

David is Rewarded for Not Getting Even

(Psalm 57; 1 Samuel 24)

Introduction

Have you ever been so upset with someone that you wanted to get even? Maybe a friend did something to you that embarrassed you in front of others; maybe someone said things about you that weren't true. It is easy to want to get even when someone does mean things to you, isn't it? The Bible tells of a time when David was badly mistreated by someone. What do you suppose he did when his chance came to get even?

Today we are going to study a psalm that David wrote during the time he had to run for his life from King Saul, who wanted to kill David.

Opening Prayer

Lord, we want our lives to bring You honor in every thing that we think, everything that we say, everything that we do. Show us how You handled it when You were treated unfairly. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD. (Romans 12:19)

Or

Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. (Romans 12:17)

Lesson

After Joshua died, the children of Israel had no strong leaders. For 200 years they were ruled by Judges. Then the people demanded that God give them a king. So God had Samuel, the last judge, appoint Saul to be the king of Israel.

Saul started out as a good king. But after awhile he became full of pride. He got to the point that he wasn't as interested in obeying God as he used to be. He seemed to want to do everything his own way instead of God's way.

Because Saul disobeyed God, God told Samuel to appoint David, a young shepherd boy, as the king. But because David was still only a boy, it would be years before he actually took the throne from Saul.

Meanwhile God used David, a shepherd boy, to kill the big, mean giant, Goliath. Does anyone remember how David killed Goliath? David shot him with his sling shot! And, it only took one stone!

After David's victory over Goliath, King Saul asked David to move into the palace and live with him and his family. It gave Saul such joy to hear David play his harp and sing praise songs to the Lord. There, in the king's household, David became one of Saul most loyal and helpful servants.

Then one time, there was a war between the Israelites and the Philistines. And David became an important war hero. When they came back from battle, there was a big parade. All the soldiers marched through town and all the people cheered loudest for David.

Let's read about it:

1 Samuel 18:6-11

When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals. This was their song: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!" This made Saul very angry. "What's this?" he said. "They credit David with ten thousands and me with only thousands. Next they'll be making him their king!" So from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.

The very next day a tormenting spirit from God overwhelmed Saul, and he began to rave in his house like a madman. David was playing the harp, as he did each day. But Saul had a spear in his hand, and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to the wall. But David escaped him twice.

Saul became insanely jealous of David's popularity with the people. He became so jealous, in fact, that he wanted to murder David.

So, David had to leave the palace, and run for his life.

Then, David lived a very hard life. He slept in the forest or caves in the mountains. Wherever we went, Saul chased after him and who ever helped David was in terrible trouble.

1 Samuel 24:1-2

After Saul returned from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David had gone into the wilderness of Engedi. So Saul chose 3,000 elite troops from all Israel and went to search for David and his men near the rocks of the wild goats.

As David was hiding in a cave, he wrote this beautiful song to the Lord:

Psalm 57:1-2

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy! I look to You for protection. I will hide beneath the shadow of Your wings until the danger passes by. I cry out to God Most High, to God who will fulfill His purpose for me.

Because he was in great danger, David cried out to God for protection. He knew that God was far stronger than his enemies. He had confidence in the Lord.

Psalm 57:3-4

He will send help from heaven to rescue me, disgracing those who hound me. My God will send forth His unfailing love and faithfulness. I am surrounded by fierce lions who greedily devour human prey—whose teeth pierce like spears and arrows, and whose tongues cut like swords.

To David Saul seemed like a ferocious lion whose bared teeth are as sharp as spears and arrows. He knew that Saul would tear him to pieces if he had a chance.

David hid in a cave. There is certainly nothing wrong with trying to stay away from people that are trying to mistreat us. In fact, that is what God wants you to do. If someone tries to harm you, you need to run and hide from them.

While David was hiding in the cave, something exciting happened.

1 Samuel 24:3-4

At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave! "Now's your opportunity!" David's men whispered to him. "Today the LORD is telling you, 'I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.'" So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.

Saul walked right into the very cave that David and his men were in! This was David's chance to get Saul. David's men wanted to attack him right there and then. But even though Saul wanted to kill David; David did NOT want to hurt Saul. Quiet as a shadow, David slipped up to Saul, took out his knife, but instead of killing him, David just cut a piece off of Saul's robe.

Wow! Could you do that? If you had just spent the last few years of your life running and hiding from someone that was out to kill you, what would you do if that very person walked right into your cave?

When someone is being mean to you, it's easy to want to get even and be mean right back, isn't it? But David knew that wouldn't please God. David showed respect for Saul. After all, Saul was the King of Israel.

He let Saul leave the cave unharmed.

Have you ever been hurt by someone that you trusted? Maybe someone wrongly accused you. How do you feel when others are unfair to you? Have you ever wanted to get even with someone for hurting you?

When someone has wronged you, the natural response is to want to get even. God hates our desires for revenge because it shows we do not trust Him to take care of the situation.

God wants to help you control your anger. You can trust Him to handle the situation. Otherwise your anger will control you and cause you to do foolish things. God is pleased when you refuse to get even with your enemies. God has promised that He will deal with those who wrong you.

David had an important decision to make about getting even. But, rather than taking revenge, he chose to let God deal with his enemy.

After cutting off a piece of King Saul's robe, David felt guilty.

1 Samuel 24:5-6

But then David's conscience began bothering him because he had cut Saul's robe. "The LORD knows I shouldn't have done that to my lord the king," he said to his men. "The LORD forbid that I should do this to my lord the king and attack the LORD's anointed one, for the LORD Himself has chosen him."

As soon as David cut that piece of Saul's robe off, he realized he was wrong. He knew it was better to trust God than to get even. David knew that when we sin, we separate ourselves from God.

Isaiah 59:2

It's your sins that have cut you off from God. Because of your sins, He has turned away and will not listen anymore.

Thankfully, God sent Jesus to pay for your sin and mine by giving His blood on the cross. He didn't deserve to be punished for us, but He did it so our sins could be forgiven. Jesus died and came back to life again so that you could become His child by believing on Him and asking Him to be your Savior. God wants you to know Him. David knew God and wanted to do the right thing.

David respectfully told Saul that he was trusting God:

1 Samuel 24:8-13

David came out and shouted after him, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked around, David bowed low before him. Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you? This very day you can see with your own eyes it isn't true. For the LORD placed you at my mercy back there in the cave. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I spared you. For I said, 'I will never harm the king—he is the LORD's anointed one.' Look, my father, at what I have in my hand. It is a piece of the hem of your robe! I cut it off, but I didn't kill you. This proves that I am not trying to harm you and that I have not sinned against you, even though you have been hunting for me to kill me. "May the LORD judge between us. Perhaps the LORD will punish you for what you

are trying to do to me, but I will never harm you. As that old proverb says, 'From evil people come evil deeds.' So you can be sure I will never harm you.

God helped David know what he should do. Instead of getting even, David spoke kindly to his enemy. He told Saul he was leaving matters with God.

If you belong to Jesus, God is pleased when you refuse to get even with your enemies. Instead of getting even, He wants you to trust Him to handle the situation in His own way and time. God may not deal with your enemies the way you think He should. He may even ask you to show kindness to those who have hurt you. But regardless of how God responds, we can know that He is always fair and right. He will perfectly judge your enemy. God says, "Don't try to get even." If punishment is needed, He will take care of it.

Romans 12:19

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say, "I will take revenge; I will pay them back," says the LORD.

When someone hurts you and you are tempted to take revenge, ask God to help you calm down. Then thank God that He will take care of this situation in the best way. Ask God to give you His love in your heart for the person who has wronged you. David allowed God to put love and respect in his heart for King Saul, and he trusted God to help him know what to do.

God delivered David by sending Saul home and David gave God all the glory.

Let's read the rest of this beautiful prayer that David wrote to God:

Psalm 57:5-6

Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens! May Your glory shine over all the earth. My enemies have set a trap for me. I am weary from distress. They have dug a deep pit in my path, but they themselves have fallen into it.

All of David's men had seen the wonderful power of God to deal with their enemy, and they gave God glory for it. They saw the value of not

getting even, and letting God deal with their enemy. And David was happy with his decision. He knew he had done the right thing by letting God judge those who hated him rather than getting even himself. David joyfully sang praise to God.

Psalm 57:7-11

My heart is confident in You, O God; my heart is confident. No wonder I can sing Your praises! Wake up, my heart! Wake up, O lyre and harp! I will wake the dawn with my song. I will thank You, Lord, among all the people. I will sing Your praises among the nations. For Your unfailing love is as high as the heavens. Your faithfulness reaches to the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the highest heavens. May Your glory shine over all the earth.

David had learned that he didn't need to get even. Neither do you. You can pray and trust God to deal with those who have hurt you. If you belong to Jesus, God is pleased when you refuse to get even with your enemies.

This week when you are tempted to get even, remember Romans 12:19. Talk to God about that person and He will give you the power to lay down your angry feelings. Thank Him for taking care of the situation in the best way. Ask Him to give you His love for the person who's hurt you.

Closing Prayer

Father, forgive us when we let our angry feelings just fly. Help us to take control of our anger and to trust that You will take care of every situation in our lives. We want our lives to bring Your name glory and we want others to know that You are a God of love and grace. In Jesus' name, I pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Activity Center

Act out 1 Samuel 24. Choose a David and a Saul. Have the remainder of the children be David's men in the cave.

Or, ask the students: Have you ever been bullied? Is there someone who is always picking on you? Have you ever been hurt by someone that you trusted? Maybe a friend did something to you that embarrassed you in front of others; maybe someone said things about you that weren't true. How do you feel when others do wrong things to you? Did you ever try to get even?

Have them get into small groups and come up with a scenario from life where one child treats the other one unfairly. Then have them act out how they would handle that situation.

Craft Corner

Kindness Cards

Supplies: blank index cards and art supplies such as markers, glitter pens, stamps, and stickers

Ask kids to think of kind actions they could do for people. For example, they could bring in an elderly neighbor's mail or newspaper, or they could help with the dishes on a day it's not their chore.

Help kids write or draw their ideas on the index cards and allow them to decorate the cards. Then encourage kids to give the cards to the recipients they thought of. (Be sure to tell kids to get their parents' permission before approaching a neighbor.)

Game Center

Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com>]

Review questions:

1. Where was David when he prayed this prayer in Psalm 57? (A Cave)
2. Why was David in the cave? (He was running for his life from King Saul.)
3. What would be someone's natural reaction to David's circumstances? (To fight back; get revenge)
4. What did David do when he was faced with this trial?
 - a. Verse 1: He looked to God for protection
 - b. Verse 2: He cried out to God
 - c. Verse 7: He had confidence in God
 - d. Verse 9: He thanked God & sang praises to Him
5. What do verses 5 and 11 say was most important to David during this trial? (That God would be exalted and glorified.)
6. Why is it important to remember that God is "exalted"? How should knowing that God is "above the highest heavens" affect our view of our problems? (It helps us to remember that He is bigger than our problems and that He can fix them.)
7. How did David's response to the trial demonstrate faith? (He trusted that God would take care of the situation.)
8. Re-read verses 9-10. How can the way we handle trouble and trials become a testimony to those who do not know God? (It shows other that God is trustworthy.)
9. Have you ever been bullied? Is there someone who is always picking on you? Did you ever try to get even?
10. When you try to get even, what does that say about your faith in God? (It is lacking!)

