

Session 11. David Discovers God's Beauty in Danger

INTRODUCTION

The phrase that I just prayed is from Psalm 16:5. It's one of the main Davidic themes of his life, one of the great themes of David. I'll just quote it. I'll mention this a few more times, that he described God as being his portion. He said, "The Lord is the inheritance of my portion, my cup" (Ps. 16:5). "You are my reward," is what he's saying. The thing that gave David strength as the rule of his life is that he literally connected with the Lord as his primary reward in this life and in the life to come. When the natural promises God gives us become secondary and the Lord becomes our primary reward, the bottom line is that we carry the reward with us when we're disappointed. When we're disappointed in earthly circumstances, we carry the reward everywhere inside of our heart with us. It's a reward where neither moth nor rust can destroy, nor thieves break in and steal it. It's a treasure we carry with us everywhere we go in this life and in the life to come.

THE SECRET OF DAVID'S SUCCESS WAS HIS INHERITANCE IN GOD

Again, this was the secret to David's life, and the rule of victory in his life—he didn't have a permanent, uninterrupted victory, but he had a general rule of victory throughout the seventy years of his life on earth. That was the rule of his life, though he had periods when he didn't have hold of that, but the secret was that the Lord was his portion. It's stated a number of times in the book of Psalms. Instead of the word *portion*, write the phrase, "You are my reward." "You give me a sense of pleasure greater than the earthly promise in natural things can ever give. The pleasure I feel from You, the unfolding of Your beauty to my heart and the beauty I have in You, is actually more powerful to my heart than even the release of the honor and the favor of circumstances and people." Of course that's the whole purpose of the trials David endured. It's that the Lord sought to strengthen that reality in him. Every time that he'll confront the trials we'll talk about in a moment, the purpose was to get him to realign his heart with God as his portion and his reward.

HUMANS ARE SUSTAINED BY REFRAINING FROM PAIN AND SEEKING COMFORT

When you go through difficulty, there's a certain mental exercise that you automatically go into. When you find discomfort in earthly circumstances, the most automatic natural human response is to find a way of thinking that causes you to have either comfort or relief from pain. When the pain comes, it's like our computer mode. We're searching every file for comfort, comfort and relief of pain. "Somewhere, somewhere..." is our mindset. We try to come up with something that gives us a sense of relief of the pain. If we look to natural things, that search is called *anxiety*. If we look to the spiritual reward, that search is called *faith*. Really, that's what it is. It's the search for comfort as we're searching all our information files to find something that relieves pain. The money will come in. The person will say yes and the door will open, but we never can lock into it in a substantial enough way to take the pain away. We think about it, twist it and turn it a hundred different ways. "My ministry will release and the favor of man and God will be on me here. This will happen, that will happen and the anointing will come, but I'm not sure." We can never actually find comfort when we work in that arena. When we search for comfort through seeing earthly circumstances change, again, we call that anxiety. When we search for that same relief from pain in the discovery of the Lord, we call it faith. It's really a search for relief from pain. That's really what it is. If you do it the wrong way, it's called anxiety; if you do it in the right way, it's called faith.

The Lord told David, “David, you’re built in such a way by My own design that you can’t find the superior pleasure outside of the discovery of My beauty. You’re simply built that way. There are limitations built into you. You can’t find the superior pleasure outside of the discovery of My beauty and the implications of it.”

David would lock into the reality that God was his portion. That was what he meant: “You’re the One who gives me the feeling of reward. You’re the one who brings the superior pleasure. It’s the discovery of You and the enthrallment I feel in my heart when I see a little more of what You look like and a little more of what I look like to You. That gives me the impulse of pleasure called ‘joy in the Lord.’” When David would get disconnected from that, a pressure would be created to realign him.

“I’M LOVED AND I’M A LOVER OF GOD; THAT’S WHY I’M SUCCESSFUL”

At the end of the day, we all search for ways to get free from pressure and pain, every one of us. It’s very natural. You can’t repent from that; you can only search in the right way. In my own personal life, the search that I’ve gone through goes something like this: “OK, all these areas are falling apart.” It could be economic areas. It could be your ministry. It could be relational areas. It could be physical pain in your body. It could be the things you’re building or breaking. Whether it’s in the job, the church world, or wherever, that has happened to me a number of times like it’s happened to you, and it will happen a number of times more. I start thinking and go through the philosophical checklist: “Why am I doing this, anyway? Why am I reaching so hard for this anyway?”

“Well, if I succeed in it, then I’ll be happy.”

“But you weren’t happy the last time you succeeded.”

“I know, but it will be different this time.”

“Why will it be different this time?”

“I don’t know. Quit asking so many questions. I’ll be happy.”

“No you won’t, not really.”

“OK. Why am I happy then? Why do I breathe on planet earth? What’s going on?”

God says, “The uncreated God, filled with beauty, likes you.”

“Oh, that feels good.”

“I’ve made you to like Me back.”

“Oh, it feels good to like You back.”

“You’re loved and you’re a lover. My beauty I will unveil to you and I will show you your beauty in Me.”

“That feels good. Wow, I’ve got that no matter what else breaks.”

We begin to realign ourselves through that. I've done that exercise, as I'm sure some of you have done, 10,000 times 10,000 in the last twenty years. "I'm loved and I'm a lover of God. That's why I'm successful. Wow. Things can be broken and I can still succeed. Wow! That feels good for a few moments. Wow. OK, pain is now relieving." A minute and a half later the pain is back. "OK, OK let's do this again. How can I get free from this pain? Why am I doing this anyway? It never works like it's supposed to work. Nothing ever lines up like it should."

"Well, if it did line up, it wouldn't really work anyway."

"OK, why do I live, breathe, and have life on planet earth?"

"Because I love you and I've made you to be a lover of Me. I want you to discover My beauty and your beauty in Me."

"Wow. Those feel good. I'm loved by God and I'm a lover of God. Therefore I'm successful."

THE SUPERIOR PLEASURE OF LIFE IS WHEN GOD REVEALS GOD TO THE HUMAN SPIRIT

That's what I believe David did. It's realigning our heart with truth. Those momentary releases of the superior pleasure touch our heart. Some of the inferior pleasures are legitimate, and some of them are sinful; the sinful pleasures are perverted forms of the legitimate. But they still aren't the superior pleasure. The superior pleasure of life in this age and in the age to come is when God reveals God to the human spirit. He has built us in that way. We can't get free from that reality. No matter how much we try, we're simply limited in our human experience to that dimension of life which assures us of walking in the glory of God. God built in those limitations, those defaults, if you will, those limitations, those boundaries, to drive us into the glory of God. He built us into that, but we resist it all our life. Then, when we stand before the Lord in eternity, we say, "Why did we resist this? It was such a wonderful plan and with such goodness that You put limitations on us to hem us into that reality to find comfort."

THE SPIRIT OF REVELATION SHOWED DAVID THE TRUE MEASURE OF A PERSON

David discovered this early on. It was part of the Lord being with him, that spirit of revelation that was on him. David connected with God as his portion in a very unusual way at a very young age. That's what made him distinct. That's what caused him to be one of the great authors of Scripture. He wrote so prolifically that which is considered Holy Writ, the Word of God; God gave him for the sake of others that extra measure of understanding. For 3,000 years the Church has lived in the benefit of it, or the redeemed have lived in the benefit of it for 3,000 years. He wrote this in around 1,000 B.C. The Lord said, "I gave him an extra dose of it so that multitudes could drink out of that well all their life."

PAIN SHOWS US THAT EVEN IN OUR IMMATURITY WE ARE LOVED BY GOD FOREVER

Beloved, the sooner we connect with this reality that the reason we're successful is because the God of infinite beauty desires us with a passion, that He has made us beautiful in Him and has given us a heart to love Him back, the sooner we see that even in our immaturity the love counts and it's real and it lasts forever. That's the measure of your success. Pain makes us align ourselves with that truth because we search for comfort, every one of us. Pain forces us to search for comfort. We keep checking out every little body of information that we can search out in order to get relief from pain. We find it in that vein of truth. The more we do this, the more we develop what is called a "renewed mind." Another term for the renewed mind is "aligning your heart with

truth,” “realigning your mind with truth.” If you get your mind aligned with it, then eventually it gets into your emotions by the Holy Spirit. You align your mind with it, you align your speech with it, and eventually God sees your mind reaching for it by speaking it to your soul. David was constantly telling his soul what truth was. He said, “I have placed my mind and speech around it.”

IF YOU CHANGE YOUR MIND, GOD WILL CHANGE YOUR EMOTIONS

The Holy Spirit said, “That’s the context in which I give revelation to the heart and change the emotions.” You can’t change your emotions, only God can. God says, “You change your mind and I’ll change your emotions. The way to change your emotions is by redirecting your mind.” We change our mind and God changes our emotions. We can’t make ourselves feel; we can only line our minds up in a way where we put a bull’s eye on our heart and the Holy Spirit, in the context of thinking in the right way, gives us the spirit of revelation which changes our emotions. David’s model of transformation was to line his mind up with truth.

BRINGING OUR THOUGHTS INTO OBEDIENCE WITH THE RUDDER OF OUR TONGUE

Of course, the easiest way to line your mind up is by speaking it. I learned some years ago in my personal prayer life that if I would barely, ever so softly whisper my prayer, my thought life came into obedience. I found that when I prayed in silence, my mind could wander. When I prayed in ever so slight a whisper, my mind had to stay with my speech. David incorporated the principle of speaking, actually verbalizing the things that he was sowing his mind in. When your mind and then your speech lines up with truth, even though you don’t feel it, that’s the context in which revelation comes by the Holy Spirit and changes the emotions. The emotion is impacted when it’s touched by revelation. God changes your emotional makeup, your emotional chemistry, by giving you revelation. When your heart has revelations, your emotions feel it.

“How can I get more revelation?”

“Fill your mind.”

“Well, it’s hard to fill my mind.”

“Get your language in line with what you wish to fill your mind. You’ll find that over and over.” We’ll look at that several times tonight in the Psalms. David filled his mind and his speech with a certain thing. That was the context for the spirit of revelation to touch the heart.

HE IS OUR PORTION AND OUR EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD

When God touches the heart with the spirit of revelation, then you feel the truth of it. You feel the truth. The Lord says, “Mike, I’ve made you in such a way to where I’ve hemmed you in. I’ve locked you in. I’ve put boundaries on both sides. You can’t find pleasure outside of Me as a superior experience. That’s the road I’m paving to lead you into the glory of God. I’ve bound you in this.”

“Well, I want to find the superior pleasure in legitimate things...and, sometimes, in illegitimate things.”

The Lord says, “No. Natural things, whether legitimate or illegitimate, are secondary. You can only find superior pleasure if I’m your primary reward, and the things that I’ve given to you become your secondary reward, your secondary issues of life.”

The discovery of the beauty of the Lord and our beauty in the Lord—when that's our primary reward, then we can actually handle secondary things without them destroying our lives. David's life is a journey into this truth and depth.

THE PERILS OF ATTEMPTING TO MEASURE OUR PROGRESS IN THE WAYS OF GOD

The way that the journey works, it's not that once you go from level one to level two of understanding, then you stay at level two. It really is three steps forward, two steps back, but you're constantly progressing over the months and years. You're constantly progressing, though you might have weeks and months where it feels like you're going back. The Lord's ways are hard to discern and hard to measure. Like I said before, one thing I'm adamant about isn't measuring how I'm doing. I just don't measure how I'm doing. I don't measure how I am doing compared to Paul the apostle. I don't measure how I'm doing compared to how I once did. I don't measure how I'm doing compared to other men or women of God. I don't know what measuring does. If you measure and come out well, you have pride, and if you come out badly, you're condemned. I don't know what you do with measuring. I don't try to figure out if I've gained ground. I'm loved and I'm a budding lover, therefore I'm successful. Even if I'm better or worse than I was yesterday or better or worse than you are, I'm still successful, because I'm loved and I'm a lover.

People have asked me a number of times, "Do you think you'll be one of the..." talking about the end-time this or that, or these vague categories of walking in the higher realms of God.

I say, "I don't ever think about it. I want to love God hard today." Basically I want to see God hard today, and I just leave it right there. I'm not just telling you that because it sounds right; I'm telling you because it really does work that way. The preoccupation with where you were yesterday, where someone else is, and where the great men and women of God in history are, I don't know how that helps us.

"Well, it spurs us on."

I don't know that it does. I think their testimony that they discovered joy in God is what spurs us on. Knowing that David saw something that changed his human dynamics is enough to spur me on. On a scale of 1 to 10, if he hit an 8—I don't care if he hit 6 or 8 or 12 on a scale of 10. It doesn't matter to me. I just want to know whether, if you see something, does it change your emotional chemistry?

David says from Scripture, "Yes, it does."

I say, "Good; thank you, David. I don't need you anymore. I don't want to study you to measure myself against you in a strange way or religious way. I want to study you to see the dynamics and the principles that God used to touch your heart."

THE REALITY OF OUR INHERITANCE IS SEARED IN OUR HEARTS THROUGH PRESSURE

That's what David did throughout his life. We're right in the Gibeah and Adullam years. Those are the difficult times for David. He has the revelation that God is his portion. It's just not very strong. It's there, but he loses it a little and the pressure causes him to realign. The pressure causes the roots of that revelation to go deeply. They're burned in our hearts, if you will, by pressure, because pressure encourages repetition. Pressure makes us go back to that source day in and day out, day in and day out. When the pressure is lifted and we're young in the Lord, we typically don't go drink at that well. We drink at the well of our blessing. The Lord lets the

pressure come and we say, "Oh, I'm hurting. I have to find comfort. I have to find comfort. The only way is through the knowledge that I'm loved and I'm a lover. I can find pleasure in the discovery of who He is and who I am in Him. I'm loved and I'm a lover; therefore I'm successful." That's the way I've summarized it, although there are many thoughts involved in that sentence. There are many, many thoughts involved in that.

PAIN CREATES THE DILEMMA WHERE YOU HAVE TO SEARCH FOR COMFORT

The Lord says, "I will let you have pressure because it drives you into that reality. It causes you to drink there primarily and it goes deeply into you." It's called the Holy Spirit writing His Word upon the mind and upon the heart. He writes it upon the mind and the heart. Some people say pain doesn't make good things happen. Pain creates the dilemma where you have to search for comfort. It's the searching of the comfort in the right way that the Holy Spirit moves in. Pain doesn't change you; pain forces you to search for answers to change you. Pain forces you to search for relief. It's the search for relief that's driving you. That's the power. When you discover it in the Lord in ever-increasing ways, then we say pain has been used to change you. Pain embitters many, many people because they search for relief in ways they can't find it. Then they conclude that there's no good under the sun and they get angry at life. They get angry at everyone. Pain in itself doesn't help you; it's your response to pain. It's not even a positive attitude; it's the driving you to drink at the right well. To define success is what pain drives you to do. Again, when you fill your mind with it and get your speech around it, that is the context in which the Spirit of God gives revelation. He says, "That reaching, that bringing your mind before Me, that's where I will shoot the arrow and cause the fire to ignite in the heart."

WE'RE BUILT BY A GOD OF PLEASURE TO LOVE THE RIGHT KIND OF PLEASURE

A lot of people just fill all their time with other things. They'll hear someone preach on the Word of God and one of my real burdens is the idea that the Word of God is often presented as something that we do. It's like a bargaining chip. "If we read the Word, God, will You then do good to us or like us?"

The Lord's answer is, "No, it doesn't work that way. You don't read the Word to make Me like you. You don't read the Word to make Me do good for you. It doesn't work that way. I already like you. I want to do good for you, but a lot of the good I want to do for you, if you're not connected to me rightly, will end up hurting you." It will hurt you more than you're hurting now. It's not about you reading the Word as a bargaining chip with God.

We read the Word because we want to find pleasure. John Piper says we're hedonists. We're Christian hedonists. We love pleasure. We're built by a God of pleasure to love pleasure if we would only drink at the right well. That's all. I read the Word of God not to motivate God to like me or to motivate Him to give me bigger things. That's not why I read the Word; I read the Word because it's the place I can find pleasure and relief from pain. Then the Lord says, "The more you connect with Me, the more I will release the things that I have ordained for you, because the things that I have ordained for you now won't hurt you the more you're connected to Me."

THE POWER OF TRUE PLEASURE TO PREVENT THE PITFALLS OF PROSPERITY

Someone might say, "Well, you read the Word more, but your ministry is growing."

No, that's later down the road. I read the Word to find relief from pain and to enter into pleasure. I don't read the Word as a grudging thing to get God to pay attention. I read the Word of God because I'm longing for pleasure. I'm craving for delight. I know that the other things are broken wells. I read the Word and I say, "O God, I don't feel it much, but I know in time I'll feel it. I know in time it will connect."

Then the Lord says, "You know those things I promised you, those earthly things? I can give you more of what's ordained for you. I won't give you what was ordained for another. I will give you what was ordained for you in a greater measure, because now the things I've given you, the larger sphere won't hurt you the more you're connected to Me."

Every person's sphere is different. Reading the Word of God won't make your sphere big; reading the Word of God will connect you to true pleasure so that the fullness of what God has promised you won't hurt you in the end of the day, the fullness of the earthly things. It's not about getting a bigger earthly sphere of blessing. I crave delight; I love pleasure. That's why I'm radically committed to a lifestyle of meditating on the Word, because I love pleasure. I just love it! I've been blessed enough to know where pleasure comes from.

WHAT SOME CALL "DISCIPLINE" IS REALLY JUST ANOTHER WORD FOR "LOVE"

I've heard people say to me a handful of times over the years, "Well, you're disciplined. I say no, no, it's not discipline. It's not discipline. That's not it. I crave pleasure. That's my problem. That's my glory. That's my power is that I crave pleasure. I'm just graced with understanding where pleasure comes from. I'm not disciplined." It doesn't require discipline for a hungry man to eat. Put a nice hot meal in front of him. "Oh, you're so disciplined because you're eating!" No, they're hungry. It has nothing to do with discipline.

THE SPIRIT OF RELIGION PREVENTS US FROM SEEING THE GOD WHO IS ALL OUR JOY

This is an understanding that I and many, many others have had. I'm not trying to use myself as the example here. The reason I bring myself into it is because I can speak with energy from what I've discovered with real passion because I know it's true. I know that it's true that I've found delight in it. I don't mean on the front end; I knew that delight was there if I stayed with it, and I was just hungry for delight. God gave David a special dose of that, if you will, in his youth, that He might prepare him to be the author of Scripture out of experience. If he had not started until he was seventy, then he would have had a hard time. He was tapping into this as a youth. It's very unusual. It's a very, very unusual thing.

The Lord wants to begin to give this in a greater measure, this conviction that this is the well of pleasure. When we have a spirit of religion on us, we develop an image of a God that's so different from what the Bible describes. Why would you go to Him to drink for pleasure? Because He's only going to beat the tar out of you if you go there. The whole approach to the Word is a sanctified selfish approach. It's not to get God to pay attention; it's not to get God to give me more anointing. It's to take pain off of my heart and to let me feel pleasure. In that context, the Lord gives me more of that which was ordained. My point isn't even to get more; my point is to get the craving and the pounding in my heart satisfied.

A HUNGRY MAN NEEDS NO ENCOURAGEMENT OR DISCIPLINE TO EAT

The Lord blessed me by pointing me in the right direction. He said, "Really, this will work. Stay with it, stay with it."

I said, "Well, nothing else seems to work."

I didn't hear this, but the Lord might whisper, "You are blessed among men because you believe that that is the path to pleasure." Everyone wants pleasure. Every hungry person loves to eat when they're hungry. There's no problem with that. It's not about discipline. It really isn't about discipline; it's about understanding. That's what it is. It's not about discipline. If you take that same hungry man and put a bowl of sand in front of him, he's just

going to look at it and say, “The craving I have makes me stay away from that. It’s not discipline. That looks like bad news to me.” It’s understanding that makes him eat the good meal and resist the bowl of sand. It’s not discipline; it’s understanding. That’s why we need the spirit of revelation. The spirit of revelation will give us understanding.

“I WILL GIVE YOU ANYTHING THAT YOU CAN’T LIVE WITHOUT”

One of the greatest blessings that ever happened to me spiritually is that I read a book when I was nineteen or twenty years old. In this book, the author, who was a sixty-year-old man, said Ephesians 1:17 was the one prayer he had prayed his whole life, every single day. I didn’t even really know what Ephesians 1:17 was. I thought, “Maybe I’ve heard of it, but whatever.” I turned to it and I made that prayer of Ephesians 1:17, the prayer for revelation, the prayer of my life. I added John 17:26 to it. I prayed it every single day I prayed. I began to have regular devotional times. I would put them in my life. Always that was the first prayer I prayed, because some man in a book told me to do it.

What if the man in the book had told me the main thing in life is to get more anointing for ministry and to get more financial blessing to do this and that? I might have followed hard after that and not the spirit of revelation. The Lord says, “I will give you anything that you can’t live without. I’ll give it to you if it’s in My will.”

Of course it was the Lord’s blessing, but from my point of view it was an accident that I stumbled into Ephesians 1:17. It wasn’t like I was any different. I said, “OK, this man prays a lot. I’ll do what he did.” It didn’t even seem like a good verse to me, to be honest. I said, “I’ll do it. Paul did it and it’s in the Bible. It doesn’t make that much sense to me.” I just locked into it for years, literally for twenty years. Now I look back and the Lord has unfolded revelation—most of it centering around the fact that there’s delight in God. That’s the primary revelation. It’s that one. It makes it easier to stay connected.

WHEN WE SEE WHAT DAVID SAW, WE WILL WORSHIP AS DAVID WORSHIPED

Again, someone might say, “You have discipline.”

I say, “No; I just have a little understanding of one major thing. I know where fresh water is.”

I challenge you to be men and women who ask for the spirit of revelation. I can’t think of anything that changes the heart more than that, like I prayed. When we see what David saw, we’ll worship like David worshiped. It’s a matter of seeing. It’s not a matter of discipline; it’s a matter of seeing. Hunger will cause you to do the extravagant hours before the Lord. Hunger will make that happen, not discipline.

SAUL SOUGHT RELIEF FROM HIS TORMENTING SPIRIT IN NATURAL THINGS

That was a nice, long introduction was it not? 1 Samuel 19:9. We looked at this story a little last week. The distressing spirit from the Lord came upon Saul as he sat in his house with his spear in his hand. I tell you, you didn’t want Saul to have a spear when that funny mood came on him if your name was David. Anyway, the spirit came on him and he already had the spear in his hand. That evil spirit or that spirit of oppression that tormented him came upon him. If Saul had had a right heart, that torment would have driven him to seek relief in God, but it did not. It drove him to seek relief from circumstances being different. David was playing music with his hands. He was having his personal worship time in the other room. The spirit of oppression came on Saul. He said, “Where is David?” He heard the music. This is the third time now where it’s recorded that the spirit of oppression, the distressing spirit, came upon him. We find it in 1 Samuel 16:14 and in 1 Samuel 18:10.

This is the third occasion where this heavy tormenting spirit comes upon him. Again, it drives Saul to find his relief in circumstances, because a person with a tormenting spirit can cry out to the Lord. They really can. They need help, and it's more difficult, but they don't have to go to natural things to find relief.

SAUL TRIES TO PIN DAVID TO THE WALL WITH A SPEAR

Then what happens? Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear (1 Sam. 19:10). I think this is probably the third time this has happened, but David slips away from Saul's presence and Saul drives the spear into the wall. If you remember, in 1 Samuel 18:6 Saul made this great promise that he wasn't going to kill David. In 1 Samuel 18:7 David returns to Saul's court. David has been out for a while. He said, "I'm not moving back in there, no way." But Saul makes a vow. Jonathan intercedes for him before his father. Things are calm for a while. A war breaks out. Maybe a month or a year goes by, who knows? I don't know how much time, but some time passes. Things are relaxed again. David is having his devotional time and this tormenting spirit comes on Saul again. It's business as usual, again. A spear is stuck in the wall, and David is looking at it thinking, "This is trouble. This is serious trouble."

SAUL SENDS MESSENGERS TO DAVID'S HOUSE TO WATCH AND KILL HIM

"Saul also sent messengers to [David's] house to watch him" (1 Sam. 19:11). He posted guards around his house like secret police. It was a military watch around his house designed to watch for him and kill him in the morning when he emerged from the house. "Watch him all night. If he sneaks out tonight, then kill him! Wait for him tomorrow morning when he goes off to work. When he leaves, just kill him and we'll come up with some excuses as to what happened."

However, Michal, David's wife, warned him of the danger, saying, "If you don't save your life tonight, tomorrow you will be killed. If you don't escape tonight, they will kill you." Saul's daughter whispered in David's ear. "So Michal let David down through a window" (1 Sam. 19:12). He escaped.

In 1 Samuel 19:13-14, she takes this image or statue; just think of the word *statue*. She put some blanket and hair around it. The men came in and said, "OK, there he is. He's sick."

David is on the run. By now, he's out of here. But look what happens: Saul rebukes his daughter and says, "Why have you deceived me?" (1 Sam. 19:17). "You sent my enemy away." Look at how demented Saul is; that's what jealousy does. David was his most loyal servant, but David looks like an enemy because of this tormenting spirit. "So David fled and escaped, and went to Samuel at Ramah" (1 Sam. 19:18). Then there occurs that episode of the prophetic spirit stopping Saul from getting David. In all these different means of deliverance, God is showing David that God can deliver him any way He wants. He really wants David to realign his heart. That's what's going on.

DAVID HAD A CALLING TO MAJOR RESPONSIBILITY BEFORE GOD'S PEOPLE

In 1 Samuel 20 David flees from Ramah, from the prophet Samuel's house. He talks once again to Jonathan. He says, "What's the deal? What's my sin? What's the problem?" The true answer is this. The real answer to, "What's my problem?" is, "Your problem is that you have a major calling." No: "You have a calling to have major responsibility." Every calling is a major calling. Every calling is important to the One who designed the call, the invitation. Whatever call God has given you is a very, very important call, because the God of Genesis 1 devised the call for you. It's not a bad invitation. Believe me, every call is a good call because it was handmade, tailor-made for you. God will reward you according to it. He had a call for major responsibility

before God's people. David was asking, "What's my problem?" That's what he was really saying: "What's the deal?" The deal is this: "The roots have to go deep in you, David, because the earthly blessing you will have will corrupt you if your roots aren't deep. That's your problem. Your problem is the measure of your calling. The intensity of the training is related to the sphere of responsibility that you have, David. You have to be able to weather the counterattack. You have to be able to overcome the temptations of pride that come with blessing. God wants you to find your joy, your delight, and your reward in Him, not in the great measure. The Lord will withhold the measure for twenty years." He did, He withheld it for twenty years. It was prophesied over him when he was seventeen. He became king of Israel, not Judah but all Israel, when he was thirty-seven. It took twenty years. The Lord said, "I will withhold it for twenty years so that you won't be corrupted by the temptations to pride or find yourself unequipped for the counterattack in spiritual warfare when Satan's rage comes against you."

DEEP FOUNDATIONS WERE NEEDED TO UNDERGIRD THE MAGNITUDE OF DAVID'S CALL

You know the phrase, "New levels, new devils"? New levels in God bring new demonic levels of attack against you. The Lord is preparing David to withstand the counterattack of Satan and to withstand the assault of pride, because he has more than others have in natural things, the two great things that assault the soul of man. God says to David, "I will so build your heart into Me being your reward that you'll have the equipment to withstand Satan and the power to say no to pride. You'll get pleasure from Me, not from what you rule."

That's the problem with David. His calling was big in the earthly sense. He had to have deep foundations. His problem was that God assigned him a seminary course under a demonized king who had an army at his command. God says, "I will train you in My seminary. I will give you a king with a powerful army as your seminary course. I can take care of this king at will and I can take care of his army. I want him to come after you because I want you connecting with Me day by day, David."

"But Lord, I already know that You're my reward."

"But you're really going to know it at the end of this one. It's going to go deeply."

DAVID DESPAIRS AND SAUL DETERMINES TO DESTROY HIM

In 1 Samuel 20:3, that spirit of despair touches David for the first time. He basically says, "I know I will die. I know I will die."

"Well, David, you have all this revelation about the glory of God and creation. Now you think God can't save you."

"Well, I know He can save me, but it feels like I'm going die."

The Lord says, "David, do you understand your emotions? I'm trying to stabilize you and it takes time for Me to write truth on your heart." It takes time.

Then, in 1 Samuel 20:33, the determination comes to kill David. It is now set in Saul's court; it is established. He is going to kill David. There's no question. The determination is there. Jonathan sets out to see David once more (1 Sam. 20:41-42). He doesn't intercede for him before Saul anymore, because Saul gets really mad and tries to kill him. He actually quits speaking up for David in the king's court, as far as we know. In 1 Samuel

20:41-42, they have one more time together. Just for your own notes, 1 Samuel 23:16 is the final time Jonathan and David are together. This is the second-to-last time.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF PSALM 59: “DELIVER ME FROM THE WORKERS OF INIQUITY”

Turn to Psalm 59. We can only look at it briefly and offer a few thoughts. Again, the value of this course isn't what you hear in an hour. It's what you do in your prayer life with what you hear. If these psalms don't enter into your prayer life, this course was merely interesting at best, if in fact it is interesting to you. But if this thing gets into your prayer life and if the language of these psalms actually makes it into to your prayer vocabulary—not that you have to use the exact phraseology, that's not my point—but if the truths of these psalms get into your life in God, your private life in God, your secret life in God, then transformation comes. You will have to study these Psalms. This course is just a big advertisement: it's saying, “Study Psalm 8! Study Psalm 29! Study Psalm 59!” I'm just giving you some of the menu items to direct you where to feast in your private life. I plead with you that if this is all you do with this course, at best whatever is happening to you between now and the end of the evening is the best that's going to happen. It won't really make any impact. These things have to get into your dialogue with God in your private time or they won't transform your emotions.

That's why I love studying this. It recaptures me and gives me new understanding of new verses. Then I get to bring it into my personal life. Not all of it, because I don't remember all of it, but key things get into my personal life. It's like, “Yes!” Some years will pass and this course will have touched me by the grace of God. Not because I'm speaking it here, but because a few of these verses will lodge in my spirit and become a part of my secret life in God, my personal history in the Lord, my secret history. Look at Psalm 59. Look at what it says. It's a michtam of David, or a composition of David, or a writing of David. There's a lot of debate as to what exactly a michtam is, and how it's different from another type. The Hebrew word isn't really clear as to the exact distinction between some of these psalms. I won't attempt to be a scholar, because I'm not one; I'm a lover, though you can be a scholar and a lover. That's not a statement against scholars.

It says, “A Psalm of David, when Saul sent men, and they watched the house in order to kill him.” It's the episode we just read. This tells you what David was thinking. This pulls the curtain back, so to speak. This psalm is broken down into two big divisions: Psalm 59:1-9 and Psalm 59:10-17. Just for the sake of interest, it says, “To the chief musician.” I'm back at the title again. It was set to the tune of, “Do Not Destroy,” which was a well-known piece of music in that day. No one knows for sure what it means but it was commonly known enough for those who compiled the five books of Psalms. The 150 Psalms are arranged in five different books, and they were developed over a long period of time. Those the Holy Spirit used to bring this together said it was set to a piece of music that was commonly known by the title, “Do Not Destroy.” You will read Psalm 57 and Psalm 58 and they're set to the same music. Those three Psalms go together. They're not from the same exact moment of David's life, but they carry one theme, and they were set to the same music when they were used in the worship of God in the temple. Psalm 57, 58 and 59 are three that are strategically set alongside one another. That's what's going on. David is telling us what he was thinking under the Holy Spirit's guidance. He's giving a Holy Spirit record of what he was thinking. God wanted his pain, his journey and process, to inspire us and to instruct us. This is what was happening when that guard was posted outside of his house.

DAVID APPEALED, NOT TO THE COURT OF MAN, BUT TO THE COURT OF GOD

“Deliver me... O my God” (Ps. 59:1). I'm just pulling a few phrases out. Point number one: Don't minimize it. God is David's source, not Saul, not the other commanders in the army. David had a number of good buddies in the high command of Saul's army. He didn't put out a mailing list against Saul. He didn't tell his story. He

didn't take it to the courts of man. I'm not saying it's always wrong to appeal to a court. David knew the problem was severe and appealed to God. He saw God as his source. That's a major revelation in Psalm 59:1. I believe in godly appeals. Godly appeals in a gentle spirit with patience do sometimes make an impact. Mostly they don't, but they do every now and then. You never know when they're going to work.

THE DANGERS OF TAKING IT TO THE BAR OF GOSSIP IN THE COURT OF MAN

Most godly appeals to human authorities come up short. Sometimes they really make a difference. You never know, so you make godly appeals. You do it in kindness; you do it in humility. You do it with patience, without threatening and without a stirred up spirit. The Scripture teaches a number of ways of looking to yourself with a gentle spirit, with patience, leaving it in God's hands if those authorities don't take your story. You leave it with God. That's the godly appeal. Most people don't really do the godly appeal, or they don't appeal to God Himself. They appeal only to man. They take it to the court of men at the bar of gossip. It's like the old saying, "Any dog that will take a bone will carry a bone." If a person will hear it, then they'll typically carry it. We're all built that way. If you're under conviction, then you're just being honest. If you're not under conviction, you're probably a little deceived. Every one of us has the propensity to settle our problems in the earthly courts of men, in the bar of gossip. We take it and say, "Can you believe they did this to me?"

The other person says, "No!"

"Yes! Let's do something." A little flurry of activity stirs up and everyone roars around. Then they all say it differently. Then we have three more meetings. "I didn't really say that to you, what you told them I said that they said. That's not what I said at all."

"Yes you did, when you told me that..."

It gets all confusing and carnal. Everyone loses connection with God. Things get worse and David says, "Let's skip that part for now. I will appeal the court of heaven."

OUR HEART AND EMOTIONS ARE TRANSFORMED WHEN WE APPEAL TO HEAVEN'S JUDGE

That's a massive statement he's making in Psalm 59:1 when David says to God, "Deliver me." He means not Saul, not his buddies in the court, not his buddies in the military, and not his financial friends, because he was the head of the army for a time. He had some financial friends. "I'm taking it there. I'm taking it one place," is what he's saying. It was one of the great powers of David's life. David said, "Not only is that the only place He can fix it, but it's the place I get changed while God is changing the circumstance." Because when you take it to God, things change in your thinking and your emotions when you appeal to Him. When I take what people do wrong to me to God, then I think differently. I don't mean just the circumstances; I don't mean I walk away thinking, "You know, they really were right." No, I don't mean that. I typically leave and think, "They really were creeps!" I don't change my view of how they acted. Sometimes I do, but typically that's not what I do.

People say, "If you'll just pray about it, bad men will look good to you!" That sounds nice, but it's just not real. Bad men typically end up looking bad to you even when you pray about them. If someone rips you off, they ripped you off. If you can come up with a little one percent idea of why they didn't mean to rip you off, then that's wonderful, but at the end of the day, that doesn't really motivate you or stabilize you.

Well, the reason I say that is because I typically hear people say it that way. I run into God, the Rock, the fountain of truth, and He says, "Let me give you some big picture ideas of what's going on." I don't hear some voice, but one little phrase at a time over the weeks and months and years, and the big picture, the puzzle, starts coming into focus. Then the Lord says, "And I won't just change the way you think about your whole paradigm of life in time and eternity." No, it all gets changed when you take your pain to God. Things look different and your philosophy changes. He says, "Sometimes I will change the circumstance." Literally, God can change things that even Saul couldn't have changed. We take it to God so that He will change circumstances, but maybe that's our motivation, that He'll change the circumstances. God's motive is that He changes the way we think. When we think differently, we feel differently and we act differently. We do everything differently when we think differently.

VENTING IS A BAND-AID OFFERING ONLY TEMPORARY REMEDY FROM PAIN

Psalm 59:1 brought David to the fountain of eternal wisdom for the big picture. One of David's great glories in his life is the way he could see the big picture. It was absolutely fantastic how he saw the big picture. One of the reasons he took pain to God instead of venting it to get a band-aid comfort that never lasted anyway—venting gives you a momentary comfort, but you have to get comforted again. You never run into the fountain of wisdom that way. Typically God doesn't hear your prayer and answer the circumstances. I've normally gone to God so that He would make the circumstance better, but He ends up changing to a small degree that vast complex puzzle of life. The big picture gets clearer when you take it to God. Every now and then I see that the bad guy wasn't so bad, but honestly that's not normally what happens. I'm normally pretty resolved. "They really did lie. They did it. That's all there's to it." When you get locked into the big picture, the reason you have more mercy is because you feel differently about things. The pain of it feels differently because things don't matter as much when you're connected to the big picture. That's the power of Psalm 59:1 right there.

TAKE YOUR CAR TO A MECHANIC AND YOUR SOUL TO THE CREATOR OF THE SOUL

"Deliver me... O my God." The implications of that are massive. That approach to solving problems and to getting pain relieved in your heart is a massively brilliant way to engage with the fountain of wisdom. What we do is put the little band-aid on to comfort things. We vent it with people. We don't have to interface with God. We don't have to do the love-lover way to find pleasure. We don't turn it to prayer. We get a little embittered and our spirits grow dim, deluded, and crusty. We get little residues of bitterness that lay hold of us. Boy, we don't want to do that! Taking it to God is godly, but it's not just godly, it's really the smart way to fix your life. It's not just that it's godly. It is, but it's brilliant, too. It really is smart. Take your car to a mechanic. Don't try to fix it yourself if you've never studied it. Take your soul to the author of the human soul. He really, really can fix you better.

NOT FOR DAVID'S SIN, BUT SO THAT HE MIGHT BE PREPARED FOR LIFE AND ETERNITY

"Deliver me... O my God." What a sentence: "O my God." It's all right there. David is convinced that they're really bad men. He doesn't figure out some way to make them good. He knows that they're bloodthirsty (Ps. 59:2). Then in Psalm 59:3, he in essence says, "I'm innocent" (paraphrased). "The mighty gather against me" (v. 3b, NKJV). The mighty are the political and military leaders of the nation in Saul's court. He says, "The mighty ones are gathering against me." Beloved, this is serious stuff that's going on in David's life. He understands this. There's no false humility. He says, "They're not gathering against me because I haven't sinned. I'm not saying I don't sin, but I haven't sinned against Saul. I haven't been disloyal to Saul. This isn't about sinning." The political, the mighty ones, the military, political, and economic leaders of the nation were in

the fear of man before Saul because they would lose their jobs. So they all ganged up against David to save their own jobs. He said, "This isn't about sin."

The Lord said, "You're right, David. I'm the one who showed that to you. It's not because you slandered Saul and Saul caught you and fired you. That's not what happened. I'm building something deep in you. I'm building you for the future on the earth and for eternity. That's why."

THE TWO SEASONS OF GOVERNMENTAL PERSECUTION IN THE LIFE OF DAVID

This is the season of David's life when he was still in his early twenties. We know he was in his early twenties in 1 Samuel 19. We also know because in all the later psalms, almost without fail, when he gets in that relief of pain mode, he always discusses his guiltiness and his transgression. There were two seasons in David's life when he was being persecuted from the government, from the military, political, economic, and social leaders of the nation. The first was when he was young under Saul, and the second was when he was old under Absalom. Whenever he's talking about the people of God pursuing him, typically he's not talking about the unbelievers. He was defeating them, I exaggerate to say *effortlessly*, but he was defeating them with a really good track record. The Philistines felt pursued by him more than he felt pursued by them. When he's talking about the wicked who are coming against him, typically he means the political, economic, and social leaders under Saul's leadership, if he was young, or under Absalom's leadership when he was old. Almost all the psalms of pain are in those two seasons. Almost without fail, if it was written in the later years of his life, he acknowledges the number of sins that he committed, and particularly the problem of his adultery with Bathsheba and the murdering of Uriah.

After the murder of Uriah, the Lord said, "I will bring trouble from your own house." Every time his son caused him trouble, he said, "I contributed to this, Lord. I know this." He was talking about more than just his general sin and the fact of being born in sin. He said, "I know I murdered a man, and You said there would be trouble in my house because of it." He acknowledges sin, but here he doesn't acknowledge his sin. He's not resisting the doctrine of original sin. That's not what he's resisting. He's saying, "This isn't because I lied against Saul and he caught me and I was fired. I didn't do anything." That's one of the characteristic Davidic trends of the early psalms: that he doesn't acknowledge guilt at first, but at the last he does. It's not because he's older and wiser and therefore acknowledges guilt, because he really did murder Uriah and his son Absalom was the fruit of that. He wasn't being falsely humble. It's divine justice that David has a vision of.

"AWAKE TO HELP ME, AND BEHOLD!"

He says two things in Psalm 59:4 in the NKJV. He says, "Awake to help me, and behold!" I love it. He asks God to awaken and he asks God to look. I love that imagery of David: "Awake and look." In other words, he says, "God, in terms of my circumstances You're sleeping. Wake up. Lord, wake up!" He means, "Take active intervention." He's picturing God as slumbering related to this event in his life. God Himself depicts Himself this way. Then he asks God to look at him. "Behold, let Your face stare at my face. Look at me God. Let's look eye to eye. Change my circumstances. Awake and behold me. Look at my face and my heart as I look at Yours and let us have communion in the process. Awake and behold." I love those two lines there, those two phrases.

"DO NOT BE MERCIFUL TO ANY OF MY WICKED TRANSGRESSORS"

The next verse is one of the major themes of David that we'll have to examine during another session. Here I just want to mention it, because we will be closing in a few moments here. One of the major themes of David is here in Psalm 59:5. "You therefore, O Lord God of hosts, the God of Israel, awake to punish all the nations; do

not be merciful to any of my wicked transgressors.” That sounds like David is being vindictive. He’s not. There’s something so much bigger going on there. David understands with great clarity the distinction between immaturity and rebellion. He always calls on mercy to an immature, struggling believer who is saying in their heart, “I want to do this thing for You God.”

As a matter of fact, that’s David’s number one characteristic, his confidence in mercy when he sins. David is tapping into something far bigger than this session right now can cover. He has a spirit of revelation about the goodness of righteousness that happens to last forever and forever. He’s tapping into the glory and the goodness, that at the core of everything there’s a righteous God that causes everything that’s not good to cease. Whether it’s an eternal judgment or temporal judgments, he says, “Everything that You do that puts to an end what is not good and removes it, that destroys whatever is opposed to good, it’s good for You to do that, O God.” That’s his doctrine of judgment. His doctrine of judgment is his passion for what’s good to be established. He sees by revelation men who are locked in fiercely against the Spirit of God. I don’t mean believers who don’t believe in healing; that’s not what I mean. They’re locked in against God. He says, “Lord, whether in time or eternity, whether in Your temporal or eternal judgments, stop the people who refuse good. Don’t let them corrupt what’s good. Let the glory of who You are endure forever and forever. Let it come into our experience.” That’s what he’s praying for.

THE PROMINENCE OF TEMPORAL AND ETERNAL JUDGMENTS IN DAVIDIC SONGS

One thing God is going to do to the prophetic singers, and I’ll just give the prophetic singers a little hint on this if they don’t already know. It’s amazing when you read the seventy-three psalms of David that we know are David’s psalms. Several more are David’s psalms as well, but they don’t have his name on them. There may be close to a hundred Davidic psalms. It’s amazing, the prominence David gives to songs, prophetic songs that magnify God’s judgments, His temporal and eternal judgments. Right now you can hardly find a prophetic song on the earth that sees the goodness and the glory of temporal or eternal judgments, but the prophetic worshipper in the tabernacle of David carried that theme continually because he saw the beauty of it. Of course, the Church isn’t instructed in the beauty and the glory of justice and righteousness at this time. That’s something that we’ll develop a lot more. I just want to introduce this idea. One of the major themes of his singing is the beauty of judgment and God’s retribution against that which absolutely won’t yield to what is good. It’s for goodness’ sake that David loves this.

“AT EVENING THEY RETURN, GROWLING LIKE DOGS, ALL AROUND THE CITY”

Now here in Psalm 59:6 David describes their heart. Actually he does this twice, in Psalm 59:6 and then again in Psalm 59:14-15. He describes their heart and what they’re like is a pack of dogs, wild, hungry, savage dogs. He says they go around like these killer dogs, growling and sniffing for the scent of something they can devour.

In the Middle East there were these wild dogs that would roam the countryside like packs of wolves. David describes it in Psalm 59:6 and 14-15. He says they’re like savage, hungry, killer dogs. “They have no conscience, no sensitivity to what’s good and what’s right before You.” He says, “Stop them.”

TAKE YOUR COMPLAINING TO THE SOURCE, TO THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE

Next, let’s look at Psalm 59:7 and 12; I’ll leave you another thought or two, and then we will end. He talks about evil speech. That’s one of David’s key thoughts, is evil speech. He constantly brings before the people evil speech. One of the reasons David is so opposed to evil speech, though there are a dozen reasons why evil speech is bad, is because by it the righteous never interface with God, and thus never interface with wisdom and

truth, and are never changed. He essentially says, "If you go vent and put a band-aid on your soul, you'll hurt again tomorrow and you'll never be different. Don't vent this thing. Take it to the source, the fountain of eternal wisdom who has great powers as well." He will change the circumstances occasionally, but He will change the way you think mostly. "If you vent it through just saying it to someone on the phone and taking the burden off and putting on a band-aid on," he says, "you lose the glory of being transformed in this thing." That's not the only reason, but that's one of David's key reasons why he wouldn't speak evil, because he wanted to connect with God. He describes this reality in Psalm 59:7 and 12; he does it over and over and over.

THE TIME DIMENSION OF PATIENCE; THE HEART POSTURE OF DEVOTION

In Psalm 59:9 he magnifies the need to wait on God. There are two key concepts in waiting. There's a time frame. It takes patience to wait. It takes patience, and it may be months or years. In David's case it took seven years before Saul was removed from his path. There's a time dimension of patience, but then there's a heart posture of devotion in waiting before God. When you wait before God, you interface with Him. You interact with Him. There's a devotional posture and there's a time dimension to waiting on God. There are two dimensions to waiting. In the waiting you're saying, "O God, I love You." You talk to God. There's a devotional aspect, and in waiting, months and sometimes years go by before changes take place in circumstances. He believed in waiting.

DAVID SINGS OF GOD'S MERCY AND JUDGMENT

In Psalm 59:10, 16-17, David magnifies mercy. He magnifies mercy. He sings about it but his concept of mercy isn't a mercy that contradicts judgment. To him, mercy and judgment were two sides of one coin of one good God. Mercy and judgment weren't paradoxical themes that confused him to where he would say, "Well, I don't get it. I sang it, I was anointed, and I'll sing the other side this time." It made sense to him that they were one and the same God he sang about.

Amen. Let's stand.

MINISTRY TIME

O Father, we love You. God, we honor You. Lord, we want to interact with You. We want to come to You. We want You to be our portion. We don't want the band-aides of men. We don't want them to give us little props and tokens to take the pain away. We want to interact with You. We want to find out that we are successful because of You. We don't want circumstances to change just so we are a little happier for a few moments; we want to interact with You. We don't want to take the pressure off by gossip and slander. We want to throw our hearts into You, God. We want to find new ways to see and think. We want to see the big picture. We want to see what You look like and what we look like. We want to see what Your plan is about. We want the pain to drive us to the fountain of life and wisdom. Lord, we just want to say before You right now that we don't want to take the carnal shortcut that always brings more pain. We want to do it David's way. We want to answer pain in the way that You showed David. God, we want to find the beauty of God in pain. We thank You in the name of Jesus. Amen and amen.