

Introduction: In His time, God will do amazing things for people to increase their faith IN Him so they can be more gracious to people, even their enemies. And again, in God's own time, these enemies may come to repent before God, receive His forgiveness IN Jesus and become faithfully obedient servants of God. *** An outstanding example of this in Church history is Stephen and Saul of Tarsus (in east Turkey near Syria). After Jews from northwestern Africa stirred up the people and priests against Stephen to stone him to death, he graciously spoke to them about the history of God's chosen people from Abraham to Moses to Joseph, and how they suffered from ignorant people. He ended with the death and resurrection of Jesus, saying they were disobedient to God. With this, they stoned him to death; but, as he was dying, he saw Jesus. With his last breath, he asked God to forgive them. Saul was present and approved of Stephen's execution. Then he persecuted the Church (Acts 6:8-8:3). However, Saul later saw Jesus, repented and became Jesus' chosen apostle to all people (Acts 9; 26:4-18). *** One thousand years before Stephen and Saul of Tarsus, there was David and Saul of Benjamin. Saul sought to kill David. Twice David graciously spares his enemy's life because of his growing faith in God. Our passage shows king Saul repenting before David's gracious act, calling David son, and blessing him. *** In a prayer psalm that David wrote out of his affliction and need, he declares Adonai's great love will give him forgiveness and deliverance. The result of Adonai's forgiving love will be worship to Him from all nations. *** Let's now dive into the details of our passages to become more faithful servants of God and Jesus; that is, Gospel ambassadors of God's grace and forgiveness IN the Messiah (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

I. From a distance, David 'calls out' Abner for not watching over his king from one 'bent' on destroying him, with Saul's spear as proof; then, Saul calls David son and David asks Saul to stop pursuing him. (1 Samuel 26:13-20)

- A. David stands on a mountain top a distance from Saul's camp, chastising Abner for not guarding his king when one came to destroy him, then he showed Saul's spear. (*Verses 13-16*)
1. Then David went over the (other) side on top of the mountain from a distance, a great space between them. (*Verse 13*)
David on top: David crossed the valley of Saul's encampment, and climbed to the top of a hill.
He is both a safe distance from Saul and literally and spiritually above Saul.
 2. Then David called to 'the people' (Saul's three thousand men), and Abner (my father a lamp) and said:
Abner, will you not answer? Then Abner answered: Who are you who calls to the king? (*Verse 14*)
Wake up: David is calling loudly to Saul's people, especially Abner, to wake up!
 3. Then David said to Abner: Are you (yourself) not a man? Who (is) like you in Israel? Why have you not watched over (guarded, kept safe) your lord, the king? Because (indeed) one of 'the people' came to destroy the king, your lord. (*Verse 15*)
Derelict in duty: David recognizes Abner is a great man of war, more than any in Israel. So, he 'calls out' Abner for being derelict in his duty to his master, king Saul, when Abishai tried to destroy Saul.
 4. (It is) not good, this thing which you have done; as Yahweh lives, because you (are) of the 'sons of death' for you did not watch over (guard, keep safe) your lord, Yahweh's anointed; now, you must look: where is the spear of the king and the jar of water which (was) at his head? (*Verse 16*)
Chastises: He challenges Abner to find Saul's spear and water jar; an implicit chastisement because Abner will see that someone took them while he slept on duty.
- B. Saul recognizes David's voice and calls him son; then, David makes his plea for Saul to stop pursuing him to death because he is harmless. (*Verses 17-20*)
1. Then Saul recognized David's voice and said: Is this your voice, my son David? Then David said: My lord, the king. (*Verse 17*)
My son: Voice recognition predates technology by several millennia. Something caused Saul to rightly call David his son(-in-law)! For a moment, Saul repents of his un-righteous desire for David's death.
He realizes he would be dead if David had not shown him grace.

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- Respect:** For his part, David continues to respect Saul as the one Yahweh anointed through Samuel.
2. Then he (David) said: Why (is) my lord pursuing after his servant? For what have I done? What guilt is on my hands? (*Verse 18*)
Why pursue: All David ever did was faithfully serve Saul his king. He cannot understand why Saul keeps pursuing him to kill him! The word David uses here, he would later use at the end of his beloved shepherd song. He says that Yahweh, in whom he has put his faith, is always pursuing him with goodness and strong steadfast love (Psalm 23:6)!
 3. Now, you will hear, please! my lord, the king, the words of his servant: If Yahweh stirred you against me, He will smell an offering; if sons of men, (they) be cursed before Yahweh, because they drove me from (being) joined to the inheritance of Yahweh; they said: You must serve other gods. (*Verse 19*)
Hear me: David begs Saul to hear him! Did Yahweh incite you against me? Then He will smell the sweet savor of a burnt offering (Genesis 8:20-22; Leviticus 1:1-9; see also 2 Corinthians 2:14-16). Was it your men?
They are cursed for driving me from my land inheritance to serve pagan 'gods'!
Foreshadows next chapter: We will see next week how this almost happened to David.
 4. And now, my blood will not fall to the earth away from Yahweh, because the king of Israel has come out to seek a flea, as one pursuing (hunting) a partridge in the mountains. (*Verse 20*)
Humble faith: David says whatever happens, he knows by faith Yahweh is with him.
Then he finishes his plea by saying he is as harmless as a small insect or bird!

II. Saul repents before David who counted his life precious, David demonstrates faith that Yahweh will do right and Saul blesses David; in a psalm, David praises Adonai who forgives those calling on Him: the unique One all nations will worship. (*1 Samuel 26:21-25; Psalm 86:5-9*)

A. Saul repents, confessing his sin to David, realizing David counted his life precious; David sends Saul's spear back, confident Yahweh will 'balance the books'; and, Saul blesses him. (*1 Samuel 26: 21-25*)

1. Then Saul said: I have sinned. You must return my son David; for I will not do you more evil, as my life was precious in your eyes this day: behold! I have done foolishly and then gone astray exceedingly much. (*Verse 21*)

Confession: Because of David's grace in counting Saul's life as precious in Yahweh's eyes, Saul confesses his sin and repents of his exceedingly great evil done to David, and says he will stop.

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2. David answered: Behold! the spear of the king; one of the young men will come over and will take it. (*Verse 22*)

Take what is yours: David tells Saul to send a young man to David to take back his spear.

3. Yahweh will return to each (one for) his righteousness and faithfulness; as Yahweh gave you into my hand today, and I did not put forth my hand against Yahweh's anointed, behold! as your life was great in my eyes today, my life will be great in the eyes of Yahweh, and He will deliver me from all distress. (*Verses 23-24*)

David's growing faith: David has great faith that no matter what tight places he must endure, in even the most dire straits, Yahweh will eventually deliver him because he was gracious to spare Saul's life. He would later conclude a psalm with the same truth that because of Yahweh's strong love, all people will eventually be repaid according to their faith, or lack of faith (Psalm 62:11-12).

4. Then Saul said to David: Blessed (are) you my son David: both to surely do and also to surely prevail; then David went his way, and Saul returned to his place. (*Verse 25*)

Words: Saul's final words of repentance to David are a desire that he be blessed (by Yahweh), and a confident prediction that David will be given the ability to endure until he prevails. This repentance came from David's life-sparing grace to Saul.

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Separate ways: This is the last meeting between these two men. David goes to a dangerous place.

Saul's repentance was short lived because he will soon die in battle.

Application: We must understand from the stark contrast between David and Saul the necessity to always be growing in faith through trials and life-threatening events because we know God's grace will strengthen our faith so we may graciously love our enemies as Father God does (Matthew 5:43-48).

B. In a prayer psalm, David praises Adonai for His goodness to forgive those calling on Him;

Adonai is unique and all nations will worship Him. (*Psalm 86:5-9*)

1. You Adonai (are) good and forgiving / and abundant of steadfast love to all calling on You. (*Verse 5*)

Adonai's character: David praises Adonai's character as good and forgiving, with an abundance of strong life-giving, life changing love. And these are especially known to all continually calling on Him.

2. Thou must 'give ear' Yahweh to my prayer / and pay attention to the voice of my supplications // in the day of my distress I will call on You / because You will answer me. (*Verses 6-7*)

Give ear and attend: With two strong requests (commands) to his covenant God, David expresses his desire that his prayers of supplication will be carefully heard and rightly considered.

Promises: David has full faith that when he calls on his Lord God in tight places and dire straits of distress, as he experienced with Saul, Yahweh will answer him according to His character of steadfast love to forgive and bless those calling on Him.

Supplication to the Lord of steadfast love leads to forgiveness

3. None like You among the 'gods', Adonai / and none of works like Yours. (*Verse 8*)

Unique Jesus: Adonai is unique in person and deeds! Jesus called himself Adonai based on David's words 'Yahweh said to my Adonai' (Psalm 110:1) when the Pharisees tried to discredit Him between Palm Sunday and Good Friday (Matthew 22:34-46). Jesus is God's one and only Son!

4. All the nations You made will come and bow down in worship to You Adonai / and they will glorify Your Name. (*Verse 9*)

All nations: Yahweh's universal blessing of all nations was promised to Abraham (Genesis 12:3); and, Jesus commanded that witness of His salvation would be to all the (nations of) earth through the power of the Holy Spirit in His disciples (Acts 1:8).

Application: We must pray and seek God's power in the Holy Spirit to share the Good News of Jesus with all our neighbors so every person might see Jesus in us and receive His salvation (1 Corinthians 9:19-22).

Conclusion: From a mountaintop at a safe distance from Saul and his army, David chastises Abner for not protecting his king from one wanting to destroy him, and he shows Saul's spear as evidence. Then, Saul calls David son, and David asks Saul to stop pursuing him. Saul repents before David because David considered Saul's life precious. David demonstrated his faith that Yahweh will do what is right in His time and Saul blessed him. Out of affliction and need, David praises Adonai, who forgives from His great steadfast love those who call out to Him. Adonai (Jesus) is the unique One whom all nations will worship.

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