

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-Presbyterian  
Church, 10 Downing St. Oakleigh, Vic.,  
3166]

**DHW BIBLE CLASS  
LESSON 18A  
FIRST SAMUEL  
CHAPTER 26**

**INTRODUCTION**

David was a fugitive --fleeing from king Saul who was intent on killing him. Chapter 26 describes the final encounter between David and Saul. After this, they never met again. David's struggles served to prepare him to be the next king. He gained more and more confidence in the LORD and became more popular with the people. On the other hand, Saul's popularity waned and the LORD withdrew his blessings from him.

The temptation to strike out and kill one's adversary is very real. David was again presented with such an opportunity. With one simple stroke, he could have killed Saul and become king. But David told his men not to touch the Lord's anointed. He did not succumb to the temptation.

Circumstances alone cannot be used as a guide to God's will. The guide must be God's Holy Word. One of David's men said that it was the will of God for him to smite the king. But the Word of God was very clear that no one could touch the LORD's anointed. Hence David did not strike the king.

That does not mean that wrong actions should be condoned. The

sinner has to be told that he has sinned. If he refuses to listen then his blood is no more on your head.

This lesson is divided into three parts:

1. David spared Saul's life a second time [26:1-12].
2. David defended himself before Saul [26:13-25]

**COMMENTARY**

**David Spared Saul's Life a  
Second Time—26:1-5**

The Ziphites acted as spies and betrayed the whereabouts of David. They reported to king Saul that David, his mortal enemy, was hiding in their locality.

Saul pursued David relentlessly. On receiving the information, he led 3,000 hand-picked warriors to go after the very person who had once spared his life. Did he not then use affectionate terms like "my son"? Did he not weep? Did he not say that David was more righteous than he and that David had rewarded him good for evil? Did he not use the name of the LORD and bless David? Did he not acknowledge then that David would be the next king of Israel? Did he not ask David to promise that he would treat his children well when he become king (24:16-21)? Saul's subsequent actions were not in line with his words. Either he had forgotten his words or he was so consumed by his fear and hatred for David that nothing mattered but David's death.

This time, David acted more intelligently. Knowing that Saul had come for him, he sent his spies to inspect and investigate the location

of Saul's camp. He came to the hill where he had a full view of Saul's camp which was on the plain. David saw where Saul lay with Abner, his personal bodyguard, beside him.

Saul was very well protected. He wanted to ensure that David would not be able to have the upper hand over him this time round. He surrounded himself with his elite 3,000 fighting soldiers and his general, Abner. To be humiliated once by your mortal enemy was enough but for it to happen a second time would be disastrous.

#### **Into the Lion's Mouth—26:6-12**

David asked for one of his men to accompany him into the camp of Saul. The men knew that this was a very dangerous mission, likely a suicidal one. Abishai, a nephew of David<sup>1</sup>, volunteered without hesitation. That night, David and Abishai made their way into Saul's camp. They saw Saul sleeping with his spear stuck in the ground beside him. Abner, his bodyguard, and all the other men slept round about him.

A golden opportunity presented itself again for David to get rid of Saul! Abishai thought so -- he remarked that God had delivered his enemy to him that night. Abishai volunteered to use Saul's spear to slay him with one stroke. However, David forbade him because Saul was the LORD'S anointed. David warned that anyone who killed the

LORD'S anointed would not be guiltless. David counted on the LORD to deal with Saul, saying "As the LORD liveth". David was confident that the LORD would remove Saul. He mentioned three possible ways that the LORD could do so. First, the LORD could smite him dead (like what happened to Nabal (cf. 25:38)), or he could die of natural causes, or he could be killed in battle (26:10).

The word of God was very clear. Without doubt, king Saul was the LORD's anointed. To kill him would be to lay hands on God Himself. He could not go against God not even to end his life as a fugitive. No matter how difficult his testing and trials, David would never touch the LORD's anointed.

David added that the LORD forbade him to kill Saul. This was so that no one could accuse him of killing Saul in order to put himself up as king of Israel. David was wise for he trusted God. He told Abishai to take Saul's spear and the flask of water and together they returned to their camp. No one knew and no one saw them as they walked away. The LORD caused "a deep sleep" to come upon Saul and his men (26:12). The word "deep sleep" is the same word used to describe how God put Adam to sleep when He took one of his ribs to create Eve (Genesis 2:21) – the first anaesthesia. It was also the same deep sleep in Genesis 15 that came upon Abram when God made a covenant with him. Here God did it again with Saul and his 3,000 men!

When David ventured on the mission, he did not know that God would put Saul and his men into "a deep sleep" – the fact that it happened indicated that God

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Chronicles 2:13 And Jesse begat his firstborn Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimma the third, {Shimma: or, Shammah} 14 Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, 15 Ozem the sixth, David the seventh: 16 Whose sisters were Zeruiah, and Abigail. And the sons of Zeruiah; Abishai, and Joab, and Asahel, three.

approved of the mission. David had conducted himself in a God-honouring way. It was not an accident that Saul and his 3,000 elite soldiers fell so soundly asleep. It was also not due to David's skill in tip toeing silently into Saul's camp that he was not caught. It was God who had presented him with another test. David passed with flying colours.

### **David Defended Himself before Saul—26:13-20**

David left Saul's camp with Abishai. He went over to the opposite side and stood on the top of the hill. It was a safe distance from Saul's camp but near enough for him to raise his voice and still be heard by Saul and his men. David called out in a loud voice, "Do you hear me, Abner?" (26:14). Abner replied, "Who are you that cry out to the king?" David taunted Abner for neglecting his duty and putting the life of the king in dire danger – a matter that was unforgivable and deserving of the death penalty. Then David asked him for the king's spear and the flask of water.

1 Samuel 26:14-16, "*And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou that criest to the king? And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? and who is like to thee in Israel? wherefore then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, ye are worthy to die, because ye have not kept your master, the LORD'S anointed. And now see where the king's spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his bolster.*" These

words of David were shrouded with double meaning. He was not rebuking Abner at all. In fact he was rebuking the king but David could not rebuke the king directly. The last time he rebuked the king directly, his conscience pricked him. This time round he rebuked the king via Abner's failure. Hence the reply came from the king and not Abner.

Saul recognized David's voice and asked for confirmation: "Is this your voice, my son, David?" David replied in the affirmative, addressing Saul as "my lord, O king." Saul still addressed David as "my son" although he meant to kill him. The turmoil in Saul's heart was seen once again by the way that he addressed David. To call him his own son (actually son-in-law) and then to seek his life was the act of an evil man. But David addressed Saul as his lord and king, departing from his earlier address of "my father" (24:11).<sup>2</sup>

David seized the opportunity to clear his innocence. He put three questions to Saul: "Why does my lord thus pursue after his servant (why are you chasing after me in this way)?", "What have I done?", "What evil is in my hand?" (26:18). David suggested that maybe God had stirred Saul up to go against him. If that be the case, then he would be willing to make an offering acceptable to God. But if Saul was instigated by men, then let them be cursed before God because they had driven him from living in the land which the LORD had given to the

<sup>2</sup> The word "lord" in Hebrew is *adon* which means a master, a owner or even a husband. It should be distinguished from "LORD" which is "YHWH" the four Hebrew letters (or radicals) which refer to God, being translated "YAHWEH".

children of Israel, intimating that he should go and serve other gods (26:19). The Tabernacle of the LORD, where one could worship the only living and true God, was in Kirjath-jearim (7:1). To be chased out of the land of his inheritance was very serious for it meant separation from God's appointed place of worship and being subjected to the temptations of other gods. David trusted that the LORD would bring to justice all those who had shed innocent blood. David compared Saul's pursuit of him as one seeking a "flea" implying that he was insignificant. He also compared the pursuit of him as one hunting "a partridge." Hunting a partridge involved following it around, constantly stirring it from its hiding place. These were very picturesque phrases describing David's feelings and the state he was in. David desired an explanation for Saul's continued hostile attitude and actions against him.

### **Saul Acknowledged his Sins —26:21-25**

Saul answered, "I have sinned". Again Saul admitted his sin. Was Saul sincere? He invited David to return and promised that he would not harm him because David had considered his life precious to him. He confessed that he had been a fool and had wronged David exceedingly (26:21). David then held up Saul's spear for him to see. He asked that Saul sent someone to fetch it from him. One would have expected David to return to Saul after Saul's assurance but David had lost his trust in Saul.

David continued by expressing his confidence and trust in the LORD, that God would judge every man according to his righteousness

and faithfulness. The LORD had given Saul to him that day but he would not do any harm to the LORD'S anointed. David's final words served to reassure Saul that his life was precious in his sight. As for David, he submitted his life to the LORD and trusted HIM to deliver him.

One can see that David acted very cautiously and was wary of Saul's intentions. This time Saul did not shed tears (cf. 24:16). His confession of sins was perfunctory. There had been no evidence to show that he had taken steps to change his ways since he last confessed his wrongdoing to David. Saul appeared to have a hardened heart that was beyond repentance.

Saul's parting words to David invoked a blessing upon David that he would do great things and be successful. Then they parted. David went on his way and Saul returned to Gibeah.

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

When we do things that are God-honouring, He will help us. God caused Saul and his men to fall into a deep sleep, allowing David and Abishai to enter the camp safely. David's actions were God-honouring and approved of God. Furthermore, he gave the honour to God when he told Saul that it was God who had given him the ability to take the spear and the flask of water. We must guard against forgetting that it is God who empowers us. We must never under any circumstances go against the revealed will of God.

If we do not trust, obey and live in the will of God, we can be sure that we will make one mistake after

another and do things that will bring ill repute to His name (sin against God). If God has been with us in the past, we must never forget the blessings that He has showered upon us. Keep trusting, believing and obeying Him, no matter what.

David found it difficult to trust Saul as he had broken his word so many times. In their final encounter and conversation, Saul seemed to be sincere but he was not.

We must be sincere and truthful. What we say must correspond with what we do. It is easy to say sweet and pleasant words of greetings and concern but if they are not accompanied by actions, they are meaningless. We must always “walk circumspectly” and be truthful at all times.

AMEN

## DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

### Daily Readings

**Monday:** 1 Samuel 26:1-5; Psalm 54:1-7.

**Tuesday:** 1 Samuel 26: 1-12; Psalm 19:13; Matthew 26:52-53.

**Wednesday:** 1 Samuel 26:1-20; Acts 20: 28-31.

**Thursday:** 1 Samuel 26:1-25.

**Friday:** 1 Samuel 26:1-25.

### Analysis

Text	Practical value
1 Samuel 26:1-5	
1 Samuel 26:6-12	
1 Samuel 26:13-20	
1 Samuel 26:21-25	

**Discussion Questions**

1. What is the biblical view on how to interpret the circumstances that are presented to us? How do we know that it is God's will?

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2. How was David able to "know" God's will so clearly even though the "message" from the circumstances was to kill Saul?

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5. Do you agree that David was rebuking Saul indirectly? If so, was it justified?

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3. What makes David so obedient to God that even the temptation of a life of ease did not lead him to sin? Do we have the same determination as David?

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4. Why was Saul so bent on lying and incapable of genuine repentance?