



FEED MY SHEEP

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On Becoming Nobody

Our investigation continues into the respective character traits of King Saul and King David. Since Saul represents non-overcomer Christians and David represents overcomers, we can learn from their lives how we can be found among those sharing in the high calling of overcomership. Our last FMS showed how Saul's jealousy and envy of David led him to ultimately try to kill him by pinning him to the wall with a spear. Failing that, Saul relieved David from his court musician duties and gave him responsibilities as an army commander. Saul sent him on mission after mission, hoping that David would be slain in battle. (1 Samuel 18:13.) With all his military missions David was no doubt learning to trust in God's sovereignty in all things. When God's protection is upon you, there is no weapon of any enemy that can harm you.

As always, God's plan was perfect. He saw to it that David was continually victorious in battle, so that when he came back to the towns and cities of Israel, the people loved a conquering hero. (1 Samuel 18:16) But this angered Saul all the more and made him even more afraid of David. So he devised a plan to at least try to provoke David to anger. Back at the Goliath incident, King Saul had promised his daughter in marriage to the man who would kill the giant. Saul had never fulfilled this pledge. Now he uses it as another pretext.

1 Samuel 18:17 And Saul said to David, Behold my elder daughter Merab, her will I give thee to wife: only be thou valiant for me, and fight YHWH'S battles. For Saul said, Let not mine hand be upon him, but let the hand of the Philistines be upon him.

This confirms our suspicion that Saul is trying to get David killed in action. Saul probably figures that it would be better for himself politically if David were to die in battle than for Saul to kill him with a spear in the palace. This is hatred, pure and simple, and Saul is continuously guilty of attempted murder. But while Saul is full of hatred towards David, did David return evil for evil? As a true overcomer, he did not!

18 And David said unto Saul, Who *am* I? and what is my life, or my father's family in Israel, that I should be son in law to the king?

This is an attitude of humility. David is acknowledging his lowly status as a mere shepherd, and that his family is really *nobody* in Israel. This reminds me of when I was telling Ron Oja how when I was in my late 20's, I used to call on some very prominent businessmen. These were CEO's of major corporations. I won't mention any names, but I remember one occasion when I met with the chairman of the board of a Fortune 500 company, and I was in his office. It was quite impressive. I noticed he had a coat-of-arms and a plaque showing that he had been knighted by the Queen of England.

I told Ron how I used to struggle to fight off the fear and trepidation and butterflies I felt in the pit of my stomach before I entered into the offices of these types of men. And I remember being blessed by Ron's reply. He said: "Well, James, I used to do the same thing and feel the very same way. But then I realized that while these are very powerful and wealthy men, that I am really a *nobody*. And so when I accepted the fact that I was a nobody, I was then free just to be my-

self and not worry about it. And I didn't have any trouble with it after that."

Isn't that exactly what David is doing here? He is acknowledging that he is a *nobody*, and he feels highly honored that he should become the son-in-law of the king. Did you ever think about this: that humility can sometimes be mistaken for naïveté or even stupidity? Was David so naïve and gullible that he did not see what Saul was doing? How he was setting him up to be killed in action? I think David knew. There is a lesson here. As we seek to be humble, we must be prepared to accept the fact that some people might just conclude that we are naïve or gullible or even stupid. If we can accept people thinking that about us, then that is really another step towards true humility.

19 But it came to pass at the time when Merab Saul's daughter should have been given to David, that she was given unto Adriel the Meholathite to wife.

In the vernacular, we would say that Saul pulled a fast one on David. He was thereby guilty of ingratitude, of lying, of breach of trust and breach of contract, and certainly of total hypocrisy. It would be fair to assume that Saul did this with the deliberate intention of trying to deeply hurt David and to stir up resentment in him so that Saul could take advantage of it. However, David did not fall into this trap. David's reaction must have been wholly upright.

Look at the underlying principle in this verse. It is really about great expectations, followed by disappointment when the expectation is shattered. Every single one of us has experienced it; whether it was with family, friends, church activities, educational expectations, or a job or career. These trials will come to each of us many times. The important thing is: *how do we react* when it happens? How did David react when Saul reneged on his promise? I think David was learning to say "Thank you, Father. I now know that this was not your perfect will for me at this time."

While we cannot help but be disappointed to some degree when our expectations are shattered, we must not let our disappointment turn to *bitterness*. As we seek to become "nobody," we can try to lower our expectations of others. The worst case is when expectations become obsessions. For example, we hear of a father who insists that his son become a doctor or lawyer or whatever. That can be obsession. It is stealing

the freedom of the son to decide his own career.

A relatively common example of disappointed expectations comes to mind. True story: There was a young man who had his heart set on a particular young woman. He and the young lady were very close. It seemed to all that knew them that they would announce their engagement before long. But then, his expectations came crumbling to the ground when God sent an evil spirit upon a third party who told horrible lies about the young man. The lies were believed by his would-be wife, and she promptly dumped him. Great expectations, followed by great disappointment.

But as sometimes happens, God was only doing that for a test so that He could bring someone better. In this case, He then blessed the young man with a fine young lady and they have a beautiful family this day. In view of what has transpired in the family of the would-be wife since that day, the young man is very grateful to God that the lies were told and caused the breakup. It is God's sovereignty at work.

We see a similar situation in the story of David. For no sooner do we learn of Saul's breaking of the promise to David than we learn of another of Saul's daughters, and this one really loves David. However, it does not say that David reciprocated Michal's love.

20 And Michal Saul's daughter loved David: and they told Saul, and the thing pleased him.

21 And Saul said, I will give him her, that she may be a snare to him, and that the hand of the Philistines may be against him. Wherefore Saul said to David, Thou shalt this day be my son in law in *the one of the twain.*

Once again, we find repeated the idea of Saul's evil motivation in plotting to have David fall in battle. The repetition indicates just what an obsession this had become with Saul. Now he goes a step further, manipulating his staff and courtiers to lie and deceive David on his behalf.

22 And Saul commanded his servants, saying, Commune with David secretly, and say, Behold, the king hath delight in thee, and all his servants love thee: now therefore be the king's son in law.

David is already rightly suspicious of any promises that Saul himself might make. Thus, we find that Saul-type people generally do not operate alone. They

recruit others to lie and do some of the dirty work for them. They use people who are dependent upon them in some way to accomplish their nefarious goals against the David-types. This dependence need not be limited to family ties or economic dependency, such as a job in the offices of Saul.

It can be something as subtle as a person's desire for the flattery and public honor that a Saul will bestow upon him. The Saul-type and his cohort become mutual sycophants in this game and the result is that this pathetic individual is bought off cheaply. He does Saul's dirty work and he does not even request money. He is more than eager to cooperate in Saul's plots solely for the good feeling he gets by being the buddy of Saul and being one of Saul's right hand men. Spiritual blindness is contagious in the court of a Saul.

23 And Saul's servants spake those words in the ears of David. And David said, Seemeth it to you a light thing to be a king's son in law, seeing that I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?

Here again, David is modest and plainspoken about his life situation. It was customary for a man taking a bride to pay a dowry to the father of the bride, but David, being a poor shepherd, would not have money for the dowry for a princess. Saul, being aware of this, again used it for a pretext to endanger the life of David.

25 And Saul said, Thus shall ye say to David, The king desireth not any dowry, but an hundred foreskins of the Philistines, to be avenged of the king's enemies. But Saul thought to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.

27 Wherefore David arose and went, he and his men, and slew of the Philistines two hundred men; and David brought their foreskins, and they gave them in full tale to the king, that he might be the king's son in law. And Saul gave him Michal his daughter to wife.

Saul asked for 100 dead Philistines. He gets 200. We could surmise that David brought him 200 just to put all the more pressure on Saul so that he would keep his word to give Michal to him to wed. For Saul's part, he asked for Philistine foreskins in an attempt to really enrage the Philistines against David personally for such a supposed atrocity and barbarism so that they might seek to kill David all the more. This is one way to view the story on the literal level.

But looking at the types and shadows, we recall that in biblical numerology, the number 200 is the number of insufficiency. It is thereby associated with Pentecost because a Pentecost anointing is insufficient to bring in the kingdom and to bring about immortality. So once again, as we have seen throughout the life of Saul, he is associated with Pentecost and insufficiency; i.e., a non-overcomer.

Exploring further the types and shadows of verses 25 and 27 above, we see that David marries a daughter of Saul. This symbolizes an overcomer married to a non-overcomer. On an individual level, this has probably happened in a high percentage of marriages throughout the centuries. One thing is for certain, a marriage of this sort will bring its own unique challenges.

On a corporate level, this signifies that for a time—during the Pentecost age—that the overcomer group will be bound (married) to the non-overcomer group in the church. But this marriage will produce no lasting fruit. That is to say, from this union, the “Christ in you” cannot be born into immortality. That will await the Tabernacles anointing. This is confirmed as the Bible later informs us that Michal bore David no children (2 Samuel 6:23).

Now, add to this picture the fact that Saul's elder daughter, Merab, was promised to David but then Saul reneged and gave her to Adriel. The name Adriel means “flock of God,” and since he is set in contrast to David and David represents the overcomers, it is obvious that the flock of God symbolized by Adriel is the non-overcomer flock. David's marriage to Michal (overcomer group to non-overcomer group) was barren of children. However, Merab's marriage to Adriel (non-overcomer to non-overcomer) produced five sons! But...all five of them were later turned over to the Gibeonites by King David and were executed to expiate a curse. That's a long story which we may explore some other time. But for now, it demonstrates that whatever life does come from a non-overcomer union, it is destined for a sad ending.

28 And Saul saw and knew that YHWH was with David, and that Michal Saul's daughter loved him.

At this point in the story, there are at least two members of Saul's family, Michal and her brother, Jonathan, who love David. A sane father would re-

joyce, but Saul has been so embittered with envy that he can do nothing but become paranoid believing that David is out to destroy him and usurp his throne. Again, each of these little incidents can have its application personally and corporately. To be accused of being out to destroy someone when you are not is another test of our character. Do we get angry and lash out? Or do we see our personal Saul's attack for the dung that it is and thank Father for providing fertilizer for our tree so that we can bring forth better fruit? The wrong thing to do—the way to fail this test for overcomership—is to take the dung and throw it right back at our Saul. But that would only prove that we are no better able to overcome than the Saul who flung dung in the first place.

29 And Saul was yet the more afraid of David; and Saul became David's enemy continually.

It is very important that we recognize that in the relationship between Saul and David, that the hatred is a one-way street: Saul hated David; but David did not hate Saul. This is the test concerning which Jesus taught about in the sermon on the mount.

Matthew 5:10 Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

Matthew 5:44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

Christians are so familiar with these verses that we seldom give them any deep thought. But these are some of the most profound and wise sayings in all the world. Have you had opportunity to be tested in this area in recent years? Recent weeks? The last few days? I daresay, we all have. When someone offends us, our first reaction ought to be "thank you, Father," instead of feeding the rising anger that our Saul nature generates. It hurts severely when someone we have known and loved for perhaps many years offends us deeply. But as overcomer candidates, let us seek to do what Jesus and David would do.

And yet we hear our flesh nature cry out: "But

it's so hard to do!" Of course, it is. That is why it is called overcoming! So when we are confronted with the Sauls in our life, let us be certain that we do not return their hatred with our own. Let us bless them, instead. Do good to them, and we will receive great reward in the kingdom of heaven.

30 Then the princes of the Philistines went forth: and it came to pass, after they went forth, that David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.

David's mutilation of Philistine corpses did in fact enrage them and so they set out to war, but David is continuing to exhibit the wisdom, prudence and judgment required of a military leader—or a civil ruler. He is being groomed by God through all the circumstances of his life. He is being trained by his Saul in how *not* to rule. No matter what our lot in life, we should view our own life no differently. Our Sauls are our trainers sent by God. It is all orchestrated by the sovereignty of the Father and it is *always* for our ultimate good and thereby for the praise of His glory.

On another occasion, Ron Oja told an assembled group: "During the course of my life, I noticed that *everybody* was trying to be *somebody*, and there wasn't *anybody* who wanted to be *nobody*—so I took the job. Then, imagine my delight when I learned that 'nobody's perfect'!"

Of course, the moral of this little ditty is that when we have become humble to the point—when we have lowered ourselves to the point of becoming nobody, when we have emptied ourselves of our self so that there is no more self in us, then we have become an empty vessel and we can be filled totally with the Spirit of Christ. That is perfection. The way up is down. He who would be the greatest of all must be the servant of all. When we become so emptied of ourselves as to become nobody, that is when we become perfect. That is why "nobody's perfect." Praise be to the Father of Lights!

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