

# Isaiah 54:17

Sunday 4/9/2017

SEC: Introduction and Call to Ministry

Exactly four years and a week ago, I preached for the first time at this church when Barb was in the hospital. I guess I am the hospital guy. The first time I preached, the music lady left, so it is not personal; it is just me.

Twenty-some odd years ago, I was introduced to our pastor through something called Tapes Kids. These were bulky audio tapes that went in your car, and you had to rewind them. I started to learn about the Bible from listening to this guy I had never met on tape. I would daydream about standing here. I was a lot better in my daydreams than I am in real life, so you will forgive me for what you are about to hear. But it is an honor to stand here in this man's pulpit. So many lives he has changed over the years without even knowing people. I did not even know him; I met him a good year and a half after I was introduced to his tapes.

I will tell you honestly, my first reaction was, "Who does this guy think he is? Really? Why is he yelling?" But the people seemed to like it. There were weird things like people saying "amen" in the church. I went to Catholic Church; you did not talk. You might wake God up. You did not want to do that. It was very quiet and hush tones, with all the hocus pocus that we do there. It was a different experience.

Then I got to actually go out to the church where he was at that time, hoping to see this man, and he was gone that day. It was really weird. There were people talking in the middle of church; it was odd and just really odd. But I finally got to see him. I did not get to hear him preach. I saw him once at this basketball thing, and I was looking like this, "Where is he? I am looking for that tall guy; that is him. That tall guy; that is him." I never really got to know who he was until I met him in 1994 or 1995 at a Bible conference in St. Louis.

An offhand comment he made to me when I was complaining to him that there was nobody in California where I lived to teach the Bible. He said, "Well, you are being a disciple?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Then you teach those lessons." That started a ministry for me that week. I was sitting in the living room of my soon-to-be, not-yet-wife and her parents, teaching a Bible study. That man started every ministry I ever had. Now, my wife has kept them alive in spite of me. But this is an important thing for me to be standing here; it is a great honor. I guess I have been saved for a while, and I have seen some things that happened to God's people along the way.

Danny, you really sparked me last week when you preached on David. You should not really design a message for one person, Danny. But I found myself over the years that I have tarried and not risen up early. It really got to me. I was trying to figure out what I was going to preach. I have this thing called a tickler file, and I get an idea, I put it in there. I think one of the lines in there was, "Need milk." It was completely useless to me, so do not try that.

SEC: The Nature of Attack on God's People

What I wanted to talk about today is the way that God's people come under attack. We saw that David brought some attack on himself. David got into some sin, and he brought some problems to himself. Danny preached out of 2 Samuel on that very subject, how David did that through a progression of actions that he knew were wrong, but he did them anyway. I know that none of us have ever done that, so that really does not apply to anybody in this room.

But there is another method that seems less obvious, but it is actually probably the most prevalent way to get an attack in Christianity: to do the right thing. Just doing the right thing. What I saw as I studied this out is that there are these two ways.

*1 Peter 2:19*

*For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.*

Now, I will do a whole bunch of things and I will suffer for it; that is not the same thing. Suffering, enduring grief wrongfully, that is thankworthy, and God can thank that. There is thankfulness in that.

There are countless times in the Bible where God's people suffer in those two ways, and they come from two groups. One is when the world sees us doing what God wants us to do. When the world sees us doing what God wants, it cannot stand it; it makes them nuts. They want us to behave like them. That is why certain religious groups are more accepted by the world than us here in the cave of Adullam. We are not accepted by the world. We are strange. We are called a cult because we believe in something and we stand by something, even when it does not really agree with us. I always say if I am not agreeing with the Bible, I am obviously wrong, but that does not mean I do not agree with the Bible; that just means I am a sinful man.

The other group of people is where you would least expect it to come from. It has been a great surprise for me in Christianity that the attacks, when we do things right, tend to come more from those in the family than from those outside. Last week, whenever you get asked to preach, you start listening a lot to people talking. Last week, after volleyball, John Busquette gave a devotion on the cost of being a Christian. There is a cost for following Christ, and there is a cost for not following Christ. One of those costs is that your reputation is going to come under scrutiny or attack. It will be attacked for two reasons: you either bring it on yourself, or someone is going to bring it to you. More than likely, that attack will come from something that you do yourself, or from someone in the family.

It is really all about our Husband, Jesus Christ, as the bride of Christ. The virtuous woman is said to be like this in Proverbs 31.

*Proverbs 31:23*

*Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land.*

Our Savior's reputation rests on who we are. The world sees us and makes a judgment about Jesus Christ. I made a lot of judgments about Jesus Christ before I met Bob Alexander, and none of them were good, not a one. If you were unlucky enough to knock on my door, and none of them were Baptists, by the way, they were not going to just get a door in the face; they were

going to get a mouthful. I was very, very bad to them. That was on me, but a lot of it was based on what I saw these people doing in their real lives, what I saw Christians doing. Our reputation is at stake from the moment we get one.

The most bizarre thing I have ever seen since being saved, and I really mean this, is that the greatest attacks on Christianity come from us, from within the family. They are dangerous because you are not looking for them. This is the last place we look, right? When that knife comes, we are looking at the world. We are looking at the liberal society out there that hates us, and we get that. I know how to deal with that. They come with the same lame attacks. It is the same thing; twenty-some odd years, it is the same attack, and you can deal with it so easily. But when someone from within your inner circle does this, it is worse because you are not expecting it.

*Proverbs 27:6*

*Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*

When a friend acts like an enemy, those sting the most. I am going to look at three guys in the Bible today. Let us pray first, because I need it.

Father, we just thank you so much for allowing us to come here to this church and for being part of a Bible-believing church in a day when no one believes the Bible, and having a pastor that will preach that Bible to us, whether we like it or not. Lord, I just thank you for the country that we live in that still somehow allows us to do this in freedom, and hopefully that day will not come when we cannot. But Lord, if it does come, I pray we would still do it anyways. Lord, I pray for me today that I would not get in the way. The sin that I am talking about is mine today, Lord, and I know that. If there is anyone else here that has this problem in their life, maybe they will hear it too, and they can change what they are doing, and that we not just hear what you have to say, but we actually do it too, Lord. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

SEC: Moses: Attacked by His Flock

The first guy in the Bible today is Moses. Moses was arguably one of the greatest leaders of the nation of Israel ever, and his flock turned on him time after time after time. God tells him to lead his people out of Egypt, and he does it. He does everything he can to get them out. He walks away from a pretty cushy life growing up in Pharaoh's house. He knows leading a group of people is no small task, but he does it anyways. He is kind of reluctant, but he does it. He overcame fear and timidity and withstood the most powerful human being on the planet at the time. You have to give him some props for that. We can read his life story and say, "Yeah, well, buddy, he was this and he was that." I would not want my life story written down for you to read; I do not ever want you to know my life story. I will edit that thing severely.

But these people, the story of Moses and the people coming out of Egypt, it is amazing. It is an amazing testimony to the loyalty and memory of people, and the lack of loyalty and memory. These people had spent entire lives as slaves in Egypt, and not just any slaves.

*Exodus 1:14*

*And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.*

It was a hard knocks life for the nation of Israel. It was not like in the movies where they had a hard day at work making a pyramid and they went home and had food. It was not good; it was with rigor. There is no grace in rigor. It was the same thing every day; there was no latitude, no leniency. It was hard labor, and they were out of this thing.

The main text I am going to be in for Moses is in Exodus 15. This is where we see them; they are just recently out of Egypt. In Exodus 15, they had recently passed through the Red Sea, and Moses breaks into song. This is great. Moses breaks into song. This is the song of Moses.

*Exodus 15:1-8*

*Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*

*The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation: he is my God, and I will prepare him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

*The LORD is a man of war: the LORD is his name.*

*Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath he cast into the sea: his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red sea.*

*The depths have covered them: they sank into the bottom as a stone.*

*Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy.*

*And in the greatness of thine excellency thou hast overthrown them that rose up against thee: thou sentest forth thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.*

*And with the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.*

*Exodus 15:18-25*

*The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.*

*For the horse of Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the LORD brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.*

*And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances.*

*And Miriam answered them, Sing ye to the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.*

*So Moses brought Israel from the Red sea, and they went out into the wilderness of Shur; and they went three days in the wilderness, and found no water.*

*And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah.*

*And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?*

*And he cried unto the LORD; and the LORD shewed him a tree, which when he had cast into the waters, the waters were made sweet: there he made for them a statute and an ordinance, and there he proved them.*

*Exodus 15:26-27*

*And said, If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee.*

*And they came to Elim, where were twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees: and they encamped there by the waters.*

So Israel escaped from Egypt. They passed through the Red Sea. Moses breaks into song, and as soon as he is done singing, they murmur against him. If I broke into song, you would murmur against me. Bubba once told me that my voice would make Ray Charles wish he was also deaf. He is mean to me; I am a nice guy.

All Moses did was lead them out of bondage in Egypt. That is the only thing he did. All he ever did was lead a people in hard bondage out of Egypt and through the Red Sea, and now they are thirsty because their water is bitter, and they murmur against Moses. This great thing happens: for years of bondage and slavery, they are out now. They see this great miracle of the frogs and the blood, and the Passover that just happened. The firstborn son out of every family in Egypt that did not put blood over their doors died, but not theirs, because they obeyed what the Lord said. This great thing happened, and boom, they are through the Red Sea, and now they are thirsty. Instead of asking God for water, they blame Moses for no water. They just do not get it. That is how people are. His own flock is turning against him.

*In Exodus 16:1-3*

*And they took their journey from Elim, and all the congregation of the children of Israel came unto the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt.*

*And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness:*

*And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*

So they are hungry now. They get tired of complaining about Moses, so they toss Aaron into the mix. It is never enough. The last thing is never enough. We always need new, improved Crest. The old Crest rotted your teeth; new, improved Crest will save your teeth. Old Tide left your clothes brown; new Tide makes them green, but it makes them better. The last thing did not work. They literally now wish that God had killed them instead of leading them out of Egypt. I guess they would have rather sat by those flesh pots, flesh pot stew, and died in between beatings and hard labor every day of their lives. The first thing is, "Look, we are thirsty, we are going to complain about Moses." Now we are tossing in Aaron, and now we are adding a slight twist to it: they would rather be dead. It just gets worse and worse. So, on an empty stomach, they are really going for rhetoric now.

By Exodus 17, they really hit it hard.

*Exodus 17:1-3*

*And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink.*

*Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?*

*And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?*

You see an escalation there? They murmur. The murmuring is more specific and frantic. Now they are all out. "Yep, this has been a big plot. Moses has conspired against the entire nation of Israel for the sole purpose of bringing them out there to kill their babies." It is an amazing thing how people are. At this feverish pitch, sitting there and complaining about Moses, not just complaining about Moses, but now they are assigning nefarious motives to him. So they come out of this wilderness of sin, and they are out of their minds because their Jack Stack closed down, and they cannot get their barbecue. They miss the flesh pot stew and the welt on their back from the whips and the broken this and the broken that. Flesh pot stew just does not sound good to me. Maybe it sounds good if you have been hungry for three days, I do not know.

But they have seen two times now how you get water, and it just has not registered with them yet. But now they accuse Moses of purposefully orchestrating this mass murder of an entire nation just for kicks. There is a progressive escalation there with God's people. When we do not get our way, we crank up the volume. When that does not work, we start throwing extra things on it because we will continue to escalate until we get what we want, will not we? Because we know what we want, and we are right. If we assign ourselves moral high grounds, who can stand against us, even if we are not on moral high ground? These people are not on moral high ground; they have missed the point. They have been released from bondage in Egypt, their enemy, a type of the world. They are led out of that world, out of Egypt, by Moses himself. They need food and

water. They are necessities of life. I am not saying that they were not thirsty or hungry; that is not the point. The point is, they knew how to get it.

*Exodus 15:24*

*And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?*

They are complaining about Moses. Has anybody ever heard a prayer? Does that ever happen? Did it ever occur in the life of an Israelite? Maybe we are all prayed up all the time. But Moses cries unto the Lord, and the Lord gives them water to drink. So they complain about Moses. Moses makes a plea to the Lord, and the Lord gives them water. Do you think they might have made a connection there? "Hey, when we are thirsty, let us ask God for something." Instead, they do not even ask Moses, "Hey, Moses, can you go ask God?" They complain about Moses; they make it about him instead of God.

*Exodus 16:9-10*

*And Moses said unto Aaron, Say unto all the congregation of the children of Israel, Come near before the LORD: for he hath heard your murmurings.*

*And it came to pass, as Aaron spake unto the whole congregation of the children of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness: and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.*

So now, this is us. This is Old Paths Baptist Church, and we are complaining, and suddenly the glory of the Lord is over there in the foyer, and we hear God speak to Moses. There is still Exodus 17 to deal with. These people have seen the glory of the Lord.

*Exodus 16:13-15*

*And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the dew lay round about the host.*

*And when the dew that lay was gone up, behold, upon the face of the wilderness there lay a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground.*

*And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.*

So this time they are warned that the Lord has heard their murmuring, and they literally get to see the glory of the Lord in a cloud. He rains down manna from heaven and quails for meat, and there they are eating flesh, drinking water, seeing the glory of the Lord, and you would think that would suffice for God's people. But then in Exodus 17:4, we see them chiding with Moses, and he says:

*Exodus 17:4*

*And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me.*

Did you hear what he said? Just ask Him; He is going to provide. But they chide with him. They are always going after the leader. This time they murmur and complain about Moses. He calls upon the Lord one more time. They provide for his people. Every time the people have a need, Moses intervenes on their behalf, and the Lord provides for them. In a short span of time, they forget what God gives them.

I think the problem with men and women in Christianity, and certainly back in this time, was that they continuously forget what God has done. When I forget what God has done, tell me I do not complain. I complain. I murmur and complain. It is true. As I said, this is about me. At no time does it appear that they thought about just asking the Lord for water or food.

You all know this story. By Exodus 32, God wants to wipe them all out, and Moses intervenes one more time on their behalf. I cannot help but think if Moses would have said, "You are right, God. Let us wipe them out and start again," if they would not have just done it a different way. There are so many times in history where God could have come to a point where He said, "That is it. All right, we are going to do it a different way." He does in certain ways, but He always leaves a way out, does He not?

Moses was no doubt a flawed man, and I get it. We can read about his life, his flaws, in our Bibles today, and we can sit in judgment of his flaws and excuse our own sin, or we can learn from the virtues that he shows us. He did not quit. I would quit. I would quit on you people so fast. I am not a good person. I admit this freely. I cannot take that kind of criticism. I am just not built for ministry. But think about it: this guy left a really cushy life, led these people out of Israel. He did not really want to do it, but he did it because God wanted it done. They are all telling him, "You brought us out here into the wilderness to kill my baby. What is up with that? Why are you doing this to me?" He could have walked away, but he did not, because that is not what God wanted. God wanted that man to do something. He gave that man a job, and that man stuck by the job.

SEC: David: Attacked by His Family

There is another guy in the Bible. I want to steal a little bit from Danny from last week. David is another guy. He took some arrows. He was a flawed guy. He did some things that brought some problems in his own life, but he took some arrows for doing the right thing from his own family. So Moses got nailed by his flock; David is getting nailed by his own family.

David is an interesting character study. He is a man after God's heart. We see that read in our Bible. He is also a man with severe shortcomings. He is a man that is no different than Uriah when it comes to our sin nature. But he is a man that at least overcame those things to a certain extent because of his heart attitude. His heart attitude is what God liked. He is a man after mine own heart, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.

So David is a flawed guy. When we see a flaw in a guy, we say, "Aha, that is why I do not have to follow that guy." That justifies about everything I can ever say. "There is a flaw in that guy." So here is David; he is a flawed guy. We all know when Nathan came and confronted him with his sin, David owned it. He might have got a little bit late; there are a lot of consequences to what

he did, but he owned it. So you have to give him props for that, but we will not, because we like it when a guy screws up, because then we can do the same thing. We like to justify our own sin by the sins of other people. God honors that. Just pull that out at the judgment seat of Christ. Say that, "Hey, God, Bob Gregg did it." I do not think I want to try that. Do not model your life after mine at the judgment seat of Christ; that would not be a good idea. We all know Nathan brought this to him; David owns it.

But the thing I like about David the most is he did not start out special. He was nothing. He was ruddy. He was out there doing something. He was not all that.

*1 Samuel 16:7*

*But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.*

Speaking of Saul, the guy that had all the attributes that the world would want in a leader, who is tall, which I hate, his head and shoulders above everybody, probably came from a good family, had all the right things. He was the guy that the world would call out to lead a flock of people. He was the world's guy. But God sees things differently, for God looks upon the heart.

We first find David, what is special? There is something special about David, though, and that is that he is found in exactly the right place, doing exactly the right thing. When David shows up, where is he? He is in the field, tending his father's sheep. There is no metaphor there, so do not even try. When opportunity comes knocking in the form of Samuel coming on God's behalf, David is somewhere he is supposed to be, doing something he is supposed to do. He is ministering to and tending to a flock of his father's sheep.

I know he is one of the giants of the faith and king of Israel, a man after God's own heart. But his humble beginnings and his chosen profession before the fame and fortune that came his way just tends to lead me to believe he is like a man of the people. When David was hitting on all cylinders, he was a guy that would be out there with his people, leading, not following, not dictating. This is me working in a line from Pink Floyd: "Forward from the rear, he cried, and the front ranks died." That is not David most of the time, right? He was a guy out there with his head down, a "get it done" kind of guy.

The thing that was special about him is he was a shepherd, and being a shepherd was not an easy job. Just think about being a shepherd. You are outside all day tending sheep who are stupid. Sheep are stupid. They are easily distracted. They wander away. They are easily taken away by wolves, and you have to watch out for them, and wolves are dangerous. Wolves are not the cute little thing you see on *\*Dances with Wolves\**; that was not really a wolf, I think that was a dog. A wolf is a ravenous animal that comes to pick off sheep from your flock, and he is supposed to fight that off.

So David, we know he was found out tending his father's sheep. Pretty good job, pretty good gig, pretty hard job. I will bet you not one of them sheep ever said, "Thanks, David. Thanks for

chasing off that wolf. Thanks for warning me that if I wandered over there, there were wolves over there. Thank you." You never heard that.

*1 Samuel 17:1-3*

*Now the Philistines gathered together their armies to battle, and were gathered together at Shochoh, which belongeth to Judah, and pitched between Shochoh and Azekah, in Ephesdammim.*

*And Saul and the men of Israel were gathered together, and pitched by the valley of Elah, and set the battle in array against the Philistines.*

*And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them.*

Here is the battle with Goliath. This is that great epic scene that we heard about last week. I liked Danny's message so much I went home and wrote it. I will just do it again. But there they were. This is the battle with Goliath. All of Israel is over here. Maybe they are over there, I do not know. They are on one side. God's enemies are on the other side, and there is a great valley between them. These great, valiant men of the army of Israel, among them were David's brothers, David's family.

*1 Samuel 17:16-20*

*And the Philistine drew near morning and evening, and presented himself forty days.*

*And Jesse said unto David his son, Take now for thy brethren an ephah of this parched corn, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren;*

*And carry these ten cheeses unto the captain of their thousand, and look how thy brethren fare, and take their pledge.*

*Now Saul, and they, and all the men of Israel, were in the valley of Elah, fighting with the Philistines.*

*And David rose up early in the morning, and left the sheep with a keeper, and took, and went, as Jesse had commanded him; and he came to the trench, as the host was going forth to the fight, and shouted for the battle.*

Now, it is confusing to me, but what I see here is every day for forty days, two armies stood between a valley, and they would make noise like they were going to go to war, but they did not. They shouted up. They got all excited, but they did not go because the Philistine would come and present himself for forty days, and they would say, "Oh, wow, there are giants in their land. Maybe we cannot do that." But here is David one more time, in absolute obedience to his father's wishes. His father says, "Go do this," and he does. He goes out there and he does exactly what he is told. David rose up early in the morning and left the sheep with the keeper. He is in abject, absolute obedience to his father, and he shows up in these trenches, and there are these great, valiant men. They are probably experts at Call of Duty, but when it came to an actual fight, they

stood there for forty days and made noise like they were warriors and just did not do it. Maybe I am wrong, I do not know.

*1 Samuel 17:11*

*When Saul and all Israel heard those words of the Philistine, they were dismayed, and greatly afraid.*

So, hey, I would be afraid too. I am not judging. I am just saying I would be afraid too.

*1 Samuel 17:24*

*And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid.*

When there is no mighty man to take the cause of God, a tender of sheep, a shepherd who is always found doing his father's work, shows up on the scene because it needed to be done, because his father told him to.

*1 Samuel 17:26*

*And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*

There is someone out there badmouthing the God of Israel, and David does not like it. He did not care that there is an entire army of Israel over here that will not take care of it. This is little David, a shepherd guy on a mission from his father. He did not even care. He wants to know, "Why is this guy badmouthing my God, my leader, my shepherd, attacking God's people and the mighty men? Why are they just sitting there looking at each other?" He said, "What is wrong with this?" Does anyone wonder where Saul is?

Instead of inspiring action and moving these great men of God to action, David is met with derision from his own family, his own brother Eliab. Eliab, his eldest brother, has it all figured out. He has the spiritual power of discernment ring that we all get in our Cracker Jacks. He has put it on. He is going to discern the heart of David right here.

*1 Samuel 17:28*

*And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle.*

What battle? I have not seen a battle yet. So, according to the great Eliab, David is prideful and naughty. They even go after him to a different extent here. They accuse him of leaving his sheep, having absolutely no knowledge of what David did in leaving the sheep with a keeper. David was not going to leave his flock. David left behind someone to take care of his flock while he was gone. Who would leave a sheep alone if you were a shepherd? Who would do that? The truth does not suit us. If we throw enough against the wall, something is going to stick. That is

what is happening here. God's people, when they see something they do not like out of someone they do not want to have happen, they will throw something at them. This is not the world. This is not the liberal media. This is his brothers. His own family are doing this to him.

*1 Samuel 17:29*

*And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?*

That had to cut them so deep. "What have I now done? Is there not a cause?" David knew there was a cause, and he was willing to take those. He knew there was a cause. They all knew there was a cause. But apparently, only David was willing to step up and do something about it. Just David. Just a little shepherd. Not a mighty man of war. Just little David. Nothing special about him, except he is found in the field tending his father's sheep. Probably nothing significant about that. Now he is taking arrows from his own flesh and blood just for standing up for God and to care for his father's sheep.

David is a guy who stepped up when no one else would. His brothers knew him. They probably knew what he did. They probably knew some of the stuff that you and I do not know about, and they could make their moral judgments and justify their cowardice in the face of an enemy that God wanted defeated. But hey, David is a man. He is prone to error. He is flesh and blood. I get it. There is another guy coming up; you cannot say that. Stepping into the ministry is going to be the surest way to get Satan's fiery darts tossed at you. But do not think for a minute you are not going to get hit by some friendly fire every once in a while. It is going to happen. David is an example of it. Moses is an example of it.

You know the rest of the story. David kills Goliath, cuts off his head, brings it to Saul. But just like Moses, something tells me if David heard what Eliab said, and said, "You know what, you are right, Eliab. You have got this. I am going to go over here and eat some cheese sandwiches for a while. Let me know how it goes," and just sat there. I always liked the alternative endings in movies. Would not that be a great alternative ending? God would have gotten it done somehow, but God wanted David to do it. That is why David is there. David's only sin at this point was obeying his father's wishes and bringing some cheese sandwiches to the troops. That is it. And he was obedient to that.

SEC: Christ: Attacked by His Friends

Okay, there is another guy now. We can look at the first two guys and say, "Well, you know, they had problems in their life. They were sinful men. Once you have done that, I cannot follow." I have heard this story told, and I am not going to tell that story; it makes me mad when I hear it. It is too personal. We all know. Christ. This is the third guy. Christ took hits from his flock. He took hits from his family. But He took hits from His friends. Christ had it coming from every angle.

I do not suppose any of us, when we read our Bibles, are surprised by the resistance the Pharisees had to Christ when He came on the scene. Who is surprised by that? Nobody. The world government at the time, the world system at the time, did not like what He had to say. They are always going to be against the thing of God. But the thing that strikes me the most is the hits He takes from His friends and His followers. We cannot look at Him and say, "Well, yeah, if you

knew Jesus the way I know Him." But they did. These people, I am going to show you an example of people saying, "Who does He think He is? We know Him." Watch this. The world system is always against the things of God, but people's flocks, people's family, and now His friends.

This is John 6. There is so much here. I am going to jump in the middle of this. He is telling these disciples some things here.

*John 6:51-66*

*I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*

*The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?*

*Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.*

*Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.*

*For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.*

*He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

*As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me.*

*This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.*

*These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.*

*Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?*

*When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?*

*What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?*

*It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.*

*But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.*

*And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.*

*From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.*

So there is this hard message. It is a hard sermon. It is hitting between the eyes. They do not even understand it, but it makes them mad. They do not even really understand what He is saying, but it makes them mad, and they murmur against Him, just like Moses' flock.

If you go back to John 6:41-42, there is another group of people, and they are murmuring because they knew Him. This is what I was alluding to before. They knew His parents.

*John 6:41-42*

*The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven.*

*And they said, Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?*

"Who is this guy? I know him." They are throwing out this open-ended innuendo. "I know this guy. Who does he think he is?" And let it stick. It does not have to be true; it just has to be out there, and the attack is already there. People will glom onto that because that is how people are. Because, you know why? We do not want to face our own sinful nature. We do not want to face our own shortcomings. We want to look at other people and justify what we are doing because I judge myself based on what you like, and that is wrong. There is a perfect Judge. There is a perfect record that we do not measure up to. But if you are comparing yourself to me, you are going to come out pretty well right up until the judgment seat of Christ, and we are all going to be in a lot of trouble. It is just bad enough. This is all bad enough. Jesus is throwing some hard meat at them. They do not like what they hear. They do not even know what they are hearing, but they do not want to hear it.

Something occurred to me as I was studying this out. There are a couple of things I have learned in ministry. The first one I ever think I really learned is that ministry is a great discerner of people. When you put someone in a ministry, you really find out what they are made of. But the other one is: familiarity breeds contempt. These people were familiar with Jesus, and the familiarity allowed them, through their own sinful nature and their unwillingness to face their own sin in their life, to make Him just like them. You can try that with Moses. You can pull it off with David; you say, "Yeah, but you knew Bathsheba. That was pretty bad, buddy." You cannot pull it off with Jesus Christ. Familiarity breeds contempt. If you try to tell me it does not, I will just murmur against you. It does not matter.

Tell me if that is not true. Our friends and family members will sometimes say things to us that our casual acquaintances never would. Some of the hardest things I have ever heard that were not true have come from my family and friends, where mere acquaintances would not dare say those things to each other. We see someone get saved. They get on fire for God. They start ministering, and they get spiritual, and we think, "Who does that guy think he is? I know him. I watched him when he came into this church. He just quit smoking six months ago." That is the kind of things we do. But they put their sin behind them, and we want that sin to be present with them because, "Uh oh, they are catching up. They are catching up." We do not like that. That is what is going on with Jesus. He was just a boy. He was just a kid. He must have been peculiar, though. Would He not have had to be different than everybody else? Would He not have had to be different than

every other kid on the block when they wanted to go out and goof around? He was probably studying the Old Testament. I do not know what He was doing, but He had to be different.

There is always a place for a guy to improve himself or a lady to improve herself and put that sin behind them. But there are always those of us that are here already going, "Yeah, but I remember that. If you knew Bob, you would not know." There is always a place for mistakes. People make mistakes. People need to learn. But they are looking at Jesus now, and He is telling them some things that He will raise people up on the last day. "Whoa, what is that? Come on, man. Only God can do that. We know that. I am God. What? We know you. We know your parents." They are insinuating something that there is something more to it, but there is not. We know that. We know it is Jesus Christ. There is nothing there. Suddenly, He is not just one of the crowd anymore. They do not like it, and they walk with Him no more. So part of His entourage says, "I am out." That is bad enough, but it gets worse.

Go to Luke 8. This is where it really gets down to the inner circle. There is a story of Jairus' daughter.

*Luke 8:41-48*

*And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house:*

*For he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went the people thronged him.*

*And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,*

*Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanch'd.*

*And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?*

*And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.*

*And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.*

*And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.*

So Jesus is on His way to Jairus' house because his daughter is sick. As luck would have it, He gets thronged by a crowd. Now He cannot get there. So He is thronged by this crowd, and this woman with an issue of blood, which is the first message I heard Chris Schmidt preach when I went to go see Bob that day, and he was not there at that other church. A break from the crowd. So she kind of hinders Him, but He is not going to stop. He has got this thing covered. He is Jesus. Luck would have it, He gets thronged by the crowd, and in the meantime, the girl dies.

*Luke 8:49-51*

*While he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master.*

*But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole.*

*And when he came into the house, he suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.*

I always like it when our pastor talks about Jesus never being able to preach a funeral because it just kept popping up out of the grave. That would be a great thing to be able to do, but He never did preach a funeral. Lazarus stunk. Lazarus was dead so long he stank. That did not stop Jesus from raising him from the dead. He said, "Come forth," and he came forth. I do not know how they got that smell off of him, but he was pretty dead. He was dead, dead, stinking dead. So this would be a no-brainer, right? The girl has been alive; she just died. It is recent dead, right? So Jesus would tell him, "Chill out. She will be fine. Just believe. Fear not, believe only, and she shall be made whole."

*Luke 8:52-53*

*And all wept, and bewailed her: but he said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth.*

*And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead.*

They laughed Him to scorn. Look, there are seven people in that room: the dead girl and Jesus. They are not laughing. Mom and Dad, I doubt it. Who is left? Peter, James, and John. The apostle that loved Him laughed Him to scorn. The inner circle, His very closest friends, looked at Him, shook their head, and said, "Are you out of your mind? She is dead, you idiot. Come on." It was not a chuckle. It was not like Sarah when she laughed at herself when God said she would have a kid, right? This was a gut laugh, a belly laugh, as the way Bubba laughed at me when I sang. They were out of their minds. It was hysterical. They were hysterical. Mom and Dad were not laughing. Come on. Think about it. You are going to laugh? Your daughter is dead? No, you are not laughing. Those three people laughed Him to scorn.

The point I am trying to make here is that even the people closest to Him took a shot at Him. This is Jesus Christ. There is nothing wrong. They never saw Him do anything wrong. They never heard Him say anything wrong. They only saw Him heal the sick, raise the dead, give sight to the blind. That is all they ever saw Him do. Now they are laughing Him to scorn because they knew better. They knew better. They knew better than Jesus Christ, even these three. These guys, they were close. Do not get me wrong; they are just men. Now the flaw has switched over to not the hero, but the other guys in the story. Peter, James, and John are just men, so give them a break. I have laughed for less. But they laughed at Him. It is really bad. In Luke 8:42, it says they all wept and bewailed her. In Mark 5, the same story is said there; it says they wailed greatly. So they went from crying, horrible things, "This little girl is dead," to laughing. I do not think so. Not the Mom and Dad. Not Jesus. That girl is not laughing.

Here is what we see: no matter how close people are to the Word of Christ, the Pharisees, His followers, His disciples, His friends, even His closest allies seem to break easily when it really comes down to it. Familiarity breeds contempt. We have to guard against that. We just need to. If these three guys could do that, imagine what you or I could pull off. Imagine what we could do when faced with a similar situation of a shepherd, a leader of a flock. David had it by his family. Moses had it by his flock. Jesus had it by His friends, not just friends, His closest friends.

SEC: The Heritage of the Servants of the Lord

There is another character I want to talk about. There is one thing in common with these three guys. The next one has this thing too. They are all called to a calling, and they fulfilled their calling. They all sacrificed something. Jesus sacrificed everything. They were given a flock of their father's sheep to tend, and they did it willingly. With the exception of Christ, they all had their flaws. But even with no flaws, Christ took the worst of it from His friends, His family, His enemies, from His closest friends.

There is a verse I want to read in a little bit, and it talks about our heritage as servants of the Lord. The first time I preached here four years and a week ago, I walked into Barb's hotel room. It was like a hotel room, except there were like thirty people in it. On the wall was her chart, and on the chart was her doctor's name, her pain level, the nurse's name, and some other stuff. There was a verse down below.

*Psalms 18:2*

*The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.*

When I walked into that hospital room, I asked Barb about that verse, and she said that verse had gotten her through some of the deepest, darkest times of her life. She has had some of those, for sure. I do not think I know all of them. I am probably pretty sure I could not handle them. But I preached the message on that verse, loosely on that verse, by asking people if we paid attention to the words of the songs that we are singing, like Zach asked us this morning. Mel Sabaka once said to me, "If you cannot live those words, do not sing them." If you are going to sing them, God is listening.

I went to the hospital Friday, a week ago Friday, expecting that I would get that same inspiration, because I had absolutely no idea. My tickler file did not work. I was hoping to see a verse on that wall. Bob was not in the room, but there was no verse on that wall. Barb was there. I said, "Barb, where is my inspiration? Where is my verse?" And she gave me one. She said it is a J. Frank Norris verse. I do not know what his deal with it is, but it is a pretty good verse. He is a shepherd. He is a leader of a flock. He had to sacrifice a lot to be where he is, to be where he got. The next guy, he tends his father's flock. He includes this as his family, and he is our friend. That guy.

*Isaiah 54:17*

*No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD.*

No weapon shall prosper. Every tongue shall be condemned. Bob Gregg, watch what you are saying. I do not know if any of you folks can say the same thing. But like I said in the beginning, this is for me. This is about me. Watch what you are saying. Watch who you are. I get it. Guys are fallible, subject to error. I get it. Nobody is perfect. But when you listen to some of the things that people say, mostly on Facebook, that faceless entity, tool of the devil, where you can be anything you want to be and get away with it, that disgusting place that we go to say things that we would never say in person. You go there, and it is just like Moses in the wilderness. "Well, you know, Bob this, Bob that." But then that did not work, so you have got to escalate it. You have got to bring it up a notch. "He brought us here to kill us. He brought us out here purposely to kill our babies." The rhetoric, as his record of service and ministry goes up, the rhetoric goes up with it. It is a horrible thing to watch.

This guy, his big crime in life, is taking a flock of people. Is he wrong sometimes? Probably. I am not going to stand here and tell you. When I have a problem with Bob, I call Bob. I do not go on Facebook and say, "I have got a problem with Bob." It is easy. It is great when people leave, and we suddenly find out all the problems in the church. It is okay; this church is not for everybody. I get that. Unfortunately, anyone can have a Facebook account. These people, just like Moses gets some water, they are not happy with that. Moses gets some food; they are not happy with that. The Lord shows Himself to them; they are not happy with it. It just turns out people are never happy, so just suck it up. The guy has got a hard job. Moses had a hard job. David had a hard job. They were both men prone to error, subject to problems in their life that they brought on themselves. But they still got attacked from within. The people that they ministered to attacked them. Their family attacked them. Their friends attacked them. I can just imagine some of the things. Close friends that have turned on our sheepdog pastor.

I do not know. After a guy could stand there and make an offhand comment to me twenty-some odd years ago about teaching a Bible study in the living room, I do not think I would be married, at least not to her. So what could he do so wrong that would lead me to Facebook to air my grievance? I do not get it. It makes me mad. "To kill our children. Bob, you led us here to Independence. To starve me to death. Deny me Jack Stack barbecue and kill my babies." We all know he is in it for the fame and fortune, right? Just look around. There are literally footsteps on the ceiling. We are never satisfied with right now. We are never satisfied with what we have. We always need more. We are never satisfied when we do not get our way. We will find a way to get our way, and it does not have to be true. When we say something about someone, all we have to do is have an open-ended statement like, "I know him." "Oh, I know Bob." Just stop talking right there. That is enough, right?

Over the years, I have seen the same thing happen when someone comes here and then leaves. The strangest thing is they may or may not have a legitimate gripe. I am not making a judgment, but they do not stop to say anything about it. They do not try to fix the problem. Guess what? We are a bunch of men and women here, and we have sin problems in our life, and we are not

perfect. That is the second thing I learned in Christianity: we are not perfect. But to go on Facebook and do it, "No weapon that is formed against thee, even Facebook, shall prosper. Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn." I would love to think that Bob, the mere mortal, can take it. He probably cannot. He is tougher than me. But when his flock turns on him, and his disciples turn on him, and his best friends turn on him, do you think it does not hurt his feelings? Something tells me it does. Something tells me he is human, despite what I know of him. I know Bob. He is not human. He is a machine.

Why Moses did not quit? That is a mystery. Why David did not just go eat a cheese sandwich? That is a mystery. Why Bob has put up with it all these years? That is less of a mystery, because he tells us. He has a Savior that called him to service, gave him a flock of people, and said, "Stick with it. Lead them." Not "forward from the rear, he cried." He is leading. I will tell you what. Familiarity breeds contempt. We are pretty familiar with him. The last church I was at, you could not get that guy out of that church on a Thursday or a Sunday to save your life. We tried to field a coed softball team. We could barely get ten people to show up. We had a church that was twice as big as this. You know why? Our guy is out there with us. We are familiar with him, and that very familiarity allows us to breed contempt. We ought to fight that. We should fight that. He is with us. He is a man of the people. He is like us. Why he does not quit, I do not know. I would probably walk for less.

Jesus comes along. You can say what you will about David. You can say what you will about Moses. They had problems in their lives, so you can justify anything you want to say. But I do not know what this message is about. You tell me. This was about me. Last week, Danny talked about David tarrying. I found myself having tarried from time to time. I find myself doing that. He is a good man. Even if he went bad for a little while, it cost him. There was a price that was paid for that tarrying. If this Bible verse from Isaiah is accurate, when you or I lapse into this tarrying mode and find ourselves becoming a weapon formed against the leader of our flock, our family, our friend, maybe this verse is a warning to us to watch out. Every tongue will be condemned. Every weapon formed will fail. You are destined to failure when you go up against a guy who is doing what God wants him to do. You are destined to failure. It is our heritage. We are prone to error. We are fallible. I get that. There is no excuse, though. "Every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn." I know God is talking to Israel, but it fits nicely to what we believe, does it not? Every idle word, see at the judgment seat of Christ. Every idle thought, see at the judgment seat of Christ. Mel Sabaka was afraid of the judgment seat of Christ. Bob Gregg should be petrified. "This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."

So there is a happy note. When we become the victim or the target of those things that come from the flock, or the family, or our friends, if we are doing what is right, that is our heritage. Our righteousness is of the Lord. That is our heritage. It should end on a happy note.

As we go forth, just know this: we have a shepherd that will chomp the rear end off of any wolf that tries to take us. He will fight for us. He will. I have seen him do it. Any wolf that tries to take a crack at one of his sheep, let us act like we know it, though. Let us act like we believe it. Let us act like we have a man that leads us, who is human, subject to error from time to time, prone to

error, I do not know. Not like me, because I am perfect. Not like you, because we are all perfect. He is the one, right? It does not bode well for the other side of history as we go through our life. That is all I have got.

Let us pray.

Father, thank you again for bringing us here today. Lord, I pray that I did not get in the way of anything you would have said to these people. Lord, I pray for our pastor to recover quickly and come back to us with full strength. Lord, in the meantime, we will hold down the fort for him. Father, I just pray for the folks here today that your Word would be a blessing to them. They not only hear what you would have to say, but they do what you say as well. I pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.