

David Ravindanathan (185) Speaker #8

“Encounter in En Gedi” (1 Sam 24)

Homiletical Outline (Inductive form)

Introduction

1. Subject: How should we respond in times of crisis or temptation?
2. Background: King Saul’s jealousy over David turns to hatred, and he hunts him without a valid reason. David has no choice but to run for his life and seek refuge in caves.
3. Preview: Today, we will examine how to respond to a crisis or temptation.
4. Restate: Today’s Scripture passages reveal what our response should be when a crisis or temptation comes our way.

I. Obey God and reject bad advice (vv. 3-7).

- A. David is given bad advice (vv. 3-4).
- B. David shows reverence to God (vv. 5-6).
- C. David rejects bad advice (v.7).

II. Trust God and respect authority (vv. 8-11).

- A. David acknowledges Saul’s authority (vv. 8 & 10).
- B. David humbles himself before Saul (vv. 9-11).

III. Fear and wait upon God (vv. 12-21).

- A. David pleads to God as his judge (vv. 12-13).
- B. David waits upon God as his avenger (vv. 14-15)
- C. Saul repents of his wrongdoing (vv. 16-21).

Conclusion

1. During a crisis or temptation, we must obey, trust, and fear God (Main Idea).
2. Learn reverence for God to control your thoughts and actions.

Encounter in En Gedi: Abishai Monologue (1 Sam 24)

Topic: Godliness
Subject: How should we respond in times of crisis or temptation?
Complement: Obey, trust, and fear God.
Purpose: The listeners will revere God in their thoughts and actions.

Intro: (To the left) Yes! My Lord and King. I will send word to the Prophet Nathan to come and meet you about building a temple for the Lord. Shalom!

Shout: (To the right) Guards, quickly tell the Prophet Nathan that the King wants to meet him. Let me know when the Prophet arrives.”

Greet: (To the center) Oh! Hello there! Shalom! Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Abishai, the brother of Joab, who is the Commander of King David’s army. You may be wondering why all the rush here. Well, big news! King David wants to build a temple for the LORD! You know, all this time, we only had the Tabernacle, where it is said the Glory of God dwells! But now the King wants to meet the Prophet Nathan to seek his advice on building a permanent temple! Everyone here is excited about it!”

Bkgrd: But this very King who wants to build a temple for the LORD almost did not make it to the throne! David would have died long ago in the hands of our first King, Saul, had not the LORD intervened on a couple of occasions. The trouble started when David defeated Goliath, the giant Philistine. After that, the ladies sang, “Saul had slain his thousands; David his ten thousand.” King Saul perceived David to be his challenger to the throne and thus viewed him as his number one enemy, even though he had given his daughter Michal in marriage to him. King Saul’s jealousy had turned into a vicious hatred, so much so that he literally sought to kill David. As a result, David had to run for his life. He took refuge in caves and even among the very enemies of Israel, the Philistines. A band of about 600 men soon joined David, who, too, were running for their lives, and David became their leader. I know it because I was one of them!

Subject: Have you heard of the Encounter in En Gedi? It is a well-known event in Israel, and it shows us *how we should respond in times of crisis or temptation*. I will tell you what happened in detail, as I was there with David.

Flight: King Saul had just returned from frightening the Philistines when one of his loyal informers told him we were hiding in the Desert of En Gedi, also known as the Crag of the Wild Goats. It was a perfect place to hide, with plenty of rocks, caves, and food, as many wild goats grazed there.

Hiding: The caves were huge and ran deep. It can easily hold 100 sheep! As we were a big group of 600 men, most of us stayed deep into one of the caves, while a few of us were on the lookout. Imagine our tension when one of our lookouts came running with the news that King Saul had located our hiding place! The King had brought along with him three thousand chosen men.

David: David our leader, instructed us to head into the deepest end of one of the caves and wait. Imagine 600 men, with swords drawn, waiting to meet their destiny. We were ready to fight until the end if we were caught. After what seemed like hours, we heard footsteps at the mouth of that cave where we were hiding!

Saul: Who could it be? Was it one of Saul's men? Have they found us? What are we going to do? David signaled to me to go and look. I could not believe my eyes! There was Saul, answering nature's call, in the very cave we were hiding! Seeing King Saul all alone in the cave brought only one thought into our minds: There will never be a better opportunity to eliminate our enemy than now. We smelled blood. But we had to convince David. Some of the men gathered around David and whispered to him, "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".

Advice: The men knew David well enough. Only the mention of God will make him change his mind. They played on David's mind, will, and emotions. Saul was David's number 1 enemy. It is God who has placed Saul in David's hands now. It is time for David to kill Saul and take the throne. David seemed to be thinking over what the others had said. I watched with interest, as to what David would do. Suddenly, he grabbed his sword and inched towards Saul. Would he do it?

Spared: When David was at a striking distance, he just took Saul's robe, which lay discarded on the floor, and cut off a corner of it! There were grunts of frustration and disappointment among the men over David's action. Why cut the garment when you could have cut down the owner of the garment, seemed to be the outcry. I looked at David's face and he seemed uncomfortable and disappointed over what he had done! He felt shame and sorry for his impulsive action of cutting off the corner of the robe.

Conviction: Conscious-stricken, David then turned on us and rebuked us for suggesting to him to kill Saul. David reminded us Saul was his master and the LORD's anointed King and that he would not harm Saul in any way. He said that such a thing would displease the LORD, and if so, he could not do it, nor would he allow any one of us to harm Saul. In short, David said that he would rather please God by refraining from evil rather than do evil and please men.

Reaction: We were all stunned by David's words. How could he think about God when his own life and future were at stake? How could he not think about himself, given the do-or-die situation that he was in? How, then, would David ascend the throne? If it was not God's will, then how did Saul end up in the same cave as

us? If Saul is let off now, what guarantee is there that he will not return to hunt us again?

Abraham: I remember my own father talking about Abraham’s life experiences. His wife Sarah had no children, but God had promised them a child. Not willing to wait for God’s promise to be fulfilled, Sarah came up with the idea that Abraham could have a son if he slept with their maid, Hagar. Abraham, under constant pressure from Sarah, finally gave in to that bad advice and had Ishmael. But look at the consequences of Abraham’s decision to follow Sarah’s bad advice. Until today, the descendants of Ishmael and Isaac, Abraham’s promised son through Sarah, are fighting with each other. The effects of bad advice should be plain for all to see.

Reverence: But David did not act like Abraham. He recognized the evil behind such bad advice. He saw it as an act of disobedience to the God whom he loved and revered. He understood it to be an act of revolt against the LORD and the one He had appointed as King of Israel. David’s reverence for God guarded him against committing evil against Saul. I was amazed that David could think and act in such a manner despite the pressure from 600 blood-thirsty men! I guess that was the training he got from his constant communion with God through prayer and worship. I guess that’s why he is chosen to be King and not one of us!

Respect: Meanwhile, King Saul was slowly walking out of the cave, unaware of our presence or anything that had happened. We all held our breath. A few minutes later, David went out of the cave too. I followed closely to see what was going to happen. As soon as Saul was far from us, David did another astonishing thing. He called out to Saul, “My Lord the King!” and when Saul turned back to look, David bowed down and prostrated himself before the King! David still had respect for the very man who was hunting for his life! Unbelievable.

Fear: My immediate reaction was to hide! “Oh! No!” I thought. Now, everyone would know our hideout, and we were doomed this time. Why David? Why? We all drew our weapons and prepared for an immediate assault by the king’s army of 3000 chosen warriors. Not only did David let Saul go when he had the opportunity for revenge, but he was talking to him. David knew what he was doing, but we did not.

Pleading: When David got Saul’s attention, he carefully chose his words to plead his case. He told Saul that the reports of David being a traitor and planning harm against Saul were false. To make his point, David pointed out to the cave and said that Saul could testify with his own eyes how “the LORD had delivered you into my hands, but I spared you.” I smiled. Weren’t these the very words we said to David when Saul was in the cave? But somehow, David’s words seemed to make better sense than what the men said earlier.

- Cloth: To prove what he just said, David held up something in the air. It was the piece of cloth he had cut off from the King’s robe. (Here it is.) David called to Saul, “My father, look, this piece of cloth is my proof.” Once again, I thought, “Oh! No! Not the cloth! Why show it? What good would it do? You see, cutting a piece off from a king’s robe in our days had its implications. It could mean an attempt to topple the king’s rule or pose a threat to the king and his descendants. If the King perceived David’s action negatively, there could be grave consequences. It could make matters even worse than they were already.
- Saul: But amazingly, King Saul just stood there listening! This piece of cloth turned out to be strong evidence of David’s innocence. That David could have killed him but spared him was compelling evidence of his innocence.
- David: David also pointed out to Saul that though others saw him as an enemy and wanted to kill him, Saul was still his master. David further made it clear in his defense that he had done no wrong, but Saul was in the wrong by seeking his life. Finally, David ended his plea by calling on the LORD to be the judge between him and Saul. Though Saul had wronged him, he called on God to avenge him, but David assured Saul that he would not harm him.
- Authority: It was a very moving speech by David. I just felt like clapping! I think you all do that, don’t you, when someone has given a good speech? It was more than a good speech. It was a plea for justice before God. It was done with utmost respect to the authority that Saul was in as the anointed King of the LORD. It was done with the utmost humility of a servant before his master. David *humbled* himself before the God he revered and the king he served.
- Tears: David had spoken; now, how would Saul react? What would Saul’s reply be? Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David my son?” My son? What followed took us all by surprise. Saul wept! Not just sobbing or silent tears, but he wept aloud! Being among the caves, you can be sure it echoed down the valley below to his 3000 men! It was the most amazing sight.
- Confession: More drama was to follow. King Saul confessed before everyone, that David was innocent. He said David was more righteous than him! Saul acknowledged that, indeed, God had delivered him into David’s hands and that David had spared his life. Saul agreed that David had done that which no one would do to his enemy.
- Blessing: He then blessed David, saying, “May God reward you well for how you treated me today.” He then requested a favor from David to spare him and his descendants when he became the next King. Finally, Saul had accepted the inevitable—that David, indeed, would be the next King. That was God’s plan; no one, not even he, could stop it. David then made an oath to Saul that he would do as he requested.

Summary: Even as I recall the “Encounter in En Gedi” to all of you, I still feel the emotional ups and downs within me. The climax of the encounter between David and King Saul was totally unexpected. The outcome was sweet. But this alone was not enough to clear the path for David to be the King. There was one more similar incident at the hill of Hakilah. I will tell you all about it on another day.

Main Idea: Before I say goodbye, I wonder what you benefited from hearing about this Encounter in En Gedi. Let me share what I benefited from. David’s reverence for God helped him control his thoughts and actions in a critical situation. Where he could have acted on his men's bad advice and killed Saul, he chose to *reject it*. From David, I learned **how to respond in times of crisis or temptation: Obey, trust, and fear God.**

Restated: Where he could have belittled Saul for how he had treated him wrongly, David chose to show ***respect for Saul’s authority as king***. David, despite being in a critical situation, with pressure from his men, chose a godly response because he trusted in God’s plan and purpose for his life, and because of that, he would rather obey him at all costs.

Applied: How about you today? Are you being treated badly or unfairly? How would you respond to it? Would your response be, “An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth”? or a response like David's? Perhaps it could be a relational issue at home or even at your work. What you say or do in response matters. Perhaps it is an issue dealing with the concept of a sinful or worldly lifestyle. Would you allow your reverence for God to govern all your thoughts and actions? If you do, then your response will be a godly one.

Exit: I must get back to the King’s Court, as he is awaiting the Prophet Nathan’s arrival to make plans for the first-ever temple of the LORD! Till I meet you again, Shalom! And God be with you!