

## LIFE LESSONS – 1 SAMUEL: Being Rejected for Your Faith! 1 Samuel 29

### SERIES OVERVIEW:

Well, good morning, Trinity family! It is so good to see you this morning.

I want to take just a moment and talk about Easter. I know Pastor Jeff mentioned our Easter plans at the beginning of the service, but I want to share with you a little vision behind Easter this year. You know, one of our core values is to share the gospel relentlessly. Our first and foremost goal is to share the gospel with everyone as it is our true hope and the only way to eternal life. Easter gives us an unprecedented opportunity to do that.

Research tells us that Christmas and Easter are the two times a year that people are the most open to an invitation to church. That's not to say they are never open to it, but just about everyone plans to attend church on those days. This is why we dedicate resources to providing tools to invite our friends, neighbors, and co-workers to Easter at Trinity.

My challenge for us, today, is to get rid of all of our invitation supplies. Stop by and grab a yard sign, a few refrigerator magnets, and some invite cards. Let's make Jesus' name famous in our city.

I don't know about you, but we seem to run out of magnets on our refrigerator, you know, to post pictures. What better way to promote Easter than to pass those out and a bonus is they'll be there year-round!

You can also grab 5 to 10 invite cards to take with you. We left the back of those blank so that you can write a personalized invitation on it. You can leave it along with your tip when you go to eat this afternoon. And by the way, if you do that, please be generous with your tip. We want people in our city to know who we really are, a bunch of Jesus-loving, generous people. You can also use those cards to hand out to your neighbors or whomever you come in contact.

Our goal this Easter is to share the gospel with 1,400 people. You can help us reach and exceed that goal! The challenge is to attend a service and serve a service. Please register to volunteer by scanning the QR code on the screen. We will have Easter Training on the 24<sup>th</sup>. Get registered today.

Also, our 9:30 service is always packed at Easter and even in overflow. I know that's the perfect service to come to and head out for brunch. But I want to ask you to consider attending either the Saturday night or the 8 or 11am Sunday morning service to make room for our guests.

I just want to say thank you, Church family, for loving people and for your willingness to do what it takes to share the gospel with everyone.

Well, we are approaching the end of a teaching series that we actually began a year ago. We are working our way through the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel. So, I want to invite you to grab your Bibles and turn with me to 1 Samuel chapter 29. We are going to look at the topic of being rejected for your faith.

### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Don't Conform**

It always stings when you feel like you are rejected. Whether it is being the last one picked for a team, turned down for a job, worrying about what other people think, or even being turned down on a date. The fear of rejection is very real and painful. Add to those things the way culture seems to be increasingly unfriendly toward those of us that call ourselves Christians.

Have you ever been rejected for your faith? Have you ever felt the sting of judgment in being labeled a Jesus freak? Have you ever been excluded because of biblical convictions you hold? If so, count yourself among good company.

Romans 12:2 says, *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."* Paul's urging to not conform carries the idea of being pressured into a mold.

I can remember when our kids were little they would play with playdoh. They would take a piece of playdoh and smash a mold around it to make it turn out like the mold. Pressure is applied to conform the playdoh to the mold. Paul is saying to resist that conformity.

Well, in our passage of study this morning, David experiences great pressure. He finds himself in a tough predicament. What will he do? How will he respond? What will others around him do and say? Let's jump in and find out.

**BACKGROUND:**

By way of background, Chapter 29 picks back up where the story left off in the first part of Chapter 28.<sup>ii</sup> At the end of chapter 27 and into the opening verses of 28, we learned that David had run from king Saul, and he found refuge and was living amongst the Philistines, Israel's arch enemies. And David made friends with the king of Philistia. And Achish, the king, asks David and his men to fight alongside them as they attack the Israelites, David's people.

What is David going to do? If David protests this, then he is outed and at the very least kicked out of Philistia and back on the run. At the worst, he is killed. But if he goes along with it, he is put in a situation where he would be killing his fellow countrymen, at least endorsing it. Imagine the pressure David is under to conform. Does he go with the flow of the world? Or does he go against the culture to do what is right? And what is the cost either way? A tough position.

Now, these past few chapters are not written in chronological order.<sup>iii</sup> If you were going to read it in chronological order you would start with the opening verses of chapter 28, jump to 29 and 30, and then go back to 28 with king Saul visiting the medium in Endor. I want you to remember that while the Bible is historically accurate in every way, the purpose of the Bible is not to tell history.<sup>iv</sup> It's a revelation of who God is and how He works. So, sometimes the storyline can be hard to follow. But I just mention this by way of background information.

**MESSAGE:**

With that in view, let's dig into chapter 29. Beginning in verse 1. Follow along in your copy of God's Word. ***1Now the Philistines had gathered all their forces at Aphek [A-Fek]. And the Israelites were encamped by the spring that is in Jezreel.*** Jezreel is the location to many battles. In fact, Napoleon Bonaparte labeled the valley of Jezreel as the most natural battlefield he had ever seen.<sup>v</sup> And many scholars believe that the Battle of Armageddon will be fought here.<sup>vi</sup>

Verse 2. ***2As the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing on in the rear with Achish.*** David is marching with the Philistines. He's in a place that he never thought he would be, among the ungodly getting ready to fight against God's people.

Verse 3. ***3the commanders of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?"*** The commanders looked at David and his men and said, "Why are these guys here? They don't belong with us. They are Hebrews. They

worship another god. They should be rejected as warriors with us." Keep reading. ***And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years, and since he deserted to me I have found no fault in him to this day."*** Fellas, this is David. He defected.

Verse 4. ***4But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him [the king]. And the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Send the man back, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him. He shall not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here? 5Is not this David, of whom they sing to one another in dances, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?"*** In other words, "These guys have to go. Haven't you heard his song on Spotify? Don't you remember what he did to Goliath? What if he turns on us here? He's a Hebrew, we reject him."

Verse 6. ***6Then Achish called David and said to him, "As the Lord lives, you have been honest, and to me it seems right that you should march out and in with me in the campaign. For I have found nothing wrong in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, the lords do not approve of you. 7So go back now; and go peaceably, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."***

We get a little insight to how the Philistia government worked.<sup>vii</sup> Commanders from the various cities of states worked together with the king. They operated on majority vote rules. Here, the king made a decision, the commanders of the army disagreed with the decision, they voted, and the king had to go back on his decision. We see checks and balances here in this situation.

David replies to the king's message that he has been rejected in verse 8. ***8And David said to Achish, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"*** What did David mean by saying that he wanted to fight against the enemies of my lord the king?

Some believe that David had travelled down such a dark path that he was willing to fight against Israel. That here he is pledging allegiance to the Philistine king. I don't think that is the case for a couple reasons.

First, in chapter 27, we learned that David was playing the role of double agent. He was raiding the nearby enemies of Israel but was telling the king that he was raiding the Israelites. If he was willing to be deceptive about that, certainly he would continue his deception here.

Secondly, many scholars believe that when David says here that he is going to, quote, “fight against the enemies of my lord the king,” that he is referring to king Saul. That is consistent to David’s actions previously. Remember when David snuck up on Saul in the cave and only cut off a piece of his robe? Remember what David called Saul? In 1 Samuel 24, verse 8, David followed Saul out of the cave and said, “My lord the king!” Same phrase in verse 8 of chapter 29.

So, in effect, I believe, David is telling Achish the king that while he is marching with him now, he plans to fight against him later. David still sees Saul as The Lord’s anointed king.

Look what happens in verse 9. *9And Achish answered David and said, “I know that you are as blameless in my sight as an angel of God. Nevertheless, the commanders of the Philistines have said, ‘He shall not go up with us to the battle.’* *10Now then rise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who came with you, and start early in the morning, and depart as soon as you have light.”* *11So David set out with his men early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. But the Philistines went up to Jezreel.* So, the Philistine king delivered the final verdict. “I’ve been outvoted. You have been denied the opportunity to fight in this battle. So, David and his men returned to Ziklag [Zick-Lag].

### **LIFE LESSONS:**

So, what are the life lessons that we can learn from this passage? I want to mention a couple of life lessons we can take from this passage today. First, ...

#### **1) Life is lived on a Battlefield.**

So much of David’s life, when you think about it, is played out on a battlefield. From his first victory over Goliath, David found himself engaging in battle often. He battled the relentless pursuit of king Saul, dodging many attempts on his life. He defended his fellow countrymen against attack, even while trying to hide. When he found refuge with the Philistines, he was engaging in battle, working to defeat the enemies of Israel. And here in chapter 29 he is marching toward a battle. Next week we’re going to see that David will engage in more

battles. Fast forward to when David was king, he was involved in battles. David’s life played out on a battlefield.

Our lives are really no different. We don’t engage in physical battle constantly, but we do engage in spiritual battle every day. Consider the Biblical perspective. Scripture tells us to be strong in The Lord by putting on the full armor of God. We are told to be self-controlled and alert, why? Because the devil prowls around like a roaring lion. 1 Corinthians tells us to be watchful and to stand firm in the faith. We are to resist the schemes of the enemy. This imagery calls our attention to the fact that our lives are lived out on a spiritual battlefield. The Christian life is not a call to life on a playground. It’s life on a battleground.

We have to realize that we battle on a spiritual level every day. And we need to know that we are up against a formidable foe. The devil, though, is no match for who is on our side. In fact, we don’t fight for victory, we fight from victory. But knowing who we are up against is half the battle. We are up against the enemy of our souls. But the God of angel armies is on our side!

### **ILLUSTRATION: World War 2: General George Patton<sup>viii</sup>**

In World War 2, General George Patton, commander of the U.S. forces, was up against the German army in North Africa. He was fighting against General Erwin Rommel. The story goes that when they got close enough in their tanks to eye each other, General Patton shouted out to General Rommel. He is reported as saying, “I read your book! I’ve read your book!” See, General Rommel wrote a book on war strategy. And General Patton read it and as a result he knew exactly the strategy Rommel would employ. That led to General defeating General Rommel.

The same is true for us. We know the enemy. And we can use this book, God’s Word, to defeat the enemy. Life is lived on a spiritual battlefield, but we can be victorious. The second life lesson that I want to point out this morning is, ...

#### **2) Rejection is not always a bad thing.**

Remember the title of this morning’s message is being rejected for your faith. Essentially, David was rejected by the Philistine army on the basis that he was a Hebrew, a Jew. Have you ever been rejected because of your faith? Passed up because of your strong biblical convictions?

David was a reject. All his life he was rejected. Remember when Samuel came to anoint one of Jesse's sons as the next king of Israel? David was forgotten, he was the runt of the family, rejected by his own dad. David was the least likely person to be king, at least in everyone else's eyes.

What about him being rejected by king Saul? David was living life on the run trying to escape Saul's threats. He finally found peace with the Philistines. Now they are rejecting him, too. And we know from the passage that David didn't like being rejected. He protested it. When Achish, the king, told him the news, David defended himself. He begins by saying in verse 8, ***"What have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"***

Have you ever asked the same question? You get passed up, rejected for the promotion. What have I done? When you are excluded because of your convictions? We tend to wonder what we've done wrong. But listen, being rejected is not always a bad thing. **Rejection can actually be God's protection!** Do you hear that? That was the case for David here.

Think about it. David was in a tough spot. Does he fight for the Israelites or for the Philistines? Any way you look at this it was not going to end well for David. But the Philistine commanders' rejection actually solved David's dilemma. Instead of seeing this as a rejection, he needed to see it as God's deliverance. God provided a way of escape. And the way in which God worked here paved the way for David's future.

See, later on, when David became king of Israel, he would unite the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel into one united nation.<sup>x</sup> But if David had engaged in battle, he would have had a stain on his record that would have made it impossible to unite the country.

Also, David could have wanted to engage in battle with the Philistines as a way of seeing that Saul is eliminated, making a clear path to the throne. Remember, he didn't want to take matters into his own hands, but maybe the Philistines attack was a way to achieve it. But by being removed from the situation, David's motives would remain pure.

Sometimes, when we are rejected for our faith, it is God providing a way of escape for us.<sup>x</sup> We see this truth mentioned in the New Testament. In 1

Corinthians 10:13, Paul builds on this idea. He says, ***"<sup>13</sup>No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it."*** Sometimes being rejected saves us from ourselves. It just might be God preventing you from being put in an impossible situation.

Listen, living out your faith will bring conflict with the world. You and I are constantly pressured to conform to the pattern of this world. But we are to be transformed, not conformed. Our lives are lived on a spiritual battlefield, and sometimes the rejection we experience is God working to protect us.

### **CONCLUSION:**

I can think of another rejection that was God's deliverance. The Pharisees turned on Jesus, rejected Him, even though He was completely innocent. They had him arrested, falsely accused Him. Then they handed him over to Herod and then Pilate who found no wrong in him. Yet it was, in the end, the people that rejected Jesus. They shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" And it was this rejection that resulted in Jesus' death on the cross.

But it was His death, and His burial that led to His resurrection! It was through the rejection of the crowd that our salvation was purchased. Isaiah 53 says, ***"<sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup>Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. Jesus endured the ultimate rejection. But, you see, it was a rejection for our good.***

Maybe you are here today, and you have never trusted Jesus as Lord of your life. You've never been born again unto a relationship with Jesus. It is my prayer that The Holy Spirit is revealing to you that you are a sinner in need of forgiveness. And I want you to know that forgiveness came by way of rejection, sending Jesus to the cross, to take our punishment so that we can receive His righteousness.

If you are here today and you have never placed your faith in Jesus as the Lord and Savior of your life, we want to visit with you today about how you can do

that. In a moment, we are going to sing and reflect on what we've heard. We will then end our services and our elders will be here at the front to visit with you. I invite you to come, take us by the hand and simply say, "I need Jesus." Maybe you are here today, and you are in need of prayer. You have a burden you are carrying, and you need to pray with someone today. Our elders are here for you as well.

I want to ask you to press into what The Lord is speaking to your heart today and simply respond to His lead. Let pray. [PRAY]

## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: Robert D. Bergen, *The New American Commentary: 1, 2 Samuel, Vol. 7*, B&H Publishing: Nashville, 1996; Heath Thomas and J.D. Greear, *Christ-Centered Exposition: Exalting Jesus in 1 & 2 Samuel*, Holman: Nashville, 2016; Bill T. Arnold, *The NIV Application Commentary: 1 & 2 Samuel*, Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 2003; David Guzik, Enduring Word Commentary, "1 Samuel 29 – The Philistines Reject David," published by Enduring Word, accessed online: <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/1-samuel-29/>; Troy Rackliffe, "Life Lessons Message 23," sermon preached at Glad Community Church in Daniels, WV; Ray Fowler, "Rejected for Your Faith," published by Ray Fowler Ministries, accessed online: <https://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/1-samuel/rejected-for-your-faith>; Skip Heitzig, "Expound: 1 Samuel 28-29," message taught at Calvary Church, October 6, 2021, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/314/sermon/4609>.

<sup>ii</sup> Bergen, 270.

<sup>iii</sup> Arnold, 386.

<sup>iv</sup> Ibid.

<sup>v</sup> Heitzig.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>vii</sup> Pointed out by Heitzig.

<sup>viii</sup> Illustration taken from Skip Heitzig's sermon.

<sup>ix</sup> Pointed out by Fowler.

<sup>x</sup> Ibid.