**Week Fourteen – November 29/30 – I Samuel 21-22**

**Introduction: Are you able to think fast on your feet and come up with plausible answers in difficult situations? What is the most difficult aspect of spur-of-the-moment decisions?** Throughout this chapter, David is running for his life and there seem to be a lot of “spur-of-the-moment” decisions in which he has no idea what will come next. However, we see God’s faithful hand directing David steps even in what he may feel are “spur-of-the-moment” decisions.

**Read I Samuel 21:1-9.** The future king is now on the run as a fugitive. **How does David explain himself when he comes to Ahimelech?** David clearly lies to the priest about why he was there. Because of this, Ahimelech is unprepared when Saul summons him to be killed, which we will read about later in the chapter. Fear caused David to take matters into his own hands rather than trust in God. **How do we not allow fear to influence our trust in God?**

**What is the first way we see God provide for David?** (*He provides food with the holy bread in the tabernacle.*) “Ahimelech’s holy bread becomes David’s daily bread” (Davis, 217). Leviticus 24:5-9 describes how the holy bread in the tabernacle was set aside for the priests to eat and yet David received it. **Does there seem to be any conflict between the law and the way God provided for David?** Matthew 12 gives us a little more insight into this situation. **Read Matthew 12:1-8. How does Jesus’ understanding of David eating the showbread reveal the hypocrisy of the Pharisees?** *(To be clear - Jesus DID NOT view the law was unimportant. But if the Pharisees had no problem with David doing something unlawful, they should have no problem with David’s greater Son doing something which was lawful.)*

**What is the second way we see God provide for David?** (*Through David receiving the sword of Goliath*) **How might this sword encourage David?** **What memories would’ve flooded David's mind when he glanced upon the sword?** David didn’t win that sword through lies and half-truths, but with a bold trust in God. As David flees, he’s reminded of God’s faithfulness to deliver. **What in your life experiences can you look back on to be reminded/encouraged of God’s faithfulness?** Subtly in the background of this part of the story, verse 7, we are introduced to Doeg the Edomite (v.7), and we will see him again later.

**Read I Samuel 21:10-15.** David flees to Gath, which is enemy territory, and is carrying Goliath’s sword in Goliath’s hometown. He knowingly goes into enemy Philistine territory by himself as he is trying to find a way to escape from Saul. **What does David’s choice in going to Gath reveal about his fleeing from Saul?** (*desperation*) **What does this desperation reveal about David’s understanding of God’s sovereignty?** In Psalm 34, the first of two Psalms that we will note tonight which shedding more light on our I Samuel passages, David recalls when he acts like a madman before Achish. **Read Psalm 34:17-22, List the convictions about God that David has in this passage. What relevance do each of these have considering his situation in Gath?**

**Read I Samuel 22:1-5.** Here we see David exemplifying his future kingship in an unlikely way by assembling a rag-tag group of not only his family, but also those who were in distress, debt, or discontented. Sound familiar? **Read Matthew 11:25-30. What is the significance of these people being drawn to David? What attributes must a person have for people who are in distress, debt, or discontented to be drawn towards them?**

**Read I Samuel 22:6-8.** We see how Saul’s insecurity has paralyzed him as a leader. In fact, he no longer directs his men, he bullies, bribes, and blames them. **What are some of the words and phrases in these verses that indicate that Saul is in a dark, bad place as a leader?**

**Read I Samuel 22:9-10.** The hardness of Saul’s heart draws the response of a similar follower. Doeg’s willingness to reveal Ahimelek’s help of David is just the tip of the iceberg and we will see his full depravity later. **Read Psalm 52.** (This is the second of two Psalms tonight which shed more light on our I Samuel passages.) In this Psalm David writes about Doeg’s betrayal of Ahimelech. **What is David’s main case against Doeg in v. 7? What do we learn from David’s mindset expressed in v. 9?**

**Read I Samuel 22:11-15**. Again Saul shows his insecurity and accusatory approach. He shows the barbaric turns his jealousy can cause. **When Saul brings accusations against Ahimelech in v. 13 (conspired, rebelled), what does the priest do instead of defending himself? Why do think he takes this approach?** **Read 16-17. What reason does Saul give for the necessity of killing the priests? How do the king’s officials respond and why do you think they respond this way?**

**Read I Samuel 22:18-23**. **How does the foreshadowing in verse 7 come to its fulfillment here?** These chapters conclude with a heartbreaking scene that nevertheless has shades of mercy and prevailing victory. Despite Doeg killing all of the priests and their families under Saul’s orders, Abiathar survives, showing us how God will maintain His kingdom here on Earth. Some examples of God preserving a small remnant for Himself that the kingdom may continue on earth are Moses (Exodus 2:1-10), the seven thousand who do not bow their knees to Baal (1 Kings 19:18), Joash (2 Kings 11:2-3), and Jesus himself (Matthew 2:13-15). **What is the significance of God only saving a remnant for Himself to use in advancing the kingdom?** (such as: *only needs a minor amount; completely self-sufficient and unmistakably the one who gains victory; mercy*) **How should this fact shape the way we approach situations where the odds are seemingly against us?**

In this mercy that has brought him out of the wrath of Saul and into the care of David, Abiathar is now in a situation where he is equipped with the promise of safety and comfort. It can be tricky when we start asking the question, “How has God allowed all of these people and their families to be killed, except for Abiathar? What did Abiathar do to deserve this?” Nothing. The question we should be asking is, “Why did God give Abiathar undeserved grace to be brought out of a difficult situation alive AND find David who promises to protect him?” **Is the underserved mercy of God something that you meditate on often? How do we live lives more evident of the mercy that we have been given through Christ?**

Looking at verse 2, we saw earlier that David lied to Ahimelech about the reason that he fled to him. This led Ahimelech to help David as he believed he was being obedient and faithful to the king. In reality this very much angered Saul. While this does not mean that Ahimelech’s response in either situation would have changed, he could have certainly been more prepared for Saul coming in anger. In verse 22, David takes responsibility for the lives of those slain by Doeg. **How do we see the character of David contrasting with Saul in this chapter? When it comes to you dealing with mistakes with much less consequences, do you struggle with accepting responsibility? How do you develop an attitude like David’s that is willing to accept responsibility and make amends for the consequences of actions?**

**Conclusion –** Know tonight that God is faithful, even when difficulties look insurmountable.

* When David is on the run and Saul is resolved to kill him, David sees God’s faithfulness as He provides bread and the sword of Goliath.
* When Saul orders the murder of Ahimeleh and the line of priests (carried out by Doeg) God provides a way for one (Abiathar) to be spared. Have someone in your group search the name Abiathar and see how many times he mentioned after this an I and II Samuel. Gos is faithful and his plans cannot be thwarted, even in the face of great tragedy and loss.

Have family group members share times they have seen God’s faithfulness, especially in difficult times. Close in prayers of praise, thanking God for his faithfulness.