

05/31/26 - Order of Worship

Red = Slide Change

Purple = Sound Person Note

Green = PC Person Note

Blue = Note for Speaker

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- **PRELUDE SONG**
- **WELCOME**
- **Women's Breakfast** — Saturday June 6th, 9am @ Joe on the Go.
- **Men's Breakfast** — Saturday, July 11th, 9am @ Joe on the Go.
 - There's a sign up sheet on the information desk in the church lobby for both the men's and women's breakfast
- **BIC Life Podcast** — Episode 50!
 - AI Jesus? | Pastors using AI | and other topics (aliens!)
- **Church Newsletter**
- **Today's Sermon** — "Wisdom in the Gray"
 - 1 Samuel 27 puts David in a tough spot. It raises a question we all face at some point: How do we move forward when we're not sure how things will turn out?
- **Connect Cards** — Lord's Prayer | Who We Are – invite! | Connect Card

PRAYER

WORSHIP (3 Songs)

CONGREGATIONAL PRAYER — **Worship Team, then Amanda MacFeat**

SCRIPTURE READING — **Karen Kitchen** — **check livestream level**

MESSAGE

PRAYER

RESPONSE SONG

Sermon Manuscript: Wisdom in the Gray

Today's Scripture reminded me of a show Alex and I used to watch called Expedition Unknown. There was this episode called, Mystery of the Flooded Pyramid, where an archeology team discovered a 2,300 year old pyramid underground.

[SLIDE 1] Picture of Ancient Royal Burial site of Nuri in northern Sudan

Exploring this pyramid was extremely dangerous because it was flooded by ground water from the Nile river.

[SLIDE 2] Picture of flooded entrance to the pyramid

The team of archeologists were determined to reach the back room that had the sarcophagus of King Nastasen.

My understanding is that prior to this dig, King Nastasen was kind of a legend. So they were hoping to find anything that proved he existed.

But again, the whole pyramid was submerged in water. In fact, there was only one spot to come up for air...

[SLIDE 3] Picture of the team coming up for air

The water was so dark you couldn't see your hand in front of your face. So they needed a guide rope to make sure no one got lost (You can see it in the picture).

That rope was everything.
It was your lifeline.
Because without it...
You literally had no sense of direction.

[SLIDE 4] Pic of Josh Gates

In fact, **Josh Gates** is a very experienced diver.

But I remember him saying that this could be the most dangerous dive he's ever done.

And that wasn't just to add drama to the show...
He never hesitated to cancel dives if he felt it was too dangerous.

This one seemed doable...
But he was worried.
And at one point, his worries came true.

In the middle of a pitch black, flooded room...
Josh lost his grip on the guide rope.

You could actually hear the panic in his voice.
Thankfully Josh found the rope and made it out.

But... Alex and I were like:
That's why you don't swim in underground pyramids!

But you know...
That's like life.

**Because depending on what we're going through...
Sometimes it's hard to see a way forward.**

I like how Paul talks about it in the New Testament.
He says...

[SLIDE 5] 1 Corinthians 13:12 - For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

Paul's saying life isn't always in 4k.

In fact...
Mirrors in the ancient world weren't clear like the ones we have today.
Mirrors back then were made from highly polished stones and metals...
Which gave *some* reflection...
But it was dim and blurry.

So Paul's saying...

[SLIDE 6] We live in the gray. Our human perspective is limited.

One day, when we're with Jesus...
Things will be clear.

But for now...

We're not capable of seeing the full picture on this side of eternity.

This brings me to a great question that one of you asked this week.

Think about David and everything he's been through.

David went from...

- Being anointed as Israel's future king...
- Defeating Goliath...
- And married into the royal family...

To now...

- Being kicked out of the family...
- Feeling forced out of Israel...
- And living life on the run because Saul wants him dead...

Considering everything that's happened to David so far...

One of you asked...

[SLIDE 7] "Why does God keep testing David's heart? And does He test us today like He tested David? It seems confusing to have a situation that looks like the right way, but it's not the right way."

That last part is so true.

I'm sure all of us can think of situations where the solution seemed obvious...

But it didn't turn out well.

But when that happens...

Is that God testing us to see what we'll do?

We've been seeing that David's heart keeps being tested.

It was tested in the cave...

It was tested when Abigail confronted him...

And it was tested in Saul's tent with the spear.

But was God the One *designing* the tests?

This makes me think of the obstacle courses on American Ninja Warrior...

[SLIDE 8] ANW picture

Each obstacle is carefully designed for the contestants to go through...
And the farther you go,
the more the course tests your strength and endurance.

But is that what God was doing with David?
Was God designing obstacles for David to face?

In this case,
I don't think so.

[SLIDE 9] God wasn't creating the situations that tested David's faith.

Sometimes God does that.
Genesis 22 says: "God tested Abraham."
God literally put Abraham in a tough situation.

But 1 Samuel never says: "God tested David."
Instead, we've got more of a "Job" situation...

It's not that God was designing obstacles to test David...

[SLIDE 9A] David lives in an already broken world where he's forced to make decisions.

In other words...
Life is hard not because God made it that way for David...
It's hard because of the choices other people are making.

But if God isn't to blame for the trials David is going through...
Then what's the test?

**[SLIDE 9B] When life gets hard and the way forward isn't clear...
Will we choose to reflect God's heart?**

That's the test.

James says it like this:

[SLIDE 10] James 1:2-3 - Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

We experience trials all the time.

It's the hard stuff in life.

We all go through it.

But when we do...

[SLIDE 11] The test is how we'll react when the way forward isn't clear.

Will we react out of fear?

Or will we trust the LORD's wisdom?

Think of it this way:

[SLIDE 11A] Will we trust the LORD when our perseverance is wearing thin?

That's the situation David finds himself in when we get to 1 Samuel 27.

David has been running from Saul for a while now.

And at the same time...

He's been leading and protecting over a thousand people...

Not just soldiers...

But families who've also been threatened by Saul.

David had many moments of fear...

Moments when he cried out to the LORD...

And the LORD delivered him!

He's also had moments of uncompromised trust in God.

But here in 1 Samuel 27...

David's exhausted.

Hiding and surviving in the desert is taking its toll.

His perseverance is wearing thin.

And now...
 In the midst of his trial with Saul...
 He's struggling to see the best way forward.

That's the test.

It's not that God put him in the desert and caused Saul to pursue him.
 David's hardship isn't God's fault.
 That's just the reality David lives in right now.

Granted, God has been with David this whole time.
 But the longer this goes on...
 The way forward becomes less clear everyday.

So how does David react?

This is a really important little detail in the text.
 If you remember last week...
 In the previous chapter, David said:
"may the LORD deliver me from all trouble."

He seemed confident in the LORD.
 He seemed to have passed the test.

But as time passes...
The waters of fear and doubt continue to rise.

Look at the first verse in chapter 27...

[SLIDE 12] 1 Samuel 27:1 - But David thought to himself, "One of these days I will be destroyed [swept away] by the hand of Saul. The best thing I can do is to escape to the land of the Philistines. Then Saul will give up searching for me anywhere in Israel, and I will slip out of his hand."

This is what an exhausted person sounds like.

David goes from being confident in the LORD to thinking...
One of these days Saul will kill me.

Time has passed.
Perseverance has worn thin.
And leaving Israel was sounding more and more like a good option.

I honestly don't know if it was the LORD's will for David to leave Israel.
The Scripture doesn't say.

But again...
This is a situation where David is feeling real pressure.

It's like he's in a difficult situation...
Fear sets in...
He loses sight of the guide rope...
And now he's trying to find his way forward.

You know...
For a man after God's own heart...
It's interesting that the Scripture *doesn't* say if David prayed about it or not.
All we know is that he made a very strategic military decision.

He's thinking:
The best thing I can do is take my people into enemy territory.
He figures that's the only way Saul will stop chasing them.

It's like the enemy of my enemy is my friend.
If Saul won't leave him alone in Israel...
Maybe he'll be better off among the Philistines?

And so...
**Whether this was the right decision or not...
David takes his people to Gath.**

Gath is one of the five main Philistine cities.
He's been here before...
Except this time he's not alone...

[SLIDE 13] 1 Samuel 27:2-3 - So David and the six hundred men with him left and went over to Achish son of Maok king of Gath. David and his men settled in Gath with Achish. Each man had his family with him...

So the king of Gath granted them some land...
And verse 7 says they lived there for a year and four months!

So what were they doing that whole time?

Well, while they were living in the land...
David had a plan to gain the king's trust.
He wanted the king to believe that he turned against Israel.

So whenever David and his men returned from battle,
Achish would ask: *Where did you go raiding today?*
And David would tell him that he attacked the Israelites.

But that's *not* what he was doing.

David was attacking the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites instead.

And when he attacked...
The Scripture says he didn't leave anyone alive...
That way no one could tell the king of Gath what David was really doing.

And David's plan worked!

Look at verse 12...

[SLIDE 14] 1 Samuel 27:12 - Achish trusted David and said to himself, "He has become so obnoxious [*he has become a foul stench*] to his people, the Israelites, that he will be my servant for life."

So David seems to be in a good spot right now.

The king of Gath now trusts him.
Saul stopped trying to pursue David.
They're finally in a safe place to live.
And this went on for 16 months!

For the first time in a long time...
Everything feels stable.

So was moving out of Israel the "right thing" to do after all?

Well, think about it like this...

[SLIDE 15] Does the fact that everything seems to be working out mean this must have been the LORD's will?

Again...

It seems like David found a solution to his "Saul problem."

But then one verse later...

Chapter 28...

David suddenly finds himself in another difficult situation...

[SLIDE 16] 1 Samuel 28:1 - In those days the Philistines gathered their forces to fight against Israel. Achish said to David, "You must understand that you and your men will accompany me in the army."

Do you feel the tension here?

We're supposed to.

The decision that seemed to solve David's problem, has now created a new one.

Imagine what David must be feeling.

He's the one who decided to move his people.

Everything seemed to be going great.

But now he's forced to make another decision...

Will he fight alongside the Philistine king?

Achish is like:

David... You do realize I'm asking you to fight against your own people...

Right?

[SLIDE 17] 1 Samuel 28:2 - David said, "Then you will see for yourself what your servant can do." Achish replied, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life."

So we're left to wonder:

Was David really willing to fight against the Israelites?
 Was Achish just testing David's loyalty?
 Was David just telling Achish what he wanted to hear?
 Was David thinking the LORD would get him out of this?

The answer could be:
 All of the above.

Honestly, we don't know!

The story leaves us in the uncertainty.

We don't have enough information to know exactly what's going on.

And maybe David doesn't either!

That's often how life goes.
 We don't always know what to do.

As I said earlier...

[SLIDE 18] We live in the gray. Our human perspective is limited.

And so the question we're wrestling with this morning is this:

When life gets hard and the way forward isn't clear...
 How will we react?
 Who will we turn to?
 Who do we trust?

This brings me to another question I got this week.

One of you asked about John 16:13 where Jesus says...

[SLIDE 19] John 16:13 - But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

But what does it mean that the Spirit will guide us into "all the truth"?

This is where the English can trip us up a little.
The Greek literally says, word for word:
He will guide you into the truth, entirely.

**It's emphasizing the completeness and reliability of the truth...
Not the number of truths.**

In other words...
As the Holy Spirit guides us...
What He reveals will be 100% trustworthy and true.

It's not that the Holy Spirit literally reveals "all the truth"...
As if He'll answer all our questions.

I had a professor at Lancaster Bible College who used to say:
The Holy Spirit will not do your homework for you.

**[SLIDE 19A] The Holy Spirit doesn't always answer all our questions.
But again, what He does reveal is 100% trustworthy.**

**And what the Spirit reveals...
Comes straight from Jesus.**

Here's the next verse...

**[SLIDE 20] John 16:14 - He will glorify me because it is from me that he will
receive what he will make known to you.**

Now in context...
Jesus is speaking to His disciples about when the Holy Spirit comes in Acts 2.

So on one hand, Jesus is saying to His disciples:
The Spirit will lead YOU with truth from Me.

But on the other hand,
This is a message for us as well.

The Spirit glorifies Jesus.
The Spirit reminds people of Jesus' words.
This is what the Holy Spirit does — it's His job.

And even today He continues to lead believers with truth from Jesus.

The Holy Spirit may not tell us exactly what car to buy...
or what job to take...

But when life gets difficult...
And we're unsure of how to move forward...

When we go to the Lord in prayer...
The Holy Spirit guides us with the wisdom of Jesus.

The key word here is wisdom.

Wisdom is more than knowledge.

Wisdom is how we apply what we know.

Knowledge is simply possessing information...
But wisdom is the capacity to know when and how to **act**.

And so...

[SLIDE 21] Wisdom always asks: *How should I live?*

In chapter 24 - David acted in wisdom when he spared Saul's life in the cave.
In chapter 25 - David heard wisdom from Abigail when he was set on violence.
In chapter 26 - David acted in wisdom when he spared Saul's life again.

But in chapter 27...

David's tired.

Saul won't stop pursuing him.
Fear is creeping in.
His perseverance is wearing thin.

David needs wisdom.

But there's no mention of him going to the LORD in prayer...
There's no one like Abigail stepping in to challenge his thinking...

And so **David becomes convinced** that one of these days...
Saul will destroy him.

Despite everything the LORD has shown him so far...
David let fear decide what he's going to do.

In a way, David's story mirrors our own.

We know what it's like to let fear take the wheel.
We might not face armies coming after us.
But we know what it's like to live in uncertainty.

Life isn't always black and white.
It's often gray.

But wisdom asks:

How will we choose to react in our situations?

With whose wisdom are we painting the picture of our life?

Because the truth is...
God has not left us alone.

He has given us His Spirit to help us walk wisely
when the way forward isn't clear.

This is why James says without hesitation...
We *will* go through hardships in life...
Those hardships will test our faith.

But we're not alone.
The LORD is building perseverance in us.
That's how our faith grows stronger...

And so...
When life gets hard...
And our perseverance starts to wear thin...

James says...

[SLIDE 22] James 1:5 - If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

This isn't about expecting God to tell us exactly what to do.

This is about trusting that God will give us the wisdom we need to walk faithfully through it.

And I love this...

God gives His wisdom to all "without finding fault."

In other words...

We don't have to feel shame when we don't know how to move forward.

David lost sight of the guide rope.

He was exhausted...

He struggled...

He was uncertain...

The same thing happens to us.

And so when we lose sight of the guide rope...

James says:

There's no shame in asking for the LORD's help.

Just ask for His wisdom.

Ask and it will be given to you.

But be patient.

Let perseverance finish its work.

Because no matter how things turn out...

Even if life doesn't go the way we hoped...

God is always with us.

He's always willing to give His strength and wisdom...
As we navigate the gray areas of our lives.

All He asks is that we would trust Him.

Let's Pray

We pray as Jesus taught us to pray:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
Your kingdom come, Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And lead us not into testing, but deliver us from the evil one.
For Yours is the Kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.