

## God, In the Hands of an Angry Sinner

By Pastor Greg  
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1 Samuel 26

Bunkertown COB

It seems that some things never change. Fred Flintstone will never learn to just tell Wilma the truth. The Brain will continue to dream up some scheme to take over the world, only to have his plans ruined by Pinky. And somewhere in the desolate mountains of Nevada, this scene will unfold once again (Wiley Coyote chases the Road Runner). It seems some things never change. Sadly, neither do some people.

As I pointed out a few weeks ago, God will sometimes allow us to end up in a cave. And most of us realize He has allowed this dark time in our lives because He wants us to change. God is busy molding and shaping us into someone different. But some people just will not be changed. Like King Saul, for example.

Following David's journey out of the cave, we find him hiding in the hills overlooking the wasteland

(follow along with this story in [1 Samuel chapter 26](#)).

Saul and his 3,000 men have traveled all over southern Judah in pursuit of David. Why? Because Saul figured David would act just like everyone else. You see, in the lands surrounding Israel it was common practice to replace a king through battle or by assassination. That's a practice we still see in other nations today. If you don't like the king, get a band of people together willing to kill the king and make you the new ruler. And considering that Samuel had anointed David as king, Saul must have figured David was out to get him. That's why Saul was so paranoid. That's why he slept in his camp surrounded by his loyal followers. That's why sneaking in and taking the spear was such an insult to Abner; he had failed to protect the king. And had David been a lesser man, Saul would have been killed.

So King Saul was beginning to act just like the very nations he was supposed to destroy. And his attitude made a mockery of God. But do you see how differently David acted? He refused to overthrow the king like some uncircumcised Philistine. David made a choice to act differently than the rest of the world so that God would be honored. He chose to trust God by letting Him take care of Saul in His own way

and according to His own timing (verse 10). And David is humble before God because he was open to the possibility to God's discipline (verse 19). God, in the hands of this righteous man, is honored by David's obedience, by his trust, and by his fear of the Lord. But God, in the hands of a sinful man, is treated in a whole different way.

Even though Saul confessed his sin back in chapter 24, even though he cried when he realized that David had spared his life (verse 16-17), and even though he confessed that David would be a great king and acknowledged that David would indeed rule (verse 20), he was still pursuing David. Why was he back to his old tricks? It's because Saul really had no reverence for God. He did not fear Him the way he should. Saul's conduct is actually an insult to God. He was the King of Israel, the nation God had set aside to be different. He had no business acting like the rest of the world. And if the king would act this way (just like everyone else) very soon so would the rest of the nation. God did not rescue these people just so they would act like everyone else. They were to be set apart and different.

Jesus points out in one of His parables that it will be difficult to enter the Kingdom of Heaven if we refuse to repent or change (**Matthew 21:28-32**). Why is that? Well, think about it for a moment. We've been taught that if we accept what Jesus did for us on the cross, our sin will be forgiven. We ask Jesus to redeem us; for His blood to purchase our salvation. In response, we get this giddy feeling inside that makes us want to lift our hands in praise. Tell me, does this emotional response mean we are saved? Not necessarily. You see, if we base salvation on our feelings alone, then we are more apt to resist change. And is not the whole purpose of our cave experiences to help us change? Paul reminds us **"that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"**<sup>1</sup> (2 Corinthians 5:17).

We are not saved because we went through the motions. We are not a Christian just because we've mouthed the words and attended membership classes.

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (2 Co 5:17). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

If time permits, there also needs to be a noticeable change in our life. Things cannot remain the same. I mean, a person can come to Christ just as they are, but they cannot remain just as they were. If we confess to being a Christian yet remain just like the rest of the world, we dishonor Jesus and make a mockery of the cross.

It's one thing to praise Jesus because of who He is. But to worship Him while refusing to be changed is to say that there was nothing wrong with you in the first place. But He expects us to change; to act differently than the rest of the world because we are not part of this world (**They do not belong to this world any more than I do.**<sup>2</sup> John 17:16).

God, in the hands of a righteous person (like David), is honored when that person becomes more godly today than they were yesterday. But God, in the hands of a sinner (like Saul), is dishonored when that person has no desire to change in the first place.

So you want to call yourself a Christian. You asked Jesus to forgive your sins. Just out of curiosity, would those around you be able to tell the difference?

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<sup>2</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. "Text edition"--Spine. (2nd ed.) (Jn 17:16). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.