



# FEED MY SHEEP

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Issue #53

April 2003

## Overcoming Fear

As we left off in the story last month, David had come to the high priest at Nob requesting the sword of Goliath of Gath. Did David have a right to arm himself? As the Founding Fathers of our nation recognized, inalienable rights come from God, not from any government. Chief among inalienable rights is the right to life, which includes the right of a person to defend himself and his loved ones. David had no qualms about arming himself. Goliath's sword was his by right of conquest. He retrieves it and he and his men then flee, oddly enough, to the land of the Philistines.

**1 Samuel 21:10 And David arose, and fled that day for fear of Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath.**

David had human frailties just as we do. If he was fearful at times, can we say that we would have been without fear in such a situation? I don't think so! Yet I can just hear someone saying, (in a churlish, self-righteous manner): "Well, David should fear God, not Saul. If he had his heart right with God, he wouldn't have been afraid of Saul."

We all know people like that (some of us *were* like that!)...the kind of person who is always critical of everybody and everything. Yet their own life is a veritable mess. They are always criticizing everybody else because they are *fearful*. They are afraid to look inside, to look at their own life and to work on getting their own heart right with Father. It is always easier to focus on "the bad guys out there" than on the "bad guy" (the carnal, Adam-man) inside.

So yes, David exhibited fear on this occasion. In

fact, he was so afraid of Saul that he went over to land of the Israel's enemy, the Philistines. It had been a number of years since David had killed Goliath, but David was no mere foot-soldier. He had been the commander of numerous battles against the Philistines in the meantime. We have to wonder, what was he thinking? But then, fear can do things like that. It can cause us to have fuzzy thinking. It can cause us to do things we would never do otherwise. Well, David probably waltzed into Gath hoping he would not be recognized (verses 11 & 12).

Too bad. David now realizes that by coming to Gath, he just jumped from Saul's frying pan into the Philistines' fire. It finally dawned on him that they would just as soon draw and quarter him. Fortunately, David has now recovered his sanity enough so that he decides to fake being insane.

**13 And he changed his behaviour before them, and feigned himself mad in their hands, and scabbled [scratched and scribbled] on the doors of the gate, and let his spittle fall down upon his beard.**

It is a humorous picture, but hey, if you're going to put on an act to save your life, you had better make it convincing! So go ahead and drool like an inmate of an asylum, if you must. By this clever ruse, David escapes the Philistines. Later, remembering the fear that he experienced—fear of Saul and now fear of the Philistines—David wrote a couple of songs. Psalm 56 is one of them.

**Psalm 56:1 <To the chief Musician upon**

**Jonathalemrechokim, Michtam of David, when the Philistines took him in Gath.> Be merciful unto me, O God: for man would swallow me up; he fighting daily oppresses me.**

**2 Mine enemies would daily swallow me up: for they be many that fight against me, O thou most High.**

**3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.**

**... 9 When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.**

**10 In God will I praise his word: in YHWH will I praise his word.**

**11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.**

What then should be our response when we are fearful? No matter what the cause of the fear, what should we do? Trust in God, yes; but more specifically, praise Him and *praise His word*. There is more in this vein in Psalm 34.

**Psalm 34:1 <A Psalm of David, when he changed his behaviour before Abimelech; who drove him away, and he departed.> I will bless YHWH at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.**

**2 My soul shall make her boast in YHWH: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.**

**3 O magnify YHWH with me, and let us exalt his name together.**

**4 I sought YHWH, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.**

Wouldn't it be wonderful to be delivered from all our fears? Upon occasion, the Father might do that; but if He does not, would we not desire to have peace as we go through our trials. Would we not desire to be delivered from all fear? Of course, but how? Verse 4 tells us to seek the Father. He will hear and deliver. But *how* does He deliver? The answer is in the New Testament. Consider this wisdom.

**1 John 4:18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.**

We conclude that the amount of our fear is in direct proportion to how far short we fall of possessing *perfect* love. Continuous perfect love is not possible in these mortal bodies, so let us not fret that we are still fearful sometimes. Nonetheless, by His grace we can approach perfect love. *A principal key to*

*engendering perfect love within us is to possess an understanding of the sovereignty of God.* When we understand that it is our Father who brings about the stressful and the fearful situations (and that it is not the devil, or that "stuff just happens..."), and we further acknowledge that it is all part of His plan for good, we can then more easily let go of the fear. In these early incidents with Saul and the Philistines, David exhibits fear. But by the time he pens the psalms, he appears to have grown immensely. His "insane man" ruse having fooled the Philistines, ...

**1 Samuel 22:1 David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him.**

In Saul's demented state of mind, if he cannot reach David himself, Saul will lash out at David's family. This is a typical tactic of evil people in every age and culture.

**2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.**

You can imagine that the evidence of Saul's tyranny is beginning to leak out to the public now, and so some of the more desperate men, perhaps some of them in trouble with the law themselves, see an opportunity in David to do something about it. For the time being though, they find themselves hiding in caves and caverns in the area of Judah near the edge of the Dead Sea. From their rocky quarters, they are adjacent to some vast, grassy plains where enormous flocks are pastured by their owners. David and his men then go into business providing protection for these flock owners from roving bands of sheep and cattle rustlers. One commentator picks up on this point:

David rendered useful service in protecting these [enormous flocks] from the Bedouins of the desert, and in return received from the shepherds' supplies of food, as well as seasonable intelligence of the movements of the roving government spies sent to search for them.

The commentator's next observation is especially important.

It is evident from the respect which [David] inculcated upon his followers for the rights of property and for the person of Saul, that he meditated neither treason against the king nor rebellion against his government. (Emphasis added.)

Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear. Do we want to be part of the Davidic (Overcomer) Company? Then we must ask ourselves: Will we qualify if we are in rebellion against Saul? Many years ago I gave a Bible teaching message on Saul and Doeg (no longer available). At that stage in my growth, I perceived that Saul represented only wicked *civil* government. I confess that at that time I also had a self-righteous and rebellious attitude against our Saul government. But by His grace, studies of Jeremiah, Daniel and David have caused my attitude to change greatly.

**3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me.**

**4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold.**

This is a passage of Scripture that many interpret to the effect that since David's great grandmother Ruth was a Moabitess—or so they think—that no wonder David found safety there for his parents. That is a logical assumption *if* you believe that fairy tale of Ruth's ancestry. We do not. We have a video on that subject, complete with a study of maps and chronologies to prove the title: *Ruth the Israelite*. (Order V-102, \$14 ppd.) Therefore, did David find safety for his parents because he was kin to the Moabites? No, I hardly think so, because later David goes and kills two-thirds of them. We quote the (generally unreliable) NIV here only for its clarity with verse 2.

**NIV 2 Samuel 8:2 David also defeated the Moabites. He made them lie down on the ground and measured them off with a length of cord. Every two lengths of them were put to death, and the third length was allowed to live. So the Moabites became subject to David and brought tribute.**

**1 Samuel 22:5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth.**

It appears that God is bringing David into contact with his Judahite tribesmen, so that he becomes acquainted with more of them in preparation for the aftermath of the death of Saul. Next, Saul transparently appeals to the greed of his supporters (verses 6 & 7); then demonstrates his paranoia (verse 8). He cannot believe that David simply wants to serve him faithfully. He insists in his own mind that David is out to ambush him and steal the throne. David, on the other hand—even while cognizant that God has chosen him for the throne—still does not run ahead of God and “help Him out” by assassinating Saul. Today, beware deluded Christian patriots who advocate violence against modern Saul. Such is clearly *not* the Biblical pattern.

**9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul,**

Doeg is what we would call Saul's chief of staff, and undoubtedly David knew him quite well. Doeg now reports, probably very gleefully, about what he allegedly witnessed at Nob.

**1 Samuel 22: 9b and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub.**

**10 And he enquired of YHWH for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine.**

**11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king.**

**12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord.**

**13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day?**

**14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house?**

**15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more.**

Ahimelech testifies truthfully that he did not

know anything about David being a fugitive. But as far as Saul was concerned, Ahimelech had committed treason.

**16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house.**

**17 And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of YHWH; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not show it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of YHWH.**

There is a rule of warfare in civilized countries that it is the duty of a soldier to disobey an order when that order is unlawful. How many times have we been told that Nazi soldiers were guilty, and that “just following orders” was no excuse? Here, these servants of Saul refused to obey. They saw the injustice with their own eyes. However, there was someone else present who would take great delight in slaughtering the priests of Israel and their families. After all, this Edomite had an ingrained hatred of the Israelites.

**18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod.**

Eighty-five priests and the entire city population were murdered in cold blood. Yet, at the same time, this tragic event was also the partial fulfillment of a prophecy. There was a prophetic curse pronounced upon the fat and lazy priest Eli, who had let his sons' behavior become an abomination to God. (Read 1 Samuel 2:31-36.) Thus the curse and doom which had been pronounced *on the priestly line of Eli* was being brought to pass by God's “left hand,” Doeg the Edomite. There would be a “phase two” to the fulfillment of the prophecy a couple decades later, but for now, there was one who escaped the executions.

**1 Samuel 22:19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and asses, and sheep, with the edge of the sword.**

**20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David.**

Abiathar then became the high priest that very

day. Later, in phase two of the curse, he was removed from the high priesthood and replaced by Zadok. Thus the prophesied change of priesthood from the line of Eli to the line of Zadok was accomplished. Eli, like Saul, represents the pentecostal age, the pentecostal era church, the church that is leavened, the non-overcomer believers. The priesthood of Eli was replaced by the priesthood of Zadok. The word *Zadok* means “righteous.” The priesthood of Zadok is the priesthood of Melchizedek, with Jesus being the eternal High Priest. Melchi-zadok (or *zedek*) means “king of righteousness.”

**21 And Abiathar showed David that Saul had slain YHWH's priests.**

**22 And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house.**

Typical of David, he does not deny his sin and make excuses. He admits his guilt and it surely must have crushed his spirit at that time, to know that his lies to Ahimelech caused all their deaths. What could he say to the son of Ahimelech? Nothing, except:

**23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.**

David had known (head knowledge) that he was destined to be king and therefore God would have to preserve him. But fear had intervened. He doubted, and he now recognizes that his weaknesses of character—of lying and fearfulness had brought about disastrous consequences. But David is coming to greater faith and understanding of God's sovereignty and while writing the aforementioned psalm, he affirmed the lesson he had learned—a lesson for all overcomer candidates—namely...

**Psalm 56:10 In God will I praise his word: in YHWH will I praise his word.**

**11 In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.**

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