

Faithfulness and Truth

1 Samuel 22:6-23

⁶ Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul was seated, spear in hand, under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing at his side. ⁷ He said to them, “Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?

⁸ Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today.”

⁹ But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, “I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelek son of Ahitub at Nob. ¹⁰ Ahimelek inquired of the Lord for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

¹¹ Then the king sent for the priest Ahimelek son of Ahitub and all the men of his family, who were the priests at Nob, and they all came to the king. ¹² Saul said, “Listen now, son of Ahitub.”

“Yes, my lord,” he answered.

¹³ Saul said to him, “Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, giving him bread and a sword and inquiring of God for him, so that he has rebelled against me and lies in wait for me, as he does today?”

¹⁴ Ahimelek answered the king, “Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? ¹⁵ Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.”

¹⁶ But the king said, “You will surely die, Ahimelek, you and your whole family.”

¹⁷ Then the king ordered the guards at his side: “Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.” But the king's officials were unwilling to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord.

¹⁸ The king then ordered Doeg, “You turn and strike down the priests.” So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. ¹⁹ He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.

²⁰ But one son of Ahimelek son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled to join David. ²¹ He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. ²² Then David said to Abiathar, “That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your whole family. ²³ Stay with me; don't be afraid. The man who wants to kill you is trying to kill me too. You will be safe with me.”

Loyalty and Faithfulness

⁶ Now Saul heard that David and his men had been discovered. And Saul was seated, spear in hand, under the tamarisk tree on the hill at Gibeah, with all his officials standing at his side.⁷ He said to them, “Listen, men of Benjamin! Will the son of Jesse give all of you fields and vineyards? Will he make all of you commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds?⁸ Is that why you have all conspired against me? No one tells me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is concerned about me or tells me that my son has incited my servant to lie in wait for me, as he does today.”

In the opening verses of this section, Saul questions the loyalty of his followers. He accuses them of conspiring against him. He is asking them if they have sold their loyalties because David has bribed them by offering them field, vineyards, and promotions. He is angry why no one has informed him of David’s whereabouts and his son, Jonathan’s covenant with David. He is bitter, angry and lonely and is blaming everyone except himself for his pitiful state. Saul never once questioned his own unfaithfulness which has brought him to this place.

1. What is our understanding of faithfulness? Is a faithful friend someone who will condone and support all our actions, or someone who will keep us accountable and responsible in doing what is right? Will a faithful friend support our self-destructive patterns or help us live a good and meaningful life?
 - As you reflect on the above questions, think about God’s faithfulness. In what way is God’s faithfulness expressed to us?
2. In many of the narratives we find Saul ‘**sitting down**’, accusing, and conspiring against others while struggling with a dark spirit that has inflicted him. In contrast, David is depicted as one who stands in the presence of God and moves into action, facing challenges and adversity with hope and victory. Saul committed and connived appalling crimes against those who were close to him, while David built good relationships by doing what was right before God.
 - What does this tell you about your spiritual life?

⁹ But Doeg the Edomite, who was standing with Saul's officials, said, “I saw the son of Jesse come to Ahimelek son of Ahitub at Nob.¹⁰ Ahimelek inquired of the Lord for him; he also gave him provisions and the sword of Goliath the Philistine.”

1. We again come across Doeg the Edomite. He wanted to curry favour with Saul, proving himself to be loyal. This is a loyalty built on cunning and deceit, because Doeg only told half the story. He did not mention the part where Ahimelek was suspicious of David’s arrival and questioned him. (“*Why are you alone? Why is no one with you?*” 1 Samuel 21:1). There are loyalties that can be bought and negotiated, loyalties that exist to protect and promote self-interest.
2. Doeg steps into the picture as a true and loyal servant who would tell Saul everything he needed to know. The fact is Doeg was telling Saul what he wanted to hear. He feeds into Saul’s conspiracy theory and hands him a conspirator. He tells Saul that Ahimelek had supplied David with provision and a weapon.
 - What does this tell you about the loyalty the world demands?

¹⁴ Ahimelek answered the king, “Who of all your servants is as loyal as David, the king's son-in-law, captain of your bodyguard and highly respected in your household? ¹⁵ Was that day the first time I inquired of God for him? Of course not! Let not the king accuse your servant or any of his father's family, for your servant knows nothing at all about this whole affair.”

¹⁶ But the king said, “You will surely die, Ahimelek, you and your whole family.”

1. Saul brought the charges against Ahimelek, “you have conspired against me”. It was all about Saul, what he thinks, who stand with him and what he believes. There was no desire to seek the truth and sort things out.
2. Ahimelek tried to tell Saul the following
 - As far as I knew, David was your loyal and respected captain.
 - This is the first time I enquired of God for him. There had been no prior meeting.
 - I have not conspired against you, because I had no knowledge of what has transpired between you and David.
3. Saul had already made up his mind, he would not listen to Ahimelek nor consider the fact that he was a priest. Saul passed judgment, Ahimelek must die.
 - Have you been unfairly accused of being disloyal or conspiring against others? Think about the event and what caused it to happen.
 - What happens when we want everything to go our way?

¹⁷ Then the king ordered the guards at his side: “Turn and kill the priests of the Lord, because they too have sided with David. They knew he was fleeing, yet they did not tell me.” But the king's officials were unwilling to raise a hand to strike the priests of the Lord.

¹⁸ The king then ordered Doeg, “You turn and strike down the priests.” So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck them down. That day he killed eighty-five men who wore the linen ephod. ¹⁹ He also put to the sword Nob, the town of the priests, with its men and women, its children and infants, and its cattle, donkeys and sheep.

1. The king's official showed more restrained than Saul. They disobeyed Saul's command because they respected the Lord's appointed priest.
2. Saul wickedly turned to Doeg the Edomite to execute the task. There was a bloodbath. Saul is making an example of those who he considers disloyal to him. Saul is waging war against God's priest. The world seeks loyalty and punishes those who are disloyal to its cause. Jesus was crucified for that reason because He would not submit to the religious power of this day.
3. Through Jesus Christ, God reaches out to those who have turned away from Him. In Christ, He shows us His love and faithfulness. The parable of the Prodigal Son shows us the heart of the Father. He was not bitter or angry even though His son had rejected and humiliated him. The Father longed for the son to come back home. This is the difference between God and the devil, Jesus and the antichrist. Jesus displays God's love, grace and truth. The anti-Christ seduces and deceives people into submission, using violence, hatred, and lust for power and pleasure as a means to hold people captive.

²⁰ But one son of Ahimelek son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled to join David. ²¹ He told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord. ²² Then David said to Abiathar, "That day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, I knew he would be sure to tell Saul. I am responsible for the death of your whole family. ²³ Stay with me; don't be afraid. The man who wants to kill you is trying to kill me too. You will be safe with me."

1. Through the tragedy, God brings the priest, Abiathar to David. Saul is driving people away to David.
2. This was a difficult moment for David. Although he did not commit any crime, he felt responsible for the death because even though he suspected Doeg of treachery, he did not do anything about it. This was a difficult situation but God was in control.
3. It is sad that the perpetrator in this story was once God's appointed king for Israel. Once again, sin and rebellion rear its ugly head and the world is cursed for it.
4. The world is a very messed up place. God can give us good things but our propensity to sin can turn every good gift into a curse. The world is in need of a saviour. Our only hope is Jesus Christ. Only He can save us.
 - Has Jesus saved you?
 - How does Jesus keep you from pursuing evil?
 - How does God's faithfulness make a difference in our life?

Prayer Items

*"Great is Thy faithfulness, " O God my Father,
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not
As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be.
"Great is Thy faithfulness!" "Great is Thy faithfulness!"
Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided—
"Great is Thy faithfulness, " Lord, unto me!*

- God may help us know that He is faithful and true
- We may always be mindful of and grateful for His faithfulness
- We may discover the joy of being a faithful community

Life Church

- God will direct the church during this season
- God will help us be an effective witness for His glory
- We may reach out to the lost and see many come to Jesus Christ
- We may grow in love and unity
- Unity in Christ will overcome all social and racial differences
- Grow in our commitment to live for Jesus Christ
- Leadership
- Ministries
- Workplaces, schools, neighbourhood: May the Lord teach how to represent His goodness and faithfulness

Covid-19 Pandemic

- God will deliver us from this Pandemic
- Front liners
- Economy
- Foreigners and all who are vulnerable
- Good governance
- Compassion: People in power and with resources will show compassion and love to those who are in need
- Those who are lonely, isolated and depressed

Healing

- Si Yun & Jayden
- Suba

Malaysia

- Leadership and good governance
- Religious freedom
- Flood victims
- Unity and peace