

LESSONS

1st Lesson: 1 Samuel 24: 1-11

1. Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David is in the Wilderness of En Gedi." 2. Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3. So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there was a cave; and Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.) 4. Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the Lord said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it seems good to you.'" And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe. 5. Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. 6. And he said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." 7. So David restrained his servants with these words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on his way. 8. David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9. And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'? 10. Look, this day your eyes have seen that the Lord delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and someone urged me to kill you. But my eye spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he is the Lord's anointed.' 11. Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that there is neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you.

2nd Lesson: Luke 8: 40-48; Mark 5:28

40. So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. 41. And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, 42. for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. 43. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, 44. came from behind and touched the border of His garment. [For she said, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well." Mark 5:28]. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. 45. And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'" 46. But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me." 47. Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. 48.

And He said to her, “Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.”

3rd Lesson: Arcana Coelestia 9954:11

The reason why the kings were called “the anointed of Jehovah” and why it was therefore sacrilegious to injure them, was that by “the anointed of Jehovah” is meant the Lord as to the Divine Human; although according to the sense of the letter the term is applied to a king who was anointed with oil. For when the Lord was in the world, He was, in respect to the Human, the Divine truth itself; and in respect to the very being of His life, He was the Divine good itself, which with man is called the soul from the father; for He was conceived from Jehovah, and in the Word “Jehovah” denotes the Divine good of the Divine love, which is the being of the life of all. From this it is that the Lord alone was “the Anointed of Jehovah” in very essence and in very performance, because the Divine good was in Him; and the Divine truth proceeding from this good was in His Human while He was in the world. The kings of the earth, however, were not “the Anointed of Jehovah,” but they represented the Lord, who alone is “the Anointed of Jehovah” and therefore on account of this anointing it was sacrilegious to injure the kings of the earth. But the anointing of the kings of the earth was done with oil, while the anointing of the Lord as to the Divine Human was done with the Divine good itself of the Divine love, which the oil represented. From this it is that He was called “the Messiah” and “the Christ,” “Messiah” in the Hebrew tongue meaning “the Anointed” in like manner as “Christ” in the Greek tongue.

S E R M O N

Relationship With The Lord

A Sermon By
Rev. Michael E. Ferrell

Now it happened afterward that David’s heart troubled him because he had cut Saul’s robe. And he said to his men, “The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.” 1 Samuel 24: 5-6

Saul and David:

Although he was a good king at the start of his reign, Saul committed a series of acts that disqualified him from leading the people of Israel. Therefore the Lord began to gradually take away Saul’s role as king of Israel. David would become the next king.

Saul began to resent David as David became more popular among the people. Saul engaged in a campaign to persecute David: he threw a spear at him, ordered his murder,

attempted to sway Jonathan against him, murdered 85 of the Lord's priests, and with an army of men pursued after David. David escaped on each occasion that Saul threatened his life. Eventually, David exiled himself from his homeland as he took up residence in Gath and then in the wilderness.

So it came to pass that a situation presented itself in which David could exact revenge upon Saul. David and his men were staying in a cave in which Saul entered not knowing they were there. David's men offered to deliver Saul into his hands so David could do unto him as he pleased. Perhaps Saul may have laid his robe aside, we don't know. But unobserved by Saul, David secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

But then David was troubled in his heart because of what he did. His conscience tormented him because he had cut off a piece of Saul's robe. David knew that it was wrong to harm the Lord's anointed. Although David did not commit an act of physical assault upon the king, the fact that he had reached out against Saul troubled him.

David had significantly high regard for Saul. To cut off a piece of Saul's robe was an act of disrespect even though Saul sought to take David's life. And so David said to his men, "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord." David demonstrated his mercy and love for Saul. The piece of Saul's robe served as proof. After Saul departed from the cave David called out to him, "someone urged me to kill you...I will not stretch out my hand against my lord...see the corner of your robe in my hand...I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you...I have not sinned against you."

The Lord:

As we look deeper into this story about Saul and David we start with a most profound truth in the Heavenly Doctrine that "in the internal sense of the Word the Lord's whole life is described, such as it was to be in the world, even as to the perceptions and thoughts" (AC 2523). Without revelation of the Heavenly Doctrine this story of a wayward king Saul and a merciful king David appears as an insignificant saga of two men who each served their tenure as king of the Israelite people several centuries ago. There's much more to this story.

Humanity drifted further and further away from God to such an extent that mankind severed its connection with God. Therefore God came into the world. Jehovah God of the Old Testament is the Lord who came into the world and lived here on earth among people. By coming into the world and clothing Himself with a human, the invisible God made Himself visible to mankind. He came into the world so that He could reestablish His connection with humanity. However, in coming into the world the Lord assumed a human that was corrupted and impure in all respects.

We learn in the Heavenly Doctrine that Saul who is "the anointed of Jehovah is meant the Lord as to the Divine Human" (AC 9954:11). This raises the question of how can Saul, by his misdeeds and constant conflicts with David represent the Lord? The struggle

between Saul and David is descriptive of the Lord's life as He labored against an impure, corrupted human He assumed in the world among mankind. Saul and David picture the Lord sorting out within Himself the relation between His very Divine and the human He assumed in the world.

The Heavenly Doctrine teaches that King David represents "the Lord in respect to Divine truth" (AE 205). And again, Saul, "the Anointed of Jehovah" is the "Lord as to the Divine Human" (AC 9954:11). The Lord was born as any other person. The Word tells us further that because He was "born as other men, He was also instructed as they are, but into His knowledges as receptacles celestial things were constantly being insinuated" (AC 1460, AC 1616:3). In other words, the Lord by means of instruction received knowledge but instantly perceived and knew what is good and what is true. The Heavenly Doctrine says that the Lord "instructed Himself in the doctrinal things of charity and faith" (AC 2497). From the Divine Truth within Him the Lord taught Himself in all matters of charity and faith.

The misdeeds of Saul, on a deeper level, picture impurities within the human the Lord assumed. Inclinations toward evils and falsities characterized this corrupted human. The Word says "the Lord was born as are other men and had infirmities as have other men" (AC 1573:3). But, by not allowing evils and falsities to influence His loves, His thoughts and His life, the Lord gradually and completely eradicated all evil and false inclinations from the human He assumed as He united it with His Divine.

David said to his men "The Lord forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the Lord's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he [Saul] is the anointed of the Lord." And so David, who represents the Lord, would not lift up his hand against the Lord's anointed which is His Divine Human. Instead, the Lord nurtured Himself along by His own power. By the strength of His Divine Love guided by His Divine Truth, He ordered Himself. The Lord organized His mind such that His Love, directed by His Truth expressed itself visibly among humanity as went about teaching, healing the sick, casting out demons, and raising the dead.

Saul gives us a picture of hereditary evils and falsities in their endeavor to sway the Lord toward disorder and to forsake even Himself and the human race. However, the Lord would not lift up His hand against His Anointed. In His mercy, He permitted Himself to endure temptations. He did not abandon this weak, frail, and corrupted human. Instead, He eradicated all hellish impurities while at the same time flowed in with His Divine. He gradually united with His Divine the human He took on in the world. All the while, the Lord continued on His mission to save mankind.

People and the Lord:

And so we turn to why this is all so important. The Lord's Glorification is an image of our regeneration. The conflict between Saul and David also describes the struggles within ourselves as we strive to prevail over our own individual disorders that tend to lead us away from the Lord and toward hell. David would not stretch out his hand

against the Lord's Anointed. Likewise, the Lord would never harm anyone in the human family. This is true even though at times we will allow something sinful or false to influence us.

While we are not the Lord's Anointed, each and every person is special to the Lord. The doctrine is clear: "the Divine Itself never casts away any man from Him for He loves all, and therefore desires the salvation of all" (AE 328:3); "the Lord is present with every man with the good of love, because He loves all, and from love wills to conjoin them with Himself" (AC 10127:4); "His love for all is like that of a father for his sons, who desires to make all His heirs, and provides an inheritance for those who are to be born, as He does for those already born" (AC 1865:3).

For some of us, now is the time to reestablish relationship with the Lord if we see that we have gone astray. For others the objective is to continue allowing the Lord to strengthen their relationship with Him. In both cases the Lord looks favorably upon us with nothing but love and compassion. The Lord's Anointed is the Lord Himself. Therefore, let's not stretch out our hand against the Lord.

In the Heavenly Doctrine we're told that "to stretch out the hand" denotes the rule of power is because the hand or arm has power when it is stretched out (AC 7673). Your hand symbolizes the power of your will. And we know the human will desires nothing but evil. Your hand symbolizes the power of your understanding. And we know also that our understanding clings to falsity in order that we may justify ourselves. Your hand is the power of your loves directed by the knowledge you have. And what you love becomes visible or is seen in your actions and deeds. Therefore your hand is the power of your loves manifested in the kind of life you live.

We're all susceptible to leading ourselves and stretching out our hand against the Lord because, as the Heavenly Doctrine teaches, man does not know what is good or evil (AC 4818:6, AC 1661, AC 2715). That's why the Ten Commandments teach us what evil is and command us what to avoid. The reason is because "one learns from evil what good is, indeed one knows the nature of good from its opposite, to be exact" (AC 7812). We need the Lord's truths because "without truths man does not know what is good, or what is the nature of good, thus does not know the way to heaven" (AE 725:4).

Before we stretch out our hand we should first examine our motivation. The woman with the issue of blood said to herself, "If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well" (Mark 5:28). It is clear she did not intend harm to the Lord. Her faith in the Lord motivated her to act. Her trust that the Lord could heal her infirmity inspired her to stretch out her hand to touch the Lord's garment.

We learn from the Word that regarding this woman by "touching" is signified communication, transfer, and reception, (AC 10130:6). By reaching out her soul to the Lord she opened herself to Him. Then the Lord could send forth His Divine and she, in turn, could receive salvation. This miracle highlights the kind of attitude to have when a person comes before the Lord.

We can learn from David's respect for Saul. Saul attempted to harm David. In contrast, our human nature strives against the Lord. We must be careful that we do not convince ourselves when we've sinned that's it allowable. We must be careful not to convince ourselves that justifications (false ideas used to excuse our sins) can be acceptable. If we do not shun evil we will not care and then make evil to be good. The Heavenly Doctrine describes how this happens:

It must be understood that the difficulty of so thinking and of resisting evils increases so far as man from his will does evils, for in the same measure he becomes accustomed to them until he no longer sees them, and at length loves them and from the delight of his love excuses them, and confirms them by every kind of fallacy, and declares them to be allowable and good. HH 533

Concluding Ideas:

The wonderful miracle living within the story of Saul and David is a story of our spiritual development. Instead of falling prey to our inclination toward what is evil and false let's instead refuse to stretch out our hand against the Lord. Like the woman who touched the Lord's garment, let's reach out asking Him to open our eyes to see. We can turn to Him to strengthen our commitment to obey His Word.

The Lord forbids that we should do anything to transgress His commandments. Our task therefore is to honor and respect the Lord and not do violence to the wonderful work of salvation He is bringing about within us. "The Lord preserves all who love Him" (Psalm 145: 20).

Amen.