

CIC 2-8-25 (Saturday night, Sunday am major snow)

Tomorrow, during Superbowl LIX (59), there will be a lot of decisions. On the field, there will be plays to run, defenses to anticipate, and timeouts to call. This is not an endorsement.

- I read about a decision Andy Reid, the coach of the Kansas City Chiefs, made. He supposedly holds back their best plays for postseason football.¹
- This means their opponents haven't seen their best offensive plays until the most important games of the year.



While the Super Bowl is important because of the money and careers involved, in the end, it is just a game.

- Every day we make thousands of decisions, some are low level and unimportant, while others change the trajectory of our life.
- Our most important decision has to do with our eternal destiny. Joel wrote, 'Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision! For the day of the Lord is near (Joel 3;14 NIV).'

Tonight, we examine some decisions that David and Saul make - poor decisions.

David Direction, 1Sa 27-29



We are looking at the life of David and learning from his example.

- Last Sunday, David hit his lowest point, having lost his wife, his friend, his army and position, and even his dignity.
- We ended with David and the 400 men who have joined him in the cave at Adullam. God took away all of David's support to give him a new pathway to the throne.

A lot happened in David's life between the end of last Sunday's story and today's story. Let's catch everyone up.

1. Recap.

¹ [Inside the secret plays Andy Reid and the Chiefs offense hold for the postseason](#)

- Saul kills everyone in Nob. He kills the priests who unwittingly helped David along with their families. One man escapes to tell David.
- David rescues the town of Keilah. He inflicts heavy losses on the Philistines who were attacking it.
- David 'inquires of the Lord' for direction, 1Sa 23:2.
- David meets Jonathan for the last time. Jonathan affirms that God has chosen David to be king.
- David moves from place to place. He is one step ahead of Saul.
- David's army grows to 600 men, 1Sa 23:13.
- David spares Saul's life in a cave.
- David spares Nabal because of Abigail's wisdom, 1Sa 25. She becomes his wife. David and his men are now a considerable raiding party.
- David spares Saul's life in a tent. Pastor Justin opened this sermon series with this message.

Often, it is more difficult to follow the Lord when things are going well than when we must cling to Him for help.

- Paul wrote, 'If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall (1Co 10:12 NIV)!'.
- It seems we Christians get comfortable with success and forget that the Lord is the source of everything good in our lives. Like exercise, we do better with a little resistance.
- David has done a lot of good. 'He's walked in victory for quite some time ... and, as all of us know, that's a very vulnerable spot.'²

He makes a critical error:

2. Self-Talk.

'But David kept thinking to himself, "Someday Saul is going to get me. The best thing I can do is escape to the Philistines. Then Saul will stop hunting for me in Israelite territory, and I will finally be safe (1Sa 27:1 NLT)."'

Friends we must guard our thinking. David took his eyes off the Lord and onto his circumstances. Always look up to the Lord and not out to your circumstances.

² Charles R. Swindoll, *David: A Story of Passion & Destiny* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing, 1997), p. 109.

Our thoughts are the gateway to the heart, which helps us make decisions. Our self-talk can lead us astray ...

Self-talk can lead us astray ...

1. If we look at things from a human perspective. Solomon wrote, 'There is a way that appears to be right, but in the end it leads to death (Pro 14:12, 16:25).'
2. If we ruminate on negative things. David is off base here – going against what others have said.
 - Samuel said he would be king.
 - Abigail said the same thing (1Sa 25:30).
 - Jonathan (1Sa 23:17) and even Saul (1Sa 24:20). Instead, David thinks about being killed by Saul
3. If we rationalize away from God's plan.
 - 'Escape to the Philistines?' He pretended to be insane just a short while ago.
 - Fear is the source of this incorrect thinking.
 - David knew he would be king, so why rationalize going to the enemy?

The human mind can rationalize anything.

- We can deceive ourselves: 'If anyone thinks they are something when they are not, they deceive themselves (Ga 6:3 NIV).' ³ Delusion can turn into reality, a false reality, through our self-talk.
- At best, this was a practical move. After all, they could not keep on running in the wilderness forever.⁴

The problem is there are always consequences to our decisions.

'So David took his 600 men and went over and joined Achish son of Maach, the king of Gath. ³ David and his men and their families settled there with Achish at Gath. David brought his two wives along with him— Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail, Nabal's widow from Carmel (1Sa 27:2-3 NLT).'

Even though David took charge of his future, he didn't go alone. 600 men and their families. Wow.

- David is acting like a worldly Christian. Someone who believes in his mind but who lives in opposition to God's way (Ro 8:6-7).

³ C.f., 1Sa 18:11, Ps 10:6, 11, 13, Is 49:5, Mt 24:48, and Lk 12:45.

⁴ David Toshio Tsumura, *NICOT The First Book of Samuel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), p. 609.

- ‘You think you can compromise and it won’t affect your family?’⁵ – Wrong.
- Psychologist Rollo May wrote, ‘Man is the only animal that runs faster when he has lost his way.’ – Rollo May David is running away, but it worked for a while.

‘Word soon reached Saul that David had fled to Gath, so he stopped hunting for him (1Sa 27:4 NLT).’

David requested someplace to live in the countryside from the Philistine king. He was given the town of Ziklag.

The story continues ... ‘David and his men spent their time raiding the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites—people who had lived near Shur, toward the land of Egypt, since ancient times. ⁹David did not leave one person alive in the villages he attacked. He took the sheep, goats, cattle, donkeys, camels, and clothing before returning home to see King Achish. ¹⁰“Where did you make your raid today?” Achish would ask. And David would reply, “Against the south of Judah, the Jerahmeelites, and the Kenites.” ¹¹No one was left alive to come to Gath and tell where he had really been. This happened again and again while he was living among the Philistines. ¹²Achish believed David and thought to himself, “By now the people of Israel must hate him bitterly. Now he will have to stay here and serve me forever (1Sa 27:8-12 NLT)!”’

A couple of things happen here.

- David’s compromise causes him to serve the enemy’s agenda. He has submitted to a foreign king. For 16 months he compromised (1Sa 27:7).
- David infers a lie. He doesn’t lie but doesn’t tell the truth either. He infers that he was raiding in Judah, but he wasn’t. Then he covers up his lie. In fact, he was raiding enemies of both Israel and the Philistines.

David’s biographer pauses his story and returns to Saul who is facing off against the Philistines.

3. Silence.

‘When Saul saw the vast Philistine army, he became frantic with fear. ⁶He asked the Lord what he should do, but the Lord refused to answer him, either by dreams or by sacred lots or by the prophets. ⁷Saul then said to his advisers, “Find a woman who is a medium, so I can go and ask her what to do (1Sa 28:5-7 NLT).”’

As believers, we have the precious Holy Spirit living in us.

- Because of his rebellion ‘The Spirit of the Lord ... departed from Saul (1Sa 16:14).’
- Remember, David pleaded with God not to take the Holy Spirit from him when he sinned (Ps 51:11)?

⁵ Swindoll, *David*, p. 111.

Always look up to the Lord and not out to your circumstances. Saul says that ‘God no longer answers me (1Sa 28:15 NIV).’

- He longs for that supernatural voice to give him direction again through dreams, the Urim, and the prophets ... but God is silent.
- That is because of the rebellion in his heart. Saul is ‘frantic with fear’ and wants direction from God.
- Those little nudges we receive from the Holy Spirit are so important. Imagine getting zero direction from the Lord.

Saul turns to a witch.

- There are evil powers, just as there are angels and the Holy Spirit. Saul is in complete rebellion and all the sorcerers were to be put to death (Ex 22:18).
- This medium conjures Samuel. She screams because it really worked.
- Amazingly, the message Samuel delivers to Saul sounds like the real Samuel.
- Theologians don’t have a good answer for this demon appearing as Samuel. It was ‘God’s final means of bringing a word to a king who insisted on going his own way ... one more warning about the evil of his ways.’⁶

The apparition of Samuel tells Saul that he and Jonathan will die in tomorrow’s battle. The moral of this part of the story is that ‘to speak with the dead (though an evil spirit) is to join the dead.’⁷

This story reveals that our heart leads us. Get filled up with God and you will not be led astray. People see what they wish to see. We do not see things as they are, but as we are.

- David listened to his self-talk because of fear.
- Saul listened to a demon because of fear and not hearing from God.
- Jesus said our thoughts and speech ‘come from the heart (Mt 15:18 NIV).’

The story switches back to David and the Philistines and the very same battle.

4. The Philistines.

‘But the Philistine commanders demanded, “What are these Hebrews doing here?” And Achish told them, “This is David, the servant of King Saul of Israel. He’s been with me for years, and I’ve never found a single fault in him from

⁶ Walter C. Kaiser, Jr. Peter H. Davids, F.F. Bruce, Manfred T. Baruch, *Hard Sayings of the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), pp. 217-18 (p. 218); Tsumura, *First Samuel*, p. 617.

⁷ Tsumura, *First Samuel*, p. 617.

the day he arrived until today.”⁴ But the Philistine commanders were angry ...⁵ Isn’t this the same David about whom the women of Israel sing in their dances, ‘Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands (1Sa 29:3-5 NLT)?’”

Even though king Achish finds no fault with David, he requests that he and his men leave at first light.

- On the one hand, this is a great thing. ‘God (has) providentially engineered the course of David’s life ... so that he does not have to fight against Saul’ and Israel.⁸
- On the other hand, David and his men return to Ziklag only to find their houses burned and their wives and families stolen.
- His men turn on him: ‘David was now in great danger because all his men were very bitter about losing their sons and daughters, and they began to talk of stoning him (1Sa 30:6 NLT).’

Sin always has consequences. The consequences ripple out from even the most private of sins to affect those around us.

- Here, David’s fear and self-talk causes him to lose their families and the respect of the men who follow him.
- For sixteen months David and his men have served a foreign king, someone who worships a pagan god.

Charles Swindoll notes that there is not one Psalm attributed to David from his time in Gath or Ziklag.⁹

- The ‘sweet psalmist of Israel (2Sa 23:1 NLT)’ has gone silent.
- There was not much joy in David’s heart. He was listening to his self-talk and was far from God.
- Another Psalmist questions, ‘How can we sing the songs of the Lord while in a pagan land (Ps 137:4 NLT).’

Losing his family and the trust of his men woke David up to his own poor decision, he returned to God.

5. Restored.

⁸ Tsumura, *First Samuel*, p. 637.

⁹ Swindoll, *David*, p. 113.

'But David found strength in the Lord his God. ⁷Then he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring me the ephod!" So Abiathar brought it. ⁸Then David asked the Lord, "Should I chase after this band of raiders? Will I catch them (1Sa 30:6-7 NLT)?"'

Isn't that beautiful. Always look up to the Lord and not out to your circumstances.

David trusted in God, leaned upon him, submitted to Him and His plan.

- He 'found strength in the Lord.'
- Please, bring me the ephod (a way to hear from God).
- 'Lord, show me your way.'

One scholar believes that David wrote Ps 25 at this point in his life.¹⁰ I can believe it.

David has lost his way, and this Psalm is all about life's direction and decisions. 'In you, Lord my God, I put my trust. ²I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me ... ⁴Show me your ways, Lord, teach me your paths. ⁵Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long ... ⁷Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, Lord, are good ... ⁹He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way (Ps 25:1-2, 4-5, 7, 9 NIV).'

The musician who lost his voice finds it again when he returns to God's plan for his life.

The Lord tells David to go after the Amalekites. 200 of David's men are exhausted, so 400 go after their families. It says, 'David got back everything the Amalekites had taken, and he rescued his two wives. ¹⁹Nothing was missing: small or great, son or daughter, nor anything else that had been taken. David brought everything back (1Sa 30:18-19 NLT).'

God restored what was lost.

But they gather more than was taken by the Amalekites. David sends a portion of proceeds to the elders in Judah. These were the elders who would anoint him king over Judah. He is back on track.

Conclusion.

Last Sunday was Groundhog Day, so in our home group, I asked the question, 'what day would you like to relive and why?' It was supposed to be a fun crowd breaker type of question because in the movie Groundhog Day, Bill Murray relives Groundhog Day repeatedly, until he gets it right – making the right decision.



¹⁰ Tsumura, *First Samuel*, p. 638.

- A few said, their wedding day, or day they met their spouses.
- Others expressed regret and would like to redo certain days. Our decisions matter. Yes, there are some decisions I wish I had not made.
- God can reroute our lives back onto His plan for us when we mess up. 'In all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Ro 8:28 NIV).'

It is better to not get off track though. Here is Solomon's advice: 'Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight (Pro 3:5-6 NIV).'

Perhaps there are some decisions you regret; some consequences you would like to mitigate – repent, trust, lean, and submit.

Pray.