



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

1 Samuel 26:1-25

“David Spares Saul’s Life Again”

TRANSCRIPT

[Prayer] Father, we thank Thee for the encouragement that we receive from the Bible. We thank Thee that we do hold in our hands the divine revelation. And we thank Thee that through the Holy Spirit we have been taught that it is not simply the words themselves but the truth of which the words speak that is the revelation of God. And we thank Thee that Thou hast contained the revelation within the words of holy Scripture and thus there is a limit, a standard by which we can study and examine and be confronted with the word that Thou wouldst speak to us.

Enable us, Lord, in all of our Bible reading to remember that this is the divine word and Thou art speaking to us through it. Give us openness of heart and mind. Enable us to respond. Teach us more of the wonderful grace that Thou hast manifested to us and are constantly manifesting to us through the indwelling Spirit. And Lord, of course, we pray that if there should be someone here who does not have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, of a relationship to Thee, that they may, through the preaching of the word and through the reading of the word, come to the realization of their own state and of the offer of the gospel through the Lord Jesus Christ.

We ask now Thy blessing upon this meeting and upon the meetings that follow.
In Jesus’ name. Amen.

[Message] 1st Samuel chapter 26, and this is the account in which the writer of the Book of 1st Samuel describes for the second time how David, having Saul in his power, nevertheless spares him.

Now if you study books about the Bible, commentaries for example, you’re not surprised to find that some of them have suggested that this chapter is perhaps not a genuine chapter. That is, it’s so parallel with the preceding experience of David sparing Saul that perhaps what has happened is that different accounts of the same event have been circulating or floating about, and the final redactor or the final collector of the revelation and the one who put it in the form of 1st Samuel has taken two accounts, which really are accounts of the same thing, and put them in the same book. And so we have repetition of the same event.

Now of course, this type of criticism is very common in the literature on the Bible written by men who are not noted for their orthodoxy. You know, it really means, of course, that we are expected to be very dumb about things because obviously if a man sought to write a book and he sought to pawn it off as an inspired book he would not be so dumb as to include in the account divergent accounts of the same event. They would at least have as much sense as the men who’s studying it in the 20th Century.

Uninspired men would never have left any room for hesitation about these things in Scripture. And so the idea of us finding in the word of God itself parallel passages which contradict one another is not what an uninspired man would do. It’s clear that what we have is a man who was inspired and who did feel that there was no contradiction in these apparently problem passages but, nevertheless, put them in because he had a conviction that this was the word of God. If you read through the Bible there are many things that cause problems but the very fact that they are still in the Bible is an evidence of the inspiration of the Bible because if a person was just counterfeiting the

Bible he would not leave in the Bible those things that are problems. So the problems of the Bible are actually arguments for the authenticity of the word of God.

Now so far as duplications are concerned, or doublettes as the scholars like to speak of them, there are quite a few in the Bible. There was the experience in the Book of Genesis which we’ve been studying, that Abraham and Sarah had with Abimelech. And then Isaac and Rebecca also had a very similar experience with an Abimelech. We saw that Abimelech was a title like Czar, or like the Kaiser. There was Moses who also had two experiences with the rock; one at Horeb and one at Kadesh. At one of them he smote the rock, at the other one he smote the rock when he should have spoken to the rock. But again, these are not the same events, they are different events. Our Lord fed the five thousand, and then in the gospel we also read a few chapters later that he fed four thousand. The fact that he fed five thousand and fed four thousand is not an indication that the Bible has given us different accounts of the same event, but that there were two events.

Now many years ago I used to play a lot of golf and I played competitive golf in amateur tournaments around the country, and also played in professional tournaments, too, as an amateur. And I was very interested in golf for many, many years. If you know anything about golf history you may remember that two of the most fantastic blowups in tournament golf were the one by Ken Venturi who, as an amateur, had the Masters Tournament in his grasp and shot an eighty on the final round after having led the tournament. And then perhaps the most famous of all was the first time that Sam Snead, who was one of the greatest golfers that has ever lived, had the Open at Spring Mill in his grasp and shot an eighty on the fourth round also.

Now I can just imagine one thousand years from now if human beings are still here that someone will come across an ancient manuscript that will say, “Sam Snead shot an eighty on the final round of the United States Open at Spring Mill,” and then also you might find a scrap of paper that said, “Ken Venturi shot an eighty on the final round of a

Masters tournament in Augusta,” and both of them lost the tournament, and there may be many other things that one might write similarly about them. And I can just see some scholar a thousand years from now saying, “This is a doublette, this is a duplication, surely no two golfer shot an eighty on the fourth round and lost a major championship so there’s been some confusion here. And what we have is really one of them, whether it was Venturi or Snead, we will never know. But someone shot an eighty on the final round of one of the greatest of the tournaments.”

So you can see that the idea that we have two accounts in the Bible that are very similar is not unexpected at all. I say that because if you’re reading through 1st Samuel you might have been puzzled by the fact that some of these events occur at the same place and the same type of thing does occur. The principle lesson of 1st Samuel chapter 26 is simply this, that David resists expediency and awaits the providence of God, and God’s time for his crowning as the Messiah of Israel. It reminds me, in a way, of our Lord in the temptation account. Because in the temptation accounts Satan took him up, showed him all the kingdoms of this world, and promised them to him if he would bow down and worship him.

Now these things were to be our Lord Jesus Christ’s. In fact, in the Bible we read in Revelation chapter 11 that the world kingdom of our Lord and his Messiah has come and he shall reign forever and ever. So he is to be over all of the kingdoms of the earth. So why not accept as a gift from Satan the kingdoms of the earth? But our Lord awaits the time for God’s crowning of him as the Messiah. And so he resists expediency. He resists the short cut because he knows that it is the will of God that he go to the cross and provide a way of redemption. There is a lot of difference between waiting on the Lord, which we do when we pray and ask for guidance, and waiting for the Lord. That is, for him to make an enter position in the affairs of men. We wait on him to find his will. We wait for him to do his will in our life. And so David has learned the lesson of waiting for the Lord. At least it’s manifested in this chapter.

He knows what God’s will is for him. He’s been told that. He does not accept any shortcut to messiah-ship. He does not want to lay one hand upon Saul because Saul is the Lord’s anointed and he knows that he is going to be God’s anointed. It’s one of the lessons that we need to learn also as Christians, and that is not to run ahead of the Lord. It is important that we learn to wait on the Lord. That is, to try to find the guidance that he is giving us through the Holy Spirit. But it’s also important that we learn to wait for him to do what we know he is going to do. He will interpose himself in our circumstances and supply our needs and do what he’s promised to do in the Bible.

We will do again what we’ve been doing. We will take a look at a section by section of this 26th chapter and draw some lessons from the things that we are reading. Now in verses 1 through 12 the writer of 1st Samuel describes again Saul’s return to the chase and David’s reconnaissance. David, we will see, has a CIA himself. And I guess we can say, “Ah, the CIA is a scriptural organization,” because here is one of the Lord’s anointed ones who has his own spy organization.

Now I’m reading from the Authorized Version and I read the first 12 verses.

“And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon? Then Saul arose, and went down to the wilderness of Ziph, having three thousand chosen men of Israel with him, to seek David in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul encamped in the hill of Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon, by the way. But David abode in the wilderness, and he saw that Saul came after him into the wilderness. David therefore sent out spies, and understood that Saul was come in very deed. And David arose, and came to the place where Saul had encamped: and David beheld the place where Saul lay, and Abner the son of Ner, the captain of his host: and Saul lay in the trench, (it was a kind of barricade. And Saul was in a place that was protected,) in the trench and the people encamped round about him. Then answered David and said to Ahimelech the Hittite, and to Abishai the son of

Zeruiah, brother to Joab, saying, Who will go down with me to Saul to the camp? And Abishai said, I will go with thee. So David and Abishai came to the people by night: and, behold, Saul lay sleeping within the trench, and his spear stuck in the ground at his head, (the Authorized Version has “bolster” but that is a term that means head,) but Abner and the people lay round about him. Then said Abishai to David, God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee, with the spear even to the earth at once, and I will not smite him the second time. And David said to Abishai, Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD's anointed, and be guiltless. David said furthermore, As the LORD liveth, and the LORD shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. (You can see that David has already received the promise that he is going to be the anointed of the Lord and he knows that Saul is going to be taken out of the way by one of these means.) The LORD forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed: but, I pray thee, take thou now the spear that is at his head, (the bolster,) and the cruse of water, and let us go. So David took the spear and the cruse of water from beside Saul's head; and they got away, and no man saw it, nor knew it, neither awakened: for they were all asleep; because a deep sleep from the LORD was fallen upon them.”

One might have wondered why Saul is now, again, pursuing David. He has been pursuing him and at the end of chapter 24 there seems to be some kind of reconciliation. In verse 16, of chapter 24 we read,

“And it came to pass, when David had ceased speaking these words unto Saul, that Saul said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And Saul lifted up his voice, and wept. And he said to David, Thou art more righteous than I: for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil. And thou hast showed this day how that thou hast dealt well

with me: forasmuch as when the LORD had delivered me into thine hand, thou killedst me not. For if a man find his enemy, will he let him go well away? wherefore the LORD reward thee good for that thou hast done unto me this day. And now, behold, I know well that thou shalt surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand. Swear now therefore unto me by the LORD, that thou wilt not cut off my seed after me, and that thou wilt not destroy my name out of my father's house. And David swore unto Saul. And Saul went home; but David and his men went up into the stronghold.”

So it would appear from that they had had some form of reconciliation. Now why Saul is again persecuting David and seeing to take his life, the Scriptures do not specifically say. It's possible that Saul's mind was so deranged at this point, and I suggest later on in this message that also he had some bad advice, possibly. It may also be because of the polygamy mentioned in verse 43 and verse 44 of chapter 25. Because after David married Abigail we also read that he took Ahinoam of Jazreel as a wife also and they both of them were his wives. And so it's possible that it is God who is dealing with David here as well as Saul persecuting him.

The Bible says the way of the transgressors is hard and if we violate the teaching of the word of God we must suffer for it, even a David must suffer for it. And we also read in the Bible that when a man's ways please the Lord he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him. And so in this case David is not at peace with Saul and it may well be that it is because of his own spiritual failures.

At any rate, the chapter opens with the report of the Ziphite that David is in the vicinity and fearful, perhaps, of ultimate revenge by David, Saul goes out after him. And his response is described in verses 2 through 4. F. B. Meyer in his little study on the Book of David has suggested that Psalm 7 is the background of this particular incident. And there are some statements in that psalm that are very close to statements that are

made in this chapter. And if that is so, in Psalm 7 David refers to an enemy who is giving bad advice to his enemy. And so it is possible that what is referred to there in that particular psalm is a person who is giving bad advice to Saul. And not only Mr. Meyer, but also one of the greatest of the preachers who’s written a very fine series of expositions of the psalms, Alexander McLaren, has gone into this in quite a bit of detail and he has even suggested that the name of the individual was Kush, a Benjamite. And what he was doing was poisoning Saul’s mind so that when Saul was in the presence of David and they had this apparent reconciliation afterwards Kush, again, poisoned his mind against David.

Well, that’s true to life and it may well have been true in this instance. Saul’s sin, of course, is more reprehensible when he does the same thing a second time. Well David hears about the fact that the three thousand men have left with Saul in order to come out to take him and so he engages in reconnaissance. And he sends his own spies out, his own little CIA. And I suggested only that in that sense there may be some justification for an organization of spies. At least, here is the man of God who has one.

Now Saul, it says, was lying in a trench. This was a kind of barricade that was placed about the camp. It reminds us of how when the Indians were in the neighborhood of the settlers of the West they used to circle their wagons and this was a similar kind of barricade, and so Saul and his men had circled their wagons for protection at night. And also in the ancient East and even to this day it was the custom for the chief of a group of individuals to have a spear implanted in the ground outside of his tent so that they would know in whose tent the chief or the sheik was sleeping. So in this case Saul has the spear outside of his tent in order to signify that he is the king, just as the sheiks among the Arabs had the spear outside of their tent to let people know that it was the sheik who was in that tent.

So there is Saul and David and Abishai. They make a very stealthy approach to the camp. And they not only make a stealthy approach to the camp but they even are

able to get inside the camp, everybody is asleep. Later on it is said that a deep sleep from the Lord had fallen upon them. They were able to sneak into the camp, they were actually able to get right up to the place where Saul was sleeping where his spear was.

Now the conversation between Abishai and David is rather interesting because Abishai says, “God has delivered your enemy into your hands.” There are people who think that circumstances are a most reliable guide for finding the will of God. And if they can find some circumstances that seem to approve a certain course of action they say, “This must be the Lord’s will because the circumstances are just right for it.”

Now you can see that in this instance circumstances were not a reliable guide. It’s true that there was Saul, there was the enemy of David, and he was in David’s hands. He had his own spear and he had his own man there to do it. He didn’t have to do it himself. He might have reasoned something like this, “God has really put Saul in my hand and furthermore, I don’t have to slay him. I’ve got Abishai here, he’ll do the job for me. Says he’ll do it so well he won’t have to plunge it in him but one time. Now, he won’t make any mistake.”

But David knows the teaching of the word of God. And he knows that he must not touch the Lord’s anointed. And so he replies, “Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the LORD’s anointed, and be guiltless?” You see, in guidance the teaching of the word of God is far more important than circumstances. And if the teaching of the word of God is contrary to a course of action then we cannot take that action. And I’ve, as a Christian man and a teacher of the word, I want to be sure to remind you that you cannot, by circumstances, determine the will of God. In fact, circumstances often are things that God surmounts in the accomplishment of his will. When the children of Israel reached Jericho and the walls were to the heavens they might have reasoned it’s not the Lord’s will for Jericho’s walls to fall because we cannot bring them down. But God was going to bring them down by a shout of the men.

So circumstances are not a reliable guide in Christian guidance. Most important, always, is the teaching of the word of God. But we must have more than circumstances to be sure of the will of God. So we commit our ways to the Lord, we trust in him, and we anticipate that he will bring to pass his will. But we are especially concerned about what does the Scriptures say.

The next section contains the rebuke that David renders to Abner in the presence of all. Now Abner was Saul’s general. He was responsible for Saul’s wellbeing. So David, we read verses 13 through 16,

“Then David went over to the other side, and stood on the top of a hill afar off; a great space being between them. And David cried to the people, and to Abner the son of Ner, saying, Answerest thou not, Abner? Then Abner answered and said, Who art thou who criest to the king? And David said to Abner, Art not thou a valiant man? (Literally it’s ‘Art not thou a man?’ It’s kind of a touch of irony in this, you see, David has managed to come right down by the side of Saul and Abner was sleeping through the whole thing. And now he’s asking him if he’s really a man. He’s enjoying this, I’m sure. I’m sure that he probably would have enjoyed getting rid of his enemy, so far as his own feelings were concerned. But the Lord did give him this little bit of joy to say the things that he said to Abner afterwards.) Why then hast thou not kept thy lord the king? for there came one of the people in to destroy the king thy lord. This thing is not good that thou hast done. As the LORD liveth, you are worthy to die, because you have not kept your master, the LORD’s anointed, (now notice how bold David is. He’s extremely bold. You know, we read in the Bible, ‘The wicked flee when no man pursueth but the righteous are bold as a lion.’ And it is of the greatest source of courage in spiritual life to know that you are in the will of God. But if you are not sure you are in the will of God, or if you are not in the will of God it is true, you flee when no man pursues. And the shaking of a leaf is enough to send fear into the hearts of the unrighteous. So David in the presence of the

three thousand men is shouting out, ‘Abner, you’re worthy to die because you haven’t kept Saul,) And now look where the king’s spear is, and the cruse of water that was at his head.”

So David has taken the spear and the cruse of water and he’s now has made fun of Abner. In other words, what he’s really doing is he’s just suggesting that there ought to be some head rolling in Saul’s company. It was tantamount to disgrace to fail to keep the king.

David’s boldness reminds us of the boldness of some of the great men of God in history. I think particularly of Martin Luther who was asked to recount his heresies that he had written in his books and he replied before the doubt, “Unless I am convinced of error by the testimony of Scripture, and by clear reason, I cannot and I will not recant anything. For it is neither safe nor honest to act against one’s conscious. God help me. Amen.”

I think of John Knox who stood before the bloody Queen Mary and he spoke, they said, as if he was of God’s privy counsel but he was a person who had the assurance he was in the will of God and to stand before Mary was something that he could do. And even the Queen of Scotland was trembling in the presence of this man whom she said afterwards she feared more than thousands of others.

So David is a man who in the center of the will of God is bold. He says take a look at where the spear is. Now he’s interested in showing Saul that he is his real friend but Saul is a man who now is largely, it seems to me, deranged of mind. In verse 17 we have Saul’s reply, “And Saul knew David’s voice, and said, Is this thy voice, my son David? And David said, It is my voice, my lord, O king.” And in verse 18 he continues his response and says,

“Why doth my lord thus pursue after his servant? for what have I done? or what evil is in mine hand? Now therefore, I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering: but if they be, (‘If they,’ notice,) if they be the children of men, cursed be they before the LORD; for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, Go, serve other gods.”

And then also in verse 29, “Now therefore, let not my blood fall to the earth before the face of the LORD: for the king of Israel is come out to seek a flea, as when one doth hunt a partridge in the mountains.” He speaks very humbly to Saul, considers himself only a flea or like a partridge in the mountains.

Now in verse 19 when he says, “I pray thee, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant. If the LORD have stirred thee up against me, let him accept an offering.” What he means by that is, “If God is using Saul righteously to chastise me then I will bring an offering in confession of my sin before the Lord if that’s the reason that you are after me. But if it is because they have been saying things to you,” then he says, “cursed be they before the Lord for they have driven me out this day from abiding in the inheritance of the LORD.”

Now that is a kind of imprecation. It may be surprising. Sometimes, you know, I think we read the Old Testament and we’re not surprised by these things. But if we said them today, in our society, we would be very surprised if somebody said something like that, “Let him be accursed.” But imprecations or the calling down of judgment upon individuals is something that is not only permitted by the word of God but is demanded in the word of God. And so this imprecation is necessary because of what the enemies are doing. They are so disturbing Saul that God’s plans and purposes, humanly speaking, are being prevented of fulfillment because it is God’s word and God’s intention to have David ultimately on the throne.

Now when he speaks about going and serving other gods he simply, it seems to me, intends to suggest that if they are driving him off they are driving him off into heathen lands. Idolatry worried him more than being a stranger, evidently.

Then Saul, after David has spoken, gives us a brief review of his life. And it’s a very tragic and pitiable kind of statement that he makes in verse 21, “Then said Saul, I have sinned.” He is now about to leave this earthly scene and what a difference there is between the last words of Saul, the King of Israel, and Saul, the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. You may remember the last words of Saul, the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. He said, “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. And not to me only but unto all them also that love his appearing.” “There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness,” what a difference between the last words of Saul the apostle and Saul the king, “I have sinned.”

Sometimes it’s possible for an individual who accuses himself to be prouder than one who protests his innocence. And in the case of Saul I think that’s so. It is possible, you know, to go around telling people how bad you are and how sinful you are, and how weak you are when really you are kind of proud. That’s very common among some Christians. They like to degrade themselves in word when they really are not degrading themselves, they really think they’re pretty good.

Now in Saul’s case when he says, “I have sinned,” we’re not to think of this as a confession of his sin and a repentance. It’s like the, “I have sinned,” to pharaoh, and it’s like the, “I have sinned,” to Judas, for that is what Judas said. He said, “I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood,” and he went out and he committed suicide. That itself was an act of rebellion against the Lord God. So his confession of sin was not a genuine confession of sin. And in Saul’s case his life after this indicates, too, that it was not a genuine confession of sin. It is a self accusation that is an expression of his pride. And I do think that he is an illustration of the fact that a self accuser may actually be prouder than one who protests his innocence.

The next thing that he says is even more striking. He says,

“I have sinned: return, my son David, (David didn’t believe him, incidentally, because he didn’t return. But,) return my son David, for I will no more do thee harm, because my soul was precious in thine eyes this day: behold, I have played the fool, and have erred exceedingly.”

If you were looking for a one liner that would give the life story of Saul, the first king of Israel, it would be that, “I have played the fool.” And it also is a one liner that is descriptive of many other people’s lives too, “I have played the fool.”

Now how did Saul play the fool? Well he played the fool by allowing his passions to control him. He was a man who was controlled not by the divine word but he was controlled by his feelings. You can go back and read the story of Saul and find justification for that a number of times.

He also played the fool by listening to false representations concerning David. He did not, in his many confrontations with David, accept the testimony of David but he listened to false representations made about David. He played the fool by acting against his conscience. His conscience plainly in more than one case indicated to him that his actions were wrong. But he did not follow his conscience, he acted against it.

Now Luther talked about that and it’s something that we ourselves have to contend with too. When God speaks to us and when he speaks to us through the word and we go contrary to it we shall suffer for it. Also, when we go against our conscience that too is a good way to play the fool.

Now he also played the fool by making good resolutions and breaking them. He says, “I have sinned: return, my son David, for I will no more do thee harm.” But the history of Saul is, of course, that he sought to do David harm constantly. So he made

good resolutions and he broke them. Several times he seemed to have a reconciliation with David but it was not a lasting thing.

So when a person makes good resolutions and does not follow them, well, breaks them he’s playing the fool too. And Saul played the fool also by contending against God’s plans. He knew that David was to be king. Back in verse 20 of chapter 24 we read, “And now behold I know well that thou shalt surely be king and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in thine hand.” And yet at the same time he is trying to put David to death. So here is a man who knows the plan of God but seeks to fight against it. It’s impossible for us to fight against the Lord God. Even Gamaliel knows that, we read in the New Testament. It’s impossible for us to fight against the will of God. It’s impossible for us to fight against the teaching of Holy Scripture. If the Bible teaches plainly things about the local church, about the way the local church should be operated and we seek to operate the church in another way that’s a foolish step to make. That’s to play the fool. Or if the Bible says things about the way a Christian should live and we rationalize and try to do things contrary to those principles in the word of God we’re playing the fool. And there is no possible way that we can succeed in a situation like that. So Saul played the fool by contending against what he knew was the plan of God. What he knew was the teaching of the world of God.

It is a serious thing, dear Christian friend, to know the Bible and not to follow the teaching of Scripture that has been made plain to us. And he played the fool by expecting happiness without holiness. No man can be truly, spiritually happy who does not seek a relationship of holiness with the Lord God. Holiness is the secret of a happy Christian life.

Now David replies in verses 22 through 24, we read,

“And David answered and said, Behold the king's spear! let one of the young men come over and fetch it, (he had it.) And the LORD render to every man his righteousness and

his faithfulness; for the LORD delivered thee into my hand to day, but I would not stretch forth mine hand against the LORD's anointed. And, behold, as thy life was much esteemed this day in mine eyes, so let my life be much esteemed in the eyes of the LORD, and let him deliver me out of all tribulation.”

Now did you notice what David did? He ignored the invitation of Saul. Saul said in verse 21, “Return, my son David: for I will no more do thee harm.” David said, “Here’s your sword, your life was much esteemed in my hand, may mine be much esteemed in the eyes of the Lord and let me deliver him out of all tribulation,” but he didn’t go back to Saul because he did not believe that Saul’s protestations of reconciliation were true.

Saul is a man who is beautifully described, I think, by James chapter 1, verses 23 and 24. Let me read these verses, I know you know about them. After saying,

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves, (James writes,) but if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and immediately forgetteth what manner of man he was.”

That’s the kind of man who reads the Bible, hears the word of God, but does not do it. Saul was that kind of individual. He was a person who was well acquainted with many things about the Lord Jehovah. But he was like the man who took a quick look in the mirror and left and forgot what he saw. The Scriptures exhort us to be not only a hearer of the word but a doer but Saul was a man who beheld his natural face in the mirror, he beheld himself, he went his way and forgot what manner of man he was. He forgot what he saw in the mirror. And we forget often, do we not, what we have read in the word of God.

And finally the 25th verse records the last response of Saul, “Then Saul said to David, Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail. So David went on his way, and Saul returned to his place.” Hosea’s words are true of Saul, “They return but not to the most high. They are like a deceitful bow, their princes shall fall by the sword for the rage of their tongue, this shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.”

When we return few should return to the Lord most high. Let’s close our meeting with a word of prayer.

[Prayer] Father we are grateful to Thee for these lessons that come from the life of David. For the great stress found within them upon adherence to the revelation of God. Deliver us Lord, from the destiny that Saul had. Deliver us from playing the fool. Deliver us from profession of faith without reality. Deliver us from hearing the word of God and not doing it. Oh God, how often it seems that we are guilty of just this kind of sin. We study the Bible much. We become very acquainted with its teaching but so little of it seems to find its way into our lives.

We know, Lord, we have the Holy Spirit within who is carrying on his sanctifying ministry. By Thy grace, Lord, enable us to respond to the Scriptures in the Spirit and to grow in holiness. Enable us to truly live a happy and holy life. We know that holiness is beautiful in the sight of our great God. So Lord, give us a deeper likeness to the Lord Jesus Christ. For his name’s sake. Amen.