

“Two Sons, Two Ways, Two Destinations”
1 Samuel 21-22
September 8, 2019
Faith Presbyterian Church – Evening Service
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We return this evening to First Samuel, looking tonight at chapters twenty-one and twenty-two. Saul is king of Israel. David has been anointed as the next king. Saul has turned against David and now David is on the run.

David has just parted with Jonathan, Saul’s son, at the end of chapter twenty, and now we come to what happens next.

Chapters twenty-one and twenty-two are really one unit, as we will see. So we will take them together.

Please listen carefully, for this is God’s word for us this evening:

^{21:1} Then David came to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest. And Ahimelech came to meet David, trembling, and said to him, “Why are you alone, and no one with you?” ² And David said to Ahimelech the priest, “The king has charged me with a matter and said to me, ‘Let no one know anything of the matter about which I send you, and with which I have charged you.’ I have made an appointment with the young men for such and such a place. ³ Now then, what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread, or whatever is here.” ⁴ And the priest answered David, “I have no common bread on hand, but there is holy bread—if the young men have kept themselves from women.” ⁵ And David answered the priest, “Truly women have been kept from us as always when I go on an expedition. The vessels of the young men are holy even when it is an ordinary journey. How much more today will their vessels be holy?” ⁶ So the priest gave him the holy bread, for there was no bread there but the bread of the Presence, which is removed from before Yahweh, to be replaced by hot bread on the day it is taken away.

⁷ Now a certain man of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before Yahweh. His name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's herdsmen.

⁸ Then David said to Ahimelech, “Then have you not here a spear or a sword at hand? For I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste.” ⁹ And the priest said, “The sword of Goliath the Philistine, whom you struck down in the Valley of Elah, behold, it is here wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you will take that, take it, for there is none but that here.” And David said, “There is none like that; give it to me.”

¹⁰ And David rose and fled that day from Saul and went to Achish the king of Gath. ¹¹ And the servants of Achish said to him, “Is not this David the king of the land? Did they not sing to one another of him in dances,

‘Saul has struck down his thousands,
and David his ten thousands?’”

¹² And David took these words to heart and was much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. ¹³ So he changed his behavior before them and pretended to be insane in their hands and made marks on the doors of the gate and let his spittle run down his beard. ¹⁴ Then Achish said to his servants, “Behold, you see the man is mad. Why then have you brought him to me? ¹⁵ Do I lack madmen, that you have brought this fellow to behave as a madman in my presence? Shall this fellow come into my house?”

^{22:1} David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam. And when his brothers and all his father's house heard it, they went down there to him. ² And everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And there were with him about four hundred men.

³ And David went from there to Mizpeh of Moab. And he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother stay with you, till I know what God will do for me." ⁴ And he left them with the king of Moab, and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold. ⁵ Then the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not remain in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

⁶ Now Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men who were with him. Saul was sitting at Gibeah under the tamarisk tree on the height with his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him. ⁷ And Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, people of Benjamin; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, will he make you all commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds, ⁸ that all of you have conspired against me? No one discloses to me when my son makes a covenant with the son of Jesse. None of you is sorry for me or discloses to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day." ⁹ Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who stood by the servants of Saul, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, ¹⁰ and he inquired of Yahweh for him and gave him provisions and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."

¹¹ Then the king sent to summon Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who were at Nob, and all of them came to the king. ¹² And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahitub." And he answered, "Here I am, my lord." ¹³ And Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword and have inquired of God for him, so that he has risen against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?" ¹⁴ Then Ahimelech answered the king, "And who among all your servants is so faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, and captain over your bodyguard, and honored in your house? ¹⁵ Is today the first time that I have inquired of God for him? No! Let not the king impute anything to his servant or to all the house of my father, for your servant has known nothing of all this, much or little." ¹⁶ And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house." ¹⁷ And the king said to the guard who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of Yahweh, because their hand also is with David, and they knew that he fled and did not disclose it to me." But the servants of the king would not put out their hand to strike the priests of Yahweh. ¹⁸ Then the king said to Doeg, "You turn and strike the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned and struck down the priests, and he killed on that day eighty-five persons who wore the linen ephod. ¹⁹ And Nob, the city of the priests, he put to the sword; both man and woman, child and infant, ox, donkey and sheep, he put to the sword.

²⁰ But one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David. ²¹ And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of Yahweh. ²² And David said to Abiathar, "I knew on that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have occasioned the death of all the persons of your father's house. ²³ Stay with me; do not be afraid, for he who seeks my life seeks your life. With me you shall be in safekeeping."

This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

Let's pray ...

Lord, like the psalmist,
When we think of the direction you give us through your ancient word,
we take comfort, Lord.
Let your word be now our joy and delight,
as we attend to it here in your house,
so that we would remember your revelation as we go from here, day and night,
that we may cling to and follow it.
Give us that great blessing,
of walking in your ways, by the power of your Spirit.
Grant this, we ask, in Jesus's name. Amen

[Based on Psalm 119:52, 54-56]

Our text this evening once more holds out two opposite and contrasting pictures. And this is something we have seen a number of times now in the Book of Samuel. Several times a passage has contained two contrasting pictures and held them out before us. And while the pattern might be becoming familiar, it is not mere repetition. Each iteration is showing us something new – each occurrence of the pattern is giving us a deeper understanding, both typologically and personally – both in terms of what each picture *points* us to, and what each picture *calls* us to.

And as we think about and observe that here, it's worth noting two paths dominated by two people is a theme in the wisdom literature of the Bible – especially in the Book of Proverbs. Wisdom literature is associated with the kingly period of Israel, especially under Solomon, and with Solomon's emphasis on learning from one's father, it should be no surprise that we see the same themes Solomon taught emerging in the life of David, or that the author of Samuel would bring those themes to the surface for us.

In Proverbs we are presented with the way of wisdom and the way of folly – the way leading to life and the way leading to death. And the leader associated with the way to life is Lady Wisdom, while the leader associated with the way to death is Lady Folly. Again and again Proverbs challenges us to consider which path we are on, where our path is leading, and which Lady we have allied ourselves to.

In a similar way, the Book of Samuel, on multiple occasions, holds out two people – two leaders. With them it holds out two paths, and with those paths, two destinations. That same pattern emerges again here, though with new details and angles for us to consider.

Again, the questions will come to us: Who have we pledged ourselves to? What path are we on? And where are we heading to?

So – tonight we will consider the pictures of David and Saul we get in First Samuel 21-22, and then we will consider who they point us to, what they call us to, and where they each lead to.

But first – what do we find in our text?

Our text tonight is structured in a chiasm that contrasts David with Saul in parallel events.

A chiasm, as some of you may know, is a text with a mirror structure from beginning to end, with the middle serving as the hinge on which the text turns. So, in a chiasmic text the first section of the text corresponds thematically with the last section of the text, the second section corresponds to the second to last section, and so on, with the middle forming a focal point of the text.

And that is the structure we see in our text tonight. In 21:1-9, the first portion of our text, we see David's interaction with the house of Yahweh – with the tabernacle and the priests. Then in the last portion of the text, in 22:11-23 we see Saul's interaction with the house of Yahweh – with the priests and the tabernacle.

Moving one step in from there, in 21:8-15, the second portion of our text, we see how David presents himself and relates to a pagan leader, all while in the setting of a royal court. Similarly, in 22:6-10, the second-to-last portion of our text, we see how Saul presents himself and relates to a pagan, again while in the setting of a royal court.

Finally, in the center we have 22:1-5 and the actions of David. [Leithart, 125 n.2]

Within this chiasmic presentation the author is giving an overt and stark contrast between David and Saul. So what does that contrast look like? Well – let’s begin with David.

In 21:1-9 we see David’s interaction with the house of Yahweh – the tabernacle and the priests. David shows up at the tabernacle, and we learn at this point that while the ark is not present, the rest of the tabernacle is still functioning. [Leithart, 125] David arrives and Ahimelech the priest comes out trembling – obviously concerned that David was on the run from Saul, and fearful of the position that now put him in. David, in response, tells a lie.

And this is the time where I again promise that we will come back to the theme of deception in the Book of Samuel in a future sermon. I should mention that in preparation for that future sermon I have begun to read a PhD dissertation written by Matthew Newkirk on the topic of deception in the Book of Samuel. First and Second Samuel together contain the highest density of deception in the whole Old Testament. In fifty-five chapters there are twenty-eight deception episodes. No other book in the Hebrew Scriptures has a higher rate of deceptions-per-chapter. So, hopefully sometime between now and when we get to the twenty-eighth deception I will finish reading that dissertation and preach a sermon on that topic.

In the meantime, we can recognize two goals in David’s deception of Ahimelech the priest. First, he hoped to deceive Ahimelech so that he would relieve Ahimelech’s fears about helping David. Second, he hoped to give Ahimelech cover before Saul for helping him. If Saul accused Ahimelech of helping a fugitive, then Ahimelech would have deniability. David was trying to protect Ahimelech while still getting help from him. As we will see, David underestimated the severity of Saul’s response to Ahimelech.

With that aside, David then comes to the house of Yahweh requesting assistance. He comes to the house of Yahweh asking both for food to sustain himself and his companions, and asking for the tools he needs to fight the battle the Lord has called him to fight. He comes, asking at the House of Yahweh for his needs to be met, and they are. He receives the bread of the presence from the tabernacle, and he receives the sword of Goliath, which has been kept at the tabernacle.

And as David discusses those needs, we also learn something interesting about David and his men. They are consecrated for service to Yahweh. It’s an easy thing to miss in the discussion about the bread. Ahimelech asks if the soldiers have had sexual relations recently – he is asking basically if they are ritually clean. In broad terms, one theme that emerges in the ritual purity laws of Israel is that what comes out of human beings often makes them unclean. That ritual pattern was meant to point to a spiritual reality. And so the emission that came with sexual intercourse made one unclean. But in response to the question, David doesn’t just confirm that the men are ritually clean. He says in verse five that they are “holy.” Now, ritual holiness is something different from ritual cleanness. Ritual holiness signifies a consecration, a setting apart for special service to Yahweh. Priests were consecrated. David is saying that his men are not only ritually clean, but they have gone further than that and are consecrated as ritually holy. David and his men are not priests ... but there is a priestly character to them in their service. They have been consecrated to God’s work like the priests. And they belong in some sense then among the priests, and it is therefore more appropriate that they receive the consecrated bread from the tabernacle. [Leithart, 127]

David and his men show up at the house of Yahweh consecrated for service to him, and requesting that he provide what they need to be sustained and equipped for what Yahweh has called them to. And they receive what they request.

That is what we see in the first passage.

In the second passage we see how David presents himself and relates to a pagan leader, all while in a royal court.

In verse ten David flees to Gath. This is an odd choice ... because Gath is the hometown of Goliath ... and David had killed Goliath, Gath's champion. We might suppose that David hoped to go in quietly and not be noticed ... but if that was his plan it was very unsuccessful.

David is recognized and brought to Achish, the king of Gath.

Now, David has a few options at this point. He could fight being brought to Achish, though it seems pretty certain that that would be unsuccessful. Another option was to form an alliance with Achish. As an insider to Saul's court, David had a lot to offer Achish ... if he was willing to betray Saul and ally himself with Achish. We will see in chapter twenty-seven that David will come to Achish and offer an alliance one day ... but it will be a deceptive alliance, not a true one. For now, being so fresh from Saul's court, such a deceptive alliance was probably not an option. Only a real alliance would do.

But David does not do that. Instead, he abases himself. He humiliates himself. David, the slayer of giants, the chosen one of God, the anointed heir to the throne of Israel ... humbles himself and disgraces himself, rather than betray Israel. He acts insane, and is then rejected by Achish in disgust.

David presents himself by making himself nothing, and is rejected by the powers of the world.

This is what we see in the first two scenes with David.

What then do we see in their corresponding accounts with Saul?

If David presented himself by making himself nothing, and was rejected by the worldly power before him, then Saul presents himself by puffing himself up, and makes an alliance with the worldly power in his court.

What we see in chapter twenty-two, verses six through ten, is Saul sitting among the leaders he has appointed from his own tribe, and boasting about how much he has given them – things that David would not give them. He gave his fellow clansmen fields and vineyard and power, he reminds them. We may remember ourselves, at this point, that the prophet Samuel warned Israel of just this sort of thing in chapter eight – he warned them that a worldly king in Israel would appoint those he favored to power, and then take the vineyards and fields of the Israelites to give them to his favored servants. Saul seems to be boasting and exalting himself over the fact that he has done just that.

Then, having exalted himself and emphasized his power, Saul next makes an alliance with Doeg the Edomite. The Edomites were a people who were often at odds with Israel – often even at war with them. Doeg was not a faithful Israelite, but a worldly mercenary. And when he offers Saul the help he wants, he and Saul strike an alliance.

Where David lowered himself, Saul exalted himself. And where David embraced rejection from worldly powers, Saul made an alliance with a worldly advisor.

The contrast is clear already, but it comes into even sharper focus when Saul interacts with the House of Yahweh – the tabernacle and the priests.

We said earlier that David and his men approach the house of Yahweh consecrated for service to him, and once there they request that the house of Yahweh provide what they needed in order to do the work Yahweh had called them to do.

Saul, on the other hand, declares war on the house of Yahweh. He accepts no mitigating circumstances for the actions of Ahimalech the priest, but sentences him to death. But he doesn't stop there. Far from it. Saul doesn't only sentence Ahimalech to death – he sentences Ahimalech's entire household, eighty-five priests, to death. More than that, in working with Doeg the Edomite, he kills not only the priests, but slaughters every living thing in their town. And we should recognize that kind of warfare at this point. Saul is carrying out *herem* warfare. This was a special kind of warfare – a warfare of total destruction. And it was a form of warfare that *only* Yahweh could authorize, and that was only to be carried out at Yahweh's direction against those who had utterly rejected Yahweh. It was a warfare that reflected and was a result of the spiritual animosity between Yahweh and those who had completely rejected him.

And Saul carries it out against the priests of Yahweh, because he believes that they have not been faithful enough *to him*.

Saul comes to the house of Yahweh expecting not to serve but to be served. He elevates himself to the place of God, and then carries out *herem* warfare against the house of God because of its lack of support for him.

Where David and his men come to the house of Yahweh consecrated for service, and requesting God's assistance, Saul approaches the house of Yahweh elevating himself to the level of God and declaring war on Yahweh's house.

David humbles himself, accepts worldly rejection, serves the house of Yahweh and comes to the house of Yahweh for help. Saul exalts himself, allies himself with the world, and boldly declares war on the house of Yahweh.

These are the contrasting pictures we see.

And then in between those pictures, at the center of the chiasm, we have chapter twenty-two, verses one through five. In the midst of an Old Israel breaking down under the rule of Saul, we have a picture of the beginnings of a New Israel, under the leadership of David.

David is on the run, but soon others begin to gather with him. It begins with his family. But then others come as well – we read in verse two that “everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was bitter in soul, gathered to him. And he became commander over them. And there were about four hundred men.”

David is forming a New Israel ... and it looks very different at this moment from the courts of Saul. Where Saul is doing exactly what Samuel warned a worldly king might do, the picture of David's gathering looks like the opposite of Samuel's warning. [Firth, 238] Instead of gathering the influential and showering them with gifts, David gathers the oppressed, the unwanted and despised, and he shares a cave with them. And in the very next verse we are reminded that David himself was in some ways among the despised. We are told in the verses that follow that David arranged for his parents to stay in Moab. This seems odd at first, since Moab was often despised by Israel. Until we remember

that David's great grandmother, Ruth, was a Moabitess. And so David may have been calling on a favor from extended family in Moab to care for his elderly parents. David has ancestry among the Moabites. David not only attracts the lowly ... he in some ways really belongs among them. [Alter, 135]

Our text sets up contrasting pictures for us. David humbles himself, accepts worldly rejection, and both serves and relies on the house of Yahweh. Saul exalts himself, allies himself with the world, and boldly declares war on the house of Yahweh.

And in the middle of those two pictures we are told that David, the despised and lowly one, is gathering a people to himself – gathering the despised and lowly, and beginning to form the core of a New Israel. [Leithart, 128]

And as the contrast between Saul and David continues to sharpen, we see in their divergence a pattern we have seen again and again in the Scriptures: the picture of the first son who rebels against Yahweh, and the second who is faithful.

We see this in rebellious Cain, the first-born, and faithful Abel, the second-born. We see it in Ishmael, the first-born of Abraham who is outside the covenant, and Isaac, the second-born who is within it. We see it in first-born Esau who scorns the promises of God and second-born Jacob who receives them. And we see it now in Saul and David, who as kings over God's people are symbolic sons of God. And once more the firstborn rebels where the second-born is faithful.

Why does this pattern repeat again and again in the Scriptures? What is God trying to show us?

Well we get an answer in Romans chapter five and First Corinthians fifteen. In those passages, the Apostle Paul tells us that the whole of human history can be seen as the division between two sons of God – the first Adam and the second Adam – Adam our First Parent, and Jesus Christ our Savior. Paul reminds us that the pattern of the firstborn who rebels, and the second-born who is faithful is the pattern of redemptive history. And so God has held it before us again and again.

In Saul we see something of Adam's rebellion. As Adam exalted himself and desired to be like God, so Saul exalts himself. As Adam allied himself with the serpent, so Saul allies himself with Doeg the Edomite. As Adam rebelled against Yahweh his Maker, so Saul declares war on the house of Yahweh. Saul again repeats the pattern of Adam.

And if Saul points to the source of our distress ... then David points to the source of our hope.

In David we catch a glimpse of Christ who is to come. For as David lowered and abased himself, so Christ would humble and empty himself. As David embraced rejection from the world, so Jesus, in humiliation would be scorned and rejected. As David sought to serve the house of Yahweh and looked to God for what he needs to do so, so Jesus would come in the form of a servant, relying on his Father every step of the way.

Our text holds out Adam and Christ ... and then it reminds us, at the center, that Christ is gathering a people to himself ... a New Israel. It points us to how those in need gathered around David ... and it invites us to do the same. Christ is gathering a people. It is not a prestigious people. It is not a court of the rich and powerful. At its heart it is often a gathering of those in distress, and in need, and troubled in soul. The Greater David is gathering to himself a people, and our text asks us if we will make the trek down to the cave of Adullam. It pushes us, urges us, to choose to identify with the lowly Son of David.

But I don't think it stops there. It doesn't stop at mere association. And that becomes clear if we look at and reflect on chapter twenty-two, verses one and two.

Because not all who gathered with David were of his spirit. Not all *with* David were *of* David. Some were. Some loved him and desired to walk in his footsteps. But others were there for selfish reasons. Others had their own agendas. Others associated with David, but still wanted to live in the pattern of Saul. We will see that play out in some of the chapters ahead.

And so this text not only urges us to ally ourselves with Christ over Adam – with David over Saul – it also calls us to walk in the ways of David and his heir. It calls us to walk in the very path we see here.

Though we might be more subtle than Saul, we too are so prone to exalt ourselves whenever we get the chance. Though we might be less extreme with it, we too are easily tempted to compromise with the enemies of God if it gets us what we want. Though we might be more subtle ... we too can find ourselves fighting against God and his ways – demanding that he serve us rather than we serve him. The ways of Saul are so often our default settings.

But if we want to dwell in the camp of David, we cannot be content to continue to live in the pattern of Saul.

And so our text calls us to the path of David. It's easy to show up at the house of God ready to receive, ready to take. But where might God be calling you to set yourself apart to serve, just as David and his men consecrated themselves to serve? What ministry here, or what Christian ministry in our community, might God be calling you to serve him in? Where do you need to set yourself apart for service to Yahweh?

And as you see the challenges to being faithful to God's calling on your life, how do you need to bring your needs to him? As David asked for bread and a sword, what do you need from God to serve as he has called you to, and what would it look like for you to more fully rely on him for those things?

And moving on from there: Where do you need to humble yourself? Where have you valued your standing in the world more than you should have? You are not called to lower and humiliate yourself before the world without cause. But if a cause does come up ... will you be willing to do it as David did it? As Christ did it?

And where do you need to be willing to be mocked, scorned, and rejected by the respected people of this world? Who are the people of the world whose esteem you so value? Again, you are not called to relinquish their esteem without cause. But are you willing to do it if you have to in order to remain faithful to Yahweh – as David did ... as Christ did?

Our text holds out two pictures. Those two pictures point us first to two other men – to Adam and to Christ – and then to two patterns of life – the pattern of rebellion, and the pattern of Christ-likeness.

But finally, we should pause and appreciate that our text also pushes us to think about where each leader and where each path takes us.

Right now things do not look good for David – he is poor and lowly. Things for Saul, on the other hand, look fairly secure. But as we reflect on their current positions – both spiritually and in the world – now is a good time for us to recall once more the words of Hannah.

All the way back in chapter two of First Samuel we encountered Hannah's song – her prayer and praise that set the spiritual framework for all that was to follow.

These were the words she proclaimed:

“My heart exults in Yahweh; [she said,]
my horn is exalted in Yahweh.
My mouth derides my enemies,
because I rejoice in your salvation.
²“There is none holy like Yahweh:
for there is none besides you;
there is no rock like our God.
³Talk no more so very proudly,
let not arrogance come from your mouth;
for Yahweh is a God of knowledge,
and by him actions are weighed.
⁴The bows of the mighty are broken,
but the feeble bind on strength.
⁵Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread,
but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.
The barren has borne seven,
but she who has many children is forlorn.
⁶Yahweh kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
⁷Yahweh makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low and he exalts.
⁸He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are Yahweh's,
and on them he has set the world.
⁹“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.
¹⁰The adversaries of Yahweh shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.
Yahweh will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

The powers of this world, whether rebellious Saul in the days of David, the arrogant Roman and Jewish leaders in the days of Jesus, or those who scorn the Church in our own day – the powers of this world often look like they will prevail. And so we may ask – why associate ourselves with David? Why associate ourselves with Christ? Why try to walk in *their* ways?

Because Hannah has told us how the story will end. For God is with David and God is with Christ and his people. And because God is with them, “The bows of the mighty are broken, but the feeble bind on strength.” “Those who were full have hired themselves out for bread, but those who were hungry have ceased to hunger.” The poor have been raised up from the dust and the needy from the

ash heap, and they are made to sit with princes. For “The adversaries of Yahweh shall be broken to pieces; against them he will thunder in heaven.” But “He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,” “and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

God’s Anointed one, and God’s people, *will* be exalted. For God is in control, and it is not by might that a man shall prevail.

Hannah tells us how the story ends. David comes to the throne, and Saul lies dead on a battle field. Christ will reign over creation for all eternity, while those who have rebelled will be cast out into the darkness.

We know the end of the story, for our God is faithful. And that gives us all the more reason to ally ourselves with the Son of David, to accept the scorn that accompanies him now ... for we know the joy and honor that is to come when God sets all things right.

Or as the Psalmist puts it: “Those who sowed with tears will reap with songs of joy. Those who go out weeping, carrying the seed, will come again with joy, shouldering their sheaves.” [Psalm 126:6-7, BCP]

Our text holds these truths before us once again. They are not new to most of us ... but they are not old either. Our text presents those same truths from yet another angle.

And in that new angle you are challenged to see yourself and your world – to see the cosmic battle in this world between the Greater Saul and the Greater David; to see the battle in your own heart between the ways of Saul and the ways of David; and to remember that in the end, the battle belongs to the Lord, and David’s Son will sit on the throne forever, while Saul is cast out.

And so, let First Samuel twenty-one and twenty-two be a lens for you. Through it, see your world more clearly. Through it, see your heart more clearly. Through it, see the trajectory of eternity more clearly.

And then come again to the greater David, recommit yourself to walk in his ways, and rejoice in the salvation that awaits you.

Amen.

This sermon draws on material from:

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