

Don't Waste Your Troubles **1 Samuel 21 & Psalm 34**

Introduction:

1. Isn't it amazing how quickly life can change? Sickness, tragedy, and trouble can occur, and come on us so quickly, with no warning.
2. David was a shepherd boy, and instantly became a famous giant killer. He went from the sheep fields to being the king's general. He was anointed by Samuel to be the next king of Israel. Everything seemed to be going David's way. He was truly a man that loved the Lord, and was a man after God's own heart.
3. But, do you know what you learn as you read God's Word? Godly people that love the Lord also encounter trials, troubles, and gut-wrenching heartaches.
4. Here in this chapter, David finds himself fleeing for his life, begging for bread, acting like a deranged man to save his own life, and escaping to a cave. And you thought you had troubles!
5. But here is what is so awesome. It was after David went through these troubles that he wrote the 34th Psalm. What a beautiful Psalm. To be honest with you, some of David's behavior is very suspect in this chapter, but out of these trials David grew in his relationship with the Lord. David looks back at these events with a different perspective in Psalm 34.
6. When troubles come into our lives, we can either gripe or grow; we can either get bitter or get better; we can wallow in self pity or wade a little deeper into our relationship with the Lord. It is our choice, but here is my challenge to you: don't waste your troubles!
7. Take your troubles and use them as tools and motivators to grow in your knowledge of who God is, and what God means to you. This is what David did, and we see in Psalm 34 that, through David's troubles, he learned several spiritual truths.

I can always trust the Lord.

1. This chapter begins with David fleeing for his life from King Saul. David fled to the city of Nob. God's tabernacle was located there, two miles northeast of Jerusalem.
2. David misled the high priest into believing that he was on a secret mission for the king and that his servants were in hiding (vs. 2). The truth was that he was fleeing from the king with a few tag-a-long renegades. Through this charade, David managed to get:
 - Food for himself and his men - vs. 3, 6
 - The sword that he had killed the giant Goliath with - vs. 8-9
3. He then fled to the Philistine city of Gath (where Goliath was from). David figured that this would be the only place Saul couldn't get to him. But they became suspicious of David, and David feared for his life. David had a plan.
 - "I'll act like a crazy, deranged, madman, and maybe they will let me go, and I can get out of here alive." The amazing part is, it worked! vs. 13-15

4. David then fled to a cave where some of his family and comrades joined him. It appears that, at this point, he wrote Psalm 34. It is as if David had time to reflect on these events and he realized that he didn't have to deceive with his tongue. Psalm 34:13-15
5. David reminded himself, "God knows right where I am. His eyes are upon me. God is still good and I can trust Him through all my troubles." Psalm 34:8, 22
6. The apostle Paul taught us that God gives to the believer all the grace needed to make it through the many trials of life. But if we never encounter any trials, we never learn this, do we? It is in these trials that our faith in God can really grow, because we learn experientially that we can trust our God. 2 Corinthians 1:9-10

I must always seek the Lord.

1. There is no record of David seeking God at all in this chapter. He schemes, connives, and relies on his own strength and wisdom. In verse 8, he says, "I'm on special assignment for the king." He failed to mention that the king's business was to kill David.
2. But as David began to reflect and meditate on these things, he realized that his main business should be to seek God. Psalm 34:1-4, 10
3. God stands ever ready to hear the cries of His children (Psalm 34:17). Does God hear our cries today as He did in the Old Testament? Absolutely! In fact, Paul taught that we have God's indwelling Holy Spirit who actually carries our prayers to the throne room of God, interceding for us. Romans 8:26-27
4. It is right after this instruction in prayer that Paul gives the wonderful promise of Romans 8:28. When we choose to seek the Lord, this verse doesn't say that every circumstance will work out to our liking, but it will be for our good.
5. When we seek the Lord in our troubles, God does an incredible work in us internally, and truly changes us more into the likeness of Christ. When we seek the Lord, even through our trials and troubles, we begin to reflect Christ to others. Romans 8:29

I should fear the Lord, not man.

1. All throughout this chapter, David is fearful of man and what man can do to him (vs. 10, 12). When these events are over, it is as if David comes to his senses and realizes, "Why am I so afraid of human men? The Lord is all-powerful and all-seeing. He is the One I should be concerned with offending." Psalm 34:7
2. It is as if David gathers the people together in the cave in 22:1 and says, "Let me teach you what I have learned about the fear of the Lord." Psalm 34:11
 - "I lied and deceived because I feared man, and it brought nothing but a snare. Here is what I have learned through this." Psalm 34:12-14
3. When we fear the Lord, it means that we live to please Him, not man. We know that God is the One that upholds us and sustains us, not man. The fear of the Lord is not just an Old Testament principle. 2 Corinthians 7:1
4. Paul said the reason that people live wickedly is because "*there is no fear of God before their eyes.*" Romans 3:18

- People live like there is no God, no coming Judgment Day, no heaven, and no eternal hell.
5. David had to remind himself that God is near to those that humble themselves before Him, but God will bring judgment on the wicked. Psalm 34:18-21

In Conclusion:

1. David had been anointed to be the new king, but he had to be prepared. In 1 Samuel 21, David enters God's school of hard knocks. David is now going to go through a preparation time before he assumes the throne of Israel.
2. One of the things that amazes me about God as I read His Word is simply this: God never gets in a hurry. We would have had David anointed in chapter 16 and put him on the throne in chapter 17. Not God. In chapter 30, David is still in the school of hard knocks.
3. But David didn't waste his troubles. He learned from them, he learned more about his God, he grew in his relationship with the Lord, and he became better equipped to be a leader for God.
4. Christian, maybe you are going through troubles and trials. Don't waste your troubles. Use them as opportunities to grow more into the likeness of Jesus Christ.