

Wait for It // 1 Samuel 24, Psalm 57 // *The Life of David* #8¹

Introduction

1 Samuel 24, if you have your Bibles...

I hope you are reading these stories of David as we go through them. I can't cover everything in these chapters, and there's some really fascinating stuff in them.

David's life in these chapters reads like a good news/bad news story. You know, good news/bad news story--like the story of the two friends who wonder, "Will there be baseball in heaven?" and they agree that whichever one dies first will come back and tell the other one the answer. Well, sure enough, one dies, and his ghost appears to the other one the next day and says, "I have good news and bad news." "Good news is there is baseball in heaven. Bad news: you're pitching on Friday."

David's story reads like a good news/bad news story. Just as David presses through one challenge, and you think things are about to get better for him, he is greeted by another obstacle. Reading through

¹ Works Consulted: Tim Chester, *1 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word for You)*, The Good Book Company, September 15, 2014; John Sailhammer. *NIV Compact Bible Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994); Beth Moore, "Survival Skills and He Who Wills," session taught with LifeWay, published in 2010; Joby Martin, "Prophets Priests Kings - Week 12: The Lord Judge," sermon preached at The Church of Eleven22, posted on July 14, 2019; Charlie Dates, "'I'm Willing to Wait' | 1 Samuel 24 | Pastor Charlie Dates," sermon streamed live from Progressive Baptist Church Chicago on Nov. 29, 2020; Andy Stanley, sermon on 1 Samuel 24, "Your Move, Pt. 3 - Pay Attention to the Tension."

these stories this time reminded me of reading about the Lewis & Clark expedition in Stephen Ambrose's book *Undaunted Courage*. For two years, Lewis & Clark and their team battled fatigue, hunger, raiding parties, desertion by their crew and a lot of other setbacks as they pressed Westward in search of a waterway that would carry them to the Pacific. They had been led to believe that once they reached the continental divide in Colorado (or in what we today call Colorado), they would find the Columbia River, where they could put their boats in and float lazily all the rest of the way to the Pacific Ocean. Ambrose says that as they approached the continental divide, Meriwether Lewis ran ahead of everybody so he could be the first to see what he assumed was going to be a long, sloping valley that stretched all the way to the Pacific. Instead, he became the first non-native American to lay eyes on the Rocky Mountains.

Just when you think things are going to get easier for David, Rocky Mountains. And it raises this question I want us to consider today:

What do you do when the path you're on takes an expected turn for the worst?

- Your career hits a snag. And, you're like, "I didn't see this coming!"
- Or maybe you say, "My career can't hit a snag--it doesn't seem to ever get started!" I graduated high school with high hopes but now I can't even find a job.
- Or your kid starts having problems when they get into middle school--eating disorder, or depression, or bad behavior.
- Or maybe you're not married and you thought surely by this age you would be.
- Or you are married but this is a far cry from the marriage you'd always dreamed of
- Or you just got divorced and never in a million years did you ever think that would happen to you

What do you do when life takes a negative turn you weren't expecting?

I want to use these stories of David today to warn you against a huge temptation that we fall into in moments like that--to take matters into your own hands; or, to put it in theological terms: **to attempt to perfect by the flesh what was promised in the Spirit.** This is a major theme in the Bible; you see almost every Bible character go through a season like this, and today we'll see it happen to David.

1 Sam 24: Things are not going well for David.

- In 1 Samuel 16, David was anointed king (that was a high point!--everybody do me a favor: smile really big)
- After that, he gets sent back to the sheep pasture where he's forgotten about for several years (that's a low point).
- Then, he wins this epic battle against Goliath, where he becomes a national hero, marries the king's daughter and gets a job on Capitol Hill (that's a high point!).
- But King Saul turns out to be an egomaniac who tries 5x to pin David to the wall with a spear (low point), and then gives David's wife to someone else and uses the state-controlled media to trash David's reputation, then puts out a warrant for David's arrest and says he'll pay a bounty to anybody who brings David to him, dead or alive (another low point).

Well, 1 Sam 24, Saul hears that David and his merry men are hiding in the wilderness of En Gedi, and so... [24:2] Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats' Rocks. [3] And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to (PAUSE) relieve himself. (The literal Hebrew here says Saul went in to the cave to "cover his feet," which is a Hebrew euphemism for... doing #2. I'll let YOU figure out how that phrase indicates that. Now, get this) And David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave.

- Talk about an awkward moment... Is this good luck or bad luck? David and some of his men are hiding in this cave, and Saul goes into that very cave, without his guard, to pop-a-squat.

- This couldn't have been a pleasant experience. That cave is dark, dank with no ventilation, BUT

[4] And the men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'"

- I mean, there is **hardly a more vulnerable position** that a man can be in. Saul's over there, all by himself crouched down on the rock, britches around his ankles, reading the newspaper...
- **This is like a mafia hit**, like something on the Sopranos
- And the **men are like, "David, now is your moment!"**
- Notice, vs. 4, they even back it up with Scripture. They say, "David, God promised he would give your enemy into your hand one day... How is this not a fulfillment of that?"

Then David arose...

- In Hebrew, that word "arose" indicates decision. David gets his knife, presumably to go kill Saul; and somewhere, as David is coming up behind Saul, holding his nose, he thinks, "Wait... this is murder! *Even if God* has put Saul here in front of me, taking his life is wrong."

Could I just pause here and say: Fortuitous coincidences are not always the sign that God is behind something. I say that because it's amazing how many people justify their behavior through some coincidence.

- "My current marriage was not working, and I met this new guy at work who is just perfect. It all feels just too coincidental--it feels like fate."
- "I really wanted that car and unexpectedly the price dropped and then unexpectedly I got approved for a loan--I feel like God is giving me a sign that he wants me to have that car. (Of course, taking out this loan is going to put me in significant debt and will likely make me car-poor and eliminate any possibility of being

generous... but why else would all these circumstances randomly happen?)”

Friends, I’m not saying God never uses coincidences to direct us. But sometimes coincidences are just... coincidences. **Pastor John Muller of the CPC** said when he was about 12 his dad was trying to make a big decision--and one afternoon he and his dad were driving home, and as they pulled into their driveway, 7 doves flew up out of the yard. John said his dad counted out loud, “1, 2, 3...7 7 Doves! Son, 7 is God’s number of completion, and doves are what God uses to give signs. He used doves to show Noah the flood waters receded and used a dove to show the Spirit descending on Jesus at the baptism. So, there’s our answer. God wants us to do this!” John said, “But Dad, I think those are pigeons.” And his dad said, “And with a closed heart like that son, you’ll never hear God speak.’

Now, again, I’m not saying God never uses circumstances to guide us. But sometimes doves are just doves. And sometimes they are pigeons. The Word of God is always a much clearer guide in a situation than are circumstances. And David understands that. So, the foremost consideration for David in this moment is, “**What does God’s word say?**”

Furthermore, y’all know that God is not the only one who arranges fortuitous circumstances in your life, right? You don’t think Satan does that, too?

This temptation David is going through follows a pattern. Satan is tempting David to take matters into his own hands, and he even uses Scripture to do it. Remember how David’s men quoted Scripture to urge David to kill Saul? Vs. 4; “Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand...’”

This was how Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness: Satan took Jesus high up on a pinnacle and said, “God wants to give you all of this.”

(And that was true. God had said he wanted to give Jesus all of that). But then Satan said, “I can give it to you all right now, if you take this little shortcut--you won’t have to go through the cross or any suffering. You can have it all right now. Don’t wait on God to give you this; go get it now for yourself”

This is what Satan does. He starts with a truth--he holds up something God wants you to have--and then urges you to step outside of God’s will to get it--to take a short-cut.

Think about it:

- **In the Garden of Eden**, Satan said: God wants you to be happy and to have God-like wisdom. (And that was true). But then he said, “To get there, I’m going to show you a short-cut. Eat this forbidden fruit.”
- **To Abraham, Satan said:** “God has promised to make you the father of a great nation.” (And that was true) But then he said, “But Abe, you’re childless, and Sarah your wife is old, so have a kid with your servant Hagar. IOW, step outside of God’s will and take a shortcut.”

Do you see the pattern? The temptation is to pursue the promise of the Spirit by the power of the flesh--by stepping outside of God’s will.

Watch what David does: David crawls right up behind him, and as Saul leans over to grab some toilet paper or whatnot, David ...stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. [5] But afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

- David felt guilty for even doing that. Now, at this point, David’s men are just apoplectic. They’re like, “First, David, you don’t kill the guy who has been trying to kill us when God puts him right in front of you; but now, you feel guilty about messing up his clothes?”

[6] But David said to his men, “The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed, to put out my hand against him, seeing he is the LORD's anointed.”

- Even if Saul is in the wrong, David says, this is God’s appointed king and these are God’s appointed circumstances and it is not for me to take matters into my own hands.
- **I cannot achieve the purpose of God by breaking the commands of God.**

Think about it, y’all: Killing Saul would have solved so many of David’s problems! And he could have framed it as self-defense. Or he could have played the victim card: “Saul is using his position of power to abuse me and manipulate me.” And wasn’t Saul guilty of death for what he’d done? And hadn’t God promised David the throne anyway?

All those things are true and David could have used them as justification. But David knew you never achieve the purposes of God by breaking the commands of God. Never. [7] So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul.

Saul finishes up his business, gives it a royal flush, uncovers his feet, and exits the cave. **David waits for a few minutes** until Saul is a little distance away, and then he calls out to Saul from the mouth of the cave... [8] “My lord the king!” And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage.

[9] And David said to Saul, “Why do you listen to the words of men who say, ‘Behold, David seeks your harm’? [10] Behold, this day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you.

I said, ‘I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.’ [11] Then he waves the little corner of his robe that he cut off... By the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my

hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it. [12] May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you.

[13] As the proverb of the ancients says, ‘Out of the wicked comes wickedness.’ IOW, “Your sin doesn’t justify mine. To do wicked would make me wicked, regardless of what you did to provoke it.” “Only from the wicked comes wickedness,” and when you do wickedness it makes you wicked regardless of what someone did to you to provoke it. **The opposite of this proverb would be,** “The ends justify the means.”

David then finishes his soliloquy with this plea: [14] After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea! (A dead dog won’t bite you. A flea can’t hurt you. I’m not trying to do anything to you!)

16 As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, “Is this your voice, my son David?” And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. 17 He said to David, “You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil... May the Lord reward you with good for what you have done to me this day.

20 And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21 Swear to me therefore by the Lord that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house.” 22 And David swore this to Saul. Now, watch this: Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

Notice: David didn’t go back with Saul. It looked like Saul had repented. He had said he was sorry, asked for forgiveness, cried about it; he even acknowledged that David one day would be king. Yet David still went back to the stronghold. Just because someone says they are

sorry, and you forgive them, doesn't mean you can always go right back to normal.

When you have been abused, someone simply saying, "I'm sorry" and crying about it doesn't mean that you are obligated to move back in immediately. He says he's sorry, and he might be! She says she forgives him, and she does. But that doesn't necessarily mean she needs to move back in. There can (and often should be) a good gap of time to know if the repentance is real and will endure. David wisely says, "I forgive you, but I'm staying here for a while."

But that brings us back to the question: **What do you do when the path you're on takes an expected turn for the worst?** You basically have 2 choices: (1) You can take matters into your own hands. Or (2), you can do the hardest thing in the Bible: Trust God and wait on his timing.

Taking matters into your own hands usually takes one of 4 forms--think of these as **(Satan's Sinful Shortcuts)**:

- A. **Rationalized Revenge:** David's men urged him to settle the score and they felt right about doing that. Revenge almost always feels right, on one level.
- Your wife doesn't appreciate or respect you. So you cheat on her.
 - Your boss has been a jerk to you—so you do sloppy work and find ways to undermine him, even steal from the company because you feel entitled to it.
 - Some group discriminates against you, you discriminate against them. Members of that ethnic group are rude to you; so you are rude to some of them.
 - People are uncharitable with your motives on social media, so you are uncharitable with theirs
 - You cheat on your taxes because you know the government mishandles your money.

- These all feel justified because of the wrong you've endured. But out of the wicked comes wickedness.
- B. Category 2: **Pilfered Pleasures:** Life hasn't delivered for you, so you find escape in some stolen pleasure.
- **I can't help but think of Joseph in the Bible.** After all the unfair treatment he'd gone through--being sold into slavery and lied about. When Potiphar's wife propositioned him--I have to think how tempting it would have been for him to think, "As badly as my life has gone, I deserve this." Maybe that's what it is for you. An affair becomes an escape of pleasure in an unfair world.
 - Or maybe you find that escape in a bottle or through looking at porn. Or through retail therapy. You think, "What's this really hurting anyway? My job or my family is so stressful, I need this. God seems to've forgotten me; at least I have this."
- C. **Cowardly Compromise:**
- You think, "God's not delivering, so I'll take matters into my own hands." Like Abraham did with Hagar.
 - You're not married yet--God hasn't brought along a partner for you--so you date someone you know you shouldn't be with, because you figure that's better than being alone.
 - Financially, you're not where you want to be: so you overwork; you cut out giving your tithe.
 - God's not moving fast enough, on your timetable, so you take matters into your own hands. Which leads to:
- D. **Panicked Presumption** (Y'all, my alliteration game is ON POINT today)
- Because God is not delivering on your timetable, you start manipulating circumstances, forcing things.
 - Now, I know that type-A people who get stuff done are the ones hustling behind the scenes. And that's not necessarily a bad thing. But sometimes you're doing that because you're not willing to wait. Your behavior becomes obsessive and manipulative.

- For me that's been shown up by self-promotion. I want to make sure I'm angled and positioned to get the opportunity. So I'm manipulating relationships and promoting myself.
- Or if someone won't do what I want, I try to coerce them or guilt them.
- If God is not moving fast enough in the life of my kids, I try to force it.
- In all these things I am trying to complete in the power of my flesh what only God can do in the Spirit.

These things are the opposite of what David did. He said, "I will not stretch out my hand in wickedness against God's anointed no matter how justified I feel in doing so. **I will wait upon the Lord. I will do things his way.** He's the one that made the promises. He's the Shepherd to whom I've committed my soul. I will wait upon him.

Say that phrase. Everybody: I WILL WAIT UPON THE LORD. That one phrase would change so much in your life!

- If you're looking for someone to date: *I will wait upon the Lord.* God gives his best to those who leave the choice to him!
- If you're in a stymied career: *I will wait upon the Lord.*
- If you're financially not where you want to be: *I will wait upon the Lord.*
- If you're still in the pasture, wondering when God will put you into the game: *I will wait upon the Lord.*
- If your marriage is not where it should be, not fulfilling you: *I will wait upon the Lord.*
- If your kids are not where they should be, doing what they should do: *I will wait upon the Lord.*

And let me be clear, by waiting, I don't mean doing nothing. David is very active in these chapters: He protects himself by running; he prays about it; given the opportunity, he confronts Saul and passionately pleads his case before him. He just **does so from a posture of trust** and a **refusal to compromise** and sin.

Waiting on the Lord is a very ACTIVE thing: Think of it like this: **Have you ever eaten at a true 5 star restaurant?** I only have once or twice, on special occasions. And I remember at this one, our table had one waiter who was devoted just to Veronica and me. He stood off to the side and just watched us. The slightest hint of a need, he was there. I'd just think "I need some pepper." And as if he'd read my mind he'd appear, "Sir, would you like fresh ground pepper or our Malted Mediterranean blend?" He's my "waiter," but he's very actively attentive to everything I'm communicating. (The opposite of that are place like the **Waffle House**, where I could burst into flames and no one would notice. You have a waiter there, too, but because they are often understaffed they are usually preoccupied with a bunch of other things. I was in there the other day and the same lady sat me, took my order, cooked my food, and mopped the bathroom, all in the space of like 10 minutes.)

The point is: **We're supposed to wait on God like the waiter at the really nice restaurant** waits on us. Trained on who God is and what he wants us to do. I'm trusting him, but doing whatever he says.

It's like that **old Christian rock star Bob Hartman of Petra** used to say (anybody else listen to Petra growing up?): *Good things come to them who wait; but not to those who hesitate; so hurry up and wait upon the Lord.*

Write this down: The biggest enemy in my life is not Saul. It's my inability to wait.

I would say that learning to wait might be the most important skill to have as a believer.

- **I have told you before about the famous Stanford Marshmallow test, done in the 1970s.** "It's become famous as the marshmallow test, but it actually wasn't marshmallows. The participants were 32 children—between the ages of 3 and 5. The children were each led into a room, empty of distractions, where a treat of their

choice (either two animal cookies or five pretzel sticks) were placed on a table. The researchers told each child they could eat the treat, but if they waited 15 minutes without eating, they would be rewarded with a second treat. Then they left the room and watched through a camera. Some kids just immediately grabbed the treats and gobbled them down. Can't trust adults. Bird in the hand is worth two in the bush. They said that kids who chose to wait developed all kinds of coping strategies: some covered their eyes with their hands so they couldn't see the treats; some got up and walked around the room; some avoid making eye contact with the treat; one kid even got down and licked the table beside the treat as if somehow the treat had transmogrified into the wood. Researchers then tracked these children for the next 3 decades, and found that children who were able to wait had consistently better life outcomes, as measured by things like SAT scores, educational attainment, physical health, marriage satisfaction, and a whole host of other things.² **The researchers concluded that more than any other single factor they had ever studied, the ability to wait predicted future successes.**

- You say, "Well, that's just one test." I recently read about a similar study done in New Zealand. Sociologists did a **massive** project—studying over 1,000 kids over four decades, putting them through all kinds of evaluative tests. The scientists said they were shocked to discover that one factor that mattered more than any other on your **health, material wealth, and relational harmony was impulse-control**. It was more significant than **social class, wealth of their family, and IQ**.
- **If that's true socially, and academically. How much more is it true spiritually? Good things come to them that wait;** but not to those who hesitate; so, hurry up, and wait upon the Lord!

²<https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2018/02/two-psychologists-followed-1000-new-zealanders-decades-here-s-what-they-found-about-how>

- You say, "This depresses me about my kids." Yes, it's something we have to help them with. But forget your kids for a minute. How many of you are like, "Yep, I'm the marshmallow grabber."

Pray for the ability to wait. You say, "Well, J.D., this all sounds easier said than done. Where do you find the resources to be a good waiter?" Oh, so glad you asked! Dave wrote a Psalm where he tells us!

Psalm 57³ (ESV) A MIKTAM OF DAVID, WHEN HE FLED FROM SAUL, IN THE CAVE. ("Miktam" is Hebrew for 'R&B ballad.' And did you notice when he wrote it? He wrote it while he was hiding in these caves.)

¹ Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in **YOU** my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by.

² I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. ³ He will send from heaven and save me; he will put to shame him who **tramples on me. Selah** (BTW, no one is completely sure exactly what SELAH in the Bible means; most likely it's something like, "Stop and ponder." It's a signal for a musical interlude; for us children of the 80's something akin to, "Stop! It's hammer time..." So, at this point in the Psalm, imagine David stopping and doing a little jig.)

"Stop!!" David says, think about what I just said: God WILL send from heaven for me AND he WILL help me. Vs. 3: **God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!**

What do we see in these verses?

(1) Sovereignty: (vs. 2)

- In vs 2 (LOOK AT IT!) David said, "I know God, that even in this cave, you are fulfilling your purpose for me." Saul may think he's in charge, but you are really in charge. And what that means is in

³ Psalm 142.

every situation, I can respond to you. I don't have to control Saul, or manipulate Saul, I just have to do what you want and you'll take care of the results.

- What if you realized that in whatever unfortunate situation you find yourself, you are not responding to your husband, or to your boss, or to the government, but to God.
- Because Christians know that God is sovereign, controlling all the details of our lives, even the bad ones, and has a PURPOSE in everything, you always respond first and foremost to him.
- Saul may not deserve your mercy. Your boss may not deserve your integrity or hard work; your husband may not deserve your kindness, but Jesus always does.

(2) Steadfast love: (vs. 3)

Not only does God have a purpose for my trial, that purpose is founded by and saturated with steadfast, unbreaking, always and forever love.

- The Muslims I lived among in SE Asia had a belief called *taqdir*: it basically meant fate. Something would happen and they would shrug their shoulders and say, "Taqdir. Inshah Allah" (or, by the will of Allah.)
- What they did not have is **the assurance that God loved them** and was working all things according to a good and beautiful plan for their lives, that he was never pouring out wrath on them, only love.
- You see, many times they'd think when something went wrong that **God was punishing them** for some sin they'd committed a while back.
- But the gospel changes all that, because the gospel teaches us that any anger or punishment God had toward our sin he absorbed into himself when he died on the cross. That means that all that waits for me now is steadfast love. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, which means we don't ever have to fear that God is acting in wrath against us.

- On the cross, Jesus **got harshness and condemnation so all we would receive is goodness and mercy.**

How would your perspective change if you really believed that in all things, even when Saul has you unjustly trapped in a cave, that **God had a sovereign purpose in it**, woven with the threads of steadfast love, and that there is not one stray thread not controlled by that love?

- One of my **watches... (backwards wheels)**. They go every which way! But it produces this impeccable time-keeping device. A lot of things in your life may feel like backward motion. *"Why did God allow me to be divorced? Why was I overlooked for promotion? Why did my parents let me down so badly?"*
- I can't answer every question about what God is doing in your life, but I can tell you if you have entrusted your life to him, God has a loving purpose he was and is pursuing in you and every movement in your life is working toward that purpose. Do you believe that, and can you patiently wait for that?

You say, "J.D., this is easy for you to say... you don't know what I'm going through." You've had a bankruptcy; an unexpected pregnancy; you've been betrayed by a friend or a spouse; you've been laid off from the company after 26 years with no prospects. And maybe I don't understand. I mean, I've got my own problems, too, but maybe yours feel worse to you.

But listen to David: ⁴ **My soul is in the midst of lions; I lie down amid fiery beasts— the children of man, whose teeth are spears and arrows, whose tongues are sharp swords.**

- That sounds pretty bad. David is being chased by a rabid king who used to be a friend who is now trying to kill him!
- David knows a little bit of the anguish you are going through. The point is not to compare yours and mine or yours and his. As I've told you: **suffering is not a competitive sport**. The point is that the resources David avails himself of are available to you, too.

Vs. 5: ⁵ Be exalted, O God, above the heavens! Let your glory be over all the earth! Now what is David praying for? For who to be exalted? God.

Write down this 3rd word: **(3) Surrender:** David has surrendered himself to God's purposes. For the Christian, at the end of the day, the goal of our lives is for Christ to be exalted. And that might occur by God giving you a mighty deliverance. Or it might occur through your faithful endurance in suffering. The Christian knows that the ultimate point of their lives is not whether they live or die, prosper or flounder, suffer in sickness or thrive in health, but that in all things they give glory to God. And so they've surrendered their agenda to God's.

So, let me ask: What do you pray for in pain? There's nothing wrong with praying for relief--David clearly did--but do you ever move beyond requests for personal relief to prayers for God to be exalted in your situation?

Look at the next verse... ⁷ ...My heart is **steadfast**, O God, my heart is **steadfast!** I will sing and make melody! (Joyful melody, not bitter complaints). What is your heart song in suffering? Contented joy, or anxious complaining?

Write down: **(4) Steadfast confidence:** (You'll notice that's 4 S's in this list, too; like I told you, my alliteration game is on fire this weekend!) You can take Baptist out the name of your church but never the soul of your preacher.

David says, "My heart is steadfastly locked on you." Now, don't miss this: this is the 2nd time David uses the word "steadfast." The 1st time was in vs. 3 and "steadfast" was used to describe God's commitment to David. Now, this 2nd time David uses the word "steadfast" to describe his commitment to God. **David can be steadfast toward God because he knows God is steadfast toward him.**

The secret to steadfast obedience is confidence in God's steadfast love. It's when you are not confident in the goodness of God to you that you get anxious, want to take matters back into your own hands, seek revenge, or compromise.

For example, **Miroslav Volf, a Croatian** who lived through one of the worst chapters of ethnic cleansing in history, said, "You know, people often say that if you believe in a God of judgment that you will become violent yourself." He said, it's actually exactly the opposite. *It's when you don't believe in a God of justice that you become violent and judgmental.* Who is going to pay these people back for what they did? When you've watched someone murder your parents and siblings, how can you not be filled with a rage that will eat you alive? He talked about how he wrestled with hating the people who had been so cruel to his people. But then he said, "As I contemplated the gospel, I realized that because the people who did these things would answer to God, I didn't have to make them answer to me. **That gave me the resources to not hate them.**"

If you don't believe in God's goodness, you'll feel compelled to seek it somewhere, even if you have to do wickedness yourself. You become like Chris Pratt in *The Terminal List* going through life with a list of scores to settle. But when you do believe in God's steadfast love for you, and his complete sovereignty over the earth, you can release those things to God and be a holy person even in the midst of a world of injustice.

Does that make sense?

4 words: **sovereignty; steadfast love; surrender; steadfast confidence.**

That's how David lived; and it's the opposite of how Saul lived. Psalm 57 shows us how people who believe the gospel can respond to disappointing or unjust circumstances.

VAMP

Which brings us to the most important dimension in this story.

Ultimately, what David goes through in that cave in En Gedi gives us a picture of Jesus.

You see, like David, Jesus was anointed King. And like David, Jesus didn't receive that Kingdom immediately; he had to wait, while he was disrespected and snubbed and persecuted and falsely accused. And, like David, Jesus never took matters into his own hands. He never took vengeance on his enemies, even when he had the chance--he gave grace instead of retribution, trusting that his Father would only day make everything right.

Satan, like David's friends, tempted Jesus to take a shortcut. Bow down to me, Satan said, make this compromise, and you can have it all. But like David, Jesus refused.

Jesus, like David, didn't kill us when he had the opportunity to, and quite frankly when he had the right to. We had usurped his throne. But that's where the story diverges a bit. You see, Jesus did more than just spare us, like David spared Saul, Jesus actually died in our place so that we could be forgiven and have a home in the palace. David let Saul go. Jesus gave his life for us.

David creates the silhouette of a suffering servant that Jesus will one day step into. Jesus came as the truer and better David, and that presents us with 2 invitations.

1. **Have you received him?** Jesus is the rightful King, and we usurped his throne. But he comes now to us with forgiveness--he even died

for your sin. He offers to forgive you, if you will surrender to him and receive his grace. Have you done that? Will you do that? You can do it today.

2. The second invitation is to trust God with your circumstances like David and Jesus did. You see, if you are willing to trust God when life takes a turn you aren't expecting, to not take matters into your own hands or take one of Satan's sinful shortcuts, then God will not only bring you to the throne he's destined you for, he'll use your life to bring salvation to others. Because Jesus didn't take matters into his own hands, because he didn't force his way to the throne with an army, he brought salvation to us. If you will submit to God and wait like him, you can bring salvation to others like Jesus brought it to you. **Isn't that what you want?** You can do that, but you have to be willing to trust in and wait on God.

So, Bow your heads...

If you want to surrender to King Jesus and receive his offer to save you, you can do that right now...

Where do you need to trust God and wait? Where are you tempted to run ahead of him? Where do you need to stop trying to control the circumstances or make things work out but just respond to him and trust him with all the results?

