



Studies in the Life of David

Text

First Samuel 28:1-2 & 29:1-11

Topic

After David decides to leave the land of Israel to escape his trials he finds himself the friend of the world and the enemy of God

Title

“What A Friend We Leave in Jesus”

Introduction

Grandparenting is the greatest, but if I have to watch *The Adventures of Milo & Otis* one more time I just might snap.

Milo the kitten has a habit of being too curious and getting himself into trouble. He soon finds a pug named Otis and they become unlikely animal friends who go on one mind-numbing adventure after another.

People seem to have a soft spot for unlikely friendships, whether animal, human, imaginary or real.

There’s an unlikely friendship in our text in First Samuel twenty-eight and twenty-nine. David, the man anointed to be the next king of Israel, was living in enemy territory among the Philistines. He and a Philistine lord, Achish, had become fast friends. So much so that when it came time for all the Philistine lords to gather for war against Israel, Achish invited David along to fight with him, with the Philistines, against Israel.

Unbelievably, **David went!** We'll see how it turns out, but that's not the point. The point is that David's friendship with Achish made him the enemy of his people and, worse, of his God.

It's all very reminiscent of what we read in the New Testament Book of James.

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

James was putting his finger on a spiritual adultery in which your choice to befriend the world makes you the enemy of God.

For a Christian, friendship with the world is one unlikely friendship we should *not* have a soft spot for.

Once again we can debrief a massive failure, this time David's, in order to plan for our own success. We can see illustrated for us just how serious friendship with the world can be.

I'll organize my thoughts around two points: #1 You Should Never Become The Friend Of The World, and #2 You Should Never Become The Enemy Of The Lord.

#1 You Should Never Become
The Friend Of The World

(28:1-2)

Let's remind ourselves what David was doing in Philistine territory. Saul had been pursuing him for many years, seeking to kill him. One day David grew tired of waiting for God to deliver him so he took matters into his own hands. Even though God had been protecting him from Saul, providing for him in the wilderness, and had promised him victory, David said in his heart, "Enough is enough," and retreated to the land controlled by the enemies of Israel.

David's bad choice is the first lesson for us if we want to avoid becoming the friend of the world. We should not decide, on our own, to jump out of our trials. We must endure godly circumstances, depending upon God for protection and provision, clinging to His promises. A decision to take matters into our own hands takes us out of the sphere of the kingdom of God and puts us into the world.

It might help us if we understood what is meant by the phrase, "the world." The world isn't so much a geographical location as it is a spiritual one. When David was enduring his trials, submitting to the Lord, he was acting spiritually, as a citizen of God's kingdom, under His rule and authority. The moment he decided to escape his trials he was in the world - *even before he physically moved into Philistine territory.*

I would put it like this. When I am thinking, "Nevertheless, not my will but God's be done," then I am in the sphere of God's kingdom. When I say in my heart to God, "Enough is enough," I have moved from His kingdom rule and into the world.

We saw in chapter twenty-seven that David's decision provided some immediate relief. But now it would come crashing down around him.

1 Samuel 28:1 Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men."

Achish recognized that David's friendship with him had made David the enemy of his people and of his God.

When you refuse to endure a godly circumstance, when you leave it, the first thing to go is your witness of the power of God through Jesus Christ. Nonbelievers conclude a relationship with God is no help in times of trouble.

Do you know, have you realized, that your trials **are not just for you?** While God is using them to grow you, to complete you, He is also showing others the wonders of His grace, mercy and love.

1 Samuel 28:2 So David said to Achish, "Surely you know what your servant can do." And Achish said to David, "Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever."

David had gone from being the slayer of the Philistine champion, Goliath, to being the "servant" of a Philistine lord. *And he was proud of it*, as if he'd accomplished something. He even got a promotion out of it.

Notice David said, "You know what I can do." In other words, "Achish, I'm quite the prize, and you're smart to see it." It's bad enough to be promoted by the world, or in a worldly manner. It's worse when you promote yourself.

Pastor Chuck Smith says, "so many people get in trouble by... promoting themselves into positions where God hasn't called them." Simple but profoundly true. You can't promote yourself then turn around and say it was God all along.

Moses was called by God to be the deliverer of Israel from Egypt. At age forty, he thought he was ready. *He wasn't!* God needed to bring him out into the desert for discipleship. Forty years later, at eighty years of age, he was ready by God's standards.

You won't have to wait eighty years! But you must wait. Bide your time. Wait on the Lord. Let Him raise you up.

David chose friendship with the world. Friendship with the world isn't what I thought it was. It isn't having nonbelieving friends. We should have them in order for them to see Jesus in us. It isn't backsliding, returning to old habits. It isn't my flesh lusting after the things of the world. No, it's my decision to abandon God's will in one or more areas of my life. And the moment I do it, I leave the sphere of His kingdom rule and I am by default the friend of the world.

Are you in some hardship? Some trial? **Endure it as unto the Lord!** God is using it to make you more like Jesus and to show everyone around you that knowing Jesus makes a difference, a real difference, an eternal difference.

#2 You Should Never Become
The Enemy Of The Lord
(29:1-11)

These chapters are in logical rather than chronological order. Chapter twenty-nine precedes chapter twenty-eight because in 28:4 you read that the Philistines *were* already camped at Shunem in the Jezreel Valley, whereas 29:1 & 11 indicates that they gathered at Aphek and then *went up* to Jezreel.

The proper order of events seems to be something like this:

1. Saul gathered his army at a spring in Jezreel near the foot of Mount Gilboa.
2. At the same time the Philistines rallied at Aphek in the Sharon plain.
3. The Philistines advanced along the Via Maris to Shunem at the foot of the Hill of Moreh.
4. Saul deployed his forces opposite them on the lower slopes of Mount Gilboa.
5. From there Saul visited the medium at En-dor.
6. The next day he would engage the Philistines in battle where he and his sons would die.

We pick-up the story in verse one.

1 Samuel 29:1 Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel.

1 Samuel 29:2 And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish.

I get the impression David was trying his best to blend in.

You and I should not easily blend-in with the enemies of God. We should stand out, we should shine in the darkness. We should be front-and-center exuding the joy of the Lord.

Here's another way of putting it. When your nonbelieving friends or associates think of you, what's the first thing that comes to their minds? You want it to be your commitment to Jesus.

The Philistine lords immediately recognized David.

1 Samuel 29:3 Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him since he defected to me."

1 Samuel 29:4 But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these men?"

1 Samuel 29:5 Is this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands'?"

David had won mighty victories as a youth in simple dependence upon God. Now he was older, with lots more spiritual experience to draw from, and he is at the lowest point of his spiritual life.

I've been saved over thirty years, since February of 1979. Doesn't mean I automatically have more faith, or automatically am more mature, or that I have grown. Doesn't mean I could not suddenly walk out of the sphere of God's kingdom rule and become a friend of the world and make myself the enemy of God.

Discipleship isn't a career path that gets easier, with less serving and less sacrifice. If I am not serving *more*, sacrificing *more* with each step on my walk... **Then I might be at a low point when I think I'm riding pretty high.**

The Christian life is about love, not longevity. I need to be, I want to be, more in love with Jesus every day than the day before, and so on until I see His face. And that works itself out as I serve and sacrifice for Him more-and-more.

1 Samuel 29:6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, as the Lord lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good

in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you.

1 Samuel 29:7 Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

We are to be people of integrity, with good reputations, among nonbelievers. But in giving characteristics of kingdom living to His twelve disciples Jesus also warned us, "Woe to you when all men speak well of you, For so did their father's to the false prophets" (Luke 6:26). You are to be respected for your character and commitment to Christ, *not* for your worldly accomplishments.

God has placed you somewhere in the physical world so you can affect it spiritually. You may accomplish much in the world, but nothing will be greater than maintaining your testimony for the Lord.

1 Samuel 29:8 So David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

You'd think this would be a great relief to David. I mean, was he really going to fight against his future subjects, his own people? Instead he protested that he was being misunderstood, mistreated. When a believer has made themselves the enemy of God, discernment goes out the window. So does honest self-evaluation.

David was spared from having to face the battlefield decision. But it shows us that when we choose friendship with the world it puts us in a position to fight against other believers. Let me put it this way. If a person is constantly critical, a gossip, tearing-down others rather than building them up, then they are friends of the world because that's what the people in the world do. Someone under submission to God builds-up, encourages, strengthens other believers. Their words are gracious and full of mercy.

God gave David a way out. It doesn't mean God condoned any of David's lies.

We should never sin thinking that it will be OK in the end because God's grace will abound. But here we see that God continues to work on us, and

for us, even when we sin in order to bring us back. *He loves you that much!*

1 Samuel 29:9 Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.'

1 Samuel 29:10 Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you. And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart."

I wonder if David was at all pricked in his heart by the words of Achish? The Philistine lord had nothing but praise for him, when all the while David had been deceiving Achish about where and who he had been raiding. His testimony was based on a false front that he put up and that he worked hard to maintain.

Be yourself. Be genuine. You don't need to impress others, believers or nonbelievers, with how spiritual you are. I'm always a little suspicious of folks who talk about their tremendous spiritual discipline, who's counsel is always based on what you ought to be doing for God rather than what He has already done and yet wants to accomplish in you.

1 Samuel 29:11 So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

It seemed that David had dodged a bullet... Or at least a spear. But we will see that when he and his troops return to their Philistine city of Ziklag, they find the Amalekites have raided it and carried away captive their wives and children. David's men want to stone him to death. Finally, at that low point, David strengthens himself in the Lord and moves back into kingdom thinking.

All of us, in our natural state, are the enemies of God. Colossians 1:21 says we were once alienated from God, we were His enemies. But Romans 5:10 declares,

Romans 5:10 ... when we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son...

A couple of verses before that you read,

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Born sinners, the enemies of God, He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to take our place as our Substitute. Jesus went to the Cross where He took upon Himself the punishment and penalty for our sins that we might be reconciled to God and be enemies no more.

Have you been saved at the Cross?

After you are saved, **you can again act like God's enemy**. Remember the words of James,

James 4:4 Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.

It doesn't at all mean you forfeit salvation. But it's still very serious and to be avoided. *What a Friend we leave in Jesus* is **not** a tune we want to be humming.

