

Plundering the Lord's Enemies From Ziklag

Call to Worship: Romans 8:1-17

1st Scripture: Joshua 13:1-7

2nd Scripture: 1 Samuel 27:5-12

Hymn #87- *Holy, Holy, Holy*

Hymn Insert- *Change My Heart, O God*

Hymn #188- *There is a Fountain*

Introduction:

Convinced that Saul will never stop pursuing him, and that eventually Saul might succeed in carrying out his wicked intentions, David and his men flee to Gath of the Philistines. And it is there that they find refuge, under the protection and care of Achish, king of Gath. When word gets back to Saul concerning this, he stops pursuing David.

David finds favor with the heathen king Achish, but he does not settle in too comfortably. While there, the anointed king of Israel, makes good use of an inconvenient and undesirable situation. He develops a plan to further his own cause, while conquering more of the Lord's enemies. There are heathen in the land, whom the Israelites in Joshua's day, failed to remove, when they entered the Promised Land. Laying hold of God's original command to take the land, and to destroy the idolatrous enemies of God, David takes aim at the Lord's enemies. And in doing so, he is able to obtain much needed supplies for him and his men, while trusting that God would go before them, upholding them in their raiding endeavors.

I. Plundering the Lord's Enemies From Ziklag

In order for David to achieve any of his goals, while in the land of the Philistines, he has to find a way to get out of the king's sight. And so, he puts forth a request to king Achish, asking if he and his men could relocate to another city. However, he puts it in the form of not wanting to inconvenience the king, by overwhelming the royal city with David's large group [Read vs. 5].

Achish grants David his request, and gives him Ziklag, which enables David to carry out his intentions freely, without being directly in view of the king. And furthermore, we are told that this portion of land remained permanently in the custody, not only of David, but in all of the kings of Judah to follow, throughout the divided kingdom years, right up to the present day (right up to the time 1 Samuel was written).

[Note: Pieces of information like this are very helpful, when attempting to locate the time period within which a Book of the Bible is written, while also providing some additional insight

into its relevant contextual use. Here, we learn that the Book of 1 Samuel was written during the divided kingdom years, seeking to address the people in the Southern kingdom of Judah, at some point before the Babylonian captivity. God's sovereign, covenant faithfulness to David, and to all who walk like David, along with all of the Messianic implications given herein, would be of great use to the people of Judah, who were constantly wavering in their fidelity to YHWH, while moving in the direction of an impending judgment exile. Those who wait on the Lord, like David, will renew their strength, finding peace and rest in God's faithfulness. Those who don't, will meet the judgment of Saul and all of God's enemies].

We are also here given the time frame, within which, David lived among the Philistines. [Read verse 7]. For an additional "one full year and four months," David endured waiting for God to fulfill his promise. Again, God makes a lot of wonderful promises to His people, but generally, they are not reached, apart from many sanctifying trials, which prepare His people for the obtaining of them. The idea of "waiting on The Lord," is by far, no foreign concept in Scripture. Not only is this reality expressly stated throughout the Scriptures; not only do terms such as "endure" and "persevere" and "remain faithful" imply it, but we find it fleshed out in the lives of all of God's people. Abraham and Sarah knew much about waiting, while longing for their son Isaac, the son of promise. Moses knew much about waiting, while wandering in the wilderness with the complaining Israelites for forty years. Joseph knew much about waiting, as a servant of Potiphar and a prisoner in Egypt. David knew much about waiting, before reigning over all Israel. The Jews knew much about waiting for the coming Messiah. We know much about waiting for the final coming of Christ....to name a few examples! Indeed, faithfully waiting upon God is a critical message of Scripture, calling naturally impatient sinners (who wish to rob God of His omniscience and omnipotence, that they might secure control over all things) to fall to their knees, humbly subjecting themselves to the perfect timing and direction of God's will. David lived among the Philistines for a "full year and four months!"

Having been given a more private position in Ziklag, David begins to execute his plan, while living in the land of the Philistines. [Read verses 8-12]

Here, we find David and his men, raiding some of the heathen lands in the southern portion of the Promised Land, near the Negeb (a wilderness region, separating Egypt from Israel). And we are told that the people occupying these lands were "from of old." And the implication here is that these are some of the heathen areas, which the Israelites had never

conquered (under the leadership of Joshua) and which yet remained in existence. You will recall from our first Scripture reading in Joshua 13:1-7, that the Geshurites were one of the people groups whom the Israelites failed to remove from the land, and whom God had commanded them to conquer. Of course, we know from earlier on in our study of 1 Samuel, and from the Wilderness wanderings, that the Amalekites were a cursed people, who remained under the judgment of God permanently, for attacking the Israelites, following the exodus. In fact, part of the reason King Saul had been rejected by God, was because he failed to execute total and complete judgment upon the Amalekites and their possessions. And while we are not given any other information about the Girzites, we can, and ought to presume that they were remaining heathen, under the judgment of God, like the others. And so, David and his men, raided these ungodly, heathen nations.

Now, at first glance, this may seem harsh or unjust on the part of David. How can we justify the raiding of other nations? But again, when we understand the history of these heathen nations, and the "as of yet," unfulfilled, expressed decree of God, concerning them, we realize that David was acting properly within the bounds of God's revealed will. David could have raided a lot of other nearby areas, if his motives were simply governed by his immediate desire for spoil and possessions. But rather, David was executing God's righteous judgment on heathen nations, which has long been over due, in accordance with their gross idolatry. David was doing the work, which should have been done during the time of Joshua. Indeed, he benefitted from it, but so did the Israelites of old, who in accordance with God's command, took over the land and possessions of the heathen nations whom they had conquered. And so, rather than view this as David partaking in the petty raids, which were common in his day, we ought to see this as David, plundering the Lord's enemies, from a very strategic position in Ziklag.

Now, when David plundered these regions, we are also told that he not only took all of the live stock and possessions, but he left no one alive. All of the men, women, children, infants...etc, were slaughtered. And, while this would have been in keeping with what the Israelites had done during the time of Joshua, we are given an additional reason for David doing this, here in our text. When David would report back to King Achish, he did so, in a way that would strengthen Achish's confidence in David's enmity against Saul, and his former people in Israel. David knew that if Achish found out that he was plundering all of these other foreign regions, while avoiding warring against the nearby Israelites, Achish would suspect that David's

loyalty to Saul and Israel was not truly broken. This would diminish Achish's personal trust in David, always leaving open, the very real possibility that David, would at some point turn on Achish, in defense of Israel.

And so, David would tell Achish that he was raiding cities in Judah, and the allies of Israel, seeking to prove more and more that his allegiance was truly to the Philistines and not the Israelites. This was significant because the Philistines and the Israelites were constantly at war with each other. And so, David states that he has raided the southern area of Judah, the southern area of the Jerahmeelites and the southern area of the Kenites, when in fact, he was raiding the enemies of Judah, the Geshurites, the Amalekites and the Girzites, the whole time. In fact, later on, we will find David sending spoils over to the Jerahmeelites, the Kenites, and various cities in southern Judah...the very opposite of his claims to Achish.

And this explains why David left no one alive during his raids. If he left anyone alive, he was justifiably certain that someone would come back to Achish and report what David was really doing. And if Achish found out the truth, David and his men would be in big trouble, to say the least. And so, everyone was killed.

And finally, we are given two final pieces of information, at the end of chapter 27. First, we are told that this was what David was doing the whole time that he lived in the land of the Philistines. These raids were a regular pattern for David. They were his career, as it were, for the whole duration of time (one year and four months) that he lived in Ziklag. And secondly, Achish, believing David the whole time, became more and more convinced of David's enmity against Israel. Surely, if David has been raiding these cities in southern Judah, the people of Israel abhor him by now. "They would never take him back, which means, David will be my servant forever!" "David and his men belong to me now, and that can never change, with all of this damage having been done by these raids." And there, we have great confirmation concerning the motive for Achish's acceptance of David and his men, from the outset. They served as a great military advantage for Achish and the people of Gath. David and his men gained refuge in the agreement, and Achish gained a large addition to his military and defense.

II. Closing Thoughts and Applications

Brethren, let us then close by considering some concluding thoughts and applications, concerning that which we have just gone over. And there are two main applications that I want to consider with you this morning: [Relate David's expansion of kingdom to Jesus?]

1) First, brethren, we ought to consider a very significant revelation, concerning the character of God, revealed in such texts as these. And it will serve to do us well, especially in response to the common anti-Christian responses that we face, coming from atheists and those who contend with the God of Christianity, whom we of course know to be the only true and Living God. Indeed, there are times, particularly in the Old Testament, when God is bringing judgement upon a nation or nations, by use of another nation, because of the ongoing idolatry of those nations being judged. And when we read of the carrying out of such judgments, we can easily lose sight of something absolutely critical about the nature and character of God, while beginning to wrestle with the goodness of God in the process.

Here, we are told that David killed all of the men and women in these foreign cities, when he plundered them. And even if we assume that children and infants are not included in this context (although I personally believe that they are included), we know that there are other texts, which expressly state that God commanded His people to destroy all of the people in such cities, including children, nursing infants and etc. And naturally, people don't like to hear this. In fact, such realities are not meant to be pleasing to the ears or human emotions, nor does God Himself, "delight in the death of the wicked." God does not harbor some hidden, inner joy, which is attached to seeing babies getting speared through or screaming women and young children having their heads cut off. None of these things are meant to identify some innate, "serial killer" like desire in the heart of God. But they do reveal something very significant about both, the character of God and the nature of fallen man, of which we are meant to, and must take note. And so, rather than hide from these realities, when atheists and others chant their accusations against a so-called "terrible and unjust God," who would order such executions, we ought to address them in accordance with their revealed design. Indeed, God has ordered such executions, and He has had them documented in Scripture for the very purpose of revealing something real; some unchanging reality about His Person. And this is where we must carry our focus, and the focus of others, if they are to benefit from what is revealed.

The fact of the matter is that at the very basic level, we can begin by saying that God is not man. God is not a created, physical being, who is bound to time and space. No, God is

eternal, without beginning or end, and as such, He is the source from which, all created beings derive any form of moral standard. God is not subject to law; God is the Law; or better yet, the Law finds its origin within the very nature and character of God Himself. Murder is wrong because murder contradicts the very character and being of our life-giving God. Adultery is wrong because it invites any form of treason and idolatry into the realm of a God who rightly demands all fidelity...etc. All that said, we can narrow all of this down to one very descriptive word, which joins itself to every virtue and quality found within the very character and being of God Himself, namely, "holiness." Our God; our Creator is holy! He is altogether unique and different from every other being in existence. And while all creatures are called to be "holy," reflecting God in a moral sense, God is holy in a unique, infinite, eternal, Creator sense.

Now this brings us to recognize something very important about mankind as well. Mankind, in Adam; mankind having inherited the fallen nature of Adam, is by his very nature, an affront upon the holiness of God. In other words, brethren, we are born with a legal and essential guilt, embedded in the very make-up and fabric of our being. We are born ungodly and contradictory to the very nature of God Himself. From a real and legal standpoint, every human being is born with a nature that testifies against him, saying, "If God is your Creator (which He is); if you are accountable to the true and Living God (which we are), than you must be the object of His wrath forever!" Every human being; every man, woman, child and nursing infant, is naturally under the direct condemnation and judgment of God. By God's nature, this is the case. By our nature, this is the case. And those who have a problem with this, have a problem not with the will and desire of God, so much as they have a problem with the very nature, character, being and essence of God Himself! To say that God is unrighteous for demanding the execution of every living human being, is to say that God is unrighteous for being God. It is to say that God ought not to exist. It would be far less to say that "water should not be wet, rocks should not be solid, flowers should not give off a fragrance...etc."

And so, brethren, when properly understood and considered, the only logic that makes sense from the standpoint of reasoning that has not been infected by the contamination of sin, is the logic that says, "How in the world does God not wipe every last bit of humanity out? How was there even a Noah left, to survive the flood? Why are we not all Sodom and Gomorrah? How is it that such a God could, in any sense, tolerate fallen humanity, you, we, us and...me?!"

And the only logic that answers that question, the real question, is the cross! The only logic that answers that question is the righteous and sinless Son of God, bearing my sins on the cross, so that I could become the righteousness of God in Him! Those who dare accuse God of wrong, when He executes judgment on any element of fallen humanity, think far too highly of themselves, and far too lowly of the glory, majesty and holiness of God! The atheist cannot see that. Proud humanity cannot fathom that, because he has set himself up as his own god. We Christians cannot fully grasp that; in fact, it is only in heaven, that we will fully come to appreciate what we attempt to scratch the surface of here; the sobering, good and just and terrifying and glorious, and righteous holiness of God!

And those of you who are outside of Jesus Christ, living as if you are getting away with all of your sins; as if God does not care, or as if He will merely pass over your offenses...see the reality of God's holiness here...because He means for you to see it here! Rather than accuse God of some wrong, when You see Him call for the execution of men, women and children...look at your own feet, and see where you are standing! Do you not sense the fire of His judgment hanging above your own head, at this very moment? Behold your God! Behold your holy God! And the only way to escape His just wrath is to embrace His pure and perfect substitute, by faith. Sodom and Gomorrah are your just desserts...and your sins will receive their due and proper condemnation. Will it be the case that Christ has borne the wrath of God for you (on the cross), or will you bear it on your own, forever and ever in hell? Don't die in your sins, friends, don't die in your sins! Repent, turn away from them, and cast your soul upon Christ by faith! Cry out to Him now, before it is too late!

2) And then lastly, brethren, see here as well, a picture of the Christian's sanctification. The Scriptures very clearly teach that the will of God for us, is our sanctification; that is to say that God desires His people, at all times, to be putting to death remaining sin, by the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8). God aims not merely to save us from the penalty of our sins, but also to form more and more of Christ in us. And we might see that illustrated here, as we consider the general way in which David conducted himself, while living in the land of the Philistines. What was he doing? He was utterly putting to death and destroying the Lord's enemies. He was plundering them, the whole time he dwelt in Ziklag.

And brethren, let that be a picture of how we ought to pursue the will of God in our sanctification at all times, and especially when we are in enemy territory, working toward our

heavenly Promised Land. We would do good to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in this sobering and difficult work, working out our salvation with fear and trembling, as God works in us to do His good pleasure. And while we do not seek to destroy physical enemies, indeed, we have a picture of how we are to combat our sin, here. We are to treat our unholy sin, in the way in which David treated the unholy heathen...not leaving a remnant even to survive, lest it come back up to hurt us later. We ought to be aggressive in this work, slaying every hint of remaining sin in us, as we strive to glorify God. The violent picture of God's executing of His enemies; indeed of the bloody, butchering of the cross, are pictures of how God justly condemns our sins, and desires us to treat all that remains of its effects in us. We certainly don't toy with sin. We never take it lightly. And though we will fall into sin, we battle fiercely against it. We choke it out, and when it is unconscious we jump on top of it, and we cut it to pieces; we tear its head off and pummel it into the earth. The bloody destruction of God's enemies, presents us with the illustrative scene of our sanctifying labors, brethren. And so, let us always be about the work not merely of injuring sin; not merely of striking sin, but of violently putting it to death!

To love Christ, is to make good use of His cross not only in embracing the forgiveness given therein, but in aggressively putting remaining sin to death, and serving His people!

Amen!!!

Benediction: Ephesians 3:14-21