

Date: October 20, 2013

Title: David's Astute Political Judgment (3)

Main Scripture: Hebrews Chapter 11, Verses 32-33

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Greetings for your peace. This is Hebrews Chapter 11, Verses 32 to 33.

32 And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets,

33 who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions,

Today, I will deliver a message on the topic of "David's Astute Political Judgment," the third part of the series on David.

After David and King Saul returned to the palace, following David's defeat of the Philistine Goliath, 1 Samuel 18:7 recounts, "The women sang as they played: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.'" This could have put David in a very difficult position.

Sure enough, in verse 8, it states, "Saul was very angry; this refrain displeased him greatly. He thought, 'They have credited David with tens of thousands, but me with only thousands. What more can he get but the kingdom?'" And so, Saul began to view David with suspicion. David had already created a favorable public opinion on the battlefield, which Saul reluctantly acknowledged by offering his daughter Merab to David in marriage in verse 17, saying, "I will give her to you in marriage; only serve me bravely and fight the battles of the Lord." However, Saul's real intent was to send David back to the battlefield and have him killed by the Philistines. Saul plotted this because he knew that if he killed David himself, the people would cease to consider Saul as their king.

However, David, discerning Saul's plot, humbly declined in verse 18 by saying, "Who am I, and what is my family or my clan in Israel, that I should become

the king's son-in-law?" Realizing David's reluctance to marry Merab, Saul considered it an advantage. On the promised day, he married Merab off to another man, as verse 19 recounts.

The relationship between Saul and David was tense. However, Michal, Saul's other daughter, genuinely loved David. Despite the king's attempts to prevent it, his efforts were in vain, and in verse 21, Saul decided to give Michal to David, hoping she would be a snare to him. Saul soon placed David, now his son-in-law and a distinguished general, into perilous situations akin to death traps.

From the day David was anointed by God as the chosen one to succeed Saul as king, David was greatly empowered by the Spirit of the Lord, as seen in the latter part of 1 Samuel 16:13. In contrast, verse 14 shows that the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit sent by the Lord tormented him instead. Given these circumstances, although Saul and David outwardly appeared as king and subject, father-in-law and son-in-law, internally one was to be dethroned, and the other was to be elevated to kingship. Thus, inherently, they were enemies.

In 1 Samuel 24:2, King Saul, wielding power, took three thousand chosen men and went out to search for David. He went to the Craggs of the Wild Goats, a place known for its rocky and inaccessible terrain. Verse 3 mentions that Saul went inside a cave there to relieve himself, unaware that David and his men, fleeing from Saul, had already taken refuge deep inside that very cave. They were well hidden in its depths. For David and his men, Saul's entrance into the cave presented an opportunity to easily ambush him.

In verse 4, David's men said to him, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" They believed this moment, with Saul unknowingly entering the cave where David and his men were hiding, was God's provision of an opportunity for David to kill Saul.

However, the latter part of verse 4 shows that David quietly approached Saul and cut off only a corner of Saul's robe, refraining from harming him further. Then, in the first part of verse 7, David restrained his men and prevented them from attacking Saul.

As mentioned in verse 4, it was indeed a moment when God had delivered Saul into David's hands, allowing David to act as he saw fit. David could have killed Saul without immediate repercussions for himself. However, verse 5 records that David was conscience-stricken for merely cutting off a corner of Saul's robe, considering Saul was his father-in-law and the Lord's anointed. This shows that David's character was not as impulsive, reckless, or disrespectful as some might have perceived. Instead, he was tender-hearted, kind, and most importantly, deeply reverent towards the Lord. The fact that David felt guilty for such a minor act against his enemy reflects his profound fear of God.

However, I would like to suggest that David's act of cutting off a piece of Saul's robe was not merely an impulse but a political act stemming from a high level of strategic thinking. Look. In 1 Samuel 24:8, after Saul had left the cave, David followed him out and called out to him. David's decision to call out was deliberate; he wanted to be heard by all. David prostrated himself and cried out, "My lord the king!" In verse 10, he said, "This day you have seen with your own eyes how the Lord delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you." In verse 11, he showed Saul the piece of his robe he had cut and said, "See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. See that there is nothing in my hand to indicate that I am guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life." David's loud declaration was not merely a show of respect or an act of contrition before God. Despite feeling guilty, David needed to perform this act.

Why did David need to do this? David needed to change the negative perception the people had of him, which had been unfairly cast upon him. If his actions were solely out of reverence for God and guilt for cutting Saul's robe, then making such a public display, prostrating before Saul and raising his voice,

would have been unnecessary. If David's goal was forgiveness, he would have sought it quietly before God. David's actions were a deliberate effort to communicate to all the people under God's sovereignty that despite being falsely branded as insolent, he was in fact reverent and served God faithfully. Contrary to some misconceptions, David had not betrayed the king; instead, he was the one being pursued by King Saul. It was crucial for David to broadcast this truth to the entire nation, hence his intentional behavior.

David, anointed by God, was destined for the throne, but becoming king was not merely about being anointed; it required winning the hearts of the people. Anointment did not immediately translate to kingship. Therefore, David was engaged in a strategic effort to win the people's favor, which was necessary to smoothly ascend to the throne as God had intended and to lead the people effectively in accordance with God's will.

In a similar situation as described in 1 Samuel 26:12, while Saul and his guards were deep in sleep, David quietly took Saul's spear and water jug. Then, in verse 13, David moved to a distant mountaintop and called out to Abner, Saul's bodyguard commander, known for his loyalty and skills in protection. In verse 16, David openly rebuked Abner, saying, "As surely as the Lord lives, you and your men must die, because you did not guard your master, the Lord's anointed." David's public rebuke could have served multiple purposes, including warning any of his own followers who might consider betraying him in the future, demonstrating the consequences of such disloyalty.

Anyway, in verse 15, rather than admitting he approached Saul with intent, David shifted the narrative, suggesting someone among the people had gone to kill Saul. In verse 16, David asked Abner about Saul's spear and water jug. Then David, in verse 22, like he had previously done with Saul's robe, used Saul's spear and water jug to make a public demonstration. David asked Saul to send him a young man to take back the king's spear while everyone was watching. And in verse 23, David declared, "The Lord delivered you into my hands today, but I would not lay a hand on the Lord's anointed."

David's actions effectively communicated to the people present that God might be orchestrating a change in kingship. By showcasing his ability to harm Saul but choosing not to, David indirectly suggested that he was being prepared for a greater role, effectively managing his own public relations (PR). This not only highlighted his respect for God's anointed king but also his strategic patience and trust in God's timing.

When Saul publicly acknowledged his fault in verse 21, saying, "Surely I have acted like a fool and have been terribly wrong," it marked a pivotal moment in the public's perception. Saul's admission, heard by David from a distance and by all the people present, could have significantly shifted the public sentiment in David's favor, especially considering the prior accusations of rebellion against him.

David believed that God would deal with Saul without David's direct intervention as evident in 1 Samuel 26:10, where David said about Saul, "As surely as the Lord lives, the Lord himself will strike him, or his time will come and he will die, or he will go into battle and perish." This belief allowed David to consistently act with integrity and wisdom, refraining from taking Saul's life even when opportunities presented themselves. David's actions, driven by his deep faith in God and strategic patience, showcased his potential to be a righteous and wise king in the eyes of God and the people. His ability to manage his image and navigate complex political and ethical dilemmas demonstrated his kingly qualities and preparedness for leadership.

Indeed, David possessed strategic acumen and political skill, both before God and the people, alongside a profound reverence and unwavering faith in God. This combination of qualities is likely why God instructed Samuel in 1 Samuel 16:12, telling him, "Anoint him; this is the one." God recognized David as the one to replace Saul and instructed Samuel to anoint David as the future king.

It's important to note that David didn't suddenly become capable and politically savvy simply because he was anointed by God. Instead, David had a long and successful journey towards kingship, indicating that his remarkable qualities

weren't the result of a sudden transformation but were inherent to his character from birth. David was born with the makings of a great king and spent a long time honing these skills and qualities.

In other words, David already possessed the qualities of a great king and the ability to lead before he was anointed by God. His anointment was not the beginning of his development into a leader but a recognition from God of the potential and capabilities that David had been nurturing over time. God's choice to anoint him was based on these inherent qualities, which David had demonstrated throughout his life.

David's profound relationship with God was rooted in his deep understanding that everything he had, from his inherent qualities to the skills he developed as a shepherd, as well as his courage, strategic and political acumen, and his deep reverence and faith in God, were all gifts from the Lord.

As seen in 1 Chronicles 29:12, David acknowledged that all he had came from God's hand, praising God for it. Furthermore, in verse 14, David humbly states, "Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand."

This perspective isn't unique to David. It's a fundamental truth that our inherent qualities and possessions are not merely our own but are gifts from God. From the moment of our birth, all that we possess and all that we are can be traced back to the providence of God.

Therefore, when David was used by God for His purposes, he saw it as simply returning to God what was already His. This acknowledgment of God's sovereignty and generosity was central to David's life and reign, guiding his actions and his deep respect for the Lord.

Oh! Hallelujah, glory to the Lord. We applaud David's great understanding.

Let us pray.

Father God,

We have reflected and learned much about David.

David believed that his talents, character, abilities, and all he had learned and experienced came from Your hand. He understood that using them pleased the Holy Spirit, who then empowered him further.

With Your anointing and inspiration from Your Spirit, David could fully utilize his existing abilities. Each time David exercised his gifts, Your Spirit with him added strength, allowing him to bring greater glory to You. Thus, we come to appreciate anew David's ascent to kingship.

Oh Lord, grant us a faith like David's. May we do the same as David, who dedicated his successes to You in accordance with Your anointed will. Anoint us and inspire us with Your Spirit, that You may be our strength as we move forward for You. Let our success be Your success.

We earnestly pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen, amen.