

1 Samuel 24

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[0 : 0 0] Okay, well, good morning, everybody. I'm just going to start with a prayer, and then we can crack into our study. Yeah, Father, we just want to thank you for this morning. We thank you for just sending your Holy Spirit to us.

We ask that it would quiet our hearts, quiet our minds, help us to listen to you. Not specifically to my words, but the words that you are speaking within each of us whilst I'm teaching.

I ask, Lord, that this wouldn't be time that is wasted, but time where transformation can take place. Help us to hold fast to what is good and let go of what is not.

Yeah, be with us at this time, Lord. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. So, I've entitled today's study, The Council of Fools.

I was considering trying to hit two chapters this week, because next week, well, the next chapter is also about council, but it's wise council.

[1 : 1 6] But we're going to be dealing with Council of Fools. So, I'm going to begin with a brief introduction for the benefit of those who might not have been with us and therefore haven't been through this journey in 1 Samuel.

So, maybe you're not as familiar with the subject matter, but it's also because it's been a few weeks since we last looked at this, and it's, let's face it, really easy to forget. So, obviously, we've been studying verse by verse through the book of Matthew most Sundays, and 1 Samuel is what we've been dealing with on the occasions when we give our main teacher a breather.

So, chapter 24 of 1 Samuel. So, so far in 1 Samuel, we have seen the miraculous birth of Samuel to a barren couple, the fall of the judge Eli and the youth Samuel taking on the role of both judge and prophet to Israel.

We have seen Israel attacked and the Ark of the Covenant stolen by the Philistines. And then it gets returned when the Philistines have strange tumours occurring all over their bodies within the population.

They have the statues of their gods being destroyed in strange circumstances. We've seen the people of Israel reject the theocratic structure.

[2 : 3 5] We don't want this. We want a king. Samuel took that as him being rejected, but God said it was, in fact, the Lord being rejected.

So, he gave the people what they wanted. A king. King Saul was, on paper, the perfect king. He's tall.

He's handsome. Everybody looks to him. You know, on the surface, he looks brilliant. But he wasn't obedient to God. So, the Spirit of the Lord left him.

Meanwhile, Samuel is told by the Lord that he, that the Lord has rejected Saul. And therefore, he sends Samuel to select a new king.

Samuel travels to a small village called Bethlehem. Nothing good comes out of Bethlehem, by the way. And he visits a man called Jesse. Samuel looks over all the sons of Jesse, expecting to see a king amongst them.

[3 : 35] But the truth is that man looks at the outside appearance. But the Lord looks at the heart. So, all of those sons are rejected. And the son, the young boy, who wasn't invited.

He's left out in the field looking after the sheep. He's the one that's selected. David. That youth, David, then fights and defeats the giant Goliath.

Saul was the man who was supposed to be up facing him. David used stones and the name of the Lord to defeat Goliath. Not the weapons of war like spears and swords and armor.

David then grows up, becomes a trusted man of Saul's army. He even marries one of Saul's daughters. Although Saul had set him up to die in obtaining the dowry for it.

Saul grows jealous and dislikes David because the people love David. There's a song that really grabs Saul's goat.

[4 : 42] Saul has slain his thousands. And David has slain his ten thousands. When he hears the people singing that, he takes it deep to his heart. David is better than Saul.

What Saul isn't realizing with that song, though, is that the people are in fact being unfair to Saul. Saul hasn't slain thousands. Saul's the guy that likes to stay at home. The guy was too afraid to fight Goliath.

The only people he's killed that we have hit in this is he's performed genocide against his own people. Well done, Saul. Anyway, Saul's own son, Jonathan, who would otherwise be next in line for the throne, also loves David.

They make a covenant together. Saul then tries to kill David. David has to go on the run. He drops his parents off in Moab, where his grandmother was from.

He gets some consecrated food and a weapon from the priests in Nob. He then spends time in Philistine country pretending to be crazy.

[5 : 52] Meanwhile, Saul gets wind of the generosity of the priests of Nob and has the priests slaughtered together with their families and all the inhabitants of the town of Nob.

Men, women, children, babies, oxen, donkeys and sheep. All dead. Mass genocide. Because he got some bread and a sword and they prayed.

Ooh. Ooh. That was justice for you. David inquires of the Lord as to whether he should attack a few Israelite enemies. And he attacks and he wins.

David carries on running, meets up with Jonathan again. They make another covenant. David escapes Saul at close quarters, running one side of a mountain, while Saul's on the other side of the mountain.

All of those bullet points brings us up to date to where we currently are at. So chapter 24. I intend to go through the chapter relatively quickly today.

[6 : 57] Perhaps that those bullet points of that introduction has influenced me. What I will then do is drill down into a couple of the themes that arise during the study. So verse one.

Now, when Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, it was reported to him saying, behold, David is in the wilderness of En Gedi. Oh, so people are telling Saul stuff now.

When he did that slaughter before, that was because nobody told me that David was getting this stuff. So let's have a look at where En Gedi is.

So we've got the Dead Sea here. The Philistines are over here on the west side of everything. The Dead Sea, it's known as the Dead Sea because it's full of salt.

It's full of salt because it's below sea level. So when water travels on along a river, it goes downhill. It can't go below sea level. And therefore, when water goes into the Dead Sea, it just stays there and evaporates and it increases in salinity, ends up very salty.

- [8 : 02] En Gedi is just here. Everything surrounding it is a bit of a desert kind of region. And En Gedi is an oasis. There's water there, fresh water coming in through a river that is, you might not be able to see it, but it's along this kind of line here.
- I've got a few other pictures. So that's the little area of En Gedi there. It looks quite barren around it.
- So getting to En Gedi is hard work. Once you get there, it's much better. So here's a picture from inside En Gedi. That's what it looks like.
- And the local inhabitants of En Gedi look like this. That is a Nubian ibex. But you will see in our study that it mentions the mountain goats.
- So verse two tells us that Saul took 3000 chosen men from all Israel and went to search for David and his men in front of the rocks of the mountain goats.
- [9 : 04] So those mountain goats are these things up here. And it's worth noting, Saul is taking 3000 chosen men. So these are warriors of the highest ilk.
- And he is going for David. He's gunning for him. Verse three. And he came to the sheepfolds on the way where there was a cave and Saul went in to relieve himself.
- So sheepfold is a shelter for a sheep. And Saul goes into a cave to relieve himself. The KJV calls it. He's going to cover his feet.
- An interesting choice of expression. Yeah. Carrying on. Now, David and his men were sitting in the inner recesses of the cave.
- Then David's men said to him, behold, this is the day of which the Lord said to you, behold, I'm about to hand your enemy over to you. And you shall do to him as it seems good to you.
- [10 : 08] So what unfolds makes it logical that. This trip into the cave for Saul is more than a few moments.
- But I don't think we need to spend too much time contemplating what he's doing. But these men are saying that God is fulfilling a promise to deliver Saul into David's hands.
- To quote everybody's least favourite source. Did God really say that? Well, the answer is there's no additional evidence to suggest that God did say that until David then repeats it later on in this chapter.
- Are they making it up? To be honest, I'm actually amazed they're even having this as a verbal conversation. Surely Saul would hear them. Wouldn't every word said echo around the cave and then they would be discovered?
- How do you hide? So David is there with 400 men. How do you hide 400 men in a cave and remain undetected? You'd think that the light of any lamps or flames or anything would be obvious.
- [11 : 17] And any noise made would also be obvious. I did see a video of this location, actually. And it suggests that there's a bunch of waterfalls outside some caves in this area.
- So we're not sure specifically which cave it is. But perhaps the sound of the waterfall would therefore mask them having this conversation. But yeah, at first I was wondering whether it was like a sign language conversation where they're just pointing at him and offering to slit his throat or something.
- But the words they're using are very specific. It has to have been a verbal conversation. But think about it. You've got 400 men trapped in a cave who, until a few moments ago, probably thought they were goners because Saul's just turned up with 3,000 men.
- They must have been absolutely amazed that it's only Saul that's gone into the cave. Because what happens next, if he's got bodyguards with him, they are useless.

Although, having said that, there is another incident in a few chapters time when everybody falls asleep and David gets to walk into the camp. Steal Saul's jug of water, I think it is, and his spear.

[12 : 33] And then go and stand outside the camp and let him know that he's managed to do this. But the point is that, what kind of bodyguards has he got?

He's supposed to be king. So anyway, the men in the cave are thinking, let's murder the guy whilst he's on the can. And I would speculate, because the Bible doesn't give us any information here, that Saul is distracted.

He's probably reading on the toilet, reading a scroll or scrolling on his tablet or something along those kind of lines. He's distracted. He's not paying attention. So carrying on with what the Bible itself says.

So he said to his men, far be it from me because of the Lord that I would do this thing to my Lord, the Lord's anointed, to reach out with my hand against him, since he is the Lord's anointed.

So if you think about this from a fleshly perspective, the temptation very clearly will be to murder Saul. Your flesh would agree that this guy more than deserves it.

[13 : 52] You'd be doing the world a favour, bumping him off. Tactically, cutting Saul's clothes is a risky, yet kind of genius move if you think about it.

If you killed the king, well, there are 3,000 men waiting outside who will eventually be wondering, where's the king? So they would go in looking for him.

And, well, 3,000 versus 400, I think we know how that one would go. We'll talk about the spiritual angle in a moment. But we know that following the behaviour of our flesh leads to death.

Galatians 5, 19 to 21 says, Okay, so murdering the king kind of ticks a few of these boxes, doesn't it?

Hatred, bits of rage, selfish ambition. Okay, so it's not the righteous path, murdering the king. So verse 7, And David rebuked his men with these words and did not allow them to rise up against Saul.

[15 : 21] And Saul got up, left the cave and went on his way. He didn't wash his hands! Well, maybe he did. So this talks about rebuke.

So Proverbs chapter 27 verses 5 to 6 says, Better is open rebuke than love that is concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.

When people correct you, are you open to being corrected? It's so easy for us to get this the wrong way round and to lose it with our friends when they call us on our nonsense.

Otherwise, God wouldn't have had the need to tell us that it's wise to listen to these people and to value their rebuke. Afterward, however, David got up and went out of the cave and called after Saul, saying, My lord, the king!

Okay, so David has now just surrendered his position. He's now placed his life in the hands of the king. This is the same guy who threw a spear at David in 1 Samuel chapter 19.

[16 : 40] This is also the same guy who was happy to let an unarmed youth take on a giant. And Saul has stolen his would-be wife away and has on multiple occasions tried to kill him.

So David's given away his position. The natural turn of events would be that Saul then turns to the commander of the army, Abner, and then the army descends on David.

If this is a cartoon, they're probably a big pile and David's trying to crawl out, but a big pile of them on top of David. David breathes his last. But it's not as simple as that, is it? So when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and prostrated himself.

So he's laying very low, very, very low down to his king. And David said to Saul, Why do you listen to the words of men who say, Behold, David is seeking to harm you.

Behold, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord had handed you over to me today in the cave. And someone said to you, sorry, someone said to kill you. But I spared you.

[17 : 51] And I said, I will not reach out with my hand against my Lord because he is the Lord's anointed. But David has humbled himself before the king.

He's found himself in a position to prove beyond all doubt that he doesn't want to kill the king. But I spared you. I will not reach out with my hand against my Lord because he's the Lord's anointed.

Saul was anointed as king before David was. David has since been anointed the next king. But he is waiting patiently for this to happen.

I find this interesting because when David is anointed king, he is promised he will be king. So when he goes and fights Goliath, he knows he's not going to lose.

The guy, for all intents and purposes, is bulletproof. In the same way when Peter is going to be executed the next day and he's chained up in the prison and he's singing.

[18 : 53] And then, yeah, he knows he's fine because he's going to live to an old age. There aren't many of us. Unfortunately, there aren't many of us who have those kinds of promises that we know how long we will live.

What we do know is we will live as long as the Lord has need for us. Verse 11. So my father, look, indeed, look at the edge of your robe in my hand.

For by the fact that I cut off the edge of your robe but did not kill you, no one understand that there is no evil or rebellion in my hands. And I have not sinned against you.

But you are lying in wait for my life to take it. He is saying that this piece of cloth is the evidence that I could have killed you. But he's also calling Saul on the fact that Saul wants to kill David.

Busted! The king can't deny it. The whole point of the 3,000 men running around the wilderness is to capture and kill David. They all know what the mission is.

[19 : 56] They're all hearing this. Verse 12. May the Lord judge between you and me and may the Lord take vengeance on you for me. But my hand shall not be against you.

Okay, so we'll dig a bit more into this in a little while. But for now, suffice to say that David is letting the Lord deal with Saul. Thus letting Saul know that he's free from having to worry about what David is up to.

Verse 13. As the Proverbs of the ancients say, Out of the wicked comes wickedness. But my hand shall not be against you. After whom has the king of Israel gone out?

Whom are you pursuing? A dead dog? A single flea? Why is this guy worried about chasing after one of his own army officers? He should be fighting with the Philistines.

The guy is deluded at very best. David is commenting on the lack of his own significance. Why are you working so hard to chase me down? Verse 15.

[20 : 59] May the Lord therefore be judge and decide between you and me. And may he see and plead my cause and save me from your hand. Again, David repeats the message that he wants the Lord to deal with him.

Verse 16. When David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, Is this your voice, my son David? And Saul raised his voice and wept.

What a sight to behold. The king is in tears. The behavior of the king in this moment is interesting. You know, I'd love to know what's going through Abner's mind at this moment.

This is the commander of the army. I imagine his jaw has hit the floor. Sorry, you what? You don't want me to put his head on a steak and then barbecue his entrails.

What on earth is going on? What are we running around this desert for? Verse 17. And he said to David, you are more righteous than I, for you have dealt with me while I have dealt.

[22 : 04] Sorry, you have dealt well with me while I have dealt maliciously with you. You have declared today that you have done good to me, that the Lord handed me over to you.

And yet you did not kill me. Though if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away unharmed? May the Lord, therefore, reward you with good in return for what you have done to me this day.

Some might say this is an amazing act of repentance. In some ways, I think he genuinely means this at this moment, because otherwise David would be dead.

But when Jesus tells us the parable of the sower in Matthew 13, which is often incorrectly named the parable of the soils. Jesus called it the parable of the sower.

So that's its name. I'm not going to argue with Jesus. There are four different places that seeds fall. Beside the road where birds eat them. Rocky places where they sprang up, then died in the sun because they had no depth of soil.

[23 : 09] In the thorns where they're choked by thorns and aren't fruitful. And they go into good soil where they yielded a crop, some 30, some 60, some 100 fold, right? Saul's repentance, in inverted commas, wasn't long lasting.

He didn't really mean it. There was no fruit. I would suggest that this is the seed that fell in the rocky places where it's immediately responded. But spoiler alert, Saul's heart does not remain in this place.

He will continue to try and get David. Now, behold, verses verse 20, sorry. Now, behold, I know that you will certainly be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand.

Now, you know, certainly. So you thought you knew before, but you weren't sure. When did you know? So in 1 Samuel, chapter 20, verse 31, in a conversation with Jonathan, he said this.

For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, neither you nor your kingdom will be established. Now then, send men and bring him to me, that he is doomed to die.

[24 : 22] He knows something's amiss here. However, in chapter 23, verse 17, thus he said to him, do not be afraid because the hand of Saul, my father, will not find you.

This is Jonathan speaking, sorry. And you will be king over Israel and I will be next to you. And Saul, my father, knows that also. So Saul knows.

1 Samuel, chapter 24, verse 20, which is where we're at. Now behold, I know that you will surely be king and the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hand. I put it to you.

Saul might have known this all along. He was very keen to send David off to fight Goliath. But whether he did or didn't is kind of a mute point. At this moment in time, he is accepting that David will be king.

Verse 21, so now swear to me by the Lord that you will not cut off my descendants after me and that you will not eliminate my name from my father's household.

[25 : 24] And David swore an oath to Saul. So David has promised not to eliminate Saul's name and cut off his descendants. Murdering those in the family tree was the default position in those days.

Saul had even done it to others. So this wasn't unusual. What was unusual was that David was happy to make such a promise.

But we can dig into that in a few moments. Carrying on the scripture. Then Saul went to his home. David and his men went up to the stronghold. OK, so Saul's gone home.

He hasn't killed David. He's not still pursuing David. He's gone home. There is something going on with Saul here. Clearly, there is some form of repentance. But David and his men went up to the stronghold.

Why has David not gone home with him? David knows something is not right. So David. So Saul going home is an act of someone who thinks they're at peace.

[26 : 26] Right. So that's the end of the chapter. What we're going to do now is drill into some of the themes and subjects that come up in here. So I if you remember, I entitled this the council of fools.

You need to be careful about who you allow and what you allow to influence you. David's not got his family around that around him at this point, but he is getting the advice to kill the king.

He's not got his family here. No wives or anything like that. Just a group of renegades. So to whom do you listen?

You know, where do you get your advice? Do you get do you get your advice from your family and your friends, parents, brothers, sisters, work colleagues?

Do you get advice from the media, podcasts, music, the news, TV, the Internet, social media? Do you just read books? You'll get advice along the lines of, well, everybody does it.

[27 : 27] You should, too. Think about David's influences. Think about how David influences people around him. In chapters to come, David is going to influence his own family.

Think about his impact on Solomon. What was the first thing that pops into your head when we think about Solomon? The number of wives, right? Maybe some of you will think about his wisdom, right?

But he'll be one of those two things. David had eight wives. Let's think about what impact that had on Solomon. He had a thousand. 300 wives, 700 concubines.

If you're not familiar, a concubine, basically, from the husband's perspective, you get all the benefits and fewer downsides. A thousand women.

If he spent a night with a different woman every night, he wouldn't return to the first one again for more than three years. How many of them do you think he would have been happy in that situation?

[28 : 34] How many of them do you think he could even remember the names of? Seriously, how many of them can you name? Solomon's wives. Can anyone name two?

You can't. The Bible only names one. She's named three times, always in the context of being King Rehoboam's mother. Narma the Ammonite.

Anyone had that on the tip of their tongue? No, no idea. So 1 Kings chapter 11 verse 4 says, As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the Lord his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

He followed Ashtaroath, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. Narma the Ammonite. Hmm.

Molech, the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon followed her god Molech. Some influence she was. So Rehoboam, who was that?

[29 : 39] This is the king who is asked for lighter taxes and easier work after the death of Solomon. Solomon. He gets advice from Solomon's advisors, and they say you should lighten the load and win the people's hearts, because they will love you.

But instead, he listens to the young men who had grown up with him. He talks to his mates and decides to increase the taxes and work. You will remember this guy.

He's the one that said, my little finger is bigger than your loins. He split the kingdom in two. So let's go back to our situation in the cave.

David is in a cave listening to men's voices echoing that he should murder the king. Well, the Bible does tell us to listen to lots of people. Proverbs 15.22 says, It's amazing how you can just take a verse all on its own and go, Oh, I just need to talk to lots of people.

Everybody says the same thing. It must be. Well, getting lots of advice without discernment is a fool's way forward. If your influences are all only influenced by each other, chances are they will all give you the same answer.

[31 : 06] It doesn't make it sound advice. This is a thing called an echo chamber. Where's David in a chamber that echoes? It's a place where everyone agrees with each other and reinforces the prevalent view.

Diverse views, on the other hand, allow you to discern what is best. Rehoboam was a fool to listen to the secondary voices of his friends to increase the taxes and the forced labour. What should he have done?

Another example of an echo chamber would be, let's have a look at the Pharisees. They all agreed that Jesus couldn't possibly be the Messiah. Oh, he's doing work on the Sabbath.

Therefore, we'll ignore all the other factors. We couldn't possibly be wrong in our interpretation on the Sabbath. Therefore, yeah, we'll have him stoned to death and disregard everything that you say.

Fools! Proverbs 12.15 says, Social media is terrible for being an echo chamber.

[32 : 22] It keeps track of what you look at and what you like, and then it just shows you more of it. So, it's going to show you stuff that you agree with, whether it's true or not.

Other examples of bad advice. Satan. Did God actually say, Now, the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.

He said to the woman, Did God actually say, You shall not eat of the tree in the garden? And the woman said to the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden.

But God said, You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden. Neither shall you touch it, lest you die. But the serpent said to the woman, You will not surely die.

For God knows that when you eat of it, your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil. The Bible also says that we should seek sound guidance.

[33 : 26] Proverbs 24.6 says, Only with sound guidance should you wage war, and victory lies in a multitude of counsellors. Proverbs 20.18 says, Set plans by consultation and wage war under sound guidance.

They're repeating the same thing. Other examples of great advice? How about Jethro? Moses' father-in-law. Moses, you know, in the psalm we were hearing earlier on, you can hear about how Israel are in the wilderness.

So Moses is there in the wilderness, all of Israel, and he's trying to resolve all the people's problems. They're all going to be a lot of problems, because they've left their homes.

They are travelling. Everything's going to be a problem. I don't think there's much running water in the middle of the desert. So, yeah, so he's there with two to three million people and their problems.

And he's getting burned out by it. Jethro advises him to appoint others to deal with the smaller problems, and Moses can then focus on the big and important problems. But how do you discern perfect wisdom?

[34 : 37] So James chapter 3, verses 13 to 18, says this. Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behaviour, his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom.

But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic.

For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder at every evil thing. But the wisdom from above is first pure, peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy.

And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace. Just dwell on those things for a moment. Wisdom from above, pure, peace-loving, gentle, reasonable, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial, free of hypocrisy, and it's sown in peace.

What about diversity of views? Just how diverse should we go? Well, the world tells us we should go for maximum diversity, except for those who disagree with them.

[36 : 14] Well, in a few chapters time, Saul will ask a medium to inquire of a dead man. Samuel, good person to speak to. Well, this is because Saul feels that God isn't speaking to him.

The Bible doesn't tell us that these things aren't real. They are real. Some of them are charlatans, but these things are real.

The Bible is telling us not to mess with them. To rely on God instead. That's why Israel were told to stone the mediums.

They're not fraudulent. Well, some of them might be, but for sure they are evil. We can dig into that more when we reach that chapter though.

Isaiah says this, chapter 44, verse 24 and 25 says this, this is what the Lord says. He who is your redeemer and the one who formed you from the womb, I, the Lord, and the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by myself and spreading out the earth alone, causing the omens of diviners to fail, making fools of fortune tellers, causing wise men to turn back and making their knowledge ridiculous.

[37 : 34] What about David? What does David say on the subject? Psalm 1, verse 1, his very first opportunity to speak in the Bible says, blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seats of scoffers.

Do you think he was thinking of this moment when he, when he wrote that? So how diverse should your counsel be? Well, a bit diverse, but not that kind of diversity.

There's another theme in this subject here. The theme of revenge comes up. David says he's not going to touch the Lord's anointed. Oh, there's a verse that can be taken out of context.

You're not allowed to criticise anybody because, oh, the preacher, oh, he's the Lord's anointed. You can't criticise him. Touch not the Lord's anointed. Nonsense. There is one Lord's anointed.

That's this person here. Well, two, Jesus. So you've got two. Other than that, fill your boots. He also said he would leave it all up to God and not deal with Saul himself.

[38 : 44] How many times does the Bible not, how many times does the Bible say not to take revenge? There's too many for me to count. Leviticus 19, 18 says, do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbour as yourself.

I am the Lord. Deuteronomy 32, 35 says, it is mine to avenge. I will repay. In due time, their foot will slip. Their day of disaster is near and their doom rushes upon them.

Proverbs 20, 22 says, I will pay you back for this wrong. Wait for the Lord and he will avenge you. 1 Thessalonians 5, 15 says, make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else.

1 Peter 3, verse 9 says, make sure no one repays evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing.

Uh-oh. That's not easy. Um, because this, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. So you inherit a blessing by repaying evil with a blessing.

[40 : 03] How's that for a promise for you? But I want to hit him with a baseball bat. No, no, bless him. David chooses to love his neighbour. He chooses to turn the other cheek.

Hmm. I can remember someone talking about that stuff once before. This is extraordinary behaviour from the man who, it was so easy for him just to reach out and, well, stab him in the cave.

But he gets it. Revenge is a strange topic, right? If you are only dealing with your flesh, what does it really look like?

Well, you broke my leg, I'm going to break yours. No, in fact, I'm going to break both your legs. You knocked out my tooth. I'm going to knock all your teeth out.

You burn my fence down, I will burn your whole house down. That's how revenge works. Lamech says in Genesis chapter 4 verse 24, if Cain's revenge is avenged sevenfold, then Lamech 77-fold.

[41 : 10] What you've done to me, multiply it by 77 and I'm doing that to you, mate. God had to instigate the code, the Lex Talionis, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, to deal with the human condition of wanting to rain hellfire from above on someone for a small slight, as the Sons of Thunder wanted to do.

Jesus, on the other hand, raised the bar for us. Love our enemies. Turn the other cheek. That's not easy to do. The subject of making oaths comes up as well.

At the end there, David is making an oath not to cut off Saul's bloodline. What do we think? Does David keep his word?

Let's have a quick look at his family tree. At the top here, it's not that legible. It says Benjamin at the top. There's many generations between Benjamin and Ner. But Saul is the king here.

He's the son of Kish. And Kish is the son of Ner. Abner, who's the head of the army, is Saul's uncle. Okay? These are all Saul's kids.

[42 : 24] Right, so, Saul. When Saul dies, he dies in battle with Jonathan. He dies in battle with Abinadab and Mikey Shua.

Thanks, Mum and Dad. Appreciate that name. These names here, single syllable, Ner, Kish, Saul, Mikey Shua.

Thanks. Yeah. So these three all die with Saul in battle. who else do we have on the block here?

Oh, Abner, by the way, I'm intrigued by it because it's very close to my name. Unfortunately, it's not linked. Or fortunately, probably. Abner means, well, Ner means light.

So Abner means of Ner or of light or my father is the light. Merab. This is the daughter that Saul promised to David and then gave to somebody else.

[43 : 27] So it was Adriel the Maholethite that Merab was given to. And you've got Michal over here. That's the one that David marries. She's the lady who helps him out of the city to escape Saul.

She's also the lady who gets very cross when David is dancing before the Lord when the ark is coming into Jerusalem. Ish-bosheth.

So this guy here becomes king straight after Saul dies. It's actually this period where David's only king in Hebron, I think it is. During that time, it's Ish-bosheth who is king.

And in that time, whilst he's asleep, he is murdered by Rechab and Barna, the sons of Rimmon the Beerothite. And then those guys go to David and show Ish-bosheth's head.

Well, you couldn't take a photo on your mobile phone and go, look, he's dead. So they brought his head. David did it with Goliath's head as well. So, okay, took David his head.

[44 : 34] David's not impressed. David has those guys killed. So you've then got Mephibosheth and Armoni. You'll notice there are two Mephibosheths, these two here, and the five sons of Merab.

They are slaughtered in 2 Samuel chapter 21 to avenge the Gibeonites. It's a complicated scene. It's been a three-year famine and the Lord tells David it is because of the blood that was spilled by the house of Saul.

So David inquires of the Gibeonites, what do you want us to do? Oh, can you hand over seven male members of Saul's household? I'm not going to cut off your name or your family.

So David hands over seven members and they are executed. If you remember, this is their mother, not Merab, the mother of these two, by the way, is the lady who's then trying to fight off the ravens or whatever it is, trying to eat the bodies.

So did David keep that oath not to cut them off? Well, this Mephibosheth over here, when Saul is killed in battle, the nurse of Mephibosheth tries to go running, falls, lands in an awkward fashion and breaks his feet.

[45 : 54] So he's lame. And you will see in 2 Samuel that David goes to honour Mephibosheth and invite him to his table. So, does he fulfil the oath?

Well, yes and no. He allows this one to live, but everybody else is dead. But the thing is, if you just remember that Saul would have slaughtered everyone in David's family if the boot had been on the other foot, I'll tell you what, if you want to get on with people in churches generally, this next verse is actually really quite important.

Matthew 5, 37, I'm sure you all know it by heart. But let your yes be yes and your no be no, for whatever is more than these is from the evil one.

What does it mean? If you say you're going to do something, do it! Don't say you will and then don't. You know, something as trivial as the church lunch. they succeed and they fail on whether you keep to your yes or your no.

If you said no and then you bring something, no harm no foul, it's a bonus. If you say yes and then forget, as I might do, what does the Lord say about vows?

[47 : 18] Ecclesiastes 5 verses 4 and 5 say this, when you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying for it, that he takes no delight in fools, pay what you vow.

It is better that you do not vow than vow and not pay. So, simple thing, don't make vows to God, if there's any chance you won't be able to fulfil it.

Better not to vow than to vow and not to pay. So, I've been talking for about 45 minutes, maybe 50 minutes by now, and what's that guy's name?

Oh yeah, Jesus. Why are we spending all this time looking at some bloke called David when Jesus is the one who should be our main focus? Okay, we'll get to that in a sec.

So, how do we apply what we've learned without just becoming legalistic? Okay, don't make vows, don't take revenge, seek good advice from a variety of sources, just not evil sources, discern whether the advice is Godly advice, follow it, don't surround yourself with fools, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, tick, that's your flesh at work.

[48 : 31] Let's not turn this into a tick box exercise. This story in the Bible, and all stories in the Bible, and just for the sake of clarity, these aren't made up, these things really happened, these are real events, these things echo the life of Jesus.

So, what have we seen? David being rejected by leaders of the time, David being persecuted, hang on a minute, David's innocent, they're seeking him out, they want to kill him.

what happens if they succeed? Seen it before, if you were here when I was last preaching, there's King David sat there, and you've got the line of Mary here, and the line of Joseph here.

So, Jesus' biological line, Jesus' legal line through Joseph, because they prioritise males, it's just the way it is, I'm afraid, ladies, but the point is that if Saul had succeeded in killing David, all of that isn't possible.

Well, God will find a way, but it would have been a different line, it would have been a different path. It's not that easy to thought God's plan.

[50 : 04] Jesus is the fulfilment of all the prophecies from David's Psalms. Jesus paid for our sin so that we wouldn't have to dwell or be trapped by the mistakes that we've made in our revenge, in our bad advice we've given or taken.

We shouldn't be so open to new ideas that we change our mind about everything any time a new idea comes along. the Bible calls this being buffeted by every wind of doctrine.

Nor should we be so ingrained in our position that we are ready to put the Prince of Peace to death just because he doesn't match one of the ideas of doctrine that we have in our head.

We should test the spirits. Are they from God or are they from Satan? Satan is perfect in wisdom, so he knows how to deceive you.

He's not the father of lies for no reason. There's a reason there are so many Christian denominations that disagree about the fundamentals as to how you even get saved.

[51 : 11] He's trying to distract. 2 Timothy chapter 4 verses 3 and 4 says this, For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths.

Paul is saying there we need to be careful about what teaching we listen to. Just because something already agrees with us doesn't mean it's right.

We need to make sure that this isn't us as a people, as a church, if you're getting so deeply involved in something that isn't a matter of salvation, my question to you is why are you bothering?

Ask God for wisdom because he gives generously to those who seek him and ask for it. Let us pray. Father, give us wisdom.

Help us. Help us to let the wisdom of men fail. Help us to surround us with your wisdom. Help us to take the good from what we learn about David and to leave the evil.

[52 : 32] Give us ears to hear. Give us teachable hearts. Give us wisdom when we are making oaths.

Give us discernment in those moments when someone's asking for us to promise something. Father, give us wisdom and patience and grace when we wish to take revenge.

Help us to place things in your domain and let you take care of them because you do provide. You are able to take revenge. All we're doing is heaping sin upon sin.

Help us to be better advocates and help us to reflect you all the more. May your Holy Spirit guide us this week.

In Jesus' name. Amen.