

THE LIFE OF DAVID

SHEPHERD. WARRIOR. POET. KING.

WEEK 4: DARK CAVES AND DEEP WORSHIP

Today's Text: 1 Samuel 22-23:14

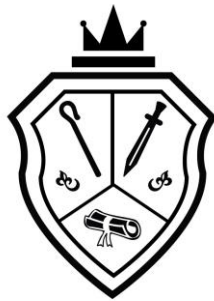
David's time of extreme trial must not be downplayed when we read it. For eight long years or more, he was under extreme stress, while his life was under threat at the hands of Saul. There were many times when David was deeply distressed and called out to God for help, comfort, relief and for hope. His pain and desperation was real, and God used these difficult circumstances in his life, over time, to develop and strengthen his character.

I. TOUGH SEASONS AREN'T NECESSARILY GOD'S JUDGEMENT & CAN STILL BE INFLUENTIAL SEASONS

- **Read 1 Samuel 22:1-2**

While David was on the run, fearful for his life at every turn, he had others join him, who were all in a bad space, physiologically or emotionally. Not only was he having to deal with his own fear and distress, but he had to lead all the others that gathered around him too. There is nowhere in the text that suggests that any of these struggling people were being disciplined by God. Life had just been hard, and they were in need of refuge and leadership. God used David in his darkest hours to lead others in theirs. We do not know how things would have worked out, had David been left to hide in the cave alone. It would have been easier to stay hidden, and far less risky. But God obviously had others around him for good reason. This causes us to reflect on the way in which we deal with our dark times. Do we retreat or do we allow others in? When life is tough all around us, do we gather with the strugglers and help them through, or do we hide from everyone until the "storm" is over? Have we ever stopped to consider what God thinks is the best way for us to respond to others in our dark seasons? Probably not. So this is a good time.

- ❖ **Q: Why do you think the other strugglers came to hide in the cave with David, and do you think it was a worthwhile decision for them?**
- ❖ **Q: Why is it important for us to recognize that there is no hint in the passage, that this season of difficulty for all of the struggling people, as well as for David, was not a result of their sin?**
- ❖ **Q: Why is community important in times of distress?**
- ❖ **Personal Reflection Q: Are you someone who helps those in distress when they are broken and afraid, or do you lose interest until they have picked themselves up again?**
- ❖ **Personal Reflection Q: When you are overwhelmed and afraid, do you run towards community or do you retreat in order to try and manage on your own? What is your reasoning for making this decision? And how does this passage challenge or support your decision-making?**



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2. TOUGH SEASONS CAN BE SPIRITUALLY SWEET SEASONS

• Read Psalm 14:1-7

In David's worst times, he did not deny the reality of the difficulties he was in. He wrote about them, and was real about them. But he did not give up on God. He took his feelings and struggles to the God he knew and trusted, and leaned into him. He knew that God was the only one who could save him, and so he went directly to his source. There are four simple lessons we can learn from the way in which David dealt with his difficulty. We too should:

- i. Speak to God
 - ii. Be honest about our feelings
 - iii. Acknowledge and learn to enjoy our lack of control
 - iv. Remember God's reputation
- ❖ Q: Why is it so important for us to see that David did not bottle up his feelings or confusion about what was happening in his life?
 - ❖ Q: Why is it a good space to be in when we realise that we cannot do anything to change our situation or save ourselves from it?
 - ❖ Q: Why does David appeal to God's great name and why is it highly significant for us that God cares about his own reputation?

3. TOUGH SEASONS CAN BE PROVIDENTIALLY PROLONGED

• Read 1 Samuel 23:1-14

This text is sobering. We often read the scriptures with the end of each story in mind, and miss some of the incredibly difficult moments that the characters have to endure. When David asked God if things would change after this victory, God said no. The season of difficulty was not yet over, the wait for God's promises would continue, and through all the distress God would remain faithful to him.

Some of us may have been in a difficult season for a long time, and we may have to continue through it for another season, or even longer. But we can be sure that God will continue to be faithful to us, and make us into the people he has designed us to be, through the testing of our faith.

- ❖ Q: Why do we need to read of God's faithfulness to David throughout his long season of trial, distress and waiting?
- ❖ **To do:** Share with the group about what is God saying to you regarding the season you are in. What is he prompting you to say or do in response to this message?