

23. A Man Who Runs and Hides.

I thought momentarily that I could read to you Gene Edward's *A Tale of Three Kings*, but then I read the prologue and knew that I would never succeed with such a plan, for I would weep on nearly every page.

Why did a young man who ran to fight against the giant now run away to hide?

Goliath was an enemy of God and of Israel, but David's new "enemy" was his father-in-law and the man anointed by the Spirit of God as king over Israel.

David's problem was that he never once viewed Saul as an enemy, and therefore, could not defend himself.

God's Purpose.

When David looked at Goliath, he saw God – with himself.

When David looked at Saul, he saw God – with Saul.

The difference between the two is the difference between finding life or death, between knowing Jesus or Satan.

What was God's purpose?

I have sat more than a hundred hours under teaching about David, absorbing every word.

Yet now I realize that I just wrote, in this slide and the last, **God's full answer to one of the most agonizing questions of my life, a question I brought into my narrative just now in "A Season of Healing."**

Did I Run?

Did I run?

Yes, I did. I have run against my enemy all the days of my life, regardless of what it looks like outwardly.

And I have run into God to know Him.

And I ran away from speaking against the anointed of the Lord, that I might not sin against God.

I do not apologize for finding such parallel between my life and David's. Indeed, this realization comes **ONLY** through hindsight.

God put David's story in the Bible so that all believers in Jesus, including you, might find such parallel with his life.

Running Again!

And here I am, running again. You will find few Christians more frightened of the arising beast in this world than I.

Yet I have ever been focused, not only on its arising power, but also on its defeat.

And here I find myself, running with you, waving our little prayers in the air, determined that God through us will take that awfulness DOWN.

What was God after with David? The same thing He is after with you.

God was NOT out to see “what was in David’s heart,” to see “if David would obey Him.”

Knowing the Heart.

God already knew what was in David's heart, for He had put Himself there. And God already knows what is in your heart, for did He not put the Lord Jesus there?

David also knew what God had placed in his heart, because Samuel had already told him.

David's problem was that he did not **KNOW** it absolutely.

God took David into the worst years of his life in order to prove to David that it was indeed He who had planted His Heart inside of David, and that God's heart is true.

And God is determined, just as much, to prove that His Heart in you, the Lord Jesus, is faithful and true.

Christian Rebellion.

Christian rebellion is the most terrifying thing in the human experience.

But submitting to what is wrong, even to conforming to it, as if such submission is “of God,” is likely the most destructive thing in the human experience.

A man who will NOT rebel against God's anointed; a man who will NOT submit to what is wrong – such a man has one choice only. He must run.

Yet his running is never into self-service, for he carries one thing ever in his heart.

And for David that one thing would become Jerusalem.

A Timeline.

David was crowned king at age 30; we assume that he first ran from Saul at age 20. Here are the events.

| | | | |
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| 1 | David kills Goliath. | 10 | Jonathan persuades Saul. |
| 2 | David befriends Jonathan. | 11 | D kills more Philistines for Saul. |
| 3 | Set over the armies, David kills many Philistines. | 12 | Saul throws a spear at David the third time. |
| 4 | Saul throws a spear at D, twice. | 13 | D escapes with Michal's help. |
| 5 | David writes Psalm 5, then 11. | 14 | David writes Psalm 59. |
| 6 | D marries Michal, daughter of S. | 15 | David flees to find Samuel. |
| 7 | D kills more Philistines, scaring S | 16 | Saul and his men pursue, but the Spirit comes upon them. |
| 8 | Saul orders David's death. | | |
| 9 | Jonathan warns David. | 17 | David writes Psalm 7 & 25. |

The Timeline Continued.

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|----|--|----|--|
| 18 | David pleads with Jonathan. | 28 | Beginning of D's mighty men. |
| 19 | J warns D again, and he flees. | 29 | David flees to Moab. |
| 20 | David writes Psalm 26. | 30 | David writes Psalm 64. |
| 21 | David flees to Ahimelech, the High Priest at the Tabernacle. | 31 | Saul confronts the priests of God and orders all killed. |
| 22 | David eats the show bread. | 32 | David writes Psalm 35. |
| 23 | David flees to Achish, king of Gath, and pretends to be mad. | 33 | Abiathar, now the High Priest, comes to David. |
| 24 | David writes Psalm 34 & 56. | 34 | D defeats Philistines at Keilah. |
| 25 | D hides in the cave of Adullam. | 35 | D writes Psalm 52, 109, & 140. |
| 26 | Many join with David, including his family members. | 36 | Saul marches against Keilah, and David flees with, now, 600. |
| 27 | David writes Psalm 141 & 142. | 37 | D hides in wilderness of Kish. |

Placing Psalm 17.

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|----|----------------------------------|----|---------------------------|
| 38 | David writes Psalm 13 & 54. | 41 | Saul pursues David there. |
| 39 | D betrayed to S by the Ziphites. | 42 | David goes to Engedi. |
| 40 | D hides in wilderness of Maon. | 43 | David writes Psalm 17. |

We assume that these events cover nearly seven plus years, leaving the next nearly 3 years as the worst years of David's life, which we will consider in the next lesson.

And the first part of that next time-period is David refusing to lay a hand against Saul on two occasions.

Then we look at Psalm 17, which I have placed as the dividing point between these two lessons, and we see that David, even in his confusion, knew what God was proving.

From Psalm 17.

Hear a just cause, O Lord, attend to my cry; give ear to my prayer which is not from deceitful lips. Let my vindication come from Your presence; let Your eyes look on the things that are upright.

You have tested my heart; You have visited me in the night; You have tried me and have found nothing; I have purposed that my mouth shall not transgress.

Concerning the works of men, by the word of Your lips, I have kept away from the paths of the destroyer. Uphold my steps in Your paths, that my footsteps may not slip.

I have called upon You, for You will hear me, O God; incline Your ear to me, and hear my speech.

A Heart Right with God.

Show Your marvelous lovingkindness by Your right hand, O You who save those who trust in You from those who rise up against them. Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings, from the wicked who oppress me, from my deadly enemies who surround me.

...As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

There is no difference between David and us; we seek the same thing, with the same earnest intensity.

It's not about the law; it's about a heart right with God.

Knowing Christ.

But here is the one difference between David then and us now. – I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness.

You and I have already awoken to the knowledge that we are the likeness and revelation of God through our weak humanity, something David could not yet know.

But look at this, for ten long years, David's constant contention is with his father-in-law.

My own father-in-law has been the most difficult man in my life, and that over many years as well.

Yet here is the contention. – From the moment I knew Christ as me, God REQUIRED me to know Christ as him.

Always the Heart.

Now, don't get me wrong; Claude Mack was NOT a Saul, though it certainly seemed such to me many times.

I know without question that my father-in-law loves Jesus with all his heart.

And this is one of the big contentions in Gene Edward's *A Tale of Three Kings*. – When you imagine that this person in your life “has to be” a Saul, that person may very well NOT be any such thing.

And another person, whom you might imagine has been a Jonathan to you, may very well turn out to be a Saul.

But that is never the ISSUE. The issue is always your heart.

Throwing Spears.

And somehow David knew that. David knew that God was proving his heart, that he shared Hheart with God.

But we must consider Saul, and we must consider the action of throwing spears in the church, and the even greater horror of throwing them back.

Saul throws spears, right at David's heart, hoping to kill him, because Saul knows God's love for David. In fact, this was Saul's way of "killing God."

Yet consider the one who throws the spears back, such a one was Korah. Saul represents the largeness of Christian rebellion, but Korah shows its bottomless pit.

A Horror to Flee.

I faced a demon of Christian rebellion in my classroom once, in the Christian school where I taught. This was NOT your normal youthful contention.

I am good at dealing with normal youthful contention, but when I saw this thing, I could NOT stay in the same room. I stood outside the door to watch my students and sent one to get the principal to escort the young man out.

It was not mental; it was the bottom-line instinct of my heart. You cannot stay in the same room with Christian rebellion; you cannot treat with it. It is a horror to flee.

People who don't know God don't understand this.

God Keeping Me.

BUT – I then saw the same manipulative religious awfulness in a Facebook fellowship group I was part of.

Without naming names, I wrote about not abusing God's people in the Church for self-exaltation. (I did soften that chapter later, "Church" in *The Two Gospels*.)

Immediately, however, I found spears flying through the air against me from a completely unexpected source.

I communicated carefully with two readers who were part of that fellowship and who understood, so that I might be found NOT throwing spears back. And at this moment, the worst years of my life became God keeping me.

Being As David.

I know what David meant when he said, “I have kept away **from the paths of the destroyer.**”

And I know how he felt when he said, “Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me under the shadow of Your wings.”

A few months later I wrote “[The Humility of Christ](#)” and “[Defining the Apostolic](#)” in *The Feast of Tabernacles*, partly in response to the fact that the spears were still going through the air, now at others as well.

I would suggest that you read/listen to those two chapters again, in light of this study of David.

We don’t want to “know about” David, but to be as he.

Justify God.

Saul is any ministry in the church, anointed of the Spirit of God, who uses his or her position to abuse God's people for religious self-gain.

It's a good idea not to do that.

Nonetheless, there are times when a David, zealous for the truth of Christ, speaks words that cut you to pieces. Or one might be pressed with a David who fails God's people badly.

What if you can't tell the difference between a David and a Saul? That's simple. Don't ever throw spears, regardless.

Justify God in all things and find Him right and true. There is no purpose in blaming anyone, including yourself.

A Man Who Wept.

Yet there is always a time to FLEE. There is that moment when you know that you will not keep the integrity of your own person unless you go, regardless of whether it is Saul or David causing the difficulty.

Then, Gene Edwards so beautifully portrays what happened next, after David knew that trying to fix the problem was not the solution.

He points out that David himself did not split the kingdom when he left; David left alone.

But soon many followed David. And in following David, what did they find? They found a man who wept before God.

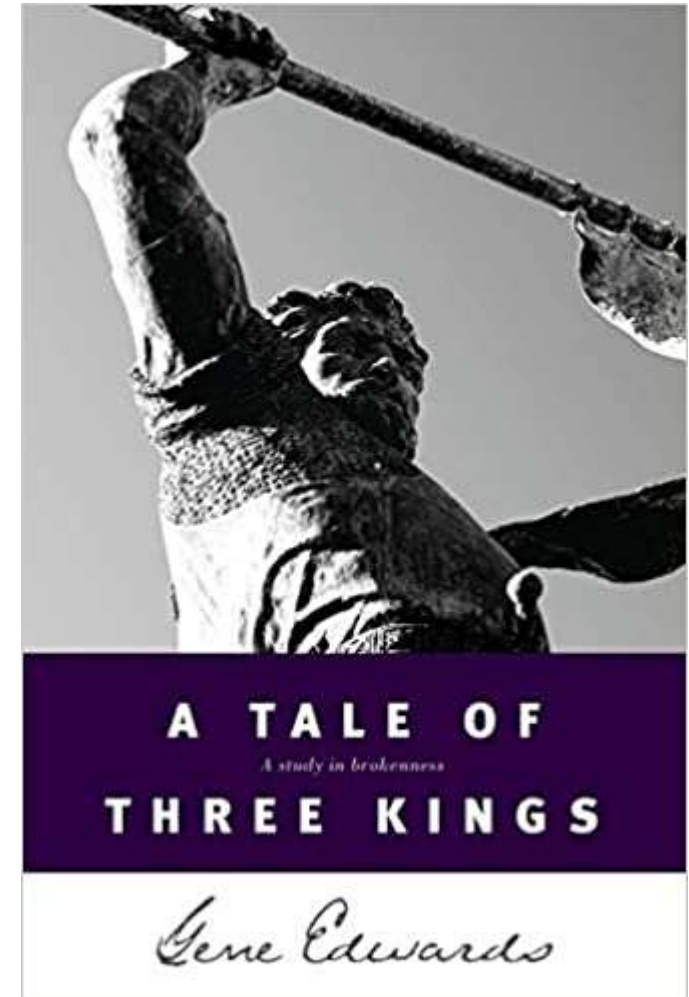
Reading from Edwards.

I see that I am doing only a poor job of attempting to convey to you what Gene Edwards so ably did in his book.

Let me attempt to read two chapters from the book, chapters 13 and 17.

Understand that Edwards is not suggesting that we allow abuse in the church to continue unchallenged.

Hurting other people is always wrong, and where it is one's place to do so, it must be stopped. The issue in David's story is something quite different.



Click on the picture to purchase from Amazon.

A Time to Be Silent.

But here is Edward's point. Most who do wield authority in the church and who use it to "root out wickedness," themselves have hearts far away from God, and themselves are the cause of more abuse than they understand.

This is a great puzzle, that those who set themselves to root heresy out from Christian thinking are themselves the greatest proponents of the false gospel.

There is a time to be silent; there is a time to weep.

And there is a time to leave quietly, without bringing a spirit of contention into the church, that is, a Korah far worse than Saul.

Knowing Jesus.

But again, God was not out to “break” David. God was out to prove to David that his heart WAS faithful like God’s.

Even more than that, however, God was out to show us Jesus through David’s mind and heart, that we could know that we are already just like Him.

And it is this quality in David’s soul, that we can find in a line here and a line there, that impartation to us that God reveals Himself through our humanity as the Lord Jesus Christ, it is this quality that is the ONLY comfort we require in the midst of all our own agony.

I would rather know that Jesus is and has always been my heart than any healing or any life free from pain.

The Only Thing I Wanted.

All the years of people attempting to “fix” me, attempting to persuade me of what was wrong with me and how I needed to change to be more “like Christ,” not one of them ever showed me the ONE thing I required, not one of them showed me Jesus in my heart, sharing my agony with me.

That’s why I refused them all, every single time.

They did not give me the only thing I wanted, the TRUTH.

But when I began reading John Eldredge, that is the ONLY thing he showed me on every page of his books, that Jesus is part of me, that Jesus fills my heart with His goodness.

That’s the only thing I’ve ever really wanted.

Reading for Next Time

The lesson next time is “A Man at the Very Bottom.” We are covering the last 2-3 years of David’s life just before he becomes king.

Read 1 Samuel 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, and 30.

The bottom line of this chapter comes at David’s lowest point. He has lost his wives and children. He has lost his men’s wives and children. Now all his men want to kill him.

David is alone again, with none to help.

Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him... But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God (and undoubtedly kept on writing).

Let's Pray Together.

In our prayer today, let's pray a call to all those believers in Jesus who KNOW that they do NOT know the one thing they long to know, but who have sought for it with tears all their lives.

Let's call the losers and has-beens into the knowledge of Christ their only life, of Jesus Himself living now as them.

“Father, we focus our prayer this time towards those individuals among Your people who find that they no longer feel at home in the churches they have known. We focus on those who know that they do not know You as they want to know You, and who are searching for what is missing.

Calling the Foolish.

“Father, we call all the foolish people in Your Church, those whom You have chosen, into their place inside the Feast of Tabernacles.

“Father, we call all the weak people in Your Church, those whom You have chosen, into their place inside the revelation of Jesus Christ. Father, we call all the low-born people in Your Church, and especially those who are despised as nothing, those whom You have chosen, into their place in Communities of Christ all across the earth.

“Father, let our hearts be the wide-open Doors of Tabernacles that many, many might run into Your Feast.

Into the Knowledge of God.

“Father, we call all the desperate and discouraged people in Your Church, and all who are afraid, that they might run through open Doors into the knowledge of God.

“And Father, we call all those whom You have appointed to Christian Community together with us, to stumble across this word of Christ our life, each as they might, and that they would join with us in joy, that we might reveal Your glory as we love one another.

“Father, we know that You are calling with us, and have already answered us. Father, we know that many throughout the world are responding to Oour call now and over the next few months.”