

When Trials and Tribulations Come Our Way

1 Samuel 21:1-22:5

¹ David went to Nob, to Ahimelek the priest. Ahimelek trembled when he met him, and asked, “Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?”

² David answered Ahimelek the priest, “The king sent me on a mission and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about the mission I am sending you on.’ As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place.”³ Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever you can find.”

⁴ But the priest answered David, “I don’t have any ordinary bread on hand; however, there is some consecrated bread here—provided the men have kept themselves from women.”

⁵ David replied, “Indeed women have been kept from us, as usual whenever I set out. The men’s bodies are holy even on missions that are not holy. How much more so today!”⁶ So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, since there was no bread there except the bread of the Presence that had been removed from before the Lord and replaced by hot bread on the day it was taken away.

⁷ Now one of Saul’s servants was there that day, detained before the Lord; he was Doeg the Edomite, Saul’s chief shepherd.

⁸ David asked Ahimelek, “Don’t you have a spear or a sword here? I haven’t brought my sword or any other weapon, because the king’s mission was urgent.”

⁹ The priest replied, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here; it is wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want it, take it; there is no sword here but that one.”

David said, “There is none like it; give it to me.”

¹⁰ That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath.¹¹ But the servants of Achish said to him, “Isn’t this David, the king of the land? Isn’t he the one they sing about in their dances:

“‘Saul has slain his thousands,
and David his tens of thousands?’”

¹² David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath.¹³ So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.

¹⁴ Achish said to his servants, “Look at the man! He is insane! Why bring him to me?”¹⁵ Am I so short of madmen that you have to bring this fellow here to carry on like this in front of me? Must this man come into my house?”

¹ David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father’s household heard about it, they went down to him there.² All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.

³ From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, “Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?”⁴ So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.

⁵ But the prophet Gad said to David, “Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah.” So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

When Everything Changes (21:1-9)

1 Samuel 20:42

Then David left, and Jonathan went back to the town.

1 Samuel 21:10

¹⁰ *That day David fled from Saul and went to Achish king of Gath.*

1. David, anointed by Samuel, the warrior who defeated Goliath, the captain that led Israel's armies successfully, was loved and admired by those around him; but now things have changed. He has become a wanted fugitive. He has to be careful about everything because Saul wants him dead. Things couldn't get worse.
 - Have you felt alone and abandoned?
2. David was not alone. He had small band of loyal supporters who followed him. He went to the priest, Ahimelek for help. David did not have food or any weapons with him. They were on the run and had no time to equip themselves or pack rations. Now David must ask Ahimelek for help without revealing that he is a fugitive hunted by Saul.
3. Here David must offer information without telling much. He must be wise to stay alive, get help and take care of the men without implicating others. We may not fully understand what David had to deal with but there are Christians who live such lives in persecuted nations. One must be careful about what they say, ask and do. One must totally rely on God for what would be normal to others. Persecuted Christians are bold because they know God is with them. Even under such circumstances, David trusted the Lord to lead him.
4. God provided David with bread and a sword. The bread the priest Ahimelek gave him was consecrated bread. Only the priest could eat it. The priest wanted to know if the men were consecrated. Even in such a desperate situation, David honoured God. This is because God's presence was with him. This means more to David than anything else.
5. Our circumstances in life may change but God is always with us. Evil will oppose the work of God, but it can never overcome the will and work of God. (**John 1:5** *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*)
 - David had faithful men around him. They followed him and stood with him in this difficult season.

David in the City of Gath (21:10-14)

1. David runs to the city of Gath, one of the five major cities of the Philistines. Gath is the hometown of Goliath. Now David who killed Goliath and led Israel's armies against the Philistines is walking into a Philistine city, Goliath's hometown with Goliath's sword. We can see how desperate David was. He has led himself into a very dangerous place.
2. David was hoping that no one would take notice of him, but people recognized him. The official of the Philistines recognized David. Even they have heard of the songs sung of him. He was exposed and afraid. What could he do now?
3. David pretended to be a madman. Cornered and afraid that they would kill him, he believed this was the only act that would get him out of this situation.

4. David, who faced Goliath and was praised by others, a captain and a victor is now scratching doors with his saliva running down his beard.
5. How does David experience God in times like this? The introduction to Psalm 34 tells us that David wrote this psalm during his time at Gath. Below is an excerpt of the Psalm.

Psalms 34:15-22

¹⁵ The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous and his ears toward their cry.

¹⁶ The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the memory of them from the earth.

¹⁷ When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears and delivers them out of all their troubles.

¹⁸ The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

¹⁹ Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

²⁰ He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.

²¹ Affliction will slay the wicked, and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.

²² The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

6. There are few things that we can learn from this Psalm.
 - a. In this world, both the righteous and the wicked will face afflictions and troubles. This is where David is different from Saul. He accepts the trials and challenges that came his way. He was confident that the Lord was with him. He faced this trial with the same courage and faith in God that led him to face Goliath.
 - b. The difference between the righteous and the wicked is God is near the righteous and He will deliver His people. Not so with the wicked, they are without hope. The circumstances may change; a different threat and a different path to deliverance, but the same God behind it all. God will deliver those who look to Him.
 - c. Even in those most difficult of circumstance, God strengthens His people. God gave David the strength to face Goliath, and now the Lord gives him strength to endure a season of intense affliction and challenges. This is the song of the church. Christians throughout the ages facing persecution and affliction yet filled with joy and praise to God. This is the amazing power that we possess in Christ. Read and meditate on the following scripture.

2 Corinthians 4:7-18

⁷ But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. ⁸ We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; ⁹ persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; ¹⁰ always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. ¹¹ For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. ¹² So death is at work in us, but life in you.

¹³ Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I

believed, and so I spoke,” we also believe, and so we also speak, ¹⁴ knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. ¹⁵ For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

¹⁶ So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

God’s Grace and Comfort (22:1-5)

¹ David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. ² All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him.

³ From there David went to Mizpah in Moab and said to the king of Moab, “Would you let my father and mother come and stay with you until I learn what God will do for me?” ⁴ So he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him as long as David was in the stronghold.

⁵ But the prophet Gad said to David, “Do not stay in the stronghold. Go into the land of Judah.” So David left and went to the forest of Hereth.

1. God was with David. God provided for him. God delivered him from the Philistine city and now God sends David’s family to him. David is now among people who love and care for him. God know us. He knows how much we can handle. He knows when to send others to comfort us.
2. David attracts an interesting group of followers. Those who were distressed, in debt and discontent gathered around him and he became their commander. They found in David a leader they could trust and follow, because he knew what it means to be beset with trials and afflictions, and yet he was not broken by any of it. David was still a man filled with faith, hope and courage. They saw the presence of God in David’s life.
3. God tells David to go the Land of Judah. David cares for his parents and does what seems best to him. God sends a prophet, Gad with a message asking him to return to Judah. Gad, the prophet will eventually be an important ally to David’s cause. He will eventually be one of the chroniclers of David’s reign (1 Chr. 29:29). He lived to see the temple in use, and played his part in regulating its worship (2 Chr. 29:25).
4. God is always on the move no matter what the circumstances are. David was on the run, but God was preparing the path for David’s reign.

Prayer Items

1. When Trials and Tribulations Come Our Way

- Faith in difficult circumstances
- A deeper understanding of God's grace in the midst of suffering
- Trusting God to work out His good purpose through difficult and challenging circumstances
- Surrendered life: God is the potter; we are the clay

2. Life Church

- Christmas service and gatherings
- Ministries
- Leadership
- Give us a heart for God – hungry for the Word, a desire for His presence, a yearning to grow spiritually, to grow strong in faith and obedience in Word
- Give us a heart for the lost – open doors for us to make disciples
- Open doors for us to minister at our workplaces, schools, colleges, neighbourhood, and surrounding community of Sg Way
- Deepen our love for one another and make us eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit

3. Healing

- Si Yun (colon cancer)
- Jayden
- Suba
- Lee Kim Sang & Lee Khay Chen (Recco's dad and brother): total healing; and strength for Recco's mom)

4. Covid-19 Pandemic

- Healing
- Wisdom for vaccine
- Economy/those who are out of work

5. Malaysia

- Salvation and religious freedom
- Churches
- Unity
- Leadership