

The cave of Adullum

How does one live as a hunted animal? Perched on cold, hard ground with knees drawn up to his chest, his arms clasped around his legs. He tilted his stiff neck back and looked at the dark sky. A deep sigh moaned from his throat. He couldn't sleep and so he stared at the moon. It was a cottony gauze circle this night. The light fog enveloped the cave and trees around him.

II Sam 22.12 "He made darkness a canopy around Him, a gathering of water and thick clouds."

It was still too early to hear the bird's song. Only the distant cricket's song accompanied him. Two stars were out, and those he saw seemed so far off. Some nights the sky was filled with starlight. This night only the cool dampness of the fog befriended him.

He had left suddenly. He had no time to pack. Only the clothes on his back as he ran into the night. He didn't stop...at first from his young wife's urging. Now from an internal force that compelled him into the night. His legs were strong to carry him to this old outpost. It was only four miles or so from where God had given him victory over the giant. He was familiar with the area and knew it was, for now, a safe distance from the rage he fled.

His thoughts were swirling inside his head. His loyalty divided. What had he done wrong? The question had no logical answer. He had done what was commanded of him. He had excelled in every battle. The blood was behind him. It had been washed off his hands for the final time.

The homecoming celebration was done. The noise of the women welcoming the warring men with their loud music and laughter was now silenced.

I Samuel 18:7 "Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands."

The blood was behind him. What had he done? Thoughts would not allow rest the moon-filled night.

Jesse's son thought back over all that had happened. He had spent many nights under the skies in the fields outside Bethlehem. The sounds of the lambs bleating brought a brief smile to his tired face, and he longed for a simpler time. Then he wrestled a bear and lion to protect his flock. Now he wrestled an unimagined enemy. The king had been raving for days. His loud outbursts echoed in the palace walls. Dark silence. And then the unexpected outbursts would come. The king seemed to quiet when David played his stringed instrument.

Servants would come to him at all hours of the day and night and beckon him to come and play the harp at the demand of the king.

The king was no longer a man to be trusted. Twice as David played his music, he had to duck to avoid Saul's spear hurled at him. Out of nowhere, the dagger would aim at his target. Thankfully he was quick and was missed. But now he knew he must never again let his guard down. Days would go by and David was treated well by Saul. The king would promise him gifts. Offering as much as his daughter in marriage. David would believe the king to be true to his word. But lies were told, deceit was done, and disappointment grew at the king's leadership. He would never treat his 1000 men the same way as his commander-in-chief. As any good warrior knows, he would stop, he would wait, and he would clear of present danger if necessary.

Saul dreaded seeing David's face. His jealousy for him ate at his soul. Under the palace roof was a new, young enemy who made the giant of Gath seem a small obstacle. David had killed the giant and more than Saul could remember. But the war was now within the walls of his home. The dread was down the hall. The rage, fear, and suspicion were now personal borders, which allowed no escape for the king's mind. That very thing Saul dreaded and grew to hate was also that which he craved. The music of David's harp seemed to be the only fix for his demons; and so the king would call for the boy, and unbelievably, David would respond.

For awhile the music soothed, but then the demon's ranting would overcome the calm. His breathing would intensify, his heart begins pounding, sweat would trickle down his back, and his stomach would churn. The suffering Saul would grab whatever was close and hurl the spear at his demon. And David's music would stop. The look on the musician's face eyeing the lunatic of a king would haunt him on his better days—which were increasingly becoming fewer. Even his son and daughter now deceived him. He could trust no one, he raged. The enemy must be killed, he vowed to himself.

He sent others to do the job. And yet no one was able. Plans he made to betray were destroyed by his enemy's Protector. He saw that the Spirit was upon David. Even those agents he sent to kill somehow had a change of mission when encountering the protective Spirit. So Saul would go and do the job. And even at Ramah, he was laid barren and naked all day and night as his killing plan collapsed. (1 Samuel 19:20-24) Why this strong arm of protection on that enemy of his kingship?

David had become disillusioned with the very thing he had been asked to do. He had done exactly what was required of him. He had done justice. He had loved mercy. He had walked humbly with his God.

Micah 6:8

1. What is justice?

Psalm 72:1 “God, give Your justice to the king.”

Psalm 125:3 “The _____ (righteous) will not apply their hands to injustice.

2. How is mercy shown?

Psalm 72:12-14 “For He will rescue the poor who cry out and the afflicted who have no helper. He will have pity on the poor and helpless and save the lives of the poor. He will redeem them from oppression and violence for their lives are precious in His sight.”

3. How do you walk humbly before the Lord as a warrior?

Psalm 72:19,20 “May His glorious name be praised forever; the whole earth is filled with His glory. Amen and Amen The prayers of David, son of Jesse, are concluded.”

4. What is interesting about the signature David used to conclude Book II of Psalms.

Psalm 72 and II Samuel 23. Does this title “son of Jesse, touch your heart?

We are all sons or daughters of someone. Our origins often call to us.

Is this reminder of your origin a positive part of your life?

Is this reminder of your origin a painful part of your life?

David’s family—father Jesse and his mother—came to rally and support their son in I Samuel 22:3,4 But David, keenly aware of the king’s continuing paranoia and the ensuing danger, sent his family to the king of Moab and said, “Please let my father and mother stay with you until I know what God will do for me. So he left them in the care of the king of Moab, and they stayed with him the whole time David was in the stronghold.”

Part of a warrior’s concern over family matters consume him before and during deployments. How does that help the warrior? Can it become a hindrance to the warrior? In this day of 24/7 TV and internet connections, does the warrior’s accessibility help or hinder the focus on the task of war?

How have you put your family in the care of a safe keeper?

Is it easy to disconnect from family during wartime?

In Psalm 27:10, David says, “Even if my father and mother abandon me, the Lord cares for me.” Are there times when it becomes overwhelmingly lonely?
How do you cope with that?

What happens when the warrior returns home and things have changed in the family sector? Have you ever felt you would like to escape back to war . . . away from the daily pressures of family after a deployment? Is it easier going back to the cave?

Would you be surprised if that was a common feeling?

Does the enemy follow you home? Does the home become a place of war as well?

Do you know when you need to address this war within the walls of home?

What things soothe?

When is it time to get help?

After all the torment, fear, and threats of Saul toward David had subsided when Saul died, David mourned deeply. II Samuel 1:17-27

David sang the following lament for Saul and his son Jonathan, and he ordered that the Judahites be taught The Song of the Bow. It is written in the Book of Jashar: The splendor of Israel lies slain on your heights. How the mighty have fallen!”

There was no gloating. David had lost his best friend, Saul’s son Jonathan. He grieved for the depth of friendship and loyalty he’d established with the king’s son.

II Samuel 1:26

I _____ (grieve) for you, Jonathan, _____ (my brother). You were such a _____ (friend) to me.

But interestingly enough, he also grieved for Saul in this lament.

What did Saul represent to David?

Verse 19 Saul was the _____ (splendor) of _____ (Israel).

Verse 21 The shield of Saul was _____ (no longer) _____ (anointed) with oil.

Anointing was a sign of God's special holiness or outpouring. Exodus 30:31,32
"Tell the Israelites: This will be My holy anointing oil throughout your generations. It must not be used for ordinary anointing on a person's body, and you must not make anything like it using its formula. It is holy, and it must be holy to you."

Because of Saul's continued disobedience, God's anointing was removed from him.

I Samuel 15:1 "The Lord sent me to _____ (anoint) you as king over His people Israel."

I Samuel 15: "Because you have _____ (rejected) the world the Lord, the Lord has _____ (rejected) you from being king over Israel."

Saul represented God's authority over the kingdom. But Saul's paranoia, disobedience, revenge, lies, and terror caused God to regret He'd made Saul to become king. I Samuel 15:34b

How do you think David mourned how the mighty have fallen? Was disillusionment with those in authority a part of this?

Do you think warriors have become disillusioned with modern-day military authority? How have you seen the mighty fall?

David showed Saul honor in death, but his heart grieved for what Israel lost—both personally and as a nation.

What has our nation lost?

Has America, the mighty, fallen off the world's pedestal?

How have we grieved as a nation?

In our grieving over the loss of the “mighty”—that which is best in us—can we go beyond this loss and reject the bitterness that could accompany such loss?

What would be that process?

Catherine Dial DePew