



Studies in the Life of David

Text

First Samuel 22:1-5

Topic

When David flees to the cave at Adullam,
other outcasts begin to join him there and he becomes their champion

Title

"Caveheart"

Introduction

Archaeologists in Rihab, Jordan, in 2008 discovered a cave that they called "the world's oldest Christian church." Dating to the period 33-70AD, the underground chapel would have served as both a place of worship and a home.

Dr Abdul Qader Al-Hassan, the director of the Rihab Center for Archaeological studies, described a circular worship area with stone seats separated from a living area that had a long tunnel leading to a source of water. The indications are that the early Christians hid there from persecution.

Long before Christians worshipped in that Jordanian cave, a persecuted David escaped to the cave of Adullam. Read Psalm 57 or 142, both penned by him at this time in his life, and you'll see that it was a place of worship.

When others heard David was there, they joined him. They emerged from the cave and began effecting their world as they waited for the rightful king to be crowned.

We don't meet in a cave. I think, however, that a case can be made that our church, and every other Bible-teaching church, should be a cave-like retreat.

I will try to make that case from verses one through five of First Samuel twenty-two. I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 Your Church Is The 'Cave' You Escape To In Order To Be Affected By The King, and #2 Your Church Is The 'Cave' You Emerge From In Order To Effect The Kingdom.

#1 Your Church Is The "Cave"
You Escape To In Order To Be Affected By The King
(v1-2)

David was fleeing for his life from King Saul.

- He tried to hide at Nob, among the priests at the Tabernacle of the Lord, but was discovered by a spy of Saul's who happened to be there.
- He fled to Philistine territory and tried to blend-in. He was immediately recognized and narrowly escaped.

David next fled to a cave.

1 Samuel 22:1 David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam....

I came across the following description of the cave:

One large broken rock, weighing many tons, almost bars the entrance. Nearby is a spring of clear, cool running water. The only access to the cave is through a circular opening some seven feet high. Inside there is a narrow, low passage leading to a small cave, from which a winding passage leads to a large room of about five thousand square feet. Narrow passages branch out and lead to other large rooms, some of which are on lower levels. There is ample room within for a thousand men.

If my geography is correct, the cave of Adullam is between Judah of the Israelites and Gath of the Philistines. It is between two kingdoms.

You and I live between two kingdoms. We are citizens of the kingdom of God, but it has yet to be fully realized on the earth. Everyday we shine as lights in the kingdom of darkness. It can be extremely stressful, extremely difficult, living between these two worlds that are constantly colliding with one another. We need a place, a cave, to retreat to in order to rest and worship. Your church ought to be that place.

Something very interesting and very exciting happened to David at the cave. Others began to gather to him there.

1 Samuel 22:1 David therefore departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. So when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him.

1 Samuel 22:2 And everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. And there were about four hundred men with him.

Why gather to David? People were realizing he was the Lord's choice to be king.

- His family knew it, because they had been there when David was anointed by Samuel.
- The citizens of Israel knew it, because of the exploits of David.
- The enemies of Israel knew it. When David was in Gath they had said of him, "is this not David, the king of the land?"

The people gathering to David is a type of our gathering to Jesus. He, of course, is God's choice to be king. He is the King of kings, the Lord of lords. One day every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord to the glory of God.

Mean time, the Lord's 'family' gathers to Him. Christians are born-again, children of God, adopted into the family of God. From the moment you are saved, you feel drawn to meet with other believers.

Others gather with us. They are “in distress... in debt... discontented.” That is as good as description of a nonbeliever as you are likely to find.

- What does it mean to be “distressed.?” It must have been difficult to live under the reign of King Saul and watch as your nation deteriorated. Likewise it is difficult to live under the reign of the devil, called the god of this world. At some point there comes an awareness that things are not right, that there is something very wrong about life and living it. There are perplexities, both global and personal, that distress a person, causing them to ask ultimate questions and to seek for answers. Often people look to religion or some pseudo-spirituality. The answer is to retreat to the rightful King, to discover Him in His cave, among His family.
- What does it mean to be “in debt?” Certainly Saul was over-taxing the people. His policies were bankrupting the nation. In our context it refers to the debt of sin we each owe as human beings. It’s a debt we cannot pay. Describing it, Alan Redpath said, “so long as you remain in [the devil’s camp] with the rejected ruler, there are ten commandments which thunder at you, and you find yourself... condemned by God’s Law.” Jesus came, He died on the Cross, to pay a debt He did not owe because we owed a debt we could not pay.
- What does it mean to be “discontented?” The word means *embittered, frustrated, disappointed*. Under the rule of Saul life itself had lost any purpose. In the case of nonbelievers, we read in the Book of Ecclesiastes that God has put eternity in our hearts. A person goes through life seeking satisfaction, seeking purpose, only to find that all the things this world has to offer, under the devil’s reign, fail to satisfy. That place in our heart can only be filled by a relationship with the rightful King, Jesus Christ.

In keeping with this thought that church is cave-like, two things come to mind:

1. First, if we are not feeling the pull to gather together, then we’re getting a little too comfortable out in the devil’s kingdom. If there is no stress, no pressure, no persecution of any kind, then we are not being identified enough with our exiled King.

2. Second, we should understand that nonbelievers are going to be difficult to be around. They are at various stages of understanding their discontent and debt. They may not see themselves as distressed - especially if they have a lot of this world's goods. Just think about yourself before you knew the Lord, before you were born-again, before you were a member of the family. Have compassion upon the lost you encounter - no matter how difficult they can be.

I'm not sure if "The Cave," or "Cave Chapel" would catch-on as a name for our fellowship. But it is the perspective we ought to have in our gathering together.

The people who gathered to David believed he was the rightful king who would one day reign. They left everything for him.

We know that Jesus is the rightful King Who is coming to reign in righteousness. Have we left everything for Him?

To quote Alan Redpath again:

There is a King in exile who is gathering around Him a company of people who are in distress, in debt, and discontent. He is training and preparing them for the day He shall come to reign.

There ought to be something a little strange about our decisions. People ought to look at us and wonder what we're thinking, what motivates us. The answer ought to be that we know we might any moment stand before the Lord to be reviewed and rewarded in preparation for reigning with Him on the earth.

#2 Your Church Is The "Cave"
You Emerge From In Order To Effect The Kingdom
(v3-5)

As wonderful as cave-life can be, we aren't meant to stay in the cave indefinitely.

There are detrimental effects, both physical and psychological, to living underground for extended periods of time.

Just so, there can be detrimental spiritual effects to extended cave-living as a Christian.

- We can become inwardly-focused.
- Minor matters tend to be blown way out of proportion.
- We can lose compassion for sinners.

David and his followers didn't stay in the cave indefinitely. They utilized it as a stronghold. They emerged from it to effect the nation.

We need to emerge from the cave and interact with those in the devil's kingdom.

1 Samuel 22:3 Then David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother come here with you, till I know what God will do for me."

1 Samuel 22:4 So he brought them before the king of Moab, and they dwelt with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.

The people gathered to David were recognizing him as their leader, as their future king. David's first recorded priority as someone starting to act kingly was to care for his father and mother. He made arrangements for their safety in Moab.

Why Moab? David's great-grandmother was none other than Ruth the Moabitess who had married Boaz. It's a great story, recounted in the Old Testament Book of Ruth. I pause to mention the grace of God in allowing Ruth, a Moabite and therefore a Gentile, to be included not just as a believer but in the line of David and, thus, of Jesus.

We certainly look upon David's care for his dad and mom as an indication of his tender heart. But there is something more, something quite powerful.

David was starting to act kingly. His first act as the future, rightful king was to honor his father and mother. It has significance beyond his love for them.

When God delivered the Jews out from slavery in Egypt, He took Moses up to Mount Sinai and gave him their new rule of life as a nation under God. It was the Ten Commandments.

- The first four commandments are God-ward. They discuss responsibilities in a relationship with God.
- The second set are man-ward. They discuss the responsibilities of men to other men.

The first of those man-ward commandments, the fifth commandment, is to honor your father and mother. Why is this the first? Because in it you get God's basic, foundational understanding of human society. It is to be based upon a respect for the biblical family unit.

The fifth commandment clears up all confusion about what constitutes a family. Along with the seventh and tenth commandments, which mention adultery and coveting your neighbor's wife, it is God's definition of family - a man and a woman bound in holy marriage who produce godly children. *There are no other alternatives!*

David acting to care for his father and mother was exactly the kind of thing a king ought to do. It was the very best way to start-off leading others. It was a declaration to them that he understood what a kingdom ruled by God ought to be like.

Christians have invested a lot of energy and resources defending 'traditional marriage' out in the public arena. Certainly in our democratic society we ought to have a voice and make it known.

How concerned are we about 'traditional marriage' **within the church?** I'm not talking about being against homosexual unions. We must oppose them on the basis of the Word of God.

I'm talking about being **for** biblical marriage in which the only grounds for divorce would be desertion or adultery.

How are we doing at preserving 'traditional marriage?' If the stats are any indication, *we're not doing well at all*. Divorce is almost just as likely among believers as it is among nonbelievers.

The church is making its own negative contribution to human society by devaluing the institution of marriage.

Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. I'm not trying to beat-up on anyone who has suffered through a divorce. What I am doing is highlighting the kind of submission to Christ's authority that ought to mark us as believers. Whatever you've already been through, start right now to submit to God's authority for marriage and family.

1 Samuel 22:5 Now the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go to the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

Gad must have been raised-up as a prophet by Samuel at Naioth, at the School of the Prophets he had established. God sent him to David with a directive.

The encouragement of a prophet is a fitting conclusion to these five verses. God wants to encourage us to emerge from the cave and follow His direction.

- Some of His direction we would call general. It is to be found in the precepts and principles of God's Word as we study it. It is to apply the wisdom of God.
- Some of His direction needs to be more specific. We need to be seeking God for our personal lives. Where does He want us? Where is He sending us?

People who like to explore caves are officially called *spelunkers*. They are more commonly called 'cavers,' and their activity is called 'caving.'

Christians are cavers, but in our case the caving we do ought to explore us rather than the other way around.

- I ought to be affected by, influenced by, my King in the cave.
- I ought to emerge from it to effect, to get results, out in the kingdom of darkness while I am awaiting the kingdom of Heaven to be established on the earth.

