

THE BOOK OF FIRST SAMUEL

"Self-Restraint"

1 Sam. 24:1-22

court scene.

- d. God is to deliver. Another legal term meaning to litigate for one.

In essence, David said that he took his own hand off the matter in view of the fact that God holds the affairs of men in His own hands! There it would stay!

Conclusion

It is impossible to calculate what this self-restraint meant for David. No single Psalm gives the answer. But there must have been a great deal of solace and peace within David for he knew God would not allow him to be put to shame. What about Saul? The record notes three items about him:

1. Saul's confession vv. 17-19.
2. Saul's conviction. v. 20.
3. Saul's concession. vv. 21, 22.

Take heart, then my Christian friend, for the matter is of the Lord and He will see to its proper and blessed end. Whatever your lot, may the Lord help you to say: It is well because it is all in His hands! If you cannot so relate yourself to the Lord, why not establish the proper relationship through faith on Christ into your heart and the thrill of His life in you will begin! Amen.

Notes:

Introduction

1. To draw back in the time of crisis is cowardice. To limit oneself in the face of emotional strain is praiseworthy.

2. Self-restraint is related to two important Christian concepts: waiting on God (which includes the ideas of prayer and supplication) and waiting for God (which includes the ideas of patience and submission to His demonstrated will). Psalm 40:1 states the latter situation happily: "I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me and heard my cry."

3. There are evidences of self-restraint in the life of David. Indications that he knew what it really meant to "wait for the Lord" in situations which otherwise were unbearable. Consider the following instances in our text:

1. PERSONALLY--toward self.

a. Actions. Some of the things which David did indicate that there was definite control of his feelings and spirit. Here are some of them:

- 1) He cut a small portion of Saul's garment (v. 4). It could have been otherwise as he notes (v. 10).
- 2) He prayed to God (v. 6). He knew the situation was beyond himself. Heavenly intervention was imperative.
- 3) He was smitten in his heart (v. 5). There was a deep conviction that what he had done was not entirely right with God.

b. Intentions. One gets the general feeling in reading the chapter that there was the genuine desire on David's part to do the will of God. He desired to be controlled by the Lord and to

wait for Him. His stricken heart and prayer to God are as much a part of this as of his overt actions.

2. PRACTICALLY--toward servants.

From the record, David's servants urged him to take advantage of the opportunity which appeared to be from God (vv. 4, 7, 10). Even an apparent advantage had to be tempered by a ruling of God which superceded a very normal and likely bit of counsel. Somehow David believed it was GOD Who would deal with Saul; it was not his own prerogative. Mark the restraint David exercised with his servants:

- a. He stayed them v. 7. The verb used here means to split, cleave, divide. Hence to rend or chide or upbraid. There is no question raised against divine leadership here!
- b. He suffered them not. v. 7. The verb here is the common one meaning to give. Hence, David did not give the command for attack. He was bridled! He waited for God.
- c. He hearkened not. v. 10. The servants told David to exercise his privilege, but he resisted apparent "golden opportunity."

NOTE: Two items should be remembered:

- a. The leadership of David was unquestioned. It was he who led the band.
- b. The miracle of God in the whole event. Why didn't Saul see David? Why did David remain (v. 3) in the cave?

3. PARTICULARLY--toward Saul.

In no other section is it so dramatically pertinent that David was waiting for the Lord than in his attitude toward Saul. Here are some items never to be forgotten:

- a. His presentation. v. 8. Two verbs show the

patience of David. He bowed down before Saul. This verb means to do homage or prostrate oneself. The other verb is stoop and means to bow the knee and to incline in honour. How do you do this toward one who was ostensibly your murderer!

- b. His designation. In a variety of ways, David showed his restraint toward Saul but the names he gave him are fantastic. Think of these:

- 1) my master v. 6.
- 2) my father v. 11.
- 3) my lord vv. 9, 10.
- 4) the king v. 8.
- 5) the Lord's anointed vv. 6, 10.

- c. His explanation. v. 9. David's argument with Saul was: why listen to men. Listen rather to God!

- d. His vindication. vv. 11, 12. David recounts his whole feeling toward Saul:

- 1) No evil. Common generic term.
- 2) No transgression. Idea of rebellion and defection, he claims, cannot be found in him.
- 3) No sin. He had always done the requirements.
- 4) No hand. David had never sought Saul's harm.

From a human point of view, David had much for which he could have been unbridled in his feelings, but he waited for God.

4. PIVOTALLY--toward God. v. 12, 15.

This is the heart of the issue. David unburdens his heart to show that the outcome of the current difficulties lay with God and not himself. This surely promotes patience and submission. It removes self effort and involvement. It leaves all with the Lord. See how this is done:

- a. God is to judge.
- b. God is to avenge.
- c. God is to plead. A legal verb related to a