

Series: David: Man of Passion and Destiny

Sermon: David 4 "Cave Dwelling"

Scripture: 1 Samuel 22:1-2, 1 Samuel 24

Psalm: Psalm 54:4-7

Theme: David on the Run

Text: Luke 6:27 "[Jesus said,] 'But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.'"

Blurb: Crutches can become problems. When we are experiencing difficulties, we lean on crutches to help support us and carry us while we are healing. Yet there comes a time when, in order to continue to heal, we need to remove the crutches. If we don't, we will learn to depend on them in unhealthy ways. This Sunday we'll look at how God removed the crutches that David was clinging to during his years of being on the run, and we'll be reflecting on the crutches that God is calling us to put away so that we can live fully into our futures!

Sources: *David: A Man of Passion and Destiny* by Charles R. Swindoll

Opening Song: "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing" - Sanctify

Welcome: Pastor David

Greeting time: Pastor David

Song set: "Build Your Kingdom Here"

"Great Are You, Lord"

"Jesus Paid It All"

Kids to Kid's Church: Louis James

Prayer: Andrew Bonsell

Offering: Noah Bonsell

Message: Pastor David

PP#1: David: Man of Passion and Destiny. Cave Dwelling

"[Jesus said,] 'But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.'" - Luke 6:27

David: Man of Passion and Destiny. Cave Dwelling. Luke 6:27 "[Jesus said,] 'But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.'"

PP#2: *Image of Michelangelo's David statue in Florence.*

God is more interested in our character than our comfort. If David were speaking to us today, that is, I believe, something that would be a major part of his faith sharing.

We're dwelling with David for a few weeks to learn how we can develop a heart after God's own heart. That's how the Bible describes David, "A man after God's own heart."

Don't you want that? I want that. I want that to describe me! What does that look like? How can we grow spiritually into being this kind of person?

Well, David might say, it comes from living a life that isn't necessarily the way we want, or plan, or is easy, or comfortable. When we ask God to shape us and grow us, it usually includes a very large dose of training.

That's why growing spiritually is hard work. It takes intentionality, self-reflection, a willingness to let God drag us through stuff we normally pray earnestly for God to remove. But God is not as interested in our comfort as He is in our character. And character is forged in the caves!

PP#3: *Image of the MN Vikings during training.*

Yesterday my son had football tryouts. He's starting the 8th grade, and as you know, Forest Lake eliminated funding for junior high sports this year. Well, some parents got together and found a way to make it happen!

So, all the boys who want to play football were called to try out. The boys have a desire to play football. Organizers are putting together teams and game slots. But, what's going to happen between now and the first game? [Practice!] Yes, practice! Lots of it!

You see, we get it. We understand that if we have a desire, and there is a plan for our lives, we can't just wait and show up that last day hoping it all comes together. That's what we want, but it doesn't work. No. There are hours, days, weeks of hard, sweaty, exhausting practice.

David would say the same for our spiritual lives. We have a desire to have a heart like God's, we believe that God has a plan for our lives, and we want to perform as God wishes of us during all situations in our lives so we can be a witness for Him. But we can't just show up and hope it just happens. Our ability to live for God—and *like* God!—is a maturity that is toned and conditioned over time.

PP#4: *Image of Saul throwing a spear at David*

God saw something in David that no one else saw. God saw a heart for God. And God's plan for David was to make him king someday. But before that, he needed a lot of training!

He faced Goliath with a courage and a trust in God. But, as we learned last week, there was another giant David had to face. It was his own king, Saul. Saul had turned his back on God and had been slipping into fits of depression, darkness, and demon oppression. He noticed God's favor now rested on David, and that God's hand was blessing everything David did. David served in the army against the Philistines, and was very successful. He was promoted to leadership, and the people sang praises of his victorys. And as the people sang, Saul grew jealous.

Twice, in fits of anger, Saul threw his spear at David, trying to kill him. Saul began to realize that David was a threat to his own son succeeding him as king. So, Saul decides to go after David, and David is on the run.

Imagine, the prodigy who killed the giant on the battle field, who had special favor of the king because of his musical skills, who rose as a great military hero, the one about whom praises were sung, was now, by a strange turn of events, outcast, enemy of the state #1, running for his life.

But this *time*—and it was a long time I might add, 15 years!—as we look at David's life, was not wasted time. It was some of the hardest times of his life, but it was also the training ground God used to develop David's character. Let's take a look at some of the ways God did this for David, and perhaps you will see how God does this also in your life.

PP#5: Cave Dwelling

1. Removing Your Crutches

“David took these words very seriously and became very frightened of Achish, Gath's king. So he changed the way he acted with them, pretending to be insane while he was with them.

He scratched marks on the doors of the city gates and let spit run down his chin.” - 1 Samuel 21:12-13

1 Samuel 18-23 shows David being stripped of his assets. In 18 he loses his hero status and becomes a wanted man. In chapter 19, David's wife, Saul's daughter, helps David escape, but then lies to her father that David threatened her. In chapter 20, David has to leave his previous way of life and flee into the wilderness for a life on the lam. Perhaps most painfully, he loses the companionship of his best friend, Jonathan. In chapter 21, David flees into the wilderness land of the Philistines, his arch enemies! Not only that, but when he is discovered by the Philistines, David pretends to be insane in order to save himself. David lost all his self-respect, his dignity! I can't imagine things getting much worse for him, he is truly in a low place in his life!

But wait, there's more! David runs to his mentor and pastor, Samuel. Samuel hides him for a time, but by the beginning of chapter 25, Samuel dies.

David is stripped of his crutches, those things that David had been leaning on for support and help. Why would God allow this to happen? What good could this be?

Sometimes looking at someone like David gives us a perspective we can't see in our own lives. Our support structures are important to us, and God provides them for our help. But God also knows that they can inhibit our growth. When we lean on them too much, or too long, they can become problems. We are reluctant to give them up, and it can hurt, but God knows that if we want to heal and grow, there comes a time when we have to stop leaning on them.

Crutches can become substitutes for God. It's so much easier to trust in what you already have than to learn to go on without them. But when we lay them aside, we learn better dependence on God. Crutches can also keep our focus on our limitations. They constantly remind us of what we cannot do, our problems. God is trying to move us beyond our current limitations, to spread our wings. And thirdly, some of the support God provides for us is only intended to provide temporary relief. When we lean on them too long, we cannot learn to trust in God when facing the unknown. Losing what we depend on can help our spiritual growth, for we learn to truly trust in God.

What are you leaning on too heavily, or clinging to, too long? What inhibits you from living boldly, putting your full trust in God, in ways you can't see? What are some crutches God is calling you to put aside? It's not easy. It's not what we like. But sometimes it's necessary.

Take the red hymnals in the pew in front of you. In the back are most of the Psalms. As you know, David wrote these songs and poems, expressing his feelings. Let's read one from this point in his life. Turn to page...[Read Psalm 59:1-4,16-17 or Psalm 56:3-4,8-9]

PP#6: Cave Dwelling

1. Removing Your Crutches
2. God shows up in the lonely darkness

“David left Gath and escaped to Adullam's fortress. When David's siblings and all his extended family learned of this, they went to join him there. Everyone who was in trouble, in debt, or in desperate circumstances gathered around David, and he became their leader. Approximately four hundred men joined him.” -1 Samuel 22:1-2

When we look at David during this hard time in his life, we see that people who are after God's own heart do experience the darkness of the cave. It isn't a sign of a lack of God's blessing, or that you're doing something wrong. It's a time when God is training you to trust in Him and believe that He is your hope.

And when we take a closer look, we also see God is providing David support, too. After David had pretended to be insane, he flees to a hideout back in Israel. And look at the first two verses of 1 Samuel 22. The first verse, “David left Gath and escaped to [a-doo-LAM] Adullam’s fortress. When David’s siblings and all his extended family learned of this, they went to join him there.” David’s family rallied around him and came to him to support him. God brings people into your life during your hard times to bless you and encourage you. Who have been the family and friends who were there for you when no one else was and everything fell apart?

Verse 2, “Everyone who was in trouble, in debt, or in desperate circumstances gathered around David, and he became their leader. Approximately four hundred men joined him.” God used David during this hard time to be a blessing to others. Others who had experienced persecution and had felt the sting of Saul’s mistreatment rallied to David. David’s difficulties became the connection that he was able to make with others. There were 400 men, and their families, who came to align with David and became his motley crew. It soon increased to 600. Quite an assembly! But David was not alone. And broken people, when they band together, can become blessings to each other. Helping others can be a most effective therapy!

A third blessing in the loneliness is time. It often just takes time for us to shift our focus off our misery and on to trusting in God. The times that David spent in the caves helped him see the caves not as a place of lonely isolation but as a haven, where he could pour out his heart to God. David wrote so many of his psalms during this time. His perspective was able to change because of time. So many times David entered the caves full of despair, but was able to emerge full of praise.

When you experience hard times, can you notice the blessings God gives to help you? The people God places around you for support, for you to reach out and help, this is God showing up. And over time, as you persevere through troubles, God is able to grow you, to tenderize you, to change your outlook, so you can see the good, and lean more and more on God.

It’s hard, because you can begin to doubt yourself. Why are things not improving? Am I doing something wrong? Time...time helps us switch from the worry and concern, to steady trust in God. And that steadiness we witness to others around us who are also struggling.

Take up your hymnals again and turn to the psalms in the back. Let’s look at one of the psalms David wrote from within the cave. Turn to page...[Psalm 142:3-4, or 57:1-5, or 34].

One day while David and his men were hiding in a cave, Saul was getting very close. Saul went into that very cave alone to go and relieve himself. David had his chance to solve all his problems! Look at 1 Samuel 24.

PP#7: 1 Samuel 24 (CEB)

1 Even as Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was informed that David was in the En-gedi wilderness. 2 So Saul took three thousand men selected from all Israel and went to look for David and his soldiers near the rocks of the wild goats. 3 He came to the sheep pens beside the road where there was a cave. Saul went into the cave to use the restroom. Meanwhile, David and his soldiers were sitting in the very back of the cave.

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PP#8: 1 Samuel 24 (CEB)

4 David's soldiers said to him, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he promised you, 'I will hand your enemy over to you, and you can do to him whatever you think best.'" So David snuck up and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 5 But immediately David felt horrible that he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 6 "The Lord forbid," he told his men, "that I should do something like that to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lift my hand against him, because he's the Lord's anointed!" 7 So David held his soldiers in check by what he said, and he wouldn't allow them to attack Saul. Saul then left the cave and went on his way.

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David was tempted by the opportunity, and his soldiers tried to convince him it was God who handed Saul over to him so easily. But David's sense of rightness pulled his heart into check. Just because Saul was wrong didn't mean David should disrespect him, or take advantage. Saul was still the king, and David was determined to treat him as such.

PP#9: 1 Samuel 24 (CEB)

8 Then David also went out of the cave and yelled after Saul, "My master the king!" Saul looked back, and David bowed low out of respect, nose to the ground. 9 David said to Saul, "Why do you listen when people say, 'David wants to ruin you'? 10 Look! Today your own eyes have seen that the Lord handed you over to me in the cave. But I refused to kill you. I spared you, saying, 'I won't lift a hand against my master because he is the Lord's anointed.' 11 Look here, my protector! See the corner of your robe in my hand? I cut off the corner of your robe but didn't kill you. So know now that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I haven't wronged you, but you are hunting me down, trying to kill me."

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PP#10: 1 Samuel 24 (CEB)

16 As soon as David finished saying all this to Saul, Saul said, "David, my son, is that your voice?" Then he broke down in tears, 17 telling David, "You are more righteous than I am because you have treated me generously, but I have treated you terribly. ... 20 Now even I know that you will definitely become king, and Israel's kingdom will flourish in your hands. 21 Because of that, make a solemn pledge to me by the Lord that you won't kill off my

descendants after I'm gone and that you won't destroy my name from my family lineage." 22 David made a solemn pledge to Saul. Then Saul went back home, but David and his soldiers went up to the fortress.

Verse 16. "As soon as David finished saying all this to Saul, Saul said, 'David, my son, is that your voice?' Then he broke down in tears, telling David, 'You are more righteous than I am because you have treated me generously, but I have treated you terribly. ... Now even I know that you will definitely become king, and Israel's kingdom will flourish in your hands. Because of that, make a solemn pledge to me by the Lord that you won't kill off my descendants after I'm gone and that you won't destroy my name from my family lineage.' David made a solemn pledge to Saul. Then Saul went back home, but David and his soldiers went up to the fortress."

David's amazing act of grace cuts through into Saul's clouded mind. Saul realizes he has been believing wrongly about David, and calls off the manhunt...for now, anyway.

PP#11: Cave Dwelling

1. Removing Your Crutches
2. God shows up in the lonely darkness
3. Resist lashing out

Luke 6:27 "[Jesus said,] 'But to you who are willing to listen, I say, love your enemies! Do good to those who hate you.'"

Oh how tempting it must have been for David to strike Saul down. How Saul had mistreated him, judged him wrongly, spread false reports against David's character! He took so much from him, took away his whole life. And there he was, alone, unarmed, with his back to him. All his friends told him this was God's gift to him. But something wasn't right.

Something was different than when he was facing Goliath. That was an enemy challenging God. David knew God would take care of that. But this was God's anointed king, challenging David. David refused to lash out to justify himself. After all, wouldn't that make David exactly what Saul had been saying of him? David clung to what he knew was right. God had appointed Saul, and even though Saul was defiant, David still respected the anointing by God.

When we are wrongly accused, and others are ruining our life, how easy it is to justify revenge. We call it "standing up for our rights," or "seeking justice." But again, God is less concerned about you getting your just desserts and more in you loving those who wrong you! A man after God's own heart is not so much focused on his or her own benefit. It's more about doing things God's way, and trusting God to work things out.

This time, anyway, David's actions help Saul call off the manhunt. But before long, Saul is back at it again. In fact, David again spares Saul's life. But for years, and through all kinds of hardship, David stays focused on doing things God's way. David came to want God's will more than his own justification.

PP#12: Image of Jesus dying on the cross, evoking how Jesus didn't seek His rights, but sacrifice

That's God's heart, you know. We see that in Jesus dying on the cross. God didn't stand up for His rights. He gave them up to die for sinners. And God calls us to do the same.

Who is God calling for you to extend the corner of the robe to? Who is God calling you to grant forgiveness, grace, and a second—or third, or fourth!—chance?

We need to surrender our constant need to be vindicated. We need to let God's grace work, in them, and in us!

In this life, we will be mistreated. We need to anticipate it, expect it. And we need to anticipate our own desire for retaliation. We need to expect that, too. And we need to be like David, be quick to call our own desires into check, and stand down. We need to refuse to fight in the flesh, and turn those feelings of scorn over to God.

The caves of our lives are gifts from God, shaping our character and teaching us to depend on God to take care of us, and fight for us. It is in the cave that we are trained. It is in the cave that we have to defeat that biggest giant, our own self will and desire to retaliate.

One more of David's psalms. Turn in the hymnal to page...[Psalm 54:4-7].

Closing Song: "Good, Good Father"

Benediction: Pastor David

From David's Psalms 31:12 and 32:7

You are my hiding place

You shelter me from the snares of my enemies

And surround me with

Sweet songs of deliverance that

Balm the bitter wounds

Of my despair

I will trust in You, yes

I will trust in You

For there in Your safe and secret place

You will sing over my broken spirit

And You will make me whole

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR JULY 31, 2016

Sermon: "Cave Dwelling"

Scriptures: 1 Samuel 22:1-2, 1 Samuel 24

Opening prayer

Introductions: Last week we talked about how we are called to be true friends. Share if you connected with a friend this past week that you felt led to encourage or pray for.

Background: David's life after he killed Goliath. Look over 1 Samuel 18-23

1. Crutches are tangible sources of earthly support that give us a sense of safety. What crutches do you have in your life? Do they sometimes take the place of God?

2. Can you imagine losing everything you depend on? What do you think David was feeling as he fled from one refuge to the next, only to have them all taken away? How would this experience change you?

3. How do you think the loss of his sources of human security helped prepare David to rule his future kingdom?

4. Read Psalm 56. What encouragement does David give you here?

Read 1 Samuel 22:1-2

5. What are some of caves that are your hiding places? What are your most comforting places to hide? Why and when do you go there?

6. What if David had never left his hiding place? When does a cave become a prison?

7. Read Psalm 57. Pick out some of the attributes of God that make Him the safest place of refuge.

8. David's cave experiences also became havens of renewal and times of pouring his heart out to God. Share an experience from your life when you experienced such a time of spiritual renewal.

Read 1 Samuel 24

9. Tell about a time someone injured you very deeply, and the wounds you still carry with you.

10. How have you dealt with that inner desire for retaliation?

11. Read Romans 12:17-19. Why do you think God commands us not to take our own revenge?

12. Application: What will you take away from these passages? How will you live it out?