

Life Lesson 67
David Spares Saul's Life
Text: I Samuel 24

Introduction

David won lots of important victories for the king. How did Saul repay him? He was jealous and tried his best to kill David. He thought that by getting rid of David he could get rid of the judgment God had promised. Can anyone do that? No, what God says will happen, WILL happen.

Saul was just about as mean and hateful to David as anyone can be. Did that give David the right to be mean right back to him? We'll see in our story today.

The Story

Saul was chasing David again. This time Saul heard David was hiding in the wilderness of Engedi. He took three thousand men and began searching through the hills and caves of that rough, rocky land.

At last he stopped in a cave to reset. Some of Saul's men guarded the door while Saul slept. They didn't know that they were watching for David in the wrong direction. All the time Saul was in the cave, David and his men were hiding back in the shadows in the sides of the cave.

"It's happened just like God said it would!" the men said to David in an excited whisper. "Didn't God say he would deliver your enemies into your hands so that you could do whatever seemed good to you?"

It was quiet in the cave. The only sound was of Saul's heavy breathing. He was sound asleep. Step by whispering step, David crept up to Saul's side. He took his razor-sharp sword – and cut off part of Saul's robe. It would have been easy to cut off Saul's head right then, but David only took a scrap from Saul's clothing.

Back he crept to the sides of the cave. Everything was still silent. No one noticed what he had done.

David wasn't happy about it. He hadn't hurt Saul. He had only played a trick to shame him. Saul wouldn't know until he was outside the cave with his men that a big hole had been cut from the back of his clothing. He would be humiliated when everyone laughed at him. He had shown himself to be a careless soldier to allow such a disgraceful thing to happen.

David knew he had done a bad thing.

"I shouldn't have done this thing to my master," David said. "After all, he is the one God chose and anointed to be king. I should be loyal to him just because God put him in authority over me."

David realized an important truth. God wants us to obey and honor those He places in charge of us, like parents and teachers. They may not always be right, but it is always right to show respect to them. Sometimes your authorities will make mistakes. God can overcome mistakes and provide for us the exact things we need.

David knew he shouldn't have played such a disrespectful trick on Saul. He refused to allow his men to do anything else to Saul.

At last Saul woke up and went on his way, still looking for David. After he had gone a ways down the hill, David came out of the cave.

"My lord the king!" David cried.

Saul turned in astonishment. There was David in the cave where he had just spent the night!

David bowed down to Saul with his face to the ground. That was a sign of respect and humility.

"Why do you listen to those people who say I'm trying to harm you?" David asked.

"Look at this. I cut off the back part of your robe while you were sleeping. If I wanted to kill

you I could have done it easily last night. But, I wouldn't do it because God has called you and anointed you to be the king. The Lord can judge between us, but I'm not going to harm you.

"Why should you be afraid of me and chase after me?" David continued. "It's like chasing after a dead dog or a flea. What harm can they do you? I'm not going to harm you either."

Saul was ashamed.

"You have shown yourself to be a better man than I," Saul admitted. "I did evil to you and you repaid me with good. I know you could have killed me today, but you didn't.

"I know that one day you will be king," Saul went on sadly. "Promise that when you are king you won't kill all my children and grandchildren."

David promised and Saul went back home.

David and his men didn't trust Saul enough to go back to civilization. They knew he might have another fit any time and try again to kill them. They went again to the caves in the wilderness to hide.

The Life Lesson

Sometimes it might seem to you that your parents or teachers don't understand or are making a mistake. Isn't it a comfort to know that God is bigger than your parents and your teachers? He can direct them and protect you. Your part is to obey and honor God by obeying and honoring those in authority over you.

Review Questions

Why was Saul chasing David?

Because he was jealous.

Where was David when Saul camped in the cave?

In the sides of the cave.

What did David do to Saul?

He cut off a piece of Saul's robe.

Could David have killed Saul?

Yes.

Was David happy with what he had done?

No. He realized he had been disrespectful.

Was Saul sorry that he had chased David when he saw what David had done?

Yes. He said, "You are a better man than I am."

Does God want us to be disrespectful of our authorities, even if they are wrong?

No.