

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

The Books Of Samuel: God's Shift Of Israel From Apostasy Under The Judges To David's Reign

I. 1 Samuel: From Samuel To The Death Of Saul

T. Handling Escalating Unwanted Relationship Conflicts

(1 Samuel 18:9-19:24)

Introduction: (To show the need . . .)

We are called of God in Romans 12:18 to try to "live peaceably with all men," but relationship conflicts can not only come our way in life, but they can keep right on escalating regardless of our best efforts to the contrary:

(1) The Associated Press story, "Newtown teacher who took gun in school had received threats" (Republican-American, September 23, 2016, p. 4A) told of a Newtown Middle School teacher who "had received dozens of threatening phone calls and social media messages" from "conspiracy theorists" who claimed that "the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre never occurred." In response to the threats, he had purchased a .45-caliber pistol and one day absent mindedly taken it into the school building, what a school employee witnessed and had reported to the authorities. The teacher was arrested and eventually resigned his job, and the court gave him a kind of probation that can lead to a dismissal of the charges, with his wife commenting, "'We're just happy that this is finally over,'" Ibid.

The Sandy Hook massacre was nothing this middle school teacher had wanted. He had never wanted threats from conspiracy theorists, he had never intended absent-mindedly to take his gun into the school building and he did not initially want to give up his job, but his only way out of the situation was eventually to give up his teaching job.

(2) We face unwanted escalating conflicts at our level, too: while typing up the first draft of these sermon notes, I recalled the unwanted escalating conflicts a party I know is facing that the party has no ability to handle.

Need: *So we ask, "If I face an unwanted relationship conflict that continues to escalate, what should I do?!"*

- I. The day after Saul began to eye David with jealousy, an evil spirit from God powerfully came upon Saul, and in his jealousy he tried twice to kill David while David played his harp before Saul, 1 Sam. 18:9-11:**
 - A. The day after Saul began to eye David with jealousy (1 Samuel 18:9-10a), the demon spirit God had assigned to torment Saul (1 Samuel 16:14 ESV, NIV) "rushed" (*salah*, B. D. B., A Heb.-Eng. Lex. of the O. T., p. 852) upon him, making Saul act ecstatically violent in his house like the demon-influenced false prophets of Baal later acted in 1 Kings 18:29 (*naba'*, Ibid., p. 612; Hithpael = intensive reflexive stem), 1 Samuel 18:10b.
 - B. David as usual was playing his harp to calm Saul, but Saul by the demon, becoming enraged at David, twice hurled his javelin at him to pin him to the wall, but David both times eluded it, 1 Samuel 16:23; 18:10-11.
- II. This marked the start of escalating efforts by Saul to kill David, with David not being aware of the level of danger he faced because he did not realize that Saul actually wanted to kill him, 1 Sam. 18:12-19:11:**
 - A. After the first episode of Saul's hurling his javelin at David, God kept on blessing David, giving him great success in leading Israel's army against the Philistines, 1 Samuel 18:13-16, 25-28; 19:8.
 - B. However, David's growing success only enhanced Saul's jealousy and fear of him (1 Samuel 18:12, 15, 29; 19:8-9a), resulting in Saul's continued, escalating efforts to try to kill him:
 1. Saul appointed David over the army in hope that David might be killed in battle, 1 Samuel 18:12-13.
 2. Saul then tried to bribe David to fight even more battles by promising his daughter to him in marriage with the dowry of 100 Philistine foreskins, with David then killing 200 Philistines, 1 Samuel 18:25-27.
 3. Saul next urged his son and servants to kill David, but this effort was thwarted by Jonathan's defense of David so that Saul then took an oath, claiming he would not kill David, 1 Samuel 19:1-7.
 4. After David greatly slaughtered the Philistines in another battle, Saul's jealousy with the evil spirit from God led him once again to try to kill David by using his javelin, but David eluded it again, 1 Sam. 19:8-10.
 5. Saul then told his servants to kill David as he slept in his own house (1 Sam. 19:11a), but Saul's daughter who was wed to David learned of her father's plot and urged David to flee for his life, 1 Samuel 19:11b.
- III. Finally realizing from his wife's urging that Saul's rages were more than mere fits fueled by a demon, but expressions of hatred toward him, David fled from Saul's immediate reach, 1 Samuel 19:12-17, 18a.**
- IV. David then went to Ramah and there sought the counsel of the godly prophet Samuel, 1 Samuel 19:18b:**
 - A. David fled from Saul in Gibeah (1 Samuel 10:26) to Samuel in Ramah (1 Samuel 19:18a) several miles away (The Macmillan Bible Atlas, 1968, map 81), and told Samuel all the evil Saul had done to him, 1 Sam. 19:18b.
 - B. Of note, Samuel led David to a section in Ramah known as Naioth (1 Samuel 19:18c), the location of a school of the prophets that Samuel headed. (Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, fn. to 1 Samuel 19:18) Samuel sought to

surround David with men of God who were influenced by the Holy Spirit to offset Saul's threat against him akin to how God in Samuel's previous judgeship of Israel had delivered Israel from a huge Philistine threat by his spiritual ministry of prayer and worship of the Lord back in 1 Samuel 7:9-10.

- V. **In seeking the counsel of godly Samuel, and hence the godly advice of the Lord, David was protected miraculously by God's Holy Spirit from Saul's continued efforts to try to kill him, 1 Samuel 19:19-24:**
- A. Saul soon learned that David was just a few miles north of his town of Gibeah up in Ramah, so he sent messengers up there to capture David, 1 Samuel 19:19-20a.
 - B. However, when they saw the school of the prophets prophesying under the Holy Spirit's power, with Samuel standing over them directing their ministrations, Saul's messengers were overcome by the Holy Spirit so that they began to prophesy instead of capturing David, 1 Samuel 19:20b.
 - C. Learning of this turn of events, Saul persisted in sending two more companies of servants to capture David, but the same thing happened to both companies as had occurred to his first company, 1 Samuel 19:21.
 - D. Finally, Saul himself went up to Ramah to capture David, and upon learning that he was at Naioth, he began to travel toward Naioth when the Holy Spirit came upon him, forcing him to prophesy until he arrived at Naioth where he stripped off his outer robe and prophesied, lying down all day and all night this way, completely subdued by the Holy Spirit from doing any harm to David, 1 Samuel 19:22-24a.
 - E. So great was this demonstration of the Holy Spirit's dominance over Saul that the question began to circulate in Israel, "Is Saul also among the prophets?" (1 Samuel 19:24b)

Lesson: *God sought to SEPARATE David from Saul so that Israel could more clearly behold the DIFFERENCES between them, and to that end, when Saul first began to view David with jealousy, God sent a demon powerfully rushing upon Saul to augment his fear and hatred of David, leading to escalations of Saul's mistreatment of David so that David eventually learned that Saul planned to kill him so that he would flee from Saul. Nevertheless, when Saul tried to pursue David to slay him, since David had sought godly advice and God's help, God protected him.*

Application: *If facing undesirable conflicts with others that seem to escalate unavoidably, (1) may we trust in Christ to be saved and be indwelt by the empowering Spirit of God, John 3:16; Galatians 3:14. (2) Then, may we (a) realize that God is allowing the escalating conflict to occur drive us to part from evil (2 Timothy 3:1-5), (b) that we thus withdraw from the party as far as needed for protection (2 Timothy 3:5), (c) that we seek advice from the godly, especially from Scripture (2 Timothy 3:12-17) and (d) wait on God to protect and to lead us from there.*

Conclusion: (To illustrate the message . . .)

By way of illustrating this message, a number of us at Nepaug Church have come from backgrounds that teach that the way to gain eternal life is by doing good works of merit before God as are found in the sacraments of some church, and we have consistently taught at Nepaug Church that Ephesians 2:8-9 counters this belief in claiming that we are saved "through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."

However, the conflict on this issue has escalated as the idea has recently circulated that though all men are saved only by faith, were they to live a perfect life all of their lives, when they died, they would go to heaven.

This view also needs to be strongly opposed, for Scripture at Romans 5:12 explains that men die because they are sinners, and one is a sinner at the point of conception without having yet committed any personal act of sin simply because he inherits Adam's sin nature at conception according to Psalm 51:5 and Ephesians 2:3b. We are thus "by nature the children of wrath," by nature at conception under divine condemnation and in need of God's salvation.

In other words, there is no possible way for one to be saved by good works, for we are all conceived and born in sin and are in desperate need of God's salvation by faith alone in Christ alone. Once again, Ephesians 2:8-9 claims that salvation is not by human meritorious works of any kind lest any man should boast, for no man who has thus inherited Adam's sin nature can of himself boast of righteousness in himself before God.

I believe God has allowed us to face this escalation of conflict with the subtle error of self-help righteousness to sharpen our focus on God's grace, that we appreciate anew the fact that we must be saved by God and by God alone, that without God we are helplessly and hopelessly lost. Only then will lost man trust in Christ!

If we face unwanted conflicts that seem to escalate uncontrollably, may we trust in Christ as Savior if needed. Then, may we realize God has a plan in allowing the conflict to escalate so that we seek godly counsel and especially Scripture to handle it, separating from evil and waiting upon God to protect and to lead us.