



ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH
PRAYERS AND REFLECTION BASED ON 1
SAMUEL 24:1-12
FEBRUARY 26TH, 2025



David Spares Saul's Life

24 When Saul returned from following the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the wilderness of En-gedi." **2** Then Saul took three thousand chosen men out of all Israel and went to look for David and his men in the direction of the Rocks of the Wild Goats. **3** He came to the sheepfolds beside the road, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself. Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave. **4** The men of David said to him, "Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it seems good to you.'" Then David went and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's cloak. **5** Afterward David was stricken to the heart because he had cut off a corner of Saul's cloak. **6** He said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the Lord's anointed, to raise my hand against him, for he is the Lord's anointed." **7** So David rebuked his men severely and did not permit them to attack Saul. Then Saul got up and left the cave and went on his way.

8 Afterward David also rose up and went out of the cave and called after Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the ground and did obeisance. **9** David said to Saul, "Why do you listen to the words of those who say, 'David seeks to do you harm'?" **10** This very day your eyes have seen how the Lord gave you into my hand in the cave, and some urged me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not raise my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.' **11** See, my father, see the corner of your cloak in my hand, for by the fact that I cut off the corner of your cloak and did not kill you, you may know for certain that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you are hunting me to take my life. **12** May the Lord judge between me and you! May the Lord avenge me on you, but my hand shall not be against you.

PRAYER

Dearest Lord, You know above all just how often I offend You when I do something that I know I shouldn't only to feel the weight and heaviness of guilt descend upon me. In this moment of quietness with You, I am grateful that I can share this precious time and feel the generosity of Your compassion deep in my heart and soul in the gift of a forgiven life as I unburden myself Amen

PRAYER POINTS OF THANKS AND PRAISE (please feel free to disregard these points if you wish)

- Thanks for giving each of us boundaries
- Thanks for giving us guidance of when it's appropriate to act and when it isn't
- Thanks for providing shelter and respite in times of need
- Thanks for wisdom to prevail over temptation
- Praise for non-violent conversations in times of anxiousness
- Praise for strength of mind and character when faced with adversity
- Praise for looking at other strategies for a better understanding
- Praise for patience and trust

PRAYER POINTS OF CONFESSION (please feel free to disregard these points if you wish)

- I confess that my patience has been stretched thin almost to the point of breaking
- I confess that I have been tempted to want more than I deserve
- I confess to You Lord, that I'm not as disciplined in how I follow the commandment to love as You would have me be.
- I confess to You Lord, that I have judged others in this world for the gifts they have received and I have not.

WORDS OF GRACE

The Lord has heard your prayer and in God's grace you have been given mercy and stand as a forgiven and much beloved child of God.

REFLECTION

This is a moment in the relationship between Saul and David that we can clearly see power, mercy and the making of a moral choice at work. David has an opportunity to kill his opponent, Saul, who has relentlessly pursued him out of jealousy and fear. However, instead of exacting any form of revenge for himself, David makes the choice to show restraint and mercy, sparing Saul's life. How can we look at this from our perspective in 2025 particularly if we're looking at leadership, conflict resolution, and personal integrity.

In our era we may find ourselves in situations where we may feel justified in retaliating against those who we consider have wronged us. It could be in a personal relationship, or in a workplace situation or perhaps an even broader aspect. The temptation to 'get back' at someone is strong, especially when we feel that our hurt is legitimate. Aren't we lucky to have a reminder from the scriptures that isn't the right way to approach our hurt feelings. David's decision to spare Saul can resonate with us as it takes a great deal of strength to show mercy and restraint.

In today's world the concept of forgiveness is seen as a weakness and can be a polarising topic. Many people believe that forgiveness implies weakness, but in truth it can be one of the greatest demonstrations of strength and self-control. David's choice illustrates the idea that true leadership often requires us to rise above personal grievances and to act with dignity, maintaining our Christian values even when others do not.

Another one of the things that we don't hear much about these days is there are always consequences for the actions we take. David recognises that Saul is God's anointed king, and his respect for Saul's God-given position, despite the personal risks he faces. This reflects David's moral grounding from his Jewish faith which he prioritises over his own desire of revenge. David honours Saul as God's anointed one, a boundary he won't cross. In our lives, understanding the broader contexts of relationships and the power dynamics within them can help us when we're involved in navigating conflicts which we experience with empathy and wisdom. When this happens to us we are faced with questioning ourselves 'is it a boundary we're prepared to cross?'

One other thing that we can derive from this passage concerns the message being delivered to us about our accountability for our actions or inactions. David confronts Saul with his actions, which serves as an opportunity for Saul to do some self-reflection which could lead to a change in his behaviour. In our

era, accountability is or should be really important; when we choose to address our wrongs with help from the Holy Spirit, the process of healing and reconciliation has begun.

It's always a good thing when we are presented with a timeless truth: the path of mercy and integrity often leads to greater peace than the quick satisfaction of short-lived vengeance. As we continue our own faith journey, we know our lives will be filled with challenges of all types. We can't be dismissive of the lessons we can learn from David's choices that demonstrate compassion, and strength in restraint. Each of which provides us with the meaningful connection we have in the Holy Spirit and the privilege to build on them through the act of divine forgiveness. Each of us have said our prayer of confession and received the mercy and grace of God's forgiveness, each of us can do likewise for those who have grieved us rather than hold a perpetual grudge.

PRAYER POINTS OF INTERCESSION

- Lord, we ask You to show us how to be strong and forgiving
- Lord, when we want to blame others for our mistakes, help us to be accountable for what has happened. Help us to find ways forward in ways that are fair and just.
- Lord, may each us be more aware of our boundaries so that others can flourish in their Spirit given gifts.
- Lord, be with us each day as we prayerfully live out our commitment to you, to love one another

HOLD ON TIGHT -a reminder to keep on going, no matter how rough the road ahead might seem.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izcLONVqaKg>

