

In the previous series we focused on major lessons regarding how Saul, the first king of Israel, failed to administer God's government in his own life because his focus was not on looking to God to rule his life, let alone Israel. Instead of holding on to humility, which he exhibited in the beginning, he very early on began to be lifted up in pride and relied on his own reasoning, which is just a normal human tendency, a normal human trait, one that's gone on for ages in God's Church in different scenarios and situations when people have different responsibilities and so forth that are given to them. It's a very common thing that's happened that people have to learn from as a part of a process of testing, as a part of a process of training to see where we're really coming from, to see what's inside of us, to see the repentance of spirit, of the mind when those things do come out in our lives, and to see whether we become convicted of how ugly pride is.

So again, that's a matter of oftentimes then, human reasoning, and so much so, even as it was with Saul, that he tried to uphold and defend his wrong choices. Then that becomes even more obvious when that's being done. But again, something that Saul did a lot of, that these examples again are written in scripture for us to learn from. It's for God's Church to learn from these examples just as much as it will be for those in the Millennium and the Great white Throne to learn from those things that happened in times past.

There are always spiritual principles that can be learned from those stories that are throughout the Old Testament. Basically, that's why they're there anyway - to teach, to train, to mold and fashion those who desire to live God's way of life.

In this new series that we started a couple of Sabbaths ago, we began looking at just the opposite kind of a spirit, which was exemplified in how David lived his life and was more squarely focused on striving to keep God at the forefront in his thinking, especially in major decisions that he was confronted with.

So, this today is going to be *Part 2* as we're returning to the series entitled *Pursuing A Heart Like David's*.

As we were covering the story of the beginning of the rise and the focus on David, we came across some parts of the story that were a little difficult to understand. They are difficult because of how some of the things are stated in the order of things that are given, and sometimes in stories like this they can tend to go back and forth a little bit. But as a whole, it is a steady story, but it's hard because of some of the things that happened and not a lot of the story is explained, that it can become a little difficult to understand.

I want to be able to clarify a couple of those things today as we go along, which we'll do. But in the first series here we just barely got started in the story of David himself and his rise, in

that respect, and the recognition that God was beginning to give to him because he would be the next king of Israel.

I think another marvelous, awesome thing to think about in the midst of all this, is that God had intended this all along. He was going to give a king to Israel. That was His plan from the very beginning of time. Everything is mapped out as far as events through history, through time that are going to be used for different purposes. Obviously, the lineage of a messiah that was going to come out of a kingly line, if you will, and that line was going to be David's, that God raised him up for that very purpose.

Saul wasn't raised up for that purpose and yet Saul was given to be the first king. But it was to learn lessons from that, lessons that are good for the Church to grasp and comprehend, this thing of humility, this thing of the focus having to be upon God and God's government or else things will not work in life. A life just doesn't work right. It doesn't turn out right at all. Only if God is there at the forefront of one's thinking, and especially once one is called to purpose, to reasons that God has for them in molding and fashioning them, then obviously, those things fit together in a marvelous way if we make the right choices.

So again, we came across some difficult stories there in a sense, but some of those will be explained. One important statement that helps to shed a little light on this is in **1 Samuel 17:14**. It says, **And David was the youngest: and the three oldest followed Saul**. So, they were a part of the military, in other words. They were a part of the army that followed Saul. That's what this is talking about. The whole nation, in that respect, was following Saul, but this is speaking of battle, this is speaking about war and that it's leading up to here in discussing even more so in the story flow of what is being addressed.

It says, **But David occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father's sheep at Bethlehem**. So, a part of the confusion of the story in the way it's presented if you just read it as a story, it's a little hard to make sense unless you think about it a little more deeply, about some of the events that are explained here. But basically, David was brought in to be the one who would play the musical instrument for Saul when Saul was being agitated by, it says, a spirit. Whatever that was that was taking place when David would play the harp then, at this point in time then the music was a soothing thing, and that spirit would leave.

Anyway, he was there playing. But the point being in all this was that he didn't really know David. Just because David was there playing; it's like the servants. There were so many servants in such a household as that serving the king, that it wasn't a matter of them becoming friendly and being close. It wasn't a matter of them knowing each other. That's where some of the confusion can come in when you read some of the story. What it's talking about here is that there were times when David wasn't needed so he would go back and tend to his father's sheep, which is what he was doing before. He was called in to play like he did. So, he would go back and forth and that's what's being said here in these verses.

It says, “He occasionally went and returned from Saul to feed his father’s sheep at Bethlehem.” Now, toward the end of the story that we came to the last time, we came to the point where Jesse, David’s father, was giving him provisions to take to the three older brothers who were in Saul’s army. They were encamped there against the Philistines.

That’s the part of the story we came into talking about the story of Goliath and the like. It was on his arrival then that he began to communicate with some of the army there because they were asking if he had seen this giant, this Goliath. And so, they were telling him about this. So, he was around talking to some of these individuals as he had been looking for his brothers to take them the provisions. But he had left them with the keeper there of the provisions because they were lining up against the Philistines as he would come out every day, had come out for forty days there, and this was on that particular day.

This is the story where we come in there and as he’s going back and forth this is a conversation that David is having with them as he’s listening to this story. It goes on then in **1 Samuel 17:26**. We begin to learn a little bit more here about the character of David as this begins to come out. He said here in the latter part of that verse, **For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy...** It’s a word in Hebrew that includes and can have the meaning of “to rebuke; to bring shame to” **the armies of the living God?**

In David’s mind, which is kind of bad in the translations because this is where some of the confusion comes in, because a lot of things haven’t been translated very well because they didn’t understand the story. They didn’t understand what was taking place fully and so they put in different ideas and thoughts concerning what these words mean in Hebrew. They don’t understand the attitude of David. David’s attitude is different than the army’s totally. He is one that’s like, “Who? Who is this Philistine to do such a thing against God’s army? We are Israel! This is God’s people. These are God’s people!”

So, anyway, that was his attitude and so that was his response. David was clearly asking, **What can happen to the man who kills this Philistine and takes away this reproach from Israel?** Now, that’s where the translations are really awkward because they don’t understand what he’s actually saying is, “What can happen? No one can do anything to someone who stands up in the name of God for God’s army and fights against this Philistine. What can happen to the man who stands up against him?” So, it’s like, “This Philistine can’t stand. God will give them the victory,” and that was his attitude.

That was molded and fashioned by some of the accounts that we read a little bit later concerning some of the things he had already learned being a shepherd. That’s why sometimes we don’t realize that there are other things that can happen in our life long before we’re ever called. Even as we’re called and God’s working with us, it’s hard for us to grasp that God is calling us for a great purpose, giving us a great opportunity early on in His Kingdom.

All are going to be given then, as a whole, opportunity in His, for His Kingdom, to make those choices in their life once they’re called. But as a whole, when you look at some of that then,

especially when it's early on, sometimes it's difficult for people to recognize how awesome the calling is that we've received. We don't recognize the things that God has called us for. We don't know what those are yet.

Yet in God's plan and God's purpose, especially early on within His family, within His Kingdom, God has great opportunities and responsibilities of things He's molding and fashioning within people to give them opportunity to fit into special, unique places within His temple and that's early on. That's an awesome blessing to be able to be called early on in God's plan.

I'd far rather be called here at this point, especially now just before Christ's coming, and not have to be called later on, perhaps in the Millennium, in the beginning of the Millennium, or especially in the Great White Throne, to be resurrected again. Those are going to be awesome for people at that time, but how awesome is it that we have such opportunities now? And so, it's important that we grasp that and recognize that.

Here David was being worked with and being prepared long in advance. God was preparing him very early on, working with him, and in time more of those stories will be given to us. We'll understand even more so how much God was planning and preparing and molding and fashioning a unique mind like David's and how David was making the right kind of choices. But God was working with him to bring him to those points in his life, to give him those opportunities.

Then we came to the story of the oldest brother Eliab and how he overheard David talking to some of the soldiers there and he chastened him. He chastised him. Here he is the older brother, talking to young David, and he already had some difficulties here with David. That goes back to the story then of how David very early on then was at a point where something unique was happening in his mind as far as his thinking was concerned when each individual was brought before Samuel. That's a unique part of the story here because you would think in the story here that the father and the sons knew that each one was being brought before Samuel for the purpose of being anointed king, that they knew that. They didn't know that and that's the whole point.

Samuel didn't even want anyone to know the reason he was there was to anoint David for the purpose of becoming the king. Because as he told God, he was fearful, in that respect, that Saul would kill him, take his life if he found out why he had gone there. So, it had to have been presented in such a manner that he was anointing him for a special purpose, setting him aside for a special purpose, not explaining any about what that was but that he had been set aside for a purpose.

So here it is, this young David is receiving recognition from Samuel, of something none of them really understood in the first place, and that Samuel wasn't fully communicating what that purpose was, but that he was going to anoint him and set him apart for special service. Whatever they might have thought that might be, perhaps later on when they recognized that here he is, he's going before the king and playing a harp, maybe that's what was in their minds,

that “Well, this is, he’s helping the king, serving the king.” Whatever it was, we don’t know; it isn’t explained.

But what we do know, in that respect, is that something often happens and takes place in families and people’s lives when something of a major manner like this begins to take place; people begin to be jealous. In this case here, Eliab, the different brothers, and so forth, jealousies can begin to set in because of recognition that David was receiving. So, that’s exactly what was taking place here.

He made the comments here, Eliab did; he confronted David and accused him of being there because of his pride and “the insolence of his heart,” which wasn’t the case at all. Now, it’s kind of interesting, human nature, seeing sometimes what happens in human nature. There was a jealousy there already. Here is the older brother having some jealousies toward his younger brother and recognition that he’d been receiving and it’s just something that just eats away at people. Oftentimes what happens in people’s lives when they begin to accuse others, it’s the very thing they’re guilty of. They don’t see that in themselves, but they accuse others of the very thing that they’re guilty of.

Here it is, he has pride, he thinks he should be honored more, he thinks that he should be recognized or should have been recognized there, especially when Samuel was there at that time. Here he is the oldest brother, so in his mind he should have been recognized. But he wasn’t. Then he talks about “the insolence” of his heart and that’s the way he began to look at David.

What a sad state of affairs that things happen in people’s lives and families. It happens within the Church. Our history is one that is filled with times of jealousy and envy that people have had toward one another, toward others who thought they should have been recognized and because they weren’t recognized they began to look down upon the one or ones who are recognized.

That’s a hideous thing that begins to take place. It begins to eat away at people. That’s what jealousy does, it eats away at people on the inside and their thinking then isn’t right toward others. The attitude toward them isn’t correct and they can begin to accuse in their own thinking then, the other person or another person of the very things that they’re battling with. Because they just can’t see what’s inside of them, in their heart.

This is exactly what was taking place. Again, they didn’t recognize, they didn’t know that he had actually been set apart to become the next king of Israel. They didn’t know that. So, you need to understand that in the story flow here.

David simply turned away from his brother and continued talking to the soldiers in the same manner as he had before. So, this is what he did. He had been talking to them and he just, when his brother Eliab was there and corrected him or chastened him, he just turned away

from his brother and continued talking to the soldiers as he had before. Basically, saying to them, the same things again.

So, **verse 31** it says, **Now, when the words which David spoke were heard...** Well, what words? The same words, again, “Who is this Philistine to stand against the armies of the living God? What can happen to the man who goes out and stands against him.” It was like, somebody should go out there and stand because nothing can happen to them, if they’ll just do that. So that’s basically what he was saying. But they weren’t having any of that. No one wanted to go out there. They were afraid of him.

Those words of what he spoke then were reported to Saul, and so, Saul sent for him. This is a part of the story that we came in on, that part, or came into close to the end of the sermon last time. But you know, the account there where David convinced Saul then of his desire to go out and fight against Goliath, that he could do it. He convinced Saul, especially after telling him about the story then of how he’s guarded his father’s sheep and on different occasion then had killed bear and lion and grabbed a hold of them by the beard underneath, the hair underneath their chins and slaughtered them. First, evidently, I don’t know how he did it, but talking about knocking them down and if they got up to fight against him he would go at them again until he just, he went ahead and killed them.

So again here, things that are just incredible in a particular story here, but already David had experienced something of help that he’d been given by God. Because he knew this wasn’t normal. He knew that he’d been given favor. He looked to God for help to be able to do these things when he did them. That became obvious in the story flow here, that God gave him help. He recognized that, and this did something in his thinking then, especially when it came to a matter like this. Something was already working with him earlier on and that led to what came later.

Verse 36. He says, **Your servant has killed both lion and bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has expressed reproach to the armies of the living God. Furthermore, David said, The Eternal who delivered me from the paw of the lion, and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of the Philistine.**

He’s giving God the credit here that “God delivered me from the hand (from the paw, if you will), of the lion, from the paw of the bear, and God will deliver me from this giant.” This was moving to Saul, to see that kind of attitude. God was working in his mind as well to lead David on to accomplish what he was going to accomplish as, again, a part of what God was working with here.

We’re going to pick up the story where we left off as David had picked up five smooth stones and was going out then to stand against Goliath. He’d already tried on Saul’s armor, couldn’t carry it, so he just had his pouch and the sling that he had and went out after Goliath to confront him.

In **verse 42** now, picking up the story here where we left off. **As the Philistine looked about and saw David, he disdained him, for he was only a young man, ruddy, and good looking. So, the Philistine said to David, Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?** So, in other words, that's how he looked upon him. "You're coming after me and you don't have any weapons, you don't have any armor? And who am I that you come out at me like that?"

And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. Then the Philistine said to David, Come to me, and I will give your flesh to the birds of the air and the beasts of the field. He told him, "Come on. I'll do you in. I'll take you." Now, most people, this is going to scare the tar out of them. But not David because of that attitude and spirit that he had because he saw God and God blessed him with that kind of attitude. God gave him the courage, the strength of mind to go ahead, because of past experiences that had been molded and fashioned already within David, to take such a stand as this and to go out against the giant. He felt in his mind, in every whit, if you will, that he was going to have the victory.

Verse 45—So, David said to the Philistine, You have come to me with a sword, a spear, and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Eternal of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defiled. Again, that attitude. God was at the forefront of his thinking. That's what he believed with all of his being, and because of that, that's why he had the kind of speech that he did with Goliath. That's why he did in the camp with the soldiers. That's why he did with Saul. Because he was adamant about this, that what could happen to anyone who stands for God?

Again, how much more should we have that kind of mind and desire to have that kind of thinking, that kind of thought, to just as the title of this sermon talks about here, pursuing a heart like David's, to want to be able to have that kind of mind that stands for God, that puts God at the forefront, that recognizes the calling we've been given, that who can stand against God's people?

It doesn't matter what it is, whether it's on a spiritual plane or a physical plane. That doesn't mean we're not going to have battles or trials or suffering in life because that goes with the territory. There are some things we go through in trial or a battle. David had a literal, physical battle here, but he had the confidence as he went into it, where others would have been, were fearful. They didn't even want to do it. But he did it.

You have to have the actions that follow that kind of mind and that kind of thinking, and that's the mind of David. I mean, what an incredible thing for him to say as he approached the giant like that and said, basically, "I come in the name of the Eternal of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel."

Now, we don't speak like that when we go into the different battles that we have. We may in our prayer to God. We can pray to God about those kinds of things, that He give us that kind of strength to have that kind of a mind and to have that kind of confidence to know who we are. I

mean, after a time we should know who we are, the Church of God. We're a part of the Church of God. We have the impregnation of God's holy spirit in us.

Sometimes we don't grasp that to the depth we really need to. Because if we really see that and grasp that with all of our being it's going to have a unique effect upon us. It truly is. It's going to have that kind of a response in our thinking that gives us a confidence in itself. We are a part of God's Church and to recognize how awesome that is, to the degree we do is to the level of strength we can have inside of us in our thinking. That's what we strive for. That's what we want to have. That's that kind of attitude and mind of David.

So again here, he says, **I come in the name of the Eternal of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel whom you have defiled.** In other words, "In whom you have rebuked," or, "brought reproach and shame on." **This day the Eternal will deliver you into my hand; and I will strike you down and take your head from you.** Incredible confidence that God had given him.

There are times we can go into battle. That's why whatever battles are in front of us, we're to look to God and pray to God and ask God to give us His strength to go through it in a right way for the right purpose of whatever it is He's doing in our life, to yield ourselves to that.

He said here, **Today I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beasts of the earth; that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel.** So again, a unique thing, an attitude here that was done on a physical plane to teach us lessons on a spiritual one.

Again, how much more for us in the Church to grasp our lives are in God's hands and we go forward. We fight. We're to stand faithful to God's way of life. So many in times past haven't and some struggle with it to this day, that certain battles maybe from a job or family or, you know, relatives, past friends if we're coming into the Church, in the beginning, because after a while that changes quickly. Our ability to stand in those cases when they come up, to know that if it's for the right purposes and the right reasons and it's a matter of God's Church, it's a matter of being a part of God's Church that some of this is coming toward you, all the more reason to stand tall and to stand firm, and to look to God to help you in fighting the battle.

Because He will help you, but you've got to do the standing yourself and you've got to look to God for the help to do so. But if we compromise, if we give in to various things then that works against it and we have to repeat those things in our lives.

That's why I made comments here recently that some of the things that people experienced between 2008 and 2012, some of the same people are experiencing some of the same kinds of trials like déjà vu again. Maybe a little different but they're some of the same kinds of trials. Where are we now? What have we learned that we hadn't exercised properly back then? Are we at a point now that it's far more mature and we're fighting in ways that we should be, and not just perhaps, but should have back then? Now is a time to seek to go through those battles

successfully and to stand firm and to learn from those things of our past where we didn't fare as well.

So, that oftentimes happens in God's Church, where if we don't go through a particular trial successfully and God's molding and fashioning certain things within us, we have to go through it again at some point. Because if we're not successful we have to come to a point in time where we're successful in the battle, in the fight. Otherwise, those things are not getting molded into us. Our mind isn't being transformed to the level, to the degree that it needs to be, that God can use it. Because He's molding us and fashioning us to be able to serve, to be able to be in some point, some place within the building, the construction of the temple.

This would be a good place here. I wanted to interject this because of the reason that I've missed a Sabbath now and good place to address a matter of the Church because it does have to do with government as well, as we go along here, and I want to interject this because some of the series leading up to this point in time are about government, and this is as well.

It's about putting God first. It's about always being focused upon God, seeking to have God govern our lives, and when given responsibility to govern through us, to serve faithfully, whatever that might mean, whatever that might be we're given opportunity. And so, here in this particular case here wanted to mention some things about what we need to grasp concerning God as we go through some of the kinds of things like this COVID thing that's out there right now and other things that are going to come along.

Because this is just the beginning of some things that are going to be magnified. Things are going to get a whole lot worse as time goes along. We just don't know at what point they're going to become a whole lot worse than what they are now.

This is nothing. I think most of us grasp that now and know that and understand that, but regardless of what we're going through at any point in time, it's important that we be deeply convicted that God is our strength. Who can stand against God? And if we understand our place is in the Church, is a part of the Church, is a part of the Body of Christ, then that in itself should give us a confidence and a boldness that is unique. And if we're not there we need to cry out for it so that we do have that kind of mind and can grow more in that kind of mind and that kind of dedication and commitment to God, putting Him first.

God is our Petra. What an awesome thing to understand. So much of the scattered Church still doesn't know about this place of Petra that they're going to be taken away to - looking at a physical deliverance type of thing. Well, God in a physical world will give us physical deliverance, but it doesn't have to be in a place like that in a country like Jordan, a literal physical place that is supposed to teach those things that are spiritual to us.

Yes, it was a place of protection, it was a place. It was a place that was able to be used at one time, but not now, and that's not the purpose of God. It's a matter of the meaning of the word,

like so many things, like the temple of God and understanding it's not a physical temple, it's a spiritual one.

The same thing about Petra, that it's about God, that He is our strength, our fortress, our high tower, our tower of defense, if you will, and on and on it goes. Our lives are in God's hands. So, it's just the way we should live our life and it's the way we should think. We are a part of God's Church. Whatever happens to the Church, it's in God's hands. There are things at times we don't know exactly what's taking place, why, and in time God reveals to us what has taken place and why and what He's been doing. The farther we go into this and the faster that things are going there's going to be less that we know, but we have so much already to bring us through all of that.

Again, COVID. Since we're talking about some of that I wanted to read through some things here that I wrote down that I want all the Church to know and understand, and I thought this would be the best place to do it, within the context of the sermon rather than an email going out. I wanted to mention a little bit of this. But no matter what we go through in our lives...

It's like my getting COVID. Just because something happens to you in your life doesn't mean you're not faithful to God, doesn't mean you're not serving God faithfully. God allows certain things to happen to us. But there was a time in the Church when people felt that if certain things happened to you that somehow if it was a physical thing, a physical ailment especially, a physical sickness of some sort, that somehow this was a matter of not being obedient to God.

It was actually stated so often to people, "You have sin in your life." Well, mystery, mystery. We all have sin our life. So, if that were the case, we would all be sick all the time. So, again, we were at an immature stage during some of those things that had to do with looking at doctors and people afraid to take medications and so forth, and all the other kinds of things that were associated with that that are associated with some groups in the world because they tend to be physically minded in these things and they don't understand, they don't understand God and technology and how God has given us that for our benefit and that we can benefit from those things.

If we really took that to it's extreme it'd be like, you know, people not being able to get glasses. God gave you what you needed and so to use glasses, it'd be like being a sin. That's kind of what it was like. Like the one person asked me one time, "Is it okay to have novocaine when I'm going into the dentist to help deaden some of the nerves?" It's like, I said, "Well," he didn't see the humor at the time I don't think, but I told him, "Well, it's either that or bite the bullet." Anyway, that's the bottom line. It's your choice - pain or no pain. It's there for our use. What a blessing it is to be able to have something like that, that you just have a little shot and it's there. People tried different things throughout history, that one works the best.

But anyway, there are all kinds of things like that that have been a lack of maturity, and we've grown so much in those things over time.

So again here, I've jokingly been telling people that be careful what you ask for sometimes because you're probably, very likely going to get it. I made the kind of comment that I'd just as soon have this and be over with it in many ways, and, well, I got it, and I'm over it. Still a little weak but maybe 95%, 90% back as far as my strength is concerned. Because it really zaps you of strength, or at least it can. Different people, everybody has different symptoms to it and so forth. But it's a very real thing. It's not a hoax. It's real.

Anyway, it's not going away, doesn't seem like, any time soon. So, it's just going to keep going through the population as time goes along. Well, if something comes your way look to God. If something were to happen, just like I told my wife at that point when after she'd slapped me and brought me back from being out as I was there; little humor involved in some of that that I sent out. But I told her right then and there, because I thought that I might have already might have it before I actually got the test that night. That afternoon I had sent into, an email to the doctor and letting him know some of my symptoms and that I felt that because of my conditions in my past, and so forth, with my heart, that I probably ought to get checked to see if I do have it, and where should I go? Anyway, there became no need for that even though they did let me know later on.

But the point was that I had the test that night and it came back as positive. But I told her right then and there that if it came to the point if I had to be put on a ventilator, I didn't want to be put on one. You know, my life is in God's hands and when it comes to something to that degree that far along, people have to make choices in life as to God's intervention, especially in the Church. Mine was that my life is in God's hands. So, that's where we are.

Whatever happens to the Church, it's God's Church, and there are things that are going to come to pass in time here that we're not going to understand to know at different times here in people's lives and things, but we are God's people and our lives are in God's hands. That's where you place them at baptism. You couldn't ask for a better place. What an awesome place to be.

There is that confidence and that boldness that people should have in that and we should pray about, especially if we're confronted with a trial or going to go through a trial or trials are in front of us, because we're all going to go through some. No one is going to be immune from this when it begins to happen, when things happen to this country and things happen around the world. It's going to be a horrifying time. We can know about it, but you don't know it yet. It's like trying to talk about the Apostasy before the Apostasy occurred. There was no understanding to the level of the degree of how bad it was going to be until people were far into it.

Well, this is a physical thing that's going to be far, far worse than what we can grasp and comprehend. But there is nothing to fear in the midst of all that, just as David here. What a great sermon to be going through at this time, thinking about that mind and that attitude. Because we're God's people and our lives are in His hands, and so, whatever He has planned for

us, we've been so blessed already and we're going to be given so much more in God's timing, in God's way. You don't have to worry about those kinds of things.

We have to do our part wherever we can and so forth, but our lives are in God's hands and no one can stand against or between us and God, in that respect. So, take that to the bank. Have the confidence that you can only have by understanding such things and striving to live by such things.

Since this took place here, I wanted to mention some things here because this isn't over with by any measure, and whether it's weakening or not, we don't know. Some had asked, something had been asked to the effect of did I get the kind of CPAP type thing or whatever it's called at the hospital. No, I wasn't given anything like that. I just had an IV, a regular saline type thing that you're given in case you're dehydrated, I think, is the main reason they give it to you. After that had a bunch of tests done, had an x-ray done. One of the main things they were looking for, to see if there was any kind of scarring that happens to so many people in the lungs because of the COVID virus, because that's evidence there of incredible damage then that can take place that can lead to breathing problems and so forth. They said I had none. At this point here, they were going to release me and send me back.

Basically, what an amazing age we live in when they tell you to get on certain vitamins. Vitamin D, Zinc, taking zinc as well is an important one, so zinc. One that I think it was the nurse or the doctor had said something about people, a lot of people in the situation are taking elderberry type stuff as well. So anyway, the vitamin C's the D, and the Zinc, and so forth, are the main ones. Anyway, everybody reacts differently and so forth.

But again, very blessed to be able to go through that and not a fun thing. A lot of things in life aren't necessarily fun but because of this I want people in the Church to be a little more cautious. I think the tendency has been, in many cases, to let down just a little bit. Just like at the Feast, I let down on the last day because different ones, we were leaving the Feast there and saying goodbyes, and gave some hugs to people. I shouldn't have done that, looking back on that. But sometimes God had mercy upon us too in our ignorance when we're not following some of the things we should be following.

So again here, I want to read through some of these things that I desire, that this is a matter of government and things we need to live by as far as the Church is concerned. So, concerning new meetings for hall rental locations, there are not going to be any new meeting hall rental locations unless already approved through a minister.

In all the areas out here, as a whole, unless something has already been pre-approved through the ministry, we're not going to have any hall rental type of locations at all until it's deemed that it's okay to do so. I don't want to put people in a predicament.

Just like when we went to Detroit, we'd asked different ones not to come to a service there. A lot of individuals, different ones who had health issues and so forth, and so we just asked them

in advance not to come when Laura and I went up there at one meeting we did have, finally, the only one we've really had in the Detroit area since all this began.

I want to use the same kind of principles. We need to be wise in some of this and this is one of those areas where I definitely don't want people getting together on their own without making certain that it's approved. In their particular area different jurisdictions as far as government is concerned, states and so forth, we need to be careful all around the world. We need to go by what those guidelines are.

We live in a strange kind of time in that, but we need to be careful. We need to, for the sake and the name of the Church, to be on guard, to be careful in these matters, and especially when it comes to the time or an opportunity when we can get together that there are those that in many cases, because of age and so forth, unless we have a unique situation like we do in Cincinnati for a huge hall and being able to spread out a lot, that we need to be very careful in some of this, of coming together.

Another thing here then, the same thing concerning any areas where some would like to host a local meeting where—I had to put down a number here, I felt—where more than five are being invited, in this particular case. So, in other words, if there are two in the home or three, then five more, obviously (eight total). But where any more than five are being invited you need to do, before you do have such a meeting, you need to do what should have been done when everyone was told to begin planning for different locations for the Feast this year. That is to go to, to ask a minister that's in your area, let them know your ideas and so forth, and get feedback from them to make sure that this falls within the guidelines that I have given, and if they're not certain about a certain question in that, they know where to go and ask it.

As a matter of government, I want to make sure, too, that people in all areas, because I eluded to this in I believe that sermon a couple of weeks ago as well, but we need to follow the order of government within Church. If you don't follow the order that God has established, then there are reasons why you're not doing things that way and you need to examine those in your life.

There are people, whoever is the closest, whoever is the one in a particular area, you should take concerns and questions, as a whole then, to them, not going around, not bypassing them. But sometimes, I'll just tell you right now, I know there are attitudes involved when people do some of this, and the lack of respect for the ministry that God has established in the different areas. So, we need to examine ourselves when we're making these kinds of decisions and what were doing and why we're doing it the way we are. We can learn something. It's like looking into a mirror, if you will just do so.

So again here, we need to follow through, make sure that it's approved before you do it, and follow those guidelines, just like we should have done during the Feast. So, I let that go. I let it happen for a purpose, for a reason, so that hopefully, different ones that I knew wouldn't follow that process, could learn from it. God gave us that opportunity to learn from something

that hopefully is deeply embedded in our mind now. So, check directly with a minister over your area.

Social distancing again, should always be practiced here. We need to be more cognisant of that. You don't want to be responsible for passing something along to someone else. You don't want to be responsible for hurting someone else. You need to do your part, and if there is a slow process where people are becoming immune to this in a slow method here because of whatever they call the herd immunity, whatever it is. Anyway. Because of so many people out there who have it you're going to come across it. You're going to breathe some air at times. When it's really a low amount your body may begin to build some immunities to it. If you get too much at one time, it seems like sometimes people get a harder dose of it and it can really do people in.

So again, we need to be careful. Love our brother. We've always known that this matter of setting ourselves apart from others is a wise practice when not feeling well and following those guidelines.

So again here, social distancing, we need to be more cognisant of that, aware of the distance between one another when visiting with different ones. No hugging. No embracing. No hugging. No shaking of hands. We just need to follow the different guidelines like that to do our part. It's just wise. It's a matter of wisdom.

It's just like different things we've done, my wife and I, when we've gone out, every time we go out different places we put on the mask, when we go into a store or whatever it might be and a group of people, and use the sanitizers on a regular basis after we come back out. Yet you can do all those things and go through everything and you can still get it. It's still being passed around and it's going to continue on that way for it looks like a long, long time. So again, we need to be careful. We need to be wise. We want to protect the Church. That's one of our main goals, should be to protect one another, to protect each other.

And if you're one of those who has a medical issues, breathing problems and simply can't wear a mask without causing those problems to be agitated or magnified, make sure that you have your conversation with others at that six foot distance at least. Don't get too close in the conversation. People don't know if they're carriers and don't know if they've been exposed to something and may not be sick themselves with it but could be a carrier and pass it along. Those things happen. So, we need to be careful.

Another one: If areas are given the go ahead to meet, whether by a larger meeting with a hall rental or one that's hosted by a smaller group, there shouldn't be any potluck type meals. I want to make sure that we're not having meals, in that respect, as far as potlucks or anything like that. We haven't been doing that in Cincinnati and I just don't feel like it's a good thing for people to do in those particular things if it's closed in, unless it's a really small group that, you know, five or six could get together and have a meal together. That's one thing. But I'm talking

about a meeting together where on the Sabbath, and so forth, people need to be careful and not relax too much.

Sometimes when people are meeting together in homes, they're letting down a lot and not wearing masks in some cases at all. So again, only if you're eating and you've been given permission for that kind of thing, a go ahead for that kind of thing. But as a whole, in the Church, we're not doing that, not going to do that.

If people go out and eat together some place afterwards or on some other day of the week, that's fine, but Sabbath services, we need to be more protective of the Sabbath service itself and those of us who come together on the Sabbath or on the Sabbath day.

If some get together in a home, outside of the Sabbath service environment, then it's fine to come together in a meal as long as people practice stringent cleanliness. So again, there is one thing to be applied to a Sabbath service environment and people who are in a home together, if there are just a few of them together during the Sabbath. But if someone during the week or late Sabbath, after Sabbath is over, they're getting together or the next day or some time during the week and they're getting together for a meal, it's fine to do those things. But you need to follow, practice very stringent cleanliness and utensil and plate placement, proper social distancing and so forth, providing hand sanitizers and wearing a mask when not eating.

So again, people need to be careful how they're doing things out here. Again, just use wisdom.

And if Laura and I come to visit in an area, we're not going to have any large gatherings of people going out to eat. If there is an exception to that, we'll let people know in advance because of maybe size or the health of the group or whatever it might be. But as a whole, I don't want to place people in those environments, those situations, primarily for the name and the sake of the Church, the protection of the Church.

What people do on their own apart from Sabbath services, on their own out there, not an organized matter of the Church, then that's a different matter. You have that freedom to do those things on your own and it doesn't carry the name of the Church in that particular case of a church function. Sabbath services, things that revolve around a home environment where people have come together for a Sabbath environment, that's another matter.

Anyway, I just wanted to interject those things in the midst of the sermon here because of battles that we go through, things that are going to come our way as time goes on. Again, we don't know the speed of which some things are going to accelerate in the world around us, but just like this COVID thing, it doesn't seem like it's going to go away any time soon. It may be around for a long, long time. Others may get it to different levels, and so forth. Again, those are battles that are going to be in front of us that we may have to go through. And if we do, we do.

So again here, unique time in which we live in some of this and we need to follow the guidelines that the Church gives to us in the Sabbath environment especially. So, I wanted to

interject that here. Again, these things go back to an attitude of David and our mind toward God and understanding our lives are in God's hands and keeping God at the forefront of our thinking.

So, in 1 Samuel 17, continuing in on here then with the story of David and what he did here, he confronted Goliath here, and again, interjecting here that he said, **Today I will give the carcasses of the camp of the Philistines to the birds of the air and the wild beast of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. Then all who are gathered here shall know that the Eternal does not save with sword and spear, for the battle is the Eternal's.**

We need to understand that in the Church. If it's, especially if it's relating to the Church even more so, to God's way of life, to the Church, to whatever it might be in whether it be job, family, relatives, whatever, then this should be in the forefront of our minds, to recognize that whatever battles are there that are in front of us, they're God's. We are in God's hands. God cares for us more than we can comprehend. He desires to fight battles for us. It's a matter of our thinking toward God that we yield those things to God. We do our part where we can but knowing all along this is God's. These things in the world around us when it comes to our being molded and fashioned are far greater than what we are, the interference of those things that come our way.

So again here, it's a matter of leaving things in God's hands to God's purpose knowing, having the confidence, and really the peace of mind, to know that this is God's, whatever happens. Ever how it turns out it's in God's hands. Whatever His purpose is for whatever He's doing, whatever that might be, so be it.

For the battle is the Eternal's, and He will give you into our hands. So it was, when the Philistine arose and came toward/forward and drew near to meet David, that David hastened, in other words, he acted or responded quickly, and ran toward the army to meet the Philistine. So, that's the direction he was going. Not away from it, but toward it, which the Philistine was first. Goliath was first. He was going for him.

Then David put his hand into his bag, and took a stone, and he slung it, and struck the Philistine in his forehead so that the stone sank into the forehead and he fell on his face to the earth. Now, we all know the story, incredible thing. But indeed, how incredible that David was moved to do something like this on this scale, to put on this kind of an attack knowing that he's going into this full fledged his life is in God's hands, and knowing that God's purpose, especially in something like that, is to uphold his people.

If we know those things, that God's purpose is to uphold us, is to help us to stand, and regardless of what takes place and what happens, then if it's to God's purpose then it'll all work to the good whatever that is supposed to be. Maybe for someone else, maybe for someone else's benefit. Maybe you will suffer for someone else's benefit, whatever that might be. Be willing to do it, whatever it is.

Verse 50—So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone and struck the Philistine and killed him. Since David was carrying no sword David ran and stood over the Philistine, took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath, and killed him, and cut off his head with it. What an incredible thing. His stuff was really heavy. You think Saul's was heavy, well, Goliath's here, we already read about how heavy some of those things were, and David pulled out that sword and cut off Goliath's head.

And so, when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled. Because they knew no one can stand up against this man. He's a giant. He's been trained in the art of war, and evidently, obviously, had that reputation as well. That's why he was sent out there to be in the forefront. And so, here is this young, little person who's out there (that's how they would have seen him), this young man came out there and was able to put him to death, then it struck fear. Again, something that God did because God has the power, in essence, to do that kind of thing through those kinds of things that take place. God was working at it to cause that effect.

Now it says, **The men of Israel and Judah arose, and shouted, and pursued the Philistines, as far as the entrance of the valley of the gates of Ekron. And the wounded of the Philistines fell along the road to Shaaraim, even as far as Gath and Ekron.** Basically, the pursuit and the battle stretched out for 24 miles (38km). That's what it gives here for the distances in all this. So, a battle that went on for 24 miles, the Israelites pursued, and Philistines they were killing all along the way in this incredible battle that was taking place. They were all fleeing for their lives.

Again here, through one individual's act, through what he did, it turned a complete spirit around to where Philistines were fearful. They had heard all the stories of things about the Israelites, and when they saw something like this take place? Then, it encouraged the Israelites, the army, and they gathered, and they took on courage then after that point. It's incredible how God can give courage and when He does intervene to give courage and give strength.

So, life is in God's hands. What more can you ever ask? I mean, this is incredible. I'm talking about those things then that we deal with on a spiritual plane in our lives because so much of it is in the mind. It's the battle that takes place in the mind.

Verse 53—Then the children of Israel returned from chasing the Philistines, and they plundered their tents. Then David took the head of the Philistine and brought it to Jerusalem; but he put his armor in his tent. And when Saul saw David going out against the Philistine, he said to Abner, the commander of the army, Abner, whose son is this young man?

Now, he had already been playing before him, music, but he didn't know him. It kind of goes along with the territory of someone lifted up with pride and you have these servants, and you don't pay them any mind. They're just there to serve your every whim, whatever you need,

whatever you want. You don't get to know them. A lot of times through history servants haven't been treated very well. They're looked down upon. They're not the ones that you look to, in that sense of being friends with, or befriending. He didn't even know who he was.

And Abner said, As your life lives on, O king, I do not know. So, the king said, Find out whose son this young man is. Then, as David returned from the slaughter of the Philistine, Abner took him, and brought him before Saul with the head of the Philistine in his hand. Then Saul said to him, Whose son are you, young man? And David answered, I am the son of your servant Jesse the Bethlehemite. Then going on now in the next chapter.

So again here, when you read through the story sometimes and it's something that's given like this, it's difficult to understand, well, why did he have to send Abner? Why did he ask Abner who he was, and why didn't he know who he was? He'd been playing a harp for him all this time, and yet he didn't know. Again, just reveals the mind, the character (or lack of it) of Saul, in this case.

1 Samuel 18:1—Now, when he had finished speaking to Saul, the life of Jonathan was bound toward the life of David. And Jonathan loved him as his own life. Now, there was an incredible bond that took place from this moment on that Jonathan had toward David because he so respected, so admired what David had done, he was so encouraged by it that he took a liking to him in a very unique way here. God blessed him with that kind of a bond and oneness, a unity of friendship from that point forward.

It says, **Saul took him that day, and would not let him go home to his father's house anymore.** So, he wasn't able to go back and forth and tend to the sheep. He kept him there.

Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, "as a league," the word means here. They allied themselves together in this particular league, if you will, an incredibly close bond and friendship, **because he loved him as his own life. And Jonathan took off the robe that was on him and gave it to David.** That was that of royalty, that of leadership. He gave that to David. What an incredible thing here that he was moved to do something like that. ... **and gave him his armor, even to his sword, and his bow, and his belt.**

So, David went, and wherever Saul sent him and behaved wisely. Primarily by this, the expression here, he wasn't lifted up by what he was doing. He didn't try to take things to himself. He didn't try to show himself as being important, which so often happens when people serve, when they do different things. It's a horrible trait of human nature to want to be seen by others as being important.

If you ever see that in your life, run from it. Ask God for help, do everything you can to fight against it, because it's ugly. To be seen of others, to be looked upon by others as being important, it's a sick, sick, spirit. It's repulsive in every way. It works against God. It works against God's spirit and it's something we should be on guard against because it's a way of human nature, it's the way of the human mind, and if it reveals itself like that, we need to see

how ugly it really is. Because it's destroyed a lot of people in God's Church, it really has. A lot of people have succumbed to that, given into that and never conquered it, never come to deal with it. It's a horrifying thing that takes place.

It says here, so again, **David went out whenever Saul sent him, and behaved wisely.** So again, wasn't lifted up by his recognition at all and that's quite a unique spirit because it's different from the ways of normal human nature. It really is. So, he had help from God in all these things. God had been molding and fashioning him and he just yielded to that process. He kept God in the forefront of his thinking. That was more important to him, as to how he served God, and not a matter of things that came his way that lifted him up.

Then Saul set him over the men of war, and he was accepted in the sight of the people, and also in the sight of Saul's servants. So, what an incredible thing here. Here, David, because of what he had done, he was elevated incredible so. He was lifted up incredibly so. God intended it be that way, so that the servants of Saul's household looked up to David. They admired him and so did the army after everything that had been done. He had all this recognition of what he'd done in killing Goliath and basically, being at the forefront of the spear head that led to the defeat of all the Philistines, the Philistine army. Incredible slaughter that took place.

It goes on to say here, of course, then Saul gave him that recognition as well then at that moment because of what he had done, moved by that for a time. He began to regret it later on because of his carnal human nature, because he just didn't recognize he did something that seemed right at the time and was good and right, but it began to eat away at Saul because he was filled with pride. It was about self. It was about himself. This begins to come out more and more, people who begin to be eaten up with this if they don't receive recognition, and this thing of being important.

I mean, he was the king, after all. He didn't have to do anything. He didn't have to prove the point. He was the king! But sometimes for people it isn't enough. That becomes really sick and that's happened a lot within the ministry in God's Church, that to serve in such a capacity is an incredible honor in itself, to work with God's people. But to do it in a wrong way and to do it because it focuses on self and strives to bring honor to self, that's just a perverted sick mind. It's not of God's spirit at all.

Anyway, we're to learn from those kinds of things because it's in our history.

Verse 6—Now, when they were coming, as David was returning from the slaughter of the Philistine, that the women had come out of all cities of Israel, singing and dancing, to meet king Saul, with tambourines, with joy, and with musical instruments. So, here they are returning and then notice what it said, **So, the women sang, as they danced said, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.**

Well, that didn't go over too well and people sometimes become jealous of those who serve under them. That's a horrible thing. Sometimes even parents have become jealous of their own children. And generally, such jealousies are not easily hidden.

I think of the past. I think of a lot of ministers that got caught up in such things, of jealousies and so forth, and I think of parents, especially. You'd think of all things, when you work with people, when you're blessed to be able to do so, whether it be one's own children or others, if a person has different responsibilities to do so, then you want them to excel. Because, really, you benefit from that.

What an incredible benefit for parents. I've talked to parents about some of these kinds of things and the kind of emotion, the kind of feeling that a parent that is right with God wants to have toward their children, is that their children excel them. That's what parents want to see. We want to see children, our children do better than what we did. So, that's beautiful. That's an awesome thing and you benefit from that then in a very powerful way.

The same thing comes true when it comes to any kind of service or the opportunity to work with others, perhaps on a job to work with people to help train and so forth. But sometimes even there, people become jealous because someone is doing so well and they begin to be envious of them, of what they're doing, and it's like this is taking away from you. No, if you're doing your job well and you're giving out different responsibilities it elevates you. You're blessed by that result as well. But sometimes because of human nature people begin to be jealous.

I thought I'd throw out a couple of examples. I think of one time in west Texas, something that happened the first time we were sent out. I was an associate pastor out there, and in this particular case here experienced this several times, many times over. But there was the one instance I thought I would just refer to just to show you how eaten up people can become.

In one occasion the pastor was transferring to another Feast site, and anyway, because of that different ones coming into Tucson then, which we were assigned to, I'd been called to give a sermonette. Which, there were so many ministers and so many different ones out there already, different associates and so forth coming into different Feast sites, that was an incredible honor at that particular time. But the minister, I can't remember the reason why now, but it fell through as far as the transfer was concerned and he, when he was going to go, and the assignments had already been given for speaking, it was killing him that I was going to speak and he wasn't. He made a big issue of it with headquarters. Which is fine, but you could tell it was something that was just eating him up, eating him alive.

You think, why do people get in those kinds of situations where they let jealousy begin to intervene and people think they need to have something? But anyway, those kinds of things have happened over and over again. I could tell tons of stories there.

But I think of one other one that happened in the Cincinnati area. I'll take a little bit of time to tell this. I don't know how many people in the Cincinnati church area were involved in this at this time, but we had one year when I was an associate pastor here where we were making something. We were trying to raise money for the Church. At that particular time the church was in need of funds, and so a lot of the churches were trying to figure out different kind of work projects and parties that they could have. Different ones were organizing various things.

We had something in this particular area that was a matter of making fruit baskets. They were in the shape of a duck. The side of the basket was cut out of wood in the shape of a duck and it had a wooden wing on it on each side so as you looked at the side of it you could see the image of a duck. Then at the bottom there was a base and then some slats that went across the front and the back of the duck that held the fruit inside the basket. So, it was piled with grapefruit and had bananas and oranges and a big ole pineapple that stuck out the back with the tail that added to it as well.

But anyway, we sold tons of these things and that particular year there was 4,200 that were sold so it made a lot of money for the church and a lot of money for the Y.O.U. program locally. The south church was the primary one involved in making them in the beginning here. After it was all over there was a big function one night. We didn't call it a potluck back then. I don't remember what we called it, but we couldn't call it a potluck because that was... What word would you use for that? It just wasn't kosher. That was too demeaning, to call a function in the Church like that a potluck meal. So, I'm not sure how food was organized but it was organized, and people brought different food in and so forth. This is at a time when the ministry had to sit up on some tables and risers that were higher than the rest and had to have the china, crystal, and different things, and people serving. It wasn't an enjoyable time.

But they had a presentation afterwards. The local elder there and some of the people who had worked, the primary ones who had worked on the project had done something that they wanted to make a presentation for because of the project that had just been completed, of all the success of the money that had been raised from all the work that people had done. There was a lot of work that went into this in both the north and south church.

But to make a long story short, what had happened was that several of them had gotten together, the fellows had gotten together, and they had cut this walnut tree in somebody's yard and sliced up some wood that came out of it. They went through this lengthy story of the duck that they had made out of walnut. I remember one of the slats and maybe even two of them, had part of a bullet of a—I can't think of the old type of rifles that were used—musket. Anyway, it was in the tree, so they just sliced it with some of the wood that was used in it.

But anyway, this whole thing was made out of walnut and they had done a great job on it, put a little plaque on the thing there in recognition of the success of the project, and they wanted to present it to me. So, there at the thing they were told they could go ahead and have this presentation, but the pastor didn't know what the presentation was all about.

Anyway, to make a long story short, when they had presented the basket to me in thanking me for the project, because of what we had done in getting it going, and so forth, then they came up next with a, I guess you could call it a plaque. It had a thing written on the side of it as well, thanking the local pastor there. But it wasn't a basket, it was just one of the sides of a duck.

Anyway, to show you what jealousy can do - it so riled up the pastor there because he looked at this thing after he was given that, because I was given the basket first, he was given the one side of a basket, just the duck, the image of it with a little plaque on it, and it was handed to him.

He took the thing and he said, basically, "I'm the pastor and you give him a duck, and you give me half a duck!?" He took the thing and slung it across the floor in the meeting there with all the people in that hall. I don't know, there had to be three hundred and some people there that were eating together there, slug it across the hall, and grabbed his wife and they stormed out.

So, poor club. The spokesmen club and the graduate club paid for that for several months after that. They were beaten up mercilessly.

But again, those are the kinds of things that sometimes happen in people's lives rather than doing something graciously. And yes, it shouldn't have been done that way. It wasn't a matter of wisdom on the part of some of those who did the presentation, but again here, if a person was looking at it from the vantage point of that pastor, it would have been far better, just as it was with Saul here, he shouldn't have been jealous over something like that but to be thankful that the congregation had come together and done something like this and worked so hard together. It would have been so much better just to really, just applaud everyone for what they had done, the effort that went into it, because it was a lot, and gave them that recognition. But that wasn't the case.

So, again here, it's the difference between humility and pride. It's the difference between recognition that people think is owed to them in the way they think it's owed to them, and if it's not then they can take offence to it and become jealous of others around them and it shouldn't be that way.

I hope there is no one out there that has that kind of thing within them, because if you do, look at yourself and your life and situations that might occur, whether it be on the job and certain responsibilities may be given to you, or whether it be in a Church environment, or whatever it is, and always loathe the concept of the human mind that thinks it has to have recognition or needs to be seen by others for what it's doing, because somehow that can lift people up and feeling more important.

We don't need to feel more important. We're God's people. We're a part of the Body of Christ. We are important in God's eyes. God instructs us as to how we are to respond to all these

situations in life, and it is in a spirit of humility, recognizing who we are and fighting against the other things that enter into and get in the way - things of envy and lust and greed and matters of jealousy that just can eat away like a cancer does in people's lives.

As I said, I could go through from the beginning of coming into the Church in 1969 and name you church area after church area and all kinds of instances within deacons and deaconesses and elders and pastors, and on and on it goes throughout the Church, of people who have had incredible jealousies toward one another and haven't wanted to see people excel and do better than what they did or what they were doing, or whatever it might be, things that happen in life sometimes where people just don't think right.

Saul fit into this category and it's written here for us to learn from so that we can see how ugly something like this is. So, again, when he heard this, if you know human nature, you know what's likely to happen. It would take a unique individual to hear something like this, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands." Well, this could have benefitted Saul, but it didn't because he didn't have a spirit of humility; he had a spirit of pride. Again, that will destroy people every time.

So, returning to this last verse, **verse 7—So the women sang as they danced, and they said, Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands. Then Saul was very angry,** just like the one who threw the duck across the floor and stormed out. What a horrible thing for someone in God's Church to do toward others, to make others feel ashamed, to make others feel lowly, to make others feel not wanted, not loved, not cared for, not nurtured and so forth.

Anyway, it says, **and the saying displeased him, so he said, They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands.** It's like, "I get a duck, a half a duck; he gets a whole duck." Think, what a goofy thing, over something so small, but it can move people; it can rile people up and jealousy can just eat away at people and destroy them inside.

...and to me they have ascribed thousands. Now, what more can he have but the kingdom? Well, well said because that's what was coming, the kingdom as well. **So, Saul eyed David from that day forward** with jealousy. He was jealous and he looked at ways to punish, to hurt, to discredit him. I've seen that happen in God's Church over and over again, people who have tried to keep others down or to keep others away or not to have any recognition because they don't want to be outdone themselves. What a sick mind. What sick minds when people give into such human nature.

Verse 10—And it happened on the next day, that the distressing spirit from God came upon Saul, and he prophesied inside the house. So, again here, what this means fully, we don't know. But saying things that is not of God, in this particular case here, but certain things that were taking place here because this is from an evil spirit, a distressing spirit.

So, David played music by his hand, as in times past. And there was a spear in Saul's hand, and Saul cast the spear, for he said, I will pin David to the wall. But David escaped his

presence twice. You think, how horrible it can become in people's minds that hatred - jealousy leads to absolute hatred, that kind of mind. I think of things that happened in recent times and some of the things that have happened in the local church here, of how it hasn't been that long back now that people had jealousies. But not just jealousies because they actually had hatred. And later on, some of that hatred began to come out, and some people in the congregation received the blunt end of that. They were already being treated in certain ways that reflected hatred, not love.

You think, how could such a thing exist in God's Church? Well, it can't for long because either the individuals repent of such things or they eat them up inside. So often what has happened in times past, it's eaten people up inside and destroyed people and disqualified people in the sense of not being able to continue on any longer. In other words, God's not going to use them anymore because just like with Saul, it's all God told Saul, in essence here, or told Samuel, He wasn't going to use him anymore. He wasn't going to give him of His spirit anymore and he'd been cut off from His spirit and it's going to be given to another, His help.

The same thing happens within the Church, has happened over and over and over again. There are things that God can work with and mold and fashion. He can work with a humble spirit. But He can't with a spirit of pride and when pride gets in the way and jealousy begins to enter in, because that's what follows, people begin to be jealous of others. It exists to this day. None in as high a level but there are still jealousies that exist and people have to fight those things. But sometimes, every once in a while, a jealousy will emerge and you hope and pray that people get a hold of it quickly. Because if they don't, the next thing to follow then is that jealousy begins to eat up inside and people begin to have hatred, not love toward others.

But jealousy leads to hatred of others, and this is what was happening to Saul even more so. So, Saul just got to a point where he was being eaten up more and more inside, to the point he tried to kill David.

Now, Saul was fearful of David... Now, you have to understand what it's saying here "is fearful of David." He wasn't afraid of David. What he was afraid of, this particular word here in the way it's being used, there was this sense of David receiving recognition and this jealousy has a type of fear, this kind of fear in it where you don't want others to look to him. That's what was taking place, and he didn't want that. He didn't want others looking up to David. So, he feared that more was going to be taken from him in the sense of prestige and honor and people looking up to him and what he wanted. He wanted to be seen as important. But if David was receiving that, then that just ate him up. And so, he was fearful of that.

It says here, **So, Saul was fearful of David, because the Eternal was with him but had departed from Saul. Therefore, Saul removed him from his presence and made him his captain over a thousand; and he went out and came in before the people.** So, here as far as the army, Saul's army, he wasn't any longer over the entire army but he was captain of a thousand, in this particular case, which was directly associated with Saul, in the sense of those

that would be sent out to represent Saul directly. David was the head of that, but no longer over the entire army.

In this particular case here he's captain over a thousand, and he went out and came in before the people. **Still, David behaved wisely in all his ways; and the Eternal was with him.** So again here, David didn't do this as he worked as a captain of a thousand, to lift himself up, to parade himself in front of others. Though he was coming in and out of the city leading this group of people, he didn't do it in a way that reflected an attitude of haughtiness like so many people tend to do with human nature. They want to be looked up to and kind of puffed up as they know that others are looking to them. They lavish that. They want to bathe in that. Again, that's the wrong kind of mind and spirit to have, one that God can't work with.

Therefore, when Saul saw that he behaved very wisely, he was fearful of him. So, Saul saw this spirit and attitude in him, that because of the way he was, what happens in a case like that? Well, people look to him all the more. You know, when people want recognition people generally know that. When you're serving for the wrong reasons, when someone is doing something for the wrong reasons people are oftentimes aware of that and so, the relationship isn't exactly the same. Again, things that have happened in the times past within the Church. Those things happen.

But individuals that will humble themselves and do things in a humble attitude just because it's done out of love and care, out of service. Then they're esteemed more. Well, Saul recognized that difference, of what was taking place and how people were looking up to him. It says he was fearful of him, again, for what was being taken away from him that he felt was his and that David shouldn't have.

And because all Israel and Judah loved David, because he went out and came in before him. So again, he knew this love was there, and that's what this was about. He loathed the fact that people loved David and didn't love him in the same way. It's something you can't hide.

Verse 17—Then Saul said to David, Here is my older daughter Merab, I will give her to you as a wife: only be valiant for me and fight the Eternal's battles. For Saul thought, I will not let my hand be against him, instead, let the hand of the Philistines be against him. So, basically, what he's telling him is he's going to send him into battles with the Philistines and so, "I'm going to give you my daughter to be your wife, and so be valiant as you go into these battles." So, Saul sent him out, basically, to get killed. That's basically what he was trying to do. He was wanting him to be killed. So, "Be valiant in battle," and knowing the kind of person that David was, that David would push himself to the forefront, that's exactly what Saul wanted him to do to prove something to Saul. So, not to prove it, but this is what Saul wanted from him.

So, David said to Saul, Who am I? And what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king? I mean, what an incredible attitude. It was like, who am I? An expression of genuine humility. He wasn't raised up by that kind of recognition or that such

a thing would even happen. But again, attitudes of things that can happen in people's lives where otherwise they would be just the opposite. People would oftentimes then, as far as human nature, crave such a thing, want such a thing.

But it happened at that time that Merab, Saul's daughter, should have been given to David that she was given to Adriel the Meholathite as a wife. And it says, Now, Michal, Saul's daughter, loved David, and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him. So, Saul backed down from what he had said he would do and did something different, not surprisingly, and he hadn't been killed, David hadn't been killed in battle yet so Saul kind of gave up on that plan. But now Michal, Saul's daughter, it says, it was brought to his attention, loved David, and this thing pleased Saul.

So, Saul said, I will give her to him so that she may be used as a snare to him, so that the hand of the Philistines may be upon him. In other words, to kill him again. He's going to try again. This was going to be the snare. He was going to use his daughter in this marriage, again, as a snare. His whole plan here was, of plotting here, was his desire to see David dead. He wanted David killed. Not to do it himself now, but to have, in essence here, the Philistines do it, so he'd send him out in these battles.

Therefore, Saul said to David a second time, You shall be my son in law today. And Saul commanded his servants, Speak with David secretly, and say, Look, the king has delight in you, and all his servants love you: now, therefore, become the king's son in law. In other words, accept this.

So, Saul's servants spoke those words for David to hear. But David replied, Does it seem a small thing to you that I should be the king's son in law, seeing I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed? A lightly esteemed man: in other words, looked down upon. Basically, he knew he was having problems with the king and so it's like, why should I be the king's son-in-law, why should I be given that or that happen in my life when he's looking down upon me and I'm not esteemed in any fashion or form before the king himself? And so, why accept this? That was part of the conversation. There's more to it than that.

So, the servants answered Saul telling him the manner David had replied. Then Saul said, Thus shall you say to David... So, basically here, he's also saying he really didn't have anything to give, like in a dowry or whatever, to the king, because he's the king, and he doesn't have anything anyway. And so, basically it goes on to say here, **The king does not desire any dowry, but one hundred foreskins of the Philistines. So again here, here we are, he's going to send David out to get one hundred foreskins of Philistines, to go out and put himself in that kind of battle, in that kind of situation where he has to go out and do this in order to receive this recognition from the king. This is all the king wants back, is one hundred, so... ..to take vengeance on the king's enemies.**

So, go out and kill and take the foreskins of a hundred. It goes on to say here, **But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.** That was his plan. He wanted David to die. So, again here, this cunning and planning and plotting that he was doing.

So, when his servants told David these words, it pleased David well to become the king's son in law. So, he did desire to have her as his wife and he accepted that payment. It wasn't a dowry he had to give at all and so he went ahead and went out to do what Saul had asked him to do.

At that time, **as the time had not yet expired David rose and went, he and his men, and killed two hundred men of the Philistines.** So, not just a hundred, as it says here. **And David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full count to the king, that he might become the king's son in law. Then Saul gave Michal his daughter as a wife.** So, here he was, he was stuck in this and so he went ahead and gave Michal to him. David had gone above and beyond by double what he'd asked for, so the king relented and went ahead and did it.

Verse 28—Then Saul came to see and realize that the Eternal was with David, and that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him. Now, it wasn't necessarily that he acknowledged that it was God's doing. He saw how David was being blessed, and this is what it's discussing here. Because of the Eternal being with David, David was being given this recognition, continuing recognition and favor of the people and the kinds of things that he did was giving him more recognition. This is basically acknowledging more this is the Eternal's doings in David's life, and this is what (again repeating again what it stated before) Saul saw, these things, and hated it.

So again, not that Saul was able to grasp and comprehend what God was doing. "And that Michal, Saul's daughter, loved him." So, he recognized these things, he didn't like that either. He didn't like the fact that his own daughter loved David more than, basically, him, **So, Saul became even more fearful of David.** So again, it was a matter of what he saw himself as and the recognition he felt was being taken away from him that David was, in essence, in his eyes, stealing from him. **So, Saul became David's enemy continually.** Basically, means for the rest of his life. That's the way the story goes. From that point forward he was always his enemy. David was treated that way by Saul.

What a sad state of affairs because these kinds of things have happened in God's Church. We can read through a story like this and it just doesn't hit us in the same way. But if a lot of you look back in life and you look at different kinds of situations, and I can think of many of you out there that know full well what I'm talking about, of things you have experienced where you've experienced this kind of hatred from others, not love. You think in God's Church especially there would always be love, a care and concern for others, for the welfare of others, a desire to see others do well and excel.

When we see those things, we should rejoice in the blessings that others have in their lives. But too often what happens is that people have been jealous of those things and come to a point

rather than loving them they've actually come to a point where they're jealous, envious, and really a spirit of hatred toward them. This isn't something that's happened a little in God's Church, it's happened a lot. And for that reason, I think of the scripture that talks about "the love of many wax cold." That's talking about within the Church with Laodicea and the things that happened that led up to the Apostasy and the kind of mindset that existed in people where there was competition and jealousies and things that were taking place. Because people were so weak these things became more rampant in the Church.

It's a horrible state of affairs to think something like this could happen in God's Church with God's spirit. The reality is, it really can't happen with God's spirit. People are cutting themselves off from God's spirit when those things are happening. That's the problem. That's the reason the Church became so incredibly weak and the Apostasy actually occurred.

So again, there should be a love, a genuine love that we have for each other, a genuine desire to see each other succeed and do well, excel. We want to see each other do well and excel and come through whatever battles that are out there. Whatever problems that exist in people's lives (and we all have problems and weaknesses), to see people conquer them and overcome them, and to even pray about those things from time to time, in people's lives, that they be able to come to see different things that you can maybe see, something that might be hurting them or whatever, or a trial or battle you see someone in and your desire is to see them come through it because you love them, because you want to see them succeed.

So, too often though other things get in the way and people have jealousies in other things that have been eating them up for some time.

Verse 30—Then the princes of the Philistines came out, meaning to fight or war against Israel. So it was whenever they came out, that David behaved more wisely, speaking of in battle, than all the servants of Saul. In other words, all the other officers of the army. So, David was always at the forefront receiving the greatest recognition, having the greatest victories, the greatest success in battle and so forth. It says here, **so that his name became highly esteemed.**

So again here, incredible story about David's life here and what was taking place and totally different spirit and different mind here of humility that was just a part of his thinking and not a matter of pride and haughtiness and jealousy. Because those things eat away at people.

I think of different scriptures here. I think of Matthew 23; just want to read a couple of these here. **Matthew 23:12** and it says, **Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; and he who humbles himself will be exalted.** You know, these are basic principles of how we should think. It's not a matter of wanting to receive recognition. It's not a matter of wanting to be lifted up and seem important in front of other people. Yet this is a weakness of some, a greater weakness in some than others. It's just a matter of human nature as it is, but we need to be aware of it and to loathe it and to hate it, and to fight against it whenever we see it raise up it's ugly head. Because it is ugly.

Again here, it's this mind and attitude toward God that if you do things right before God, serve God in a spirit of humility, that God is the one who lifts us up. I mean, we're a part of the Body of Christ, the Church of God, and we're being prepared for things that we can't even begin to grasp and comprehend, and if we'll just continue to be faithful and loyal to God's molding and fashioning and being transformed in our minds, we have things awaiting us that we can't even begin to comprehend.

I think of that oftentimes when I think about how that there are going to be those in the Church who continue on into the Millennium, and not grasping and comprehend the kind of recognition that's going to be there before you. My greatest concern and fear in that regard is, is that it can go to individual's heads, to a person's head. Because you're going to be recognized for who you were. "You were part of the remnant Church?" I mean, people are going to know about this. They're going to know different individuals, know of you, and you can't take it like Saul did. You can't use it in a wrong way. If you do, God won't be able to continue to work through you and with you, and you'll become an example of something wrong, not something that's good.

So, if you do it right, if you continue to do it right on into the Millennium, then God can continue to raise you up and exalt you and work with you and magnify you in your abilities and your opportunities and your service. We should do what we do because it's right before God. God will take care of everything else.

Again, it's an awesome part of being a part of God's Church and the things that God has planned for us, and that's far, far more valuable than anything that a person can achieve and have in human life. I mean, really, on your own abilities is what I'm talking about.

1 Peter 5:6 it says, **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you in due time.** So, I think of the Millennium, in due time.

So, we continue to fight, we continue to battle. We need to recognize who we are, that we are God's people, that we are to stand tall in that and stand strong in that and look to God to lead, guide, and direct us, and to serve Him with humility and meekness of spirit. As we continue to yield to doing things God's way and putting God first in our life God exalts us. He has so much planned for us. We shouldn't do it for what we're going to get out of it in the future, we should do it because it's what is right.

James 4:10—Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. That's what David did. That was his mind. That was his life. Again, all these verses when you go through and read scriptures like this, they should ring out so powerfully to us because this is what this is all about. It's about a mind and an attitude of humility toward the Great God of the universe and a right mind toward and about ourselves, of seeing what we are, who we are, of recognizing how small we are, but being so thankful that God has called us something to something so great, so awesome, so, so incredible beyond our understanding.

So, with that we'll stop for today and continue with *Part 3* next Sabbath.