanding the nature of God, that you'll find in this book, 1 Samuel, and in my opinion, the Old Testament, is when Samuel is at Jesse's house to anoint the next king.

[15:53] 1 Samuel 16, verse 7 says, God looks at what goes on inside you.

He looks at your reasons. He looks at your motives. Perhaps I'm using this verse slightly out of context. So if you're not convinced, let's look at a few other verses. Proverbs 16, verse 2, for example.

All the ways of a person are clean in his own sight, but the Lord examines the motives. Let's think about compassion.

I want compassion more than sacrifice. Psalm 103, verse 13 says, As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

Proverbs 3, verse 27 says, Do not hold good from the deserving when it is within your power to act.

Isaiah 49, 15 says, Can a woman forget her nursing child or lack compassion for the son of her womb?

[17:01] Even if she could forget, I will not forget you. Jesus talks a little bit more about this topic, cross-referencing it with the Sabbath.

Matthew 12, 11 to 14. But he said to them, What man is there among you who has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath? Will he not take hold of it and lift it out?

How much more valuable then is a person than a sheep? So then, is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath? Then he said to the man, Stretch out your hand.

So this is when he's with the guy with the withered hand. Then he said to the man, Stretch out your hand. He stretched it out and it was restored to normal like the other. But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him as to how they might destroy him.

Great motives there, guys. Jesus knew their motives. So Jesus was teaching that there's a higher law.

[18:10] Through the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus demonstrated that we should love our enemies. Go two miles when our enemies demand one. We should turn the other cheek. In the same way, Jesus raised the bar on murder and adultery from the physical acts of sex for adultery and violence for murder to the thoughts in our head as well.

If you don't believe me about this higher law, think about when Peter and the apostles were told to stop preaching. Peter and the apostles answered, We must obey God rather than men.

So obedience to God is more important than obedience to human authority in this situation.

Because that was in direct conflict with the Great Commission.

How about this one for a higher law? You'll know it. John 3.16. I probably don't even need to read it.

You know what it says. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son.

Whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. Whoever believes shall not perish.

That cuts through all possible loopholes.

[19:23] Whoever believes. Doesn't matter what you did. Whoever believes shall not perish.

Everlasting life. Bit more on compassion.

Matthew 7.9-11. So this is. More related to the. An earlier section. What person is there among you who when his son asks for a loaf of bread will give him a stone?

Or if he asks for a fish, he won't give him a snake, will he? So if you, despite being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your father, who is in heaven, give good things to those who ask him?

Did you notice the choice of words there? If he asks for bread, won't give you a stone. David asked for bread. Priest gave him some.

Gave him life. Jesus' disciples are gleaning in the field. They want to stone them for it. Hmm. He asks for a fish. Gets a serpent.

[20:27] Serpent. That's the devil straight there out of Genesis 3. So, okay. So let's start pulling some of these threads together because we need to get on with 1 Samuel. Matthew 7 verse 12 says, In everything, therefore, treat people the same way you want them to treat you.

For this is the law and the prophets. How you want someone to treat you. This is something that can only be measured by weighing our motives and our thoughts, really.

The Pharisees are an easy example of people who've got this in the wrong way. Matthew 23 verse 23 to 24 says this. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

For you tithe mint and dill and cumin and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law, justice and mercy and faithfulness. But these are the things that you should have done without neglecting the others.

You blind guides who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. Here, he's teaching that tithing is less important than justice and mercy and faithfulness.

[21 : 39] Right, let's get back to our passage in 1 Samuel because we need to move on. Now, one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord.

And his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds. Put that name in your pocket for a minute. We'll come back to Doeg the Edomite shortly.

Verse 8. David said to Ahimelech, Now, is there no spear or sword on hand? For I brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's matter was urgent.

Then the priest said, The sword of Goliath, the Philistine, whom you killed in the valley of Elah, is, Behold, it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod.

If you would take it for yourself, take it. For there is no other except it here. And David said, There is none like it. Give it to me. So David is on the run.

[22 : 38] He's got no weapons. So he's going to take Goliath's sword. I really hope that Goliath's sword is a little bit more like a letter opener, because David, Goliath, he's going to be wielding this huge, clumsy sword.

Yeah, probably not the best weapon to take, but that's what's on offer. So verse 10.

Then David set out and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish, king of Gath. But the servants of Achish said to him, Is this not David, the king of the land?

Did they not sing of this one as they danced, saying, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands? So Nob is over there.

Gath is here. Valley of Elah, that's where the battle with Goliath took place. But now he's gone over here into Philistine territory. He is going much further afield.

[23 : 48] Right. What strikes me as odd during that passage is that they even recognize him. I mean, today, in these days, we've got the Internet, we've got TV, we've got newspapers, we've got all kinds of forms of medium to be able to know what someone looks like.

David will have grown up from this point in time, yet they recognize him. Problem is, he's gone to Goliath's hometown. David is famous for one thing more than anything other. That's killing Goliath. Right. If you ask anyone who knows nothing about Christianity, they'll know that story. They might not be able to tell you anything else about David. The thing is, though, he's taken Goliath's sword with him.

Talk about not being subtle. He might as well have dragged Goliath's head out again and taken that with him as well. So it's no wonder that he does what happens in the next few verses.

So verse 12. David took these words to heart and greatly feared Achish, king of Gath. So David is afraid and it causes him to start lying again.

[24 : 58] Verse 13. So he disguised his sanity while in their sight and acted insanely in their custody. And he scribbled on the doors of the gate and drooled on his beard.

We know something about his appearance. Then Achish said to his servants, look, you see, the man is behaving like an insane person. Why do you bring him to me?

Do I lack insane people? You brought this one to behave like an insane person in my presence.

Shall this one come into my house? Look, I don't want to spend too much time focusing on mental health.

Not because mental health isn't a serious issue. But in this particular moment, he is feigning having a mental health issue to avoid being killed.

There are examples in the Bible of genuine mental health troubles, such as Nebuchadnezzar loses his sanity. God makes him think that he is a cow.

[25 : 56] He lives as a beast in the field for many years. See, Daniel chapter four. That's piqued your interest. Elijah suffered from burnout and depression and wanted the Lord to take his life.

First Kings chapter 19, verse four. Jonah. He wanted to die. He was asking the sailors to throw him into the sea in Jonah chapter one, verse 12. Samson.

Some people think he may have had some kind of antisocial personality disorder. The guy had no friends at his own wedding. They had to hire some companions for him.

Hannah. That's Samuel's mum. From chapter one of this book. In her distress, she's calling out to the Lord because she hasn't got a child. Adam and Eve. So afraid and anxious, they've hidden from God in the garden.

But this issue, in the text we are looking at, isn't mental health. It's about lying. He is faking having a mental health issue. He feels more like a Premier League footballer taking a dive in the box to win a penalty than a man after God's own heart in this moment.

[27 : 04] So anyway, David's nose is growing and his pants are on fire. So David isn't the first liar in the Bible. Let's be clear here. There are plenty of examples of liars in Scripture.

Satan, father of lies, twisting the truth in Genesis 3. You surely will not die. Lying by omission.

Abraham said that Sarah was his sister.

It's only a partial truth. Yeah, she's also your wife. Sarah. I didn't laugh. In Genesis 18. Isaac lies to Abimelech.

Oh, she's my sister. Fearing that, saying that, no. She is my sister, fearing to say she is my wife.

Genesis 26. I wonder where Isaac learned that trick from.

Deception. Jacob says to Isaac, I am Esau, your firstborn. Oh, Laban deceived Jacob and made him marry Leah instead of Rachel.

[28 : 03] Rachel lied about having Laban's idols. Sons of Jacob in Genesis 37, verse 32. They sent the multicolor tunic and brought it to their father and said, We found this.

Please examine to see if it's your son's tunic or not. They ripped it. They put blood on it. Potiphar's wife. So this is like 30 seconds in front of each moment.

That Hebrew slave you brought us came to me to make sport of me. There's positive examples.

Hebrew, the Hebrew midwives in Exodus chapter one.

Rahab in Joshua chapter two. In this book, Samuel lies and says, I obeyed the Lord. Sorry. Saul lies when Samuel confronts him.

I obeyed the Lord. Saul even lies to David. He says he could marry his daughter Merab and then sent her to marry Adriel, the Maholothite. New Testament example.

[29 : 02] Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit. Peter lied. I don't know Jesus. Right. Moving on. Verse 22. 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 400 men were with him. Saul is starting to reap what he sows. What's Saul been doing? Well, he's been throwing spears at his flock.

When leaders behave in this reckless fashion, it's natural for us to be afraid of them and to lose trust in them. Christian leaders need to be trusted all the same.

So Saul has sown discontent and caused distress with his actions. That has repercussions, which we'll see shortly. Verse 3. From there, David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?

[30 : 14] So he left them there with the king of Moab and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold. Moab. Let's move on to my next slide.

So Moab is this big area over here. It's outside of Israel. Moab will be one of those places which will ring a bell with you.

So what's David doing here? He's taking his parents, his father and his mother, to Moab. He's protecting them from Saul. In Exodus 20, verse 12 says, honour your father and your mother so that your days may be prolonged on the land which the Lord your God gives you.

Deuteronomy 20, 16 slightly expands that. Honour your father and mother as the Lord your God has commanded you so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land your Lord God is giving you.

It adds that it may go well with you in the land on top of the prolonged life or live long aspect.

[31 : 17] David's making sure his parents are safe from Saul. This is wise given what happens later in this chapter. So David's taking them to Moab. So I'll show you where Moab is.

The Moabites were the offspring of one of Lot's daughters. You remember they're the ones got him drunk in the cave after they escaped Sodom and Gomorrah and Lot's wife had turned to salt. Yeah, incest in the Bible. Lovely. In the book of Ruth, Ruth was a Moabite. Ruth was David's great grandmother. To join these dots, you know, a little bit easier for you.

That means Jesse, who's David's father, is going to where Jesse's grandmother was from. It's not completely ridiculous to go there.

Taking care of your parents is something we also see Jesus do at the cross. He said in John 19, verses 26 to 27. When Jesus therefore saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing by, he said to his mother, woman, behold your son.

[32 : 23] Then he said to the disciple, behold your mother. And from that hour, that disciple took her to his own home. Right. Verse five. But the prophet Gad said to David, do not stay in the strongholds.

Go into the land of Judah. Judah. So David left and went to the forest of Hereth. There's Hereth. Jerusalem and Noba up there, if that helps to help you with your positioning.

Yes. So it's the prophet Gad who's told David to do this. So, yes, Gad is also one of the names of the 12 tribes. But in this context, we've got a prophet called Gad.

He's told David to go to Judah. This guy will pop up again. Well, I'm presuming he's a guy. In 2 Samuel chapter 24, the 1st Chronicles 21, Prophet Gad will tell David to build an altar on the threshing floor of Arunah, the Jebusite, who lives in Jabez, which will become Jerusalem, remember.

So that's who the prophet Gad is. Verse six. Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul was seated, spear in hand, under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing at his side.

[33 : 41] He said to them, listen, men of Benjamin, will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?

Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today.

I'll give you a good reason why nobody tells him. He's been so in discontent. These people are not as oblivious as Jonathan had been. They'd seen Saul throw spears at David and also at Jonathan. It's no wonder they are apprehensive about telling him the things like this. Perhaps Jonathan has more of their trust. Perhaps David does as well.

So verse nine. But Doeg the Edomite, that's that name from earlier on. Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelech, son of Ahitub at Nob.

[34 : 50] Ahimelech inquired of the Lord for him. He also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath, the Philistine. Saul is asking why nobody tells him anything. Doeg had been present when David got showbread and Goliath's sword from Ahimelech.

Moral dilemma for you. Show of hands. Do you tell the truth? OK, show of hands. Do you lie? So we have discovered that 100% of you don't know how to raise your hands.

We have also discovered that we're not so keen about telling this guy this stuff.

So we will see. We've seen that Doeg the Edomite has told Saul what he's seen. Turn to Psalm 52 for me, please. I'm going to read the whole thing through.

Because Psalm 52 is written about this very moment. So this very moment, we're going to read it. Psalm 52. For the music director, a masculine of David.

[36 : 00] So I think he's aiming this straight at Doeg.

Why do you boast in evil, you mighty man? The faithfulness of God endures all day long. Your tongue devises destruction like a sharp razor, you worker of deceit.

You love evil more than good. Lies more than speaking what is right. You love all words that devour, you deceitful tongue.

But God will break you down forever. He will snatch you up and tear you away from your tent and uproot you from the land of the living. The righteous will see and fear, and they will laugh at him, saying, Behold, the man who would not make God his refuge, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and was strong in his evil desire.

But as for me, I am like a green olive tree in the house of God. I trust in the faithfulness of God forever and ever. I will praise you forever because you have done it.

[37 : 21] And I will wait on your name, for it is good in the presence of your godly ones. Verse 3 of Psalm 52 said this. You love evil more than good.

Lies more than speaking what is right. But he spoke the truth. This says he loves lies more than speaking what is right.

The word used for lies can also be translated treacherously. You love speaking treacherously more than speaking what is right. I put it to you that despite speaking the truth, he has not spoken what is right, as per Psalm 52.

Personally, I'm challenged by this. Of course, it's always easy to know when you're speaking the truth or not. It's not easy to discern when you should deviate from that path.

We'll get into that a little bit more later. Verse 11 of 1 Samuel 22. Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelech, son of Ahitub, and all the men of his family, who were the priests at Nob.

[38 : 40] And they all came to the king. Saul said, listen now, son of Ahitub. Yes, my lord, he answered. Saul said to him, why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me as he does today?

Ahimelech answered the king, who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard, and highly respected in your household?

Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not. Let the king accuse your servant or any of his father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.

But the king said, you will surely die, Ahimelech, you and your whole family. Then the king ordered the guards at his side, turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me. But the king's officials were unwilling to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord.

[39 : 56] So the king has sentenced the priest, Ahimelech, to death. But because Saul has been sowing discontent, it is no wonder that his own officials are not willing to carry out the sentence.

They can see it's unjust. He helped a man that they work with who has done nothing wrong. So what happens next? Then the king ordered Doeg, you turn and strike down the priests.

So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. Step forward, Amoron.

He has obeyed his king to a fault. A massive fault. We need to call this out for what it is. This is genocide.

What's the fundamental difference between this and when Joshua and the Israelites wiped out Jericho or Ai and the other cities? Well, Genesis 15 verse 16, we learn that the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.

[41 : 21] Joshua 6.21, it says that they devoted the city to the Lord and destroyed with the sword everything living there, men and women, young and old, cattle, sheep and donkeys.

Apparently they did the sheep earlier than Doeg did. Are these things the same? No. One is ordered by the Lord as judgment. The other one is ordered by another moron.

In 1 Samuel 15 verse 3, Saul was called to take out the Amalekites and the Lord told him through Samuel to wipe out Amalek and all that he has and not spare any man, woman, child, infant, ox, sheep, camel, donkey.

That was God judging Amalek. Saul was obedient in attacking them, disobedient in his execution in all meanings of the word.

When disasters like this happen, we need to remember there are real people behind these situations. That's a real story. Real people being executed by a mass murderer, men, women, children, infants.

[42 : 33] And animals as well. When something like this happens, the fleshly response is to get angry with God. Maybe even to hate God.

I think it's really important that I talk to every single one of you here that there are times when things like this can happen and it can shake you and it can shake your faith to your very core.

Friends having cancer, children dying, whatever the disaster is, can you picture that day? I don't know what that thing would be that would happen, but to make you feel, Lord, I've had enough.

I'm turning my back on you. In those moments, it is too late. You need to be deepening your faith now, deepening your roots so that you drop anchor and you prepare for that day.

Because in those moments, when our lives are in a place where we would consider rejecting God, if you've got these things in your life, I put it to you that you've made idols of these people or of these

things.

[43 : 46] Do the work now, not in the storm. Pray to the Lord to help you with these burdens. Help us to trust in your commands, Lord. Psalm 119 is actually a great psalm on this topic.

Verses 105 to 112 say this. Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. I have sworn and I will confirm it that I will keep your righteous judgments.

I am exceedingly afflicted. Revive me, Lord, according to your word. Be pleased to accept the voluntary offerings of my mouth, Lord, and teach me your judgments.

My life is continually in my hand. Yet I do not forget your law. The wicked have set up a trap for me. Yet I have not wandered from your precepts.

I have inherited your testimonies forever, for they are the joy of my heart. I have inclined my heart to perform your statutes forever, even to the end. Let's go back to our passage.

[44 : 53] Verse 20 of 1 Samuel 22. But one son of Ahimelech, son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled to join David.

He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. Then David said to Abiathar, that day when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul, I am responsible for the death of your whole family.

Stay with me. Don't be afraid. The man who wants to kill you is trying to kill me too. You will be safe with me. It's a very natural and easy thing for people to do this.

You know, what did Jesus say about doing good to good people? It's easy for that. There's no glory in that. It's when we do good to evil people that God is really glorified.

Abiathar crops up many times in 2 Samuel. He's going to be one of the working priests throughout David's life as king. We need to try and wrap this up.

[46 : 05] So let's pull together some of these threads we've been looking at. We've been looking at lies. We've been looking at defying the king.

Is it right to tell the king what Abimelech the priest did? Is it right to follow the order to execute him and his family? I think we can answer both these questions with the same answer.

Look, we know from Romans 13 that we should obey the authorities. When we're children, we're to obey our parents. This is well-pleasing to the Lord. But when should we disobey them?

Let me draw some parallels first. We can get angry with righteous anger when it's in God's interests that are offended, not when we are personally offended.

Why did Jesus tell us to go two miles when their order was to go one? Why did he tell us to turn the other cheek? 1 Corinthians chapter 6, we're given a simple principle. This is verses 1 to 7.

[47 : 08] Does any one of you, when he has a case against his neighbor, dare to go to law before the unrighteous and not before the saints? Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world?

If the world is judged by you, are you not competent to form the smallest law, to form the smallest law courts? Do you not know that we will judge angels how much more matters of this life?

So if you have law courts dealing with matters of this life, do you appoint them as judges who are of no account in the church? I say this to you.

I say this to your shame. It is, is it so that there is not among you anyone wise who will be able to deceive, to decide between his brothers and sisters, but brother goes to law with brother, and that's before unbelievers.

Verse 7 is the important verse. Actually then, it is already a defeat for you that you have lawsuits with one another. Why not rather suffer the wrong?

[48 : 16] Why not rather be defrauded? You can see this principle acting in Philippians chapter 1 as well. Verses 12 to 18. Now I want you to know, brethren, that my circumstances have turned out for greater progress of the gospel, so that my imprisonment is the cause of Christ that has become well known throughout the whole Praetorian Guard and to everyone else, and that most of the brethren, trusting in the Lord because of my imprisonment, have far more courage to speak the word of God without fear.

Some, to be sure, are preaching Christ even from envy and strife, but some also from goodwill. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I'm appointed for the defence of the gospel.

The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition rather than from pure motives, thinking to cause me distress in my imprisonment. What then?

Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed and in this I rejoice. The principle that I'm trying to draw here is that Paul's being has denied his freedom to the benefit of the

gospel.

There are people preaching with the wrong motives, trying to upset Paul. Paul doesn't care. Christ is being proclaimed. The gospel's being preached. Paul is considering his rights lower than God's. [49 : 38] So when should we lie? When should we disobey? When should we get angry? It's when the person in detriment, the one getting on the negative end of it, is God, not us.

So, you lie to Saul, you defy him, and no, you do not murder innocent people. But what about when Peter lied to save a life?

He denied knowing Jesus to save his own life. I put it to you that that was sin. So, we should always tell the truth except when it is God who is the one losing out.

I hate this not being black and white. Always tell the truth, always obey. that is so much easier to follow. But the subjectivity makes me realise that I am so going to get this wrong.

Not just from time to time, a lot. And I'm going to need his grace in those moments. I'm going to need his wisdom to navigate that path. And that wisdom comes from having a deep relationship with Jesus.

[50 : 49] And it is a relationship is what separates us from those who have memorised the Bible but lack the relationship, the understanding of God and his character like that of a Pharisee.

Let us pray. Lord, it's so easy to see things in black and white. It is so easy in those moments to follow the white or the black.

But Lord, we ask that you would give us discernment. Your word says that you will give wisdom to those who ask for it. So we're asking you right now, Lord, for wisdom.

We're asking for you to give us the grace to forgive others who get these things wrong. We're asking for your grace to forgive us when we get this wrong and we know we will.

We ask that you would deal with these situations more than we. Protect us from these dilemmas. But also, Lord, help us to deepen our roots.

[52 : 05] Help us to encourage each other to do the work now to deepen our relationship so when the storm comes, we're not blown away by the wind, but we stand solid and firm on the rock.

Jesus, in your mighty name, Lord Jesus. Amen. Thank you.