

In Nomine Iesu

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Trinity 1
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Text: 1 Samuel 24:8-10,16-19 [1-22]

⁸ David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. ⁹ And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'?" ¹⁰ "Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and *someone* urged *me* to kill you. But *my eye* spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he *is* the LORD's anointed.'... ¹⁶ So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "*Is* this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept. ¹⁷ Then he said to David: "You *are* more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. ¹⁸ "And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. ¹⁹ "For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day.

Dear fellow redeemed in Christ,

From the time of David's great triumph over the Philistine giant Goliath, his fame had been ever increasing. It got to the point where the king, Saul, became jealous of David's fame. Saul then began to plot the death of David, going so far as to try and hunt him down in order to kill him. Saul had gotten to this point of attempting to murder one of his own subjects due to his earlier sin in which he had rejected the Lord God of Israel, resulting in God leaving Saul. Saul then became subject to an evil spirit, one which David actually could help with, as he played soothing music for King Saul on his harp.

We see in the remainder of Saul's life the tragic end of one who had chosen to abandon God. At times Saul would appear to be sorrowful and repentant over his sin, but it would not last. Even here in our lesson for today we are told about Saul's sorrow as he weeps at the truth of David's words. David has opportunity to kill Saul, but doesn't do it. Saul knows that he himself would have never allowed such an opportunity to go by. He knows he would have killed David given a similar chance. Saul's sin, his own unrighteousness, his attempts to do evil to David, all

this is known to Saul, but sadly it does not result in Saul ever returning to faith. Saul is like the traitor Judas who knew his sin, but rejected any grace of God. Both of them, both Saul and Judas, ended their lives by their own hands.

The actions of David stand in contrast to those of Saul. David, through this time of struggle, has learned to rely on the promises of God. God had promised David the kingdom of Israel. But the kingdom would come in God's time, not in David's. David had no authority to bring about the death of King Saul. He would not dishonor the office of the king established by God by assassinating Saul.

These years of Saul's searching for David to kill him were years of struggle for David, not only struggle with the enemy Saul, but also a time of spiritual struggle. This is brought out in Psalm 18, as well as other psalms written by David. Psalm 18 was spoken by David "on the day that the Lord delivered him from all his enemies and from the hand of Saul." Part of the Psalm reads: "The pangs of death surrounded me, And the floods of ungodliness made me afraid. The sorrows of Sheol surrounded me; The snares of death confronted me."

David describes his anguish during these years as the "sorrows of Sheol," that is of hell itself. David could look back later at these times and praise God and thank Him for his gracious care and deliverance. But the actual moments of these events were times of soul searching for David as he struggled with knowing God's promises and yet seeing his enemies all around him.

And only his enemies would trouble David. Think, too, of the advice being given him when he has Saul at his mercy there in the cave. His fellow soldiers tell David to strike the king, kill him while he has the chance. It seems like the obvious thing to do. Saul has already tried to kill David. Wouldn't it be right to kill Saul? But David cannot. He knows it would be wrong. And this, by the way, is why we cannot in any way condone the murder of the abortionist that occurred two weeks ago. We cannot avenge the murder of the unborn by murdering someone. That is the way of anarchy and chaos, the way that is against the order of God's justice; no matter how justified it might seem to us.

David and Saul are put before us here so that we might learn the mercy of God, and the consequences for those who reject God. In this way this Old

Testament history parallels the Gospel lesson we heard today about the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus learned to rely on the mercy of God, since his life was one of bearing the burdens of poverty and illness. The rich man learned to consider God as unnecessary for his life. Both of those men died, just as both David and Saul would die. But the destination was different. David, like Lazarus, trusted the promises of God and was brought to the glories of heaven. Saul, like the rich man, would reject Moses and the prophets, and be received in the torments of hell. Specifically Saul rejected the words of Samuel, God's voice to him for many years.

Because David would rely on God's word and promises, because he learned to trust, he was able to confess: "I will love You, O LORD, my strength. ² The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. ³ I will call upon the LORD, *who is worthy* to be praised; So shall I be saved from my enemies." These are not easy words, but words that were impressed upon David during his years of struggle and hardship.

David endured the hatred of his enemies, and left things to God, believing that he would redeem him and save him. "He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man. ⁴⁹ Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, And sing praises to Your name."

Here we learn to pray with David so that we might learn more and more to put our trust in the Lord. The struggle of the Christian life is nothing new. We see from the very beginning of God's plan of salvation in the days after the Fall into sin that God's people suffer and endure the evils of this world. We know that Satan would love to beguile us with his lying words. We know that sometimes even our friends, like David's friends in this text, might give us advice that goes against God's Words and tempt us to trust human strength and wisdom instead of the wisdom of God. May God helps us always to keep hearing Moses and the Prophets, the holy Scriptures written for our learning. There we keep receiving the forgiveness we daily need for our sins, for our doubts of God's promises; and there we receive the strength, the deliverance of God Himself, won by our Savior, Jesus Christ, for us all. God keep us in such faith always. Amen.