

Place: Lurgan Baptist 15:12:2002

Readings: 1 Samuel 22:1-5, 20-23 Psalm 142

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF DAVID

6. WHEN YOU REACH "ROCK BOTTOM"

Few historical events paint a picture as black and bitter as those that surrounded the Nazi regime, when Hitler persecuted, tortured and mercilessly killed millions of Jews. Yet even during those days of abysmal darkness the light of protection and security flickered through. On the top floor of their crooked little Dutch house Corrie Ten boom and her family built a secret room to provide a hiding place for many of those hunted people.

Over a period of time hundreds of Jews passed to safety through the walls of the Ten Booms house until one chilling February day when the secret was whispered into the ear of the German Gestapo. Within days Corrie was torn from her comfortable home in Haarlem and locked in a dank prison cell in Scheveningen. Once a provider of safety Corrie Ten Boom now needed a hiding place herself.

And although no secret room was to be found in the prisons and concentration camps she sheltered her soul in the Lord. David, the man after God's own heart

(13:14) also suffered undeserved persecution bringing him to one of the lowest, most desperate points in life.

He talks about his experience in (Ps 142) he says,

" Refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul I am brought very low." Can you feel the loneliness of that desolate spot ? The dampness of that cave ? The depths to which his life has sunk. Can you feel David's

despair ? My he has reached rock bottom. Is that where you are this ? Do you know something ? I get weary of the philosophy that says that the Christian life is just one silver-lined cloud after another just soaring. It is not.

Sometimes the Christian life includes a deep, dark cave. Thank God, in the darkness of Adullam, David discovered the light of God's deliverance for he says,

" many are the afflictions of the righteous but the Lord delivereth him out of them all." (Ps 34:19) Now there are three pairs of words here that seem to sum up David's experience at this time. The first pair are " went down," the second pair are " the cave," and the last pair are " a captain." As you consider David at rock bottom think of:

(1) THE HARDSHIP THAT BROUGHT HIM LOW

Fleeing from Saul's angry sword David sought refuge in the cave. The cave of Adullam was located in the Valley of Elah in the vicinity where David killed Goliath.

(Gen 38:1,12, 20) With all the crutches in his life removed from him he havened his body within the walls of the rocky cavern and his spirit within the clefts of God's granite love. Have you ever wondered how he felt in the cave ? Well, the Scripture gives us a peep into his diary. Three psalms were written at this period.

In (Ps 142) David is on his face. His lowest point.

In (Ps 57) he is on his knees, and finally in (Ps 34) he's on his feet. Did you hear his cry in (Ps 142:6) ?

" Attend unto my cry for I am brought very low." (1)

My can you relate to David's feelings ? Could it be that you are having a cave experience ? There are hours in our lives when dark clouds hang low and storms of depression sweep our seas and we find ourselves in Adullam the Cave

of Gloom. It is then that we make that discovery that David did that in all our troubles God is our refuge. No storm can overtake us but what He is there. No if you look at little closer at (Ps 142) you'll sense:

(a) THE PRESSURE DAVID FELT:

He says " When my spirit was overwhelmed within me."

(Ps 142:3) Overwhelmed is literally " darkened. It carries the idea of fainting. He blacked out is the way we would put it today. My David's troubles were not imaginary, they were real. For e.g.; there was

1. Material Pressure:

Here he was in the cave of Adullam, south west of Jerusalem, not the ideal place for his parents, so he took them to a fortified place in Moab. (22:3-4) But what a contrast from the splendour of the palace to the severity of the cave. How was he to live ? I mean what was he to live on ? Are you facing material pressure ? Are you wondering how you will eke out a living ?

2. Intellectual Pressure:

" My spirit was overwhelmed within me." (Ps 142:3) His troubles had created so much inner tension and stress that even his buoyant spirit could not rise about them. He was overwhelmed, indeed the only safety valve he had was that God knew his path and that enabled him to retain his sanity. Burdened believer, the Lord knows all about your adversity this !

3. Governmental Pressure:

For he says " In the way wherein I walked have they privily laid a snare for me." (142:3) Those in power were out to get him and David was fearful. Are you feeling governmental pressure this ? Are the authorities out to get you ? My David was fearful.

Have you ever noticed that men often fail at their strongest point ? Abraham the father of the faithful, but under pressure his faith failed. Moses, the meekest of men yet it was this same man who " spoke unadvisedly with his lips." (Ps 106:33) John, the apostle of love, yet he wanted to call down fire from heaven. Elijah, champion of Carmel, yet when one irate woman Jezebel shook her fist at him, he ran. David, the giant slayer is now fearful. 1. 2. 3.

4. Emotional Pressure:

" I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me, refuge failed me, no man cared for my soul." (142:4) Oh, when he had slain Goliath, the whole nation shouted his praise.

Suddenly, he was a somebody, court musician, captain of the guard, the kings son in law, plenty of friends. But when Saul turned against him, his friends did not know him anymore. It was no longer safe to know David. Like David do you feel lonely, ignored, rejected ?

5. Spiritual Pressure:

" No man cared for my soul " (142:4) Not a man in all the land thought enough of David to seek him out and bring him a word of encouragement. " David, I know theres not much I can do, but I can pray with you." My think of (a) Materially, Intellectually, Governmentally, Emotionally, Spiritually ! Can you relate to him ? Are you in the cave of gloom this ?

Dejected (142:2) Depressed (142:3) Despised

(142:4) Despondent (142:6) Despairing (142:7) How will you react ? How did David react ?

(b) THE MEASURE HE TOOK:

He says " I cried unto the Lord " David not brood over his trouble or do nothing about it. He did not indulge in self-pity, he did not sit on the pity pot. He did not become bitter or rebellious. He did not talk to others about his troubles before he spread them before the Lord. What did David do ?

1. He TOLD God:

Four times in two verses it says that David went to the Lord. My we all have our troubles but where we take our troubles is the key to whether troubles defeat us or we defeat them. Joseph Scriven the hymn-writer had been jilted by his fiancée, who left him for another man leaving him broken hearted. But handing his grief and pain to the Lord he wrote those lovely words.

Do thy friends despise forsake thee

Take it to the Lord in prayer

In his arms He'll take and shield thee

Thou wilt find a solace there

David told God. My have you told the Lord about your trouble ? Is it trouble from the enemy ? Is it domestic trouble ? Business trouble ? Have you told the Lord ? 1.

2. He TRUSTED God:

For he says " Thou knowest my path thou art my refuge." David had lost everything but he still had God and it seems that he looked up into the face of the Lord and said, " Its alright, the Lord knows all about it and my trust is in Him." Yes, there was (1)

(2) THE FRIENDSHIP THAT SOUGHT HIM OUT

Here he was feeling ignored, unwanted, lonely, despondent. David had not dreamed that there were those who loved and cared for him. Have you discovered what David discovered ? Hardship often leads to friendship ! " Outside the camp," away from the haunts of men David becomes the attraction for the outcasts of Israel. Did you notice:

(a) THE PEOPLE WHO WERE THERE:

You see, David is a type and picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. And those who came to him during his humiliation and rejection represent those who came to our Greater David when He was the reject of the earth.

The Gospels reveal that those who sought Christ were the poor and needy, the lepers, the blind, the maimed and the halt. My its when we see this strange gathering of people about David that we understand why David went through what he did. Like our Saviour he is touched with the feeling of their infirmities. He is now able to succour those who are in trouble for he knows what they have gone through. (a) Who were they ?

1. The DESPISED:

" His brethren and all his fathers house " They are now despised by Saul as David is. Their lives are in constant danger. They are " his brethren," and so are hated by the world.

2. The DISTRESSED:

Strange is it not that distress is used to bring many to David ? The word means they were under pressure.

My is the Lord using pressure, some storm of life, some affliction to drive you to the Saviour ?

3. The DEBTORS:

" Everyone that was in debt " (22:2) These bankrupts found a way to escape all their liabilities by coming to David. My we had no hope of clearing ourselves until we came to Christ and He placed all our indebtedness to His account.

4. The DISCONTENTED:

" Everyone that was discontented." The disappointed, frustrated, embittered, all sought refuge with David. Can you hear David asking each one, " Why did you come to me ?" Can you hear the varied confessions as many a bitter secret is disclosed in the silence of the cave. Many a burden is left a David's feet. Many a story of suffering and sorrow David listens to. Everyone is received and welcomed. My does this company not look like Pauls description of the ragged regiment of the redeemed ? " But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world " (1 Cor 1:27) My take it by faith we are nothing and our need drove us to Christ. " They gathered themselves unto David." Have you done that ? Have you sought Christ ? Can you testify " I came to Jesus as I was He has made me glad." (a)

(b) THE PROPHET THAT WAS THERE:

Look at (22:5) Now Gad was the bearer of the Word of God. Saul had refused the testimony of Divine Revelation (15:3) and now Divine Revelation is where David is. My in the dark, cave experiences of life do you realise what you have got ?

For one thing, you have the people of God beside you, but thats not all, for you have the Word of God before you ? And if that is not enough to encourage you, look at (22:20) (a) (b)

(c) THE PRIEST THAT WAS THERE:

The last link binding the people of God was the priest in Israel, and Saul had slaughtered the priests in Nob.

(22:19) Abiathar alone escaped and fled to David wearing the priestly robe. Now both the Word

(represented by the prophet) and the Priesthood

(represented by the priest) is found with David.

Now listen, in the OT period God's people had a priesthood, but today God's people are a priesthood.

Think of it, each of us have the privilege of coming right into the very presence of God. (Heb 10:19-25) We don't come to God through any person on earth, but only through the one Mediator Jesus Christ. (1 Tim 2:5) My like David have you hit rock bottom ? Are you in some cave of gloom this ? Will you remember that you have the Word of God before you, the People of God around you, and the Throne of God above you ?

(d) THE POTENTATE WAS THERE:

Did you notice that ? Did you notice that the folk who

" gathered themselves unto David," found in him all, that they need. Gad the Prophet had come, Abiathar the priest had come and David is there. Do you know what that means ? The testimony in Israel is completed, Prophet, Priest and King and finding David they found all that they needed. My has it not been the same with us ? What do you need that is not found in Christ ? For surely in finding Christ we have found all.

(3) THE LEADERSHIP THAT TAUGHT HIM MUCH

Did you notice (22:2) " He became a captain over them " My when David hit rock bottom, God gave him a ministry, helping 600 men (23:13) who had been weakened by despair to become strong warriors.

(1 Chron 12:8) Did you know that God uses your

"cave experiences," to gave you purpose and

direction ? Well, certainly it was that for David, for

"he became a captain over them." What did that mean ?

(a) TOTAL SURRENDER:

They had turned away from the evil influence of Saul to be subject unto the authority of David. Did these soldiers find a new centre for their life in David ? My we also have found a new object in Christ for whom to live is life indeed. Did this new centre draw them away from the decadent kingdom of Saul ? Our oneness with Christ has made us unworldly by making us other worldly. Did they so gave themselves to David that they were willing to risk their lives everything for him !

(1 Chron 11:18) My how much more should be willing to " hazard our lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 15:26) Totally Surrendered ! Are we ? " He became a captain over them," (a) It meant:

(b) PERSONAL SECURITY:

You see, the moment they became David's followers they became Saul's enemies, they were open to all the persecution which came on David, they had to share it but he promised them protection. (22:23) Do you recall what our Greater David says to all those who believe on Him ? " I gave eternal life and they shall never perish." (Jn 10:28) My we are in the Shepherd's Hand, but we are on the Shepherds Shoulders.

(Lk 15:5) The shoulder is the symbol of strength and His shoulders (plural) are like His two fold power in heaven and in earth. (Matt 28:18) And all that mighty power secures the weakest child of God against the powers of earth and hell. My what a place of security !

" Safe in Christ, safe in Christ

He's there glory ever

None can pluck them from His hand

They shall perish never."

(c) FINAL SUCCESS:

You see, the cause of David, was the cause of God, therefore could never fail. (13:14, 16:13) Those who suffered with him, would one day share his exaltation with him. Aren't you glad that there is day coming when the Rejected Christ will be the Reigning Christ ? And those who follow Him now, will be rewarded then !

(Rom 8:17) Napoleons soldiers were marching through Paris. His cause hung in the balance. As they passed through, a working woman stepped out, put a broom to her shoulder, fell into line and marched with the troops.

She was laughed at and asked, " how do you expect to fight with that broom ?" She said, " I don't expect to fight, but I expect to show which side I'm on." My which side are you on ? Are you trying to be in both camps at the same time ? Or are you sold out entirely to the cause of Christ ?

" When you reach rock bottom," is that where you are ? David was there, but because he looked to the Lord, during this dark experience, God was able to bring him into the light of a wonderful ministry. Will you allow the Lord to do the same with you ? To lead you through the adversity and use you in a new way in the lives of others ?

