

Week 15: *The Contrast Continues: God's Care for David*

Hook



Main Point: A godly person consults the Lord and trusts in His promises.

Takao Kato created the first escape room in Kyoto, Japan, in 2007. The game designer was inspired to create something exciting: “I wondered why interesting things didn’t happen in my life like they did in books ...”. The concept eventually made its way to the United States in 2012.¹ The industry boomed from about 24 rooms in 2014 to 2,350 in 2019.² Although each room has a different theme (like the Titanic Escape in Los Angeles or the school playground in Dallas), they all have the same goal: complete the puzzles, solve the mystery, and escape the room before time runs out.³

Q: Have you ever been in an escape room? What did you enjoy most about it?

Q: Describe a time when you were looking for an escape from a situation. How did you handle the pressure?

Transition: Today’s story in the life of David reminds us that God always provides an escape from the temptation of sin. That way may not be easy, and it may take a while to get there, but He always provides a way out.

RECAP: In this section of our study (weeks 8–17), David was on the run from Saul. It’s a long period in our study and in the text because it was a long period in David’s life — eight years. The text will continue to contrast Saul and David, showing David’s integrity and trust in the Lord. Last week, Saul finally spiraled out of control and resorted to consulting a medium, for which Samuel told him he would soon die in battle, and Israel

would be given over to the Philistines. When last we left David, he was in a predicament. He had fled to Achish of Gath and made an alliance with him but remained faithful to Israel by deceiving Achish about whom he was fighting when he brought back the spoils. But then, all the Philistine armies gathered to fight against Israel, and Achish expected David to join them. David answered him in an ambiguous way, waiting to see what God would do. This week, we'll see what God did!

It is during this time that David wrote most of the psalms that are labeled in relation to particular events in his life (Psalm 56, 34, 57, 142, 52, 63, 54). Other psalms may have been written during this time as well, but they are not specifically labeled as such. This season of David's life, particularly, taught him to lean on God as his refuge and fortress.

Week 15: David: The Contrast Continues: God's Care for David

Book

Main Point: A godly person consults the Lord and trusts in His promises.

1 Samuel 29 and 1 Corinthians 10:11–13 [Read]

Talking Point 1: The Lord will always provide a way of escape from temptation.

Q: Why did the other Philistine kings not trust David even though Achish did?

Q: How did the Lord give David a way out while maintaining Achish's trust?

The narrative now brings us back to the story of David, when last we left him. The story steps back in time a few days, which we know because the Philistine armies are still assembled at Aphek (29:1), before they moved to Shunem in 28:4 (29:1).⁴ The whole Philistine army had gathered from all the different tribes. No wonder Saul was terrified when he saw them (1 Samuel 28:5). David, as Achish's vassal and personal bodyguard, went with him to gather with the rest of the Philistine armies.

The other Philistine kings were surprised to see Hebrews with Achish in a battle against Israel (29:3), but Achish promised them that he trusted David, who had been his loyal servant now for years (29:3). But the other commanders said he might get into the middle of the battle and fight against them with the Israelites instead (29:4). They believed he had probably been planning this all along. What better way to get back into Saul's good graces than to bring him the heads of all the Philistine kings? (29:4). They simply didn't believe David was really loyal to Achish. And they were right. If God had not orchestrated the situation the way He did to get David out of the battle altogether, David very well may have turned on them in battle. As we the readers know, but Achish didn't, David had been deceiving him, so he was not as loyal as Achish thought.

Achish called David and told him that he trusted him, but the others didn't, so he was sending him back. Scholars agree that this was the Lord's hand orchestrating events so David wouldn't have to fight against Israel, which would have kept him from ever being accepted by the people as king.⁵ David must have been relieved that he was being sent back and yet he protested, continuing to play the part of the loyal Philistine vassal to stay on Achish's good side. Again, David's language was ambiguous. When he said, "I may not go against the enemies of my lord the king," he may have been referring to Saul instead of Achish.⁶ Again, David was deceptive and manipulative, but God was able to use his sinful actions to accomplish His will.

Achish's speech to David is incredibly ironic. He started by swearing by David's God, "As the Lord lives," not the gods of the Philistines (29:6). He claimed that David has been honest, while David in reality had been deceiving him the whole time. He called David as "blameless" as "an angel of God" in his sight (29:9). His praise of David was extravagant,

considering we, readers of the Bible, know that David had been deceiving him. But God used Achish's trust in David to get him out of going to battle against his own people and even maintained his "cover" with Achish. David had not done everything right in any of these situations, but his heart's desire was still to protect Israel and stay loyal to God.

In the New Testament, Paul promised that when we are struggling with temptation, God will always provide a "way of escape" for us (1 Corinthians 10:13). This doesn't always mean our circumstances will be easy. When God took Israel to the Promised Land, He didn't destroy the Red Sea; He provided them a way through it. He didn't stop Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from being thrown into the fiery furnace, or Daniel from being thrown into the lion's den, or Joseph from being thrown into the pit or prison; He was there with them and brought them through it. God doesn't take away our temptations or hard situations, but He does show us a way through them.

Through the prophet Isaiah, God tells us, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you" (Isaiah 43:2). He doesn't say "if," He says "when." We *will* go through fires, but the Lord will be with us. He will never forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6–8). We may be pressed, but we will not be crushed. We may be struck down, but we will not be destroyed (2 Corinthians 4:8). All the fires we go through will only refine us to make us more like Jesus (1 Peter 1:6–7). So, when we are in a tough situation, we need to seek the Lord, listen for His voice, and look for the way out. We may have to wait and just take the "next right step" until the way out is revealed, but the key is to trust in the Lord and stay faithful to Him.

Q: How have you seen God give you a way out of temptation in the past?

Q: How have difficult times refined you?

1 Samuel 30:1–8 and Psalm 6 [Read]

Talking Point 2: Godly people trust in the Lord even when the situation is horrible.

Q: Why were all of David's men so upset with him?

Q: How did David respond? How did he show faith in God?

If you look at a map of ancient Philistia (see the *ESV Study Bible*), Aphek is at the northernmost point and Ziklag, where David was living, is far away in the south. Ziklag is in the Negeb, south of Jerusalem, where David's capital would be. When David had gone on raids for Achish and brought back spoils, he had told Achish that he was raiding cities of Israel and her allies in the Negeb (27:10), but he was really raiding non-Israelite peoples, one of which was the Amalekites (27:8). When he struck these cities, he destroyed them, but the Amalekites had multiple cities, just like the Philistines. So there were still some Amalekites around who were seeking revenge. While David and his men

were in the north at Aphek, those Amalekites attacked Ziklag, burned it to the ground, and took captive the families of David and his men (30:1–3).

David's men showed deep emotion at the loss of their families. They "wept until they had no more strength to weep" (30:4). They threatened to stone David because they were "bitter in soul" (30:6). This would have been an especially hard situation to face after they had just done what they thought was right in God's eyes and left the battle against Israel – only to return and see that the Lord had allowed this to happen? It would be easy to become embittered and angry at God. But even though he was "greatly distressed," David chose to "strengthen himself in the Lord" (30:6).⁷

We don't know when Psalm 6 was written, but the emotion in it is much like what David and his men must have felt in this moment. "I am weary with my moaning ... I drench my couch with my weeping; my eye wastes away because of grief" (Psalm 6:6). David was not afraid to pour out his deepest emotions to the Lord. He didn't whitewash or sugarcoat his grief. But when he was grieved, he didn't wallow in despair. He turned to the Lord. "Heal me, O Lord, for my bones are troubled. ... Turn, O Lord, deliver my life" (Psalm 6:2–4). Instead of wallowing in despair or letting his anger get the best of him and reacting with a bloodthirsty revenge, David called for the high priest and the ephod – he consulted the Lord (30:7–8). Though he didn't have a perfect track record, he did consistently show a desire to follow God and His will and His timing. Only after he received the go-ahead from God did he take his men to attack (30:10).

When we are in heart-breaking situations and feel as though all we can do is weep, we can weep to the Lord, and He will hear our cries. The Lord is near to all who call upon Him (Psalm 145:18). In another psalm, David wrote, "You have kept count of my tossings, put my tears in your bottle." God hears and remembers every one of our griefs, in the same way He knows every hair on our heads. When circumstances are this desperate and horrible, it would be easy to give up, turn our backs on God, and even blame Him for what is happening to us. But James tells us not to blame God, because God does not tempt anyone (James 1:13). God does not send evil upon us. God is light and in Him, there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). Instead, God is in the business of making good out of everything that happens to us (Romans 8:28). He is not the one who sends evil on us; He is the one we run to as our refuge and strength (Psalm 46:1).

Q: Describe times when you have felt despair and anguish as strongly as David's men in this moment. How did you seek the Lord? How did He respond?

Q: How have you seen God make good out of horrible circumstances in your life?

1 Samuel 30:9–31 [Read]

Talking Point 3: The Lord keeps His promises to His people.

Q: How did David show grace to his men who were too tired to fight?

Q: To whom did David send a portion of his spoils? Why do you think he did that?

So, David and his men pursued the Amalekites. Originally all 600 went, but when they came to the brook Besor, 200 of them were too tired to go on (30:9–10). They found an Egyptian slave who had been abandoned by the Amalekites and gave him food and water (30:11–12). Note that they did this *before* they even asked him who he was and realized they could use him (30:13). This seemingly minor detail of this Egyptian slave’s story is significant because it marks the third time God used a foreigner to help David, particularly with intelligence about a situation. God put these people in David’s path and orchestrated these events, showing us He uses foreigners and slaves and women like Abigail.⁸ It also gives us a contrast between David and his men and the Amalekites. The Amalekites abandoned this man because he was sick, but David stopped to “revive his spirit” (30:12). They ended up being able to use him to find the Amalekites, but the implication is that David did it first out of hospitality and care for the stranger/foreigner, as a man after God’s own heart. The fact that he was Egyptian would have especially reiterated God’s commands to “show your love for the alien, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt” (Deuteronomy 10:19).

When they got to the land of the Amalekites, David struck them down and recovered all that had been stolen from them, just as the Lord had promised (30:16–20). The text even uses the same word in the promise and the fulfillment of the promise – “rescue” the captives (30:8, 18). This is even the same word God used to describe how He “delivered” His people out bondage in Egypt (Exodus 6:6). When the 400 of his men who made it all the way to the battle didn’t want to share the spoils with the 200 who stayed behind, David said no, because “you shall not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us” (30:23). This was a gift from the Lord, not a payment that should be split by the amount of work done.

David saw the grace of God in delivering their families back to them unharmed and insisted on sharing that same grace with others, regardless of whether they “earned” it. This is another picture of the heart of David as a man after God’s own heart.⁹ He understood that those who receive the overwhelmingly abundant grace of God cannot help but show that same grace to others. David went even further and sent part of the spoils to the elders of Judah – his own tribe of Israel and the allies of Israel in the Negeb, the very people he had told Achish he had been fighting (30:27; 27:10). He specifically called it a gift to them from the spoils of the “enemies of the Lord” (30:26). David saw this abundance as a gift from God and therefore felt the need to share it instead of hoard it.

In this story, God shows how He keeps His promises to His people. David had been on a long journey through lots of ups and downs. He was anointed king but hadn’t yet become king. Instead, he went through years of danger, being pursued by Saul, and even exiled from the land. But through it all, he had learned to rely on God alone for provision and protection. It may take years or decades for us to see it all come to

fruition, but God will keep His promises to us. And He will use the journey to shape and mold us into who He wants us to be.

Q: How have you seen God keep His promises to you?

Q: Describe a time when you had to wait for a long time for God's promises to come to fruition. What did He teach you along the way?

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Took

Main Point: A godly person consults the Lord and trusts in His promises.

Diane Ball was a camp director, and her husband was a maintenance man for the same facility. The couple had four children between the ages of 10 and 14, and she was known to be someone who had objectives and kept a tight schedule. One day in 1978, Diane was looking forward to leaving the camp for a speaking engagement followed by a family vacation. Her plans were hindered as an emergency arose for her husband and caused the day's agenda to be delayed. As she was fuming and fretting over being late, she asked God for peace; the words of Ecclesiastes 3:11 ran through her mind, and she penned these lyrics to a now beloved song¹⁰:

*In His time, in His time,
He makes all things beautiful in His time.
Lord, please show me every day,
As You're teaching me Your way,
That You do just what You say, in Your time.*

Q: What helps remind you of God's faithfulness to fulfill His promises?

Q: Where do you find peace in a season of waiting and frustration?

CHALLENGES

THINK: Since we don't have high priests and ephods today, what does it look like to consult the Lord? When we do consult Him, how can we know what He is saying? How can we determine His will for our lives?

PRAY for God to give you the strength, patience and trust to wait for Him to fulfill His promises to you in His timing. Thank Him for keeping you in the palm of His hand, even in the toughest of situations. Thank Him for never leaving you or forsaking you but always giving you a way out. Pray for Him to reveal to you the way you are to go in whatever situations you are dealing with.

ACT: Share God's gifts. What has God given to you? Maybe it's tangible things such as David's spoils; maybe it's restored relationships as the men finding their families; maybe it's grace, love and mercy; maybe it's the Fruit of the Spirit. Think and pray about how

you can share those gifts with others. How does God want you to pay forward His grace and His gifts to someone this week?

NEXT TIME in *The Life of David*: Next week, we'll go back to the story of Saul and see his death and the death of his son, Jonathan. We'll also see David's final act of grace toward him in the way he honors Saul at his death even though he mistreated David so grievously.

¹ <https://theescapegame.com/blog/the-history-of-escape-rooms/>

² <https://roomescapeartist.com/2020/08/24/escape-room-industry-report-2020/>

³ <https://www.thetravel.com/ranked-best-crazy-escape-rooms-america/>

⁴ Robert D. Bergen, 1–2 Samuel, *The New American Commentary* (Nashville: B & H Academic, 1996).

⁵ *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

⁶ Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999).

⁷ *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

⁸ Robert Alter, *The David Story: A Translation with Commentary of 1 and 2 Samuel* (London: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999).

⁹ *ESV Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2008).

¹⁰ <https://hymnstudiesblog.wordpress.com/2021/05/30/785534/>