

April 26th, 2020

Finding Victory by Extending Mercy

1 Samuel 18, 24, 26 and 2 Samuel 6, 9 (Selected Verses)

Sermon Summary

This message looks at several instances in which David extends mercy to various people and why extending mercy gives us victory in our lives. However, the message actually begins with a look at how Saul refused to extend mercy and how it constantly brought about defeat in his life. Saul and David are opposites when it comes to their hearts and their motives and this affected how each one dealt with the issue of mercy. Neither Saul, nor David were perfect people, but David's desire to do the right thing brought him victory on more than one occasion. Once Saul had died and David became King, David decided to bring the Ark of The Covenant back to Jerusalem. On the way, there was a mishap and one of the Priest, Uzzah, was killed. His death was due in part to the haphazard way in which the Ark was being handled. However, Uzzah's death was a stark reminder of how sin had separated man from God and why God's extension of mercy through Jesus' death on the cross was essential to humankind's salvation. The message closes with a look at David extending mercy to Saul's family by basically adopting Saul's grandson Mephibosheth, restoring to him the lands Saul had owned, and by allowing him to eat at David's table every day from then on. The message ends with selected verses of Ephesians which speak of God extending us Mercy and adopting us into His family through the Blood of Jesus Christ!

Full Sermon Notes

Good morning! So thankful for the worship we've had this morning. God is so awesome no matter what we're going through! I sure miss seeing you all. I know you're there, but the camera only goes one way in this setting, so I can't see you! I want you to know your staff is working hard to figure out how we can best do ministry in these circumstances and how and when we will be able to transition safely back to some type of gathering. However, we know God is using this time to grow us all and to push out of our comfort zones. It's ironic that this time of physical distancing, has actually caused us to go beyond the four walls of our church building and reach out to the world in new and innovative ways. Our mission statement is: Transforming worship, people and the world! Our Vision statement reads: To raise up a healthy church that will impact the North Shore and ultimately the world with the life changing message of Jesus! God wants us to get the message out to the North Shore, but it's not supposed to stop there! So while I miss seeing you and I believe we will be together again, in God's timing, be encouraged that God is doing what only He can do, making good come from the bad! He always does this for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose! Our Church purpose is "To See the One who gave His life for us exalted and the ones He gave His life for transformed!" And here's the good news: It's not God's will that anyone perish and that's why He extended His mercy to us through Jesus' sacrifice. So with that in mind, let's pray and ask God to help us understand how we find victory by extending grace! Pray!

Father God, how can we say thank you enough for Your willingness to extend Your grace and mercy to us through Your Son Jesus! We could never do enough to earn Your love or be good

enough to deserve Your love! So we want to live lives that show our gratitude. We want to extend to others the same mercy You've extended to us! We want to find victory over bitterness, hurt, hate, jealousy, desire for revenge, anger, and discouragement by learning to extend grace. Help us to have Your wisdom to do that in a Godly way without putting ourselves or keeping ourselves in situations that allow others to abuse our take advantage of our kindness. Extending mercy to those who don't deserve our mercy is not an easy thing to do. I often marvel at Your willingness to do that for me when I had cursed Your name and rejected You. But You did, and I will be forever grateful! God we continue to pray for those who are fighting for their lives and for those who are fighting to save their lives. Your presence, power, protection and peace are needed so desperately in our world today. Thank You for our medical professionals and first responders who continue to serve selflessly! Please be with them and their families! We ask that You be the Great Physician, adding Your blessing to their efforts. Hide me behind the Cross today and anoint this message with Your Holy Spirit so lives can be eternally transformed. I pray this humbly in the Precious Name of Jesus! Amen.

Today I will begin our message with a portion of Scripture that was in your Foundations 260 reading plan from last week and then highlight several passages from this week that will give us valuable lessons on extending mercy. At the end of this week you will read 2 Samuel 11, which will give you a sneak peak into next weeks message titled, "Finding Victory over Failure." Just didn't want you to be confused. Okay, with that said, let's jump into our message.

1. Defeat Comes to Those Who Refuse to Extend Mercy

Last week we saw the shepherd boy David take on the Philistine Giant Goliath and come out the victor. He trusted God's Power, and His plan! He trusted God's purpose, His protection, and His aim. However, just as the extra four stones he picked up indicated he would later face other Philistine giants, David also faced dangers from his own leader, King Saul. Let's read from 1 Samuel 18...

1 Sam 18:5 Whatever Saul sent him to do, David did it so successfully that Saul gave him a high rank in the army. This pleased all the people, and Saul's officers as well.

1 Sam 18:6 When the men were returning home after David had killed the Philistine, the women came out from all the towns of Israel to meet King Saul with singing and dancing, with joyful songs and with tambourines and lutes.

1 Sam 18:7 As they danced, they sang: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

1 Sam 18:8 Saul was very angry; this refrain galled him. "They have credited David with tens of thousands," he thought, "but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?"

1 Sam 18:9 And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

1 Sam 18:10 The next day an evil spirit from God came forcefully upon Saul. He was prophesying in his house, while David was playing the harp, as he usually did. Saul had a spear in his hand

1 Sam 18:11 and he hurled it, saying to himself, "I'll pin David to the wall." But David eluded him twice.

1 Sam 18:12 Saul was afraid of David, because the LORD was with David but had left Saul.

You would think that Saul would have extended mercy to David for fighting the Giant Goliath and defeating the enemies of Israel, but Saul was angry with David, Jealous of David, and he feared David! You might wonder why? Let me put it this way: When everything depends on you and you alone and when things don't go as you planned anger is only natural. Saul was King, but he wanted more. He wanted to be a great King, a revered King, a respected King, and a King who would have a great legacy. However, he was simply not willing to trust God's power or follow God's plan for him so his kingship was constantly derailing. This caused Saul to be a very angry man! And an angry man can become extremely irrational.

It can seem at times as if an evil spirit has come upon that person. We talked about the evil spirit situation with Saul last week. That message and full sermon notes are available on our web-site. When a person is responsible for their own protection and success in life and things keep getting through and bringing pain, hurt, and defeat to personal plans and aspirations, they're going to get angry and be mad at the world. Saul's anger led him to try to kill David. Isn't it strange when we do things that cause problems we want to take it out on someone else! And when we are outside the umbrella of God's protection and things are not going good it's easy to become jealous of those who seem to have God's blessing. Saul was insanely Jealous of David. Listen to this verse from Proverbs...

Prov 27:4 Anger is cruel and fury overwhelming, but who can stand before jealousy?

Saul was galled at the refrain the people were singing about Saul's thousands of victories but David's ten's of thousands of victories. The sad thing is that Saul's jealousy prevented him from seeing that David was doing the things he did because David was loyal to Saul as his King. People who refuse to extend mercy to others will ultimately find extreme defeat because God can't bless those kinds of attitudes. Jealousy is a terrible mistress! It will control your life, your time, your thoughts, your very soul! Jealousy is at the heart of selfishness. It will destroy you and those around you. Let me tell you just how low down jealousy took Saul.

1 Sam 18:17 Saul said to David, "Here is my older daughter Merab. I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the LORD." For Saul said to himself, "I will not raise a hand against him. Let the Philistines do that!"

Wow, that's low. Letting your daughter get married in hopes that her husband will be killed in battle. That gives you an idea of the difference between a person who has mercy and one who has none! David however, said this...

1 Sam 18:18 But David said to Saul, "Who am I, and what is my family or my father's clan in Israel, that I should become the king's son-in-law?"

David was humble about things and didn't feel he was worthy to be a part of the King's family. Even after Saul had tried to kill David, David still honors Saul and his position as King! Shows you a little bit of David's heart. Merab ended up marrying someone else and then Saul did the same thing with his younger daughter Michal. Unbelievable! David did marry Michal, but this did not bring about the demise of David as King Saul had hoped. You see, Saul was fearful of David. He was suspicious and distrustful of him to the point of paranoia! This happens when a

person refuses to trust God's, power, plan, protection, provision, and peace. The only thing left for a person like this is to live a life of fear. Here's the problem: pride. "I've got this! I don't need anyone's help! I can do this on my own! I don't need anybody telling me what to do! I'm in control! I don't need anybody's mercy and I'm not giving anybody mercy!" But what Saul and others like him don't realize is that this attitude is a breeding ground for fear. The reason is this: If it's my plan, I'm responsible. If I have to provide my own protection I have to be ahead of everything, I've got to know what's coming, I've got to be stronger, smarter, better! And, let me just throw this in the mix: if you're depending on your own righteousness then you've got to be perfect! Of course a person like this knows deep down they aren't perfect, and when this person lays their head on their pillow they begin to wonder if they missed something, forgot something, didn't see something, didn't do something! Fear and worry ensue! But pride keeps them from seeking help or extending mercy! Saul, the King of Israel had rejected the protection and mercy of God and as a result, he was filled with fear of giants and shepherd boys. There's a Scripture in the New Testament which sums up the tragedy of those who refuse to extend mercy.

Mat 6:14 For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.

Mat 6:15 But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

This sounds very harsh of God but, it's really not on God. You see those who are unwilling to give forgiveness are so harsh in spirit they are not willing to receive forgiveness. Their anger and pride build a wall between them and God! God wants to forgive them and wants to teach them to forgive. But they refuse. It all goes back to the covenant formula: "If you will be my people I will be your God!" Make no mistake about it, you have a choice in the matter. Our Sovereign God gave you that choice! Saul had choices, David had choices.

Saul chooses several more times to try to kill David, but God gives David wisdom to allude Saul! What happens next is really amazing because it showcases that a person can extend mercy even to the most vile of persons, remembering that forgiveness is not excusing a person's sin, but looking beyond a person's sin and seeing their need for God!

2. Find Victory by Extending Mercy

1 Sam 24:1 After Saul returned from pursuing the Philistines, he was told, "David is in the Desert of En Gedi."

1 Sam 24:2 So Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Crags of the Wild Goats.

1 Sam 24:3 He came to the sheep pens along the way; a cave was there, and Saul went in to relieve himself. David and his men were far back in the cave.

1 Sam 24:4 The men said, "This is the day the LORD spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

Saul's eyes have not adjusted to the darkness of the cave and he cannot see the men standing around the walls in the back of the cave. He doesn't see David. Can you hear the whispers? And can you imagine how thrilled David's men were. They had been running with their leader David,

from this madman Saul and now here's the chance for them to end this madness. They may get to go back home and see their families. But then to their surprise and dismay, David takes out his dagger and silently and gently cuts off a corner of Saul's robe. What just happened? They were bewildered at the actions of their leader. And what about David. Let's see...

1 Sam 24:5 Afterward, David was conscience-stricken for having cut off a corner of his robe.

1 Sam 24:6 He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the LORD."

1 Sam 24:7 With these words David rebuked his men and did not allow them to attack Saul. And Saul left the cave and went his way.

1 Sam 24:8 Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and prostrated himself with his face to the ground.

1 Sam 24:9 He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'?"

1 Sam 24:10 This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, 'I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the Lord's anointed.'

1 Sam 24:11 See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. Now understand and recognize that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life.

1 Sam 24:12 May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you.

1 Sam 24:13 As the old saying goes, 'From evildoers come evil deeds,' so my hand will not touch you.

Now if you had someone trying to kill you on multiple occasions and you had a chance to take them out, what would you do? Many today would say, "take care of business!" But David extends mercy! Had David done what many of his men wanted him to do, there would have been a blood bath. Saul's men would have sought to avenge Saul's death and many of David's men in that cave would have perished that day. However, we see that David finds victory in extending mercy. Listen to what Saul says...

1 Sam 24:16 When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud.

1 Sam 24:17 "You are more righteous than I," he said. "You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly.

1 Sam 24:18 You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me.

1 Sam 24:19 When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today.

1 Sam 24:20 I know that you will surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands.

1 Sam 24:21 Now swear to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants or wipe out my name from my father's family."

1 Sam 24:22 So David gave his oath to Saul. Then Saul returned home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

So many lessons here. David wins the victory that day by extending mercy. Saul admits he had been wrong and David righteous! However, Saul's words, while true, were not proof of repentance. True repentance must be followed by action. That's why David and his men returned to their stronghold rather than heading back with Saul. Why? Extending mercy does not mean you place yourself in a position where you continue to endure abuse. If Saul had really changed, his actions would begin to reflect his words. However, we find that Saul would again pursue David to kill him. This time David and Abishai, one of his men, snuck into Saul's camp and walked right up to where he was sleeping and this happens...

1 Sam 26:8 Abishai said to David, "Today God has delivered your enemy into your hands. Now let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of my spear; I won't strike him twice."

1 Sam 26:9 But David said to Abishai, "Don't destroy him! Who can lay a hand on the Lord's anointed and be guiltless?"

1 Sam 26:10 As surely as the LORD lives," he said, "the LORD himself will strike him; either his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish.

1 Sam 26:11 But the LORD forbid that I should lay a hand on the Lord's anointed. Now get the spear and water jug that are near his head, and let's go."

1 Sam 26:12 So David took the spear and water jug near Saul's head, and they left. No one saw or knew about it, nor did anyone wake up. They were all sleeping, because the LORD had put them into a deep sleep.

What wisdom David had! What a heart David had. He has another chance to take matters into his own hands and destroy his mortal enemy. However, David still considered Saul God's anointed because of the position he held. David extends mercy and realizes Saul's fate needed to be left in God's hands. Remember this: If you take matters in your own hands when it comes to me dishing out judgement, you become responsible for any missteps in justice, and you have to live with the consequences! You may feel good for a moment, but then you have to deal with the fact that you have acted no differently than the one you despised. Max Lucado puts it this way...

"Vengeance fixes your attention at life's ugliest moments!"

David had the wisdom to trust God to handle his situation. He refused to focus on how Saul had misjudged him and mistreated him. It's as if he had read a passage of Scripture that had not yet been written, found in the New Testament book of Romans...

Rom 12:19 Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.

Rom 12:20 On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head."

Rom 12:21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

David once again finds victory by extending mercy! Saul once again speaks some really flowering words of repentance but his actions do not back his words. David and Saul go their separate ways. So sad! Just think of what Saul and David could have accomplished as a team, if Saul had not been so jealous every time God used and blessed David in a mighty way! There are many leaders who make the same mistake. Instead of celebrating the accomplishments of people

on their team, they are jealous of the praise they are receiving and put the brakes on their advancement and stifle the overall mission! Saul, instead of turning to God and working with David to unite the people of God, continues to make poor decisions. He goes even deeper into wickedness by consulting with the Witch of Endor and ends up being confronted with his sin of disobedience. Saul ends up tragically taking his own life while David goes on to become the king.

Now I need to interject something here. I have seen times in my ministry where someone has been a Saul and caused great harm to others, but unlike Saul in the Old Testament, they became like the Saul of the New Testament, who became Paul the Apostle! The Saul of the New Testament had also done some terrible and brutal things, but truly repented and cried out for forgiveness and God granted it. However, some folks didn't believe he had truly changed and were unwilling to trust him. Maybe you're listening to this and you have been a Saul, the offender, the one who grievously hurt others, but you've truly changed and yet others won't accept that, or believe that. Now you have a decision. Will you forgive their unforgiveness? Will you love even when there is no love returned? Will you give the mercy you so desperately yearn for? The only way to achieve victory in your own life is extend mercy to those unwilling to extend mercy!

David goes on to become King. And as he is on his way to Jerusalem, celebrating his victory, something happens that causes David to become very upset with God.

3. A Graphic Example of Our Need for Mercy

In 2 Samuel 6 we are reintroduced to the Ark of the Covenant which held Aaron's staff, a jar of Manna, and the tablets of stone with the Ten Commandments. On the lid of the Ark, which was known as the Mercy Seat of God, were two carved creatures called cherubim with outstretched wings. God's power, His provision, His principles, and His presence were all represented in this Ark. The Ark, which had been the center piece of the Holy of Holies behind the thick curtain in the tabernacle, had been neglected and set aside for some 30 years in storage at a Priest's home. It's amazing that something so central to the Jewish faith would have been neglected. This probably reflects somewhat on its previous leader Saul and his priorities. David was determined to change that. But here's what happens. Instead of following God's directions for handling the Ark, they ignored His instructions. God had given the instructions for a reason. He knew if the sinfulness of a man were to come into contact with the holiness of God, the man would perish! That's why there were rings on the Ark for poles to be run through so the priest could carry it without touching it. God's warnings were very clear. It's like the labels on the side of a piece of machinery that show the hazards if you place your hands or feet in certain places. Bad things will happen if you ignore those warning labels. But they ignored the instructions and placed the Ark on a cart pulled by Oxen instead of being carried by the priests with poles. The result was the oxen stumbled and one of the Priest, Uzzah, who was actually one of the sons of the priest in whose home the Ark had been stored, reaches out to stabilize the Ark and bam, he dies. David's celebration is struck with tragedy. The parade is over. David leaves the Ark with A Philistine from Gath who was loyal to David, and doesn't come back for it for 3 months. He's not sure how to handle the Ark or this tragedy.

The ark and Uzzah's mishap showcase the desperate need of humankind to be made right with God and the extreme separation that sin has caused between God and man. God's holiness and man's sin cannot be intermingled without catastrophic consequences. This fact broke God's heart and He was determined to do something about it. This story highlights the very reason for the Cross, the very reason for the sacrifice of God's One and Only Son Jesus! God did not want people to die because of their sin, but to be forgiven for their sin.

The Scriptures record that the people understood God to have been angry at Uzzah! God had the writers of Scripture record events as they happened and to record the exact feelings, reactions and beliefs of the people as they understood them at the time. That's why God's Word has such integrity! Down through the years there have been many opportunities for Scribes and others to change what was written to make things more favorable towards God and to make it fit what we have come to understand since the New Testament, but for that to happen, the integrity and reliability of Scripture would come under question. So we read the Old Testament just as it was written through the eyes of those who lived it, inspired by God! There's a difference between explaining things away and explaining things. So let me explain. God, in His wisdom, sent Jesus at just the right time in history. And we now have the lens of the Cross and the lens of Jesus' teachings, along with the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, James and Jude in the New Testament with which to view the Old Testament. There's a reason it is called the New Covenant! Jesus didn't come to do away with the old covenant, but to fulfill it! Jesus told His disciples because they had seen Him they had seen the Father, because He and the Father are one! God had sent the prophets and the poets of the Old Testament to write and to teach about God, but people didn't fully understand. So God sent His One and Only Son to show them! And we see God extending His mercy, His grace and His love on the Old Rugged Cross! Why? Because God had been on a mission from the time of Adam and Eve to restore the relationship man's wickedness had broken. God was saddened by man's sin and heart broken that humankind was separated from Him and could not even be in His presence without tragic ramifications. He was determined to do something about that and He did. I'll close with one last example of David extending mercy and how it relates to God's extending mercy to you and me.

4. Find Unending Victory by Extending Unending Mercy

Even after Saul, David's enemy, was gone, and Saul's son Jonathan, David's friend had died, David still desired to extend mercy to their family! Most people would have just moved on, but not David. David was after all a man after God's own heart! So this happens...

2 Sam 9:2 Now there was a servant of Saul's household named Ziba. They called him to appear before David, and the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" "Your servant," he replied.

2 Sam 9:3 The king asked, "Is there no one still left of the house of Saul to whom I can show God's kindness?" Ziba answered the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan; he is crippled in both feet."

2 Sam 9:6 When Mephibosheth son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, came to David, he bowed down to pay him honor. David said, "Mephibosheth!" "Your servant," he replied.

2 Sam 9:7 "Don't be afraid," David said to him, "for I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan. I will restore to you all the land that belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will always eat at my table."

What a difference! Saul tried to kill anyone who might threaten his position as King, yet David takes in the crippled grandson of Saul and has him eat at his own table as one of his own sons. This reminds me of the mercy God has extended to us in Jesus. Check this out...

Eph 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Eph 1:4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love

Eph 1:5 he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will--

Eph 1:6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Eph 1:7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

Eph 1:8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

And listen to verse 13 and 14...

Eph 1:13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit,

Eph 1:14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of his glory.

If you've never accepted the mercy, the grace, the forgiveness, and the love which God has extended to you in His Son Jesus Christ, today can be your day to join His family! Admit that you have sinned and are in need of a Savior. Believe Jesus died on the Cross in order to be your Savior. Call upon His Name by simply asking Him to become your Savior! God has already chosen to adopt you into His family and His Word promises that All who call upon the Name of the Lord shall be Saved!

If that's your decision today, please let us know how we can contact you to encourage you in your new relationship with The Lord! Let's give thanks to God with another worship song! Love you all and can't wait to see you again!

