

CONFLICT WITHIN THE SOUL

Opening: The late Andy Rooney a man who had a gift of saying a lot with a few words

Text: 1Samuel 26 (MSG)

Key verse: 1Samuel 26:9 ⁹But David said to Abishai, “Don’t you dare hurt him! Who could lay a hand on God’s anointed and even think of getting away with it?”

The Butterfly & Cocoon

Butterflies are beautiful and graceful, cocoons fuzzy and gross but without the life and death struggle it takes for the butterfly to emerge from its cocoon the butterfly would not exist.

Of all the battles we engage in ... the battle against self is probably the most agonizing.

David's inner conflict is our focus this morning

We've learned that God uses trials and struggles to build spiritual strength and faith.

After **almost** losing her husband to a brain tumor in 2006, **Laura Story** wrote the song "Blessings" as a reminder that God is faithful even when things don't turn out the way we expect them to.

- It won a Grammy for Best Contemporary Christian Music Song in 2012.
- Minor compared to the millions of hearts and lives God touched through her conflict of soul.

'Cause what if your blessings come through raindrops

What if Your healing comes through tears

What if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know You're near

What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise



David's life must have seemed like a yoyo on a string ... Do kids know what a yoyo is today?

He started out with such incredible highs but had to endure devastating lows

- God sent Samuel to anoint him king over all his older brothers (high point)
- God preps him in the sheep fields of Bethlehem taking on a bear and lion
- God gives him a soaring victory over the monstrous Goliath
- At 17 David is a wide eyed optimist who believes God can do anything

- In his early twenties David's optimism turns to pessimism when he becomes a hunted fugitive for 10 years

Like every person who is asked to provide leadership David wanted to escape the pressure – There were moments he not only doubted God's promise of his anointing – when all he wanted was to escape from it all.

➡ Not unusual ...

In the early days of the American Revolution, George Washington felt the same way. In a letter to his cousin Lund Washington he writes: “*In confidence I tell you I have never been in such an unhappy, divided state since I was born. I'm told that if I leave the service all will be lost.*”

Ten years of continuous hounding by the king gradually wore David down.

To stay alive - he developed an extensive spy network

His spies were so good – they not only tracked the King's movements they knew exactly where Saul laid his head at night and who was guarding him.

1 Sam 26: 6-11 David hatches a daring plan - sneak into Saul's camp hours before dawn

6 “Who will go down with me and enter Saul's camp?”

Abishai whispered, “I'll go with you.”

7 So David and Abishai entered the encampment by night, and there he was—Saul, stretched out asleep at the center of the camp, his spear stuck in the ground near his head, with Abner and the troops sound asleep on all sides.

8 Abishai said, “This is the moment! God has put your enemy in your grasp. Let me nail him to the ground with his spear. One hit will do it, believe me; I won't need a second!”

9 But David said to Abishai, “Don't you dare hurt him! Who could lay a hand on GOD's anointed and even think of getting away with it?”

10-11 He went on, “As GOD lives, either GOD will strike him, or his time will come and he'll die in bed, or he'll fall in battle, but GOD forbid that I should lay a finger on GOD's anointed. Now, grab the spear at his head and the water jug and let's get out of here.”

Abishai begs permission to kill the Saul

He sees this moment as God ordained providence ... but David doesn't.

When you want something bad enough, it's easy to lose sight of what is and isn't God's leading for us

- We need spiritual awareness of what is and isn't the will of God
- The Bible calls this kind of understanding, *discernment*

Not all opportunities that appear to be good are part of God's plan for us.

How can we tell what is and isn't?

Jen and I were taking our daily 2 mile walk in our neighborhood – she looked down along the side of the road near an undeveloped piece of land and discovered \$220.00 Exciting but then came the decision ... what's the right thing to do with it? Someone lost that money

Abishai, who risked his life for David is standing over the sleeping king, pleading with David! (Loud Whispers) *I can kill this creep with his own spear* ...but David is nods no. “*David if you're looking for a sign from God ... this is it!*”

But David won't let him do it; because he sees this moment as a test of faith

God expects things from us.

- To recognize the right thing to do
- In doing the right thing we provide examples to others ... especially to people who don't know him

Proverbs 2 Talks about Understanding or discernment

³Cry out for insight,
and ask for understanding.

⁴Search for them as you would for silver;
seek them like hidden treasures.

⁶For the LORD grants wisdom!
From his mouth come knowledge and understanding.

⁹Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will find the right way to go.

But there are times when we struggle to know what the right thing is!

There are situations when making a decision is absolutely frightening! We put off making a choice

We're afraid ... What if we make the wrong choice?

The year before I retired from teaching - I applied to Adelphi University , I believed God wanted me to become an accredited counselor and begin a second career. Boy would that have been a mistake ... but all signs seemed to point in that direction

I was accepted to a very select program at Adelphi but from there things were not working out

I struggled with the decision ... did God want me to do this or not ...

The Holy Spirit used a close friend to put me at ease ...*Dummy God isn't going to let you make the wrong choice not when your praying for his direction!*

Like David our fears can seem overwhelming causing us to lose our spiritual footing - and do what we think is the best

I think David struggled like the rest of us with **What ifs and If Only.**

Daily Bread If Only ...

David made the right decision in not killing King Saul but then followed it up with a terrible decision going back into enemy territory and aligned himself with the enemy King Achish.

In [Matthew 16](#) Peter had just moved to the head of the class by answering a question Jesus had put out to His 12 disciples.

Jesus asked them ,Who do men say that I am? ... “**But who do you say I am?**”

¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, “**You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.**”

¹⁷ Jesus replied, “**You are blessed, Simon son of John, because my Father in heaven has revealed this to you. You did not learn this from any human being.** ...

Then Jesus begins to reveal to them how his mission is to suffer and die on the Cross.

Peter still basking in Jesus' praise, takes him aside to correct him ... Lord don't say those things that will never happen to you.

Jesus response: “**Get away from me, Satan! You are a dangerous trap to me.**”

Peter's head had to be spinning

Personal ...

I have interesting neighbors: some friendly and outgoing , some who keep to themselves and one whose adversarial

- He started accusing my children, were still living at home at the time, of assaulting his property .
- Put warning notes on the windshields of their boyfriends who did nothing more than park on the street adjacent to his property.
- Trying to reason with him only made things worse he became hostile.
- After months of this I asked people at our Bible study to help us pray about it.

Then the unexpected happened while having his oak trees trimmed a branch from fell and made a hole in the roof of my shed.

- “Now I’ve got him! But God’s voice immediately responded inside me – “*You’re not going to do anything!* And I didn’t – Tree guys came over offering to pay for repairs – I refused

Amazingly not only did the tension stop but the man became friendly – **in fact too friendly!**

God wants to direct our lives ... Are we willing to listen to Him?

Read 1 Samuel 26: 15- 21

From a safer distance David shouts to the sleeping kings body guard. Taunting him.

“Hey, Abner! How long do I have to wait for you to wake up and answer me?” ...

¹⁵⁻¹⁶ “Aren’t you in charge there?” said David. ... Bad form! As GOD lives, your life should be forfeit, you and the entire bodyguard. Look what I have—the king’s spear and water jug that were right beside his head!”

^{17 -20} By now, Saul had recognized David’s voice and said, “Is that you, my son David?”

²¹ Saul confessed, “I’ve sinned! Oh, come back, my dear son David! I won’t hurt you anymore.

Then David went on his way, and Saul went home.

Saul is remorseful, sorry about hunting David and says so in front of all his troops – he even pleads with David to come home.

A great victory for David!

But David follow a good decisions with a bad one.

Our most vulnerable moments isn't when we're broken down, it's when we're puffed up full of success.

1 Samuel 27: 1

David thought to himself, "Sooner or later, Saul's going to get me. The best thing I can do is escape to Philistine country. Saul will count me a lost cause and quit hunting me down in every nook and cranny of Israel. I'll be out of his reach for good."

That decision ends up in what I call the Ziklag Affair

David heads back into Philistine territory and lies his face off ... ends up the personal body guard of Achish The Philistine King of Gath

Things go from bad to worse as pay back for protection, Achish asks David and his men to fight alongside of him in a raid against Israel and David agrees to do it!

It never happens because God prevents it ... but when he and his men return to their Philistine home, their wives and children are gone - captured and carried away.

- His men turn on him wanting to stone him.
- This is might be the lowest point in David's life
- He had nothing left: no wife, children, no respect, and friends and warriors that want to kill him.

At his lowest point David turned back to the God who saved him from the giant.

- He heard God's voice again for the first time in a long time.

How great it is to feel God's presence after a long dry spell

1. David had abandoned God but God never abandoned David and he'll never abandon you.
2. If you're facing a decision and don't know what to do
3. Or you've made some bad decisions and don't know the way out of them.

Know that Jesus is here right now to lead you back across enemy's lines into His presence

Let's Pray