

**Contrast: The Difference of a Life In Christ  
When God Kills The Seed  
1 Samuel 29**

**Introduction:** Over the last few months, we've frequently mentioned the law of the harvest and how we always reap what we sow. David and Saul's life constantly testified to this truth. However, after bringing it up in a sermon a month or so ago, a lady grabbed my arm in the lobby and said to me, "Thank God, He sometimes kills the seed!" What was she getting at?

Well, let me quickly remind you of what we mean by "The Law of the Harvest." If you plant corn, you can't get a banana tree; you can only get corn. Furthermore, if you plant corn in soil that allows the seed to germinate and take root, you will likely get corn stalks that produce exponentially more corn than the number of corn seeds you planted! It is a literal law of the universe. A seed doesn't become a plant that produces another seed of the same kind but rather an abundance of those seeds!

Therefore, when it comes to eternal life, God promises a harvest to all who have the seed of the Gospel planted in the good soil of true belief and repentance. Additionally, when we live in faithful submission to Christ and fully abide in Him, we sow seeds of His life in our own lives and others that produce an abundant harvest of His life in ourselves and others! For more on all of this, read Matthew 13:1-43. In John 15, Jesus illustrated this truth another way when he talked about what happens when we truly abide in Him as a branch abides in a healthy vine—we abundantly produce the fruit of the vine!

However, the opposite is also true. When the seed we plant is a life of faithlessness and rebellion, then the fruit of that will be an abundance of what the seed of faithlessness and rebellion is—destruction and death!

The point is that the universal law of the harvest states that you "can" only reap what you sow and that you "will" reap what you sow, as long as the seed you planted doesn't get killed! This is precisely what happens in 1 Samuel 29.

David has been planting the seeds of his lack of faith in God into the soil of a Philistine King who was more than willing to let David trust in him instead! In 1 Samuel 27, David, who had understandably grown weary of running from Saul, took the 600 men who followed him, along with their wives and children, and allied with the king of Gath, King Achish, the King of the Philistine empire. As a reward for David's willingness to serve him, Achish gave David a city called Ziklag, where he and his followers could live. David then used Ziklag as a base of operations to raid the ancient enemies of Israel, but as he did, he deceived King Achish into believing he was actually raiding Israelite cities! 1 Samuel 27 records,

**8 Now David and his men went up and made raids against the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites, for these were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as far as Shur, to the land of Egypt. 9 And David would strike the land and would leave neither man nor woman alive, but would take away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys,**

**the camels, and the garments, and come back to Achish. 10 When Achish asked, "Where have you made a raid today?" David would say, "Against the Negeb of Judah," or, "Against the Negeb of the Jerahmeelites," or, "Against the Negeb of the Kenites." 11 And David would leave neither man nor woman alive to bring news to Gath, thinking, "lest they should tell about us and say, 'So David has done.'" Such was his custom all the while he lived in the country of the Philistines. 12 And Achish trusted David, thinking, "He has made himself an utter stench to his people Israel; therefore he shall always be my servant." (1 Samuel 27:8-12)**

Understandably or not, David has nonetheless been sowing the seeds of deception, and the laws of the harvest always hold unless the seed gets killed. In this particular instance, the seed of David's deception not only led King Achish to believe David had made himself an enemy of Israel but also that he was a faithful enough ally of the Philistines for Achish to bring him to battle with him against the Israelites! In 1 Samuel 28, we read,

**1 In those days the Philistines gathered their forces for war, to fight against Israel. And Achish said to David, "Understand that you and your men are to go out with me in the army." 2 David said to Achish, "Very well, you shall know what your servant can do." And Achish said to David, "Very well, I will make you my bodyguard for life." (1 Samuel 28:1-2)**

David created a horrible mess for himself and his men! The Philistine army vastly outnumbered them, and therefore, they could have quickly annihilated them if David confessed to his deceptive practices and refused to protect King Achish. However, David and his followers have no animosity toward Israel at all; as a matter of fact, they have done nothing but protect Israel and help it prosper. But, because David led them to not only form an alliance with the Philistines but then deceive the Philistines into thinking they were attacking their own Jewish brothers and sisters, they reaped a harvest of Achish seeing them as genuine turncoats that served him!

David was facing the reality of the seed he had sown. He and his men were either going to have to march into battle against Israel with King Achish or be killed for refusing. David's circumstance is the direct result of the seeds he planted, and by this point, the seed had sprung up into plants that were about to bear an abundance of fruit filled with the seeds of death and destruction! So, praise God, sometimes God kills the seed!

In 1 Samuel 29 the providential hand of God kills the seed of the deception David had sown with King Achish. What do I mean by the "providential of God?" Well,

**The Providence of God refers to God doing things in a way that only He can get the credit, and, in many cases, despite what we've done to thwart it.**

When we say things like this, we are referring to the Providence of God:

- **What Satan meant for evil, God used for good.**

- I refused to do what God told me, but He still made it all work out.
- I ran from God, but He used it to run me full circle back to Him.
- Everything we tried to do to make it work failed, but then God just did it all by Himself.

All of those are statements of the providential hand of God doing something that only He can get credit for doing, and in 1 Samuel 29, we are going to see God do that very thing with David. The seed of David's deception had created an impossible scenario for he and his men, but not for God! Watch how God providentially killed the deceptive seed David sowed!

**Proposition: There are two ways God providentially killed the seed of David's deceptive practices.**

**The first way God providentially killed the seed of David's deceptive practices was that ...**

**(1) God used the Philistine commanders to terminate King Achish's plan to use David and his men as bodyguards in their battle against Israel. (29:1-5)**

**A. 1 Now the Philistines had gathered all their forces at Aphek. And the Israelites were encamped by the spring that is in Jezreel.**

1. "The episode occurred at *Aphek*, before the Philistines marched on northwards and camped at Shunem (28:1). In other words, the events of ch. 29 took place before those of ch. 28."<sup>1</sup>
2. "On the eve of the battle the Philistines had rendezvoused at Aphek, precisely where they had defeated Israel and captured the ark about 90 years earlier (4:10–11). Israel took up positions by the spring in Jezreel, on the flank of Mount Gilboa, some 40 miles northeast of Aphek. Among the troops of Achish, lord of Gath, were David and his men."<sup>2</sup>

**B. 2 As the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing on in the rear with Achish, 3 the commanders of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years, and since he deserted to me I have found no fault in him to this day."**

<sup>1</sup> Payne, D. F. (1994). [1 and 2 Samuel](#). In D. A. Carson, R. T. France, J. A. Motyer, & G. J. Wenham (Eds.), *New Bible commentary: 21st century edition* (4th ed., p. 319). Inter-Varsity Press.

<sup>2</sup> Merrill, E. H. (1985). [1 Samuel](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 1, p. 454). Victor Books.

**Note:** The seeds of David's deceitful actions have worked with Achish! Achish is all in with David because he's convinced David is not only all in for him but also for the Philistines in general!

C. **4 But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him. And the commanders of the Philistines said to him, "Send the man back, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him. He shall not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here? 5 Is not this David, of whom they sing to one another in dances, 'Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?"**

1. The Philistine commanders believed David was setting a trap to regain favor with the Jewish people and possibly even Saul. They likely believed, as Achish did, that David had become a "stench" (1 Samuel 27:12) to the Jewish people because David had been telling them he was raiding Jewish towns and cities! However, verse 4 tells us that the Philistines knew enough about David's love of Yahweh that they feared David would ultimately want to reconcile himself to Yahweh, and what better opportunity would there be than while the entire Philistine army was engaged in battle with the Israelites.
2. You see, serving Achish as his bodyguard meant David and his men would guard the rest of the Philistine upper command structure. As such, this is by far the most vulnerable place on the battlefield for the king and his leadership team if David were planning to do what the Philistine commanders thought he would do. While the Philistine army engaged the Israelites in combat, King Achish and the other leaders would have been defenseless against David, who previously had a reputation of killing tens of thousands of Philistines. This is a two-fold threat in that David not only has a very clear history of killing Philistines but of also being really good at it!

**Note:** "As royal bodyguard, David's unit was to the rear of the attacking forces. The Philistine commanders were very uncomfortable with a sizable "Hebrew" unit to their rear."<sup>3</sup>

3. What else does the story tell us about David? Well, it tells us that even though David claimed to raid the Jewish people, everything else about David's life told the Philistines that his greatest love was Yahweh. I'm not justifying David's deception, but it's significant to note that even though David seems to be living faithlessly in one area, he's clearly living faithfully to the Lord in others, so much so it's clear to the commanders of the Philistines who he really is—a man after God's own heart! As such, they are

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<sup>3</sup> Smith, J. E. (1995). [\*The Books of History\*](#) (p. 322). College Press.

so convinced of David's love for God that they believe it's just a matter of time before he will repent and turn back to Yahweh, and they don't want to be there when it happens! I'm not saying this justifies David's deception. However, it is still significant that even when David is seemingly living faithlessly in one area of his life, the posture of his life, his attitude, the way he treats others, etc., all pointed these pagans to a person whose effort in life wasn't to rebel against God but to love and obey Him!

4. No matter what, when we pretend to be somebody we aren't, we end up looking like somebody pretending to be somebody we aren't! Whether it's wealthy suburban rich kids trying to look and act like inner-city gangsters, low-income country boys from a trailer park trying to act like rich upper crest sophisticates, or lifelong diehard liberals trying to pose as moderate conservatives to win elections, everybody who tries to look and act like somebody they aren't, are seen by most people as somebody looking like somebody acting like somebody they aren't!
- D. So, David may have fooled King Achish, but the Philistine commanders aren't convinced. To them, David looks like a man allied with Yahweh who's pretending to be allied with them! However, to King Achish, there was no reservation whatsoever. David had him totally fooled, which takes us back to the main point. David appears to have faithlessly entered an alliance with the King of the Philistines, and because of his deceptive practices that reinforced that alliance, David is being forced by his own actions to continue the charade. David can't do a thing to get himself out of this situation, and he's about to be seen on the battlefield defending the greatest threat to Israel! David's in a situation of his own making that he can't do anything about. He can't kill the seed! So, God does! God uses the Philistine commanders to get David off the battlefield!

**This takes us to the second way God providentially killed the seed of David's deceptive practices.**

**(2) God used King Achish to allow David and his men to return to Ziklag (the city King Achish gave David and his followers to live in), having no idea it was under attack. (29:6-11)**

- A. We won't find out Ziklag was attacked until the next chapter; however, it's essential to mention it now so you can understand the providential significance of what's getting ready to happen! Achish could have told David and his men to stay in Gath and protect his city while they were away in battle. Achish could have ordered David and his men to do a thousand different things because Achish was fully convinced David had betrayed Israel and was faithfully serving him! Instead, Achish told David to return to the land of the Philistines, which effectively gave his genuine blessing for David and his men to go back to Ziklag and enjoy their families while they were off risking their lives in battle! the Bible says,

**B. 6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "As the LORD lives, you have been honest, and to me, it seems right that you should march out and in with me in the campaign. For I have found nothing wrong in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, the lords do not approve of you.**

1. Achish is all in with David. He has bought David's deception hook, line, and sinker to the point he's even willing to acknowledge that Yahweh lives! Now, before you go too far with that, remember that the Philistines believed in a bunch of gods, so it wasn't that big of a deal that they added Yahweh to the list. They've been convinced that Yahweh is real ever since the story we read in 1 Samuel 5 and 6! The priests of Dagon, the main Philistine God, kept finding Dagon lying on the floor in front of the ark, the last time with his head detached, then people started breaking out in these horrific tumors and dying. Therefore, after sending the Ark to different Philistine cities with the same results, they finally sent it back to Israel but did so with one more final test to see if Yahweh was real. They placed the Ark on a cart pulled by two milk cows that had never pulled a cart, meaning they were likely either going to stand there not knowing what to do or go back to find their calves that the Bible says had just been taken from them, but instead, they went straight to an Israelite city.
2. The point is, from that day forward, the Philistines knew Yahweh was real and that He was powerful; however, they by no means embraced Yahweh as the only God and, as such, bowed down in submission to Him. Achish, nor any other Philistine that we know of in this story, embraced the central confession of faith required by God,
3. **4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)**
4. Achish is, however, profoundly trusting of David and respects him big time, so much so that he makes a statement about who he believes David to be by using the strongest, most meaningful terms he knows David would understand! **"As the LORD lives, you have been honest ... For I have found nothing wrong in you from the day of your coming to me to this day."**
5. Achish has been totally fooled by David and sees him as a brother! Therefore, he treats him like one. Achish, who wants to give David the honor of going to battle with him, instead allows him and his men to return and enjoy their families in the comfort and safety of their own homes.

- C. **7 So go back now; and go peaceably, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines." 8 And David said to Achish, "But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" 9 And Achish answered David and said, "I know that you are as blameless in my sight as an angel of God. Nevertheless, the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' 10 Now then rise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who came with you, and start early in the morning, and depart as soon as you have light." 11 So David set out with his men early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. But the Philistines went up to Jezreel.**
- D. God killed the seed of David's faithlessness, and when you see what happens next week, you will truly understand just how big of a deal this was!! However, for now, let's stop and consider how we should respond to what we've learned so far.

### Challenge:

- (1) **What areas of faithlessness in your life are you attempting to excuse with areas of faithfulness?**
- A. You can almost hear David saying to himself, "I know I'm not trusting God by forming this alliance with Achish, and I'm certainly not being honest by lying to him about who I'm raiding, **BUT** I'm refusing to attack Saul and remove him from the throne, and I'm taking care of the people the Lord has put under my care, so it can't be that big of a deal!!"
- B. Are there areas in your life where you're doing this? For instance, some people excuse themselves from tithing to their local church because they faithfully serve the Lord with their time and abilities. Others excuse themselves from faithfully serving the Lord with their time and abilities because they faithfully financially support their local church and other ministries with their money. We sadly hear about pastors who faithfully preach God's Word but then use their faithfulness in preaching to justify their sexual immorality, which is the exact same thing people are doing in the previous illustrations!
- C. Now, some say, "Hold on, preacher, not being faithful with your time, money, or talent isn't the same thing as sexual immorality." Listen to what Paul wrote in his letter to the church in Philippi,
- D. **18 For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. 19 Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. (Philippians 3:18-19)**

- E. Wherever we live in faithlessness to the Lord, we are literally rejecting God as the one worthy of our trust and obedience and replacing Him with our own desires; therefore, wherever we justify faithlessness in Him is where we are justifying the faithfulness to an idol—whether that idol be our ourselves or something else.
- F. Therefore, if you view the things you perceive to do right as credit for doing things wrong, then your mind is set on how to live in submission to an idol, all while claiming to be living in submission to Him! You are literally saying you've earned the right to worship an idol because you've been really good at worshipping God! It makes no sense at all, especially when we understand just how clear the Bible is on the subject. From Jesus telling a successful religious man to sell all he had and follow him (Matthew 19:16-22), to those he said to let the dead bury the dead (Luke 9:59-62), to God flat-out commanding we can't have other gods in our life (Exodus 20:3), there is no possible way for us to come to any conclusion other than God demands and deserves complete allegiance!
- G. So, if you justify faithlessness with faithfulness elsewhere, then at a minimum, you are a believer headed for a life filled with the seeds of the destruction you are sowing. However, at worst, you could be as religiously lost as Saul and headed straight for eternal destruction! Either way, you need to stop justifying sowing the seed of faithlessness and repent so you can enter into the joy and power of a life surrendered to HIM, a life that is sowing the seeds of His life in yourself and others!

This leads me to the second challenge question.

**(2) Are you responding to the gracious providence of God that killed the seed of your faithless, rebellious actions by repenting and growing in Him, or as a license to do it again?**

- A. We have all thanked God for unanswered prayers; you know, the ones where you begged Him for something He didn't give you, only to later realize that if He had given you what you asked for, it would have destroyed you! It's in that realization of His love that we should learn to just trust Him, that is, to lay our desires before Him not as expectations we demand of Him to fulfill, but rather as desires we are surrendering to Him as our Lord and King to do with whatever He wants! But, all too often, we will say out of one side of our mouth that we thank God for unanswered prayers and out of the other side of our mouth pray for things as if God doesn't do what we want, then our entire world is going to collapse; praying as if He doesn't do what we want that He's somehow failing us!
- B. In the same way, you would think the knowledge of God killing the seed of the faithless and rebellious actions of our life that could have wreaked havoc in our life and others would so stir us to praise Him and follow Him that we could never again even consider anything but living in glad submission to Him. But sadly, we



all inevitably find ourselves tempted to act in faithlessness and rebellion again. We will see David do this again as well.

- C. The question then becomes whether faithlessness and rebellion are who we are, or is it something we find ourselves in? For instance, in this story, David pretends to be somebody who betrayed Israel and God, but the commanders of the Philistine army know better. To them, he's somebody acting like he's their ally rather than somebody who is their ally!
- D. I'm not justifying David's behavior at all, but the only future more frightening than a believer trying to act like an unbeliever is an unbeliever trying to act like a believer! That is, there is nothing more dangerous to themselves and even the church than a person trying to act like somebody who is faithful and obedient to the Lord, all while being somebody who has no faith in God at all. Throughout Saul's life, there were times he tried to act like somebody who was faithful to the Lord, but it always just looked like somebody trying to act like somebody who truly loved the Lord! He never had a desire to truly repent and surrender his life to God. He just wanted to be king. The Apostle Peter wrote about people with similar motives infiltrating the New Testament church.
- E. **20 For if, after they have escaped the defilements of the world through the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, they are again entangled in them and overcome, the last state has become worse for them than the first. 21 For it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than after knowing it to turn back from the holy commandment delivered to them. 22 What the true proverb says has happened to them: "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." (2 Peter 2:20-22)**
- F. Peter was writing about the false teachers misleading the church as if they were actually followers of Christ who believed in Christ's Gospel. He made it clear that these men, who knew the actual Gospel but had since rejected it, were still trying to act like they were followers of Christ even though they had come up with their own version of Christ's Gospel. Peter says these men were actually never genuine followers of Christ, which is made evident when "The dog returns to its own vomit, and the sow, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire." You can only act like somebody else for so long until who you are comes out.
- G. If you are in Christ, the Holy Spirit of God lives in you! At times in our lives, you and I may act like He doesn't live in us, but eventually, the truth comes out because He comes out! The Holy Spirit of God cannot live within us without outward evidence of Him being there; the Holy Spirit can't live within us and not eventually overcome us with conviction and bring us to repentance!
- H. So, when a child of God sees the seed of their faithless rebellion graciously destroyed by the Grace of God, they not only find themselves praising God for

His mercy to protect them from the consequences of their own faithlessness, but they even more so find themselves fueled up and driven to live faithfully surrendered to the God who is so rich in grace! As David sang,

- I. **1 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, 3 who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, 4 who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, 5 who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. (Psalm 103:1-5)**
  
- J. However, when God rescues “a dog” from the seed they sowed, the dog will eventually return to planting the same seed. A person who has never really repented and given their life to Christ might initially praise God for rescuing them from the consequences of the seed they sowed in their faithless rebellion against Him. However, if they don't truly repent and surrender their life to Him, they, like the false teachers Peter called out, will soon return to the same practices—the dog will return to his vomit and the pig to the mud, arrogantly thinking they can outsmart the Laws of the Harvest this time around!
  
- K. So, is your life a testimony of somebody who has seen God kill the seed of your faithlessness and rebellion and responded to it more motivated to live a repented life of faithful obedience to Him or as one who sees it as a reason to go right back to a life of faithless rebellion?