

# But God. But David. (Quality: very good)

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Date: 13 March 1991

Preacher: Wood, Clement (1920-2010)

- [ 0 : 0 0 ] In dependence upon the Lord for all needed help, I venture to draw your prayerful attention to two portions of the Word of God, both with but two words.
- The first you will find in the first book of Samuel, chapter 23, toward the end of verse 14.
- First book of Samuel, chapter 23, verse 14, and these two words, But God.
- Then turning to the same book, first book of Samuel, chapter 30, and we turn to verse 6, and toward the end of that verse, these two words, chapter 30, verse 6, But David.
- Reading the sentences, Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand, but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God, but God, but David.
- [ 1 : 5 4 ] David. David had been anointed by Samuel to become, in God's time, a king over Israel.
- Indeed, soon after that anointing, David was given a great victory.
- The shepherd lad that had, by God's help, delivered the sheep and lamb from the mouth of the lion and the paw of the bear.
- By God's help slew the giant Goliath. Anointing, victory, and then persecution, trouble, danger, threat to his life.
- Not just once, it was constant. Instead of the throne, it seemed it would be the grave.
- [ 3 : 1 9 ] David was constantly in great danger. But, as our first text named, but God delivered him not into his hand.
- There are seasons and times in the Christian experience when walking by faith, obedient unto God, that we come into the trial of our faith, into times of deep testing, when there's none to help, when all seems against us, when we are overwhelmed, when we are oppressed, when we come to wits' end and stagger to and fro like drunken men.
- But God, O beloved hearer tonight, canst thou trace this out in thy path, when, as I say, there was none to help, when you were at wits' end.
- But God appeared, delivered, made a way, strengthened, helped you, sustained you, supported you.
- But this time, indeed in the previous chapter, God had told David, through his servant, to go to the land of Judah.
- [ 5 : 1 4 ] So David, in going to this city, Keilah, was obedient to the word of God.
- We observe that. Because David here had not gone into a path of his own choosing.
- I must tarry on this point for a moment. The right path, obedience to God, walking by faith, is not always a way of comfort and ease.
- It's the right way. God will be with thee. God will uphold you in the way. But it may well be the path of trial.
- This is so clearly set forth in the word of God. I feel constrained to tarry on it for a moment. And let us just take one or two examples of obedience to God and faith in its testing.

- [ 6 : 32 ] Take Israel of old by the Red Sea. they didn't choose their paths. The pillar of cloud by day and fire by night directed him to the very spot.
- As they stood there with the Red Sea in front of them, the Egyptian host behind them, yet the pillar of cloud was right above them. They stood where God had ordered them to stand.
- It was a trial of their faith, wasn't it? They were dismayed. They thought it must be the end. But God will make a way. Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward.
- Dear old minister once said, men can stack bricks, men can stack hay, God stacks water, makes it stand up as a wall.
- But God, yes, the right way, the path of testing, the way of trial, and yet the destruction of their enemies, and how often it's recounted in the word of God what the Lord did at the Red Sea.
- [ 7 : 44 ] Let's just come to the New Testament and take two quick examples. The Lord Jesus twice, on two occasions, constrained his disciples to get into the boat to go to the other side.
- Now, they were obedient. They did just what Jesus told them. You and I would have thought that they would have a very calm crossing that night. Surely, obedience to God would bring a calm sea.
- It was just the reverse. That the wind was contrary. That the tempest blew. On the first occasion, Jesus, when awakened, said, peace be still, and there was a great calm.
- On the second, he was on the mount praying. He saw them toiling and rowing. They weren't out of his sight. They weren't out of his care either. And though I'm digressing from my subject for a moment, let me just say this, friend.
- They never tried to turn the boat round. They kept going. Struggling. Fourth watch of the night, Jesus went to them.
- [ 8 : 57 ] And, oh, the trial and the testing and yet the blessing. Nights never to be forgotten. Times in our experience when walking by faith, sorely tried, fearing everything had gone wrong, and the Lord appears, the Lord, but God, but God brings out of it a blessing.
- and such a confirming of your soul. We will notice as enabled in a moment or two in the second portion that that followed David choosing his own path, but we'll come to that in a moment.
- In the meantime, we're reminded then here that David had gone in obedience to God and in Judah and this town of Keilah, the Philistines had been and robbed the threshing floors.
- and David inquires of God. Now mark what he does. David didn't say let us rise up immediately and go against and do battle against the Philistines.
- Her friend is for our instruction to pray over every step we take to seek God's divine guidance and direction.
- [ 10 : 33 ] God said to his servant go and smite the Philistines and save Keilah. David makes this known to his followers.
- His followers are full of fear. They cannot rest on the word that David had received from God. He says here we are a small band in Judah oppressed by Saul and now to go against another enemy surely we shall be overcome.
- David takes it again to God in prayer. David has the confirming word of God. Arise go down to Keilah I says God will deliver the Philistines into thine hand.
- David in obedience was granted the victory and Keilah was saved. But further trouble.

Saul hears that David is in Keilah in a town that has gates and is shut in and Saul says now there is no escape for David no way out I will overcome I will take him I will slay him and he calls his people together to go down to besiege the city of Keilah one would think that that which David had accomplished for the inhabitants of Keilah would have put them feelingly into David's debt and that they would support and do all they could to defend him and his men who had overcome their enemy David is aware of Saul's intentions again

[ 12 : 40 ] David goes to God in prayer I tarry for a moment on this ninth verse David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him and he said to Abiathar the priest bring hither the ephod now what does this mean we must go back further in the old testament to the high priest who wore the upper garment which was of most beautiful colors of gold and blue and purple and scarlet and fine twine linen all spiritually we haven't time neither would I have the ability tonight to spiritualize each of those colors but there is spiritual teaching as we see our high priest who has entered into heaven

Jesus Christ now on that garment on the ephod which was worn by the high priest on the shoulders was on one shoulder and on the other an onyx stone and in each of those stones were engraved the six names of the tribes of Israel the twelve tribes in all also fixed in the breastplate over the ephod were the stones twelve precious stones each bearing the name of each of the tribes of Israel again not one is missed out again each are in their appointed place now also with this there was the urim and the thanim now there's no clear understanding of exactly what this was it is considered to be like two lights or stones light and perfection that

God was pleased to convey to his people as they sought him for guidance that God in some way through those urim and thanim would reveal the purpose of his heart and guide his ancient people just this thought and we pass on here we have we do not have a urim and thanim a light to shine or show which is right and which is wrong we have the word of God we have the throne of grace we have a living Christ in glory and we have that saviour to whom we may go to whom we may turn to whom we may pray and to seek for that guidance and for that direction in all our concerns in the way that we need guidance the way that we need providing the way that we need deliverance the way that we need pardon but just this thought something very beautiful in that which I have named about the two stones on the shoulder they were carried

God carries his people even to your old age I am he I have made I will carry says God I will bear what a mercy what a comfort the shoulder is the place of strength and the government shall be upon his shoulders and what does the shepherd do with the sheep that's lost and he finds it puts it on his shoulder carries it in his bosom what about the twelve stones and the breastplate near the heart near the place of love look at the eternal safety of God's dear children look at the living Christ I know that my redeemer liveth in glory to whom we may go to whom we may turn and seek that guidance I say we seek no lights of perfection as we think of

Urim and Thummim as was revealed in a mysterious way by God as way of direction in Old Testament times we have God's word now God spake through the ephod God spake and said yes when David said it is will Saul come and will the men of Ki-Ida deliver me up into his hand will Saul come down as thy servant hath heard O Lord God of Israel I beseech thee tell thy servant do show show me the path

[ 18 : 28 ] I to go make the provision for me Lord and now they said they will deliver thee up now when we read this it doesn't mean that God said that this actually would happen that David that Saul literally would come to the city and that the inhabitants would literally give David up what it means is this that the intention God knows the heart of all the intention of these in Keilah instead of supporting strengthening and protecting David that they would betray him God preserved David but God you see but God knows all the intentions of the heart of man and once more a way of escape is made deliverance is granted before Saul comes before the inhabitants of Keilah can give him up and David flees from the city and when whithersoever they could fleeing for their life no settled place seeking doubtless shelter wherever they could find it in the wilderness in strongholds in the mountains fleeing from a relentless enemy and

Saul sought him every day it wasn't just a trouble of a day it was day by day every day and then we read but God delivered him not into his hand I think we read on another occasion of David saying there's but a step between me and death what a solemn word what a true word and we never know when that last step's going to be taken a step is it well with my soul but God delivered him and not into his hand still under if I may so put it the anointing still under the promise that God had made though as I say it seemed that it was an impossibility that ever it should be fulfilled it seemed more like death than the crown more like grave than the throne but

God delivered him out not into his hand it's a sore trouble when it goes on day by day and day by day and day by day without any relenting when under the pressure yes you can say yes I was helped yesterday but look I'm still in the same place today I'm still perhaps in greater danger today more difficulty never so weak as I am now never so weary ready to give up I'm sure I shall fail I'm sure that I shall be overcome but God out of your difficulty God makes the way he will never lay upon a person more than but they can bear his own dear children cast thy burden on the Lord and he shall sustain thee and I feel prompted to name something I read recently rather laid hold on me you see in the path of trouble we may suffer temptation the devil says now look there's a way out why are you so worried and that way out that the devil brings before you you know is not right you know you cannot ask

God to bless it your conscience is not happy and yet there you are the struggle the tumult the turmoil the conflict one moment you stand firm the next moment you never nearly give way perhaps you even do try and get out of it your own way try and find your own way out of it be careful how you come out of your troubles there was a dear man ever so many years ago a godly man and he was in the depth of trouble and he owed a considerable amount of money and the devil whispered something to him you steal a sheep no one would know they put matters right poor man knowing it was wrong depth of trouble seeing a way out would it matter could he not do it and the dear man was overcome and one night went forth to fulfill this purpose on his way there was a river it might have been

Scotland I don't know it was in full flood and it was moonlight and as he walked along burdened with his spirit struggling almost wanting to drag himself back and yet propelled forward by the power of temptation he espied in a pool near the river through the water that had receded a large salmon the Lord made a way for that man I don't know in just what way it cleared his dead or what but there it was it stopped him stopped him but God but God friend there are some very dark paths that we walk at times I not say you see whilst it was here day by day that David went in this experience it wasn't right through his life but there are times in our life when it may be a sudden trouble may be confined just to a day or two but there are sometimes troubles that seem that there's no end to it no end at all whatsoever but

[ 25 : 08 ] God that sustaining help that sustaining grace out of weakness made strong that help that has been afforded to you but God delivered him not into his hand this was not the end of David's troubles because later we read that David was hiding himself and if you read further on in this chapter that Saul again pursued it and the people said that they would help Saul to find David and would search him throughout all the land of Judah and there was this number following Saul pursuing David and David was in the wilderness and Saul were pursuing him and there we read that David went on this side of the mountain and Saul went on that side of the mountain

David made haste to get away from Saul and Saul his men compassed David about they're near him they're getting him they're surrounding him now David is a dark moment now David there's no way out but God just that Saul was about to take David there comes a messenger to Saul hasty come come back the Philistines have invaded the land Saul had to go back Saul had to leave David but God we trace out in our spiritual and providential experience the hand of a good and gracious God that brings deliverance there was in Scotland a godly minister that was pursued by a relentless foe and they were pursuing him and his followers and catching him up and the dear man stopped and said let us pray we can go no further and he prayed to almighty

God and prayed Lord send down thy cloak over the mountain and as he prayed a dense fog came over and preserved him and his followers but God I hope friend in this rambling sermon tonight that you have been tracing out something in your life and say yes there I was but God helped me helped me just as I tell my people at home sometimes a seed thawed or two here that you think of dear Joseph when he was in the prison but the Lord was with him but God was with him you'll find those words in Acts in the ministry of

Stephen but God you see what a path how mysterious everything seemed impossible that ever those dreams would be fulfilled and in the prison couldn't be darker but God and how that dear Joseph could say at the end you meant it unto evil but God see but God meant it unto good God was my helper we know that all things were together for good to them that love God to them who are the called according to his purpose I'll bless the hand that guided I'll bless the heart with plan oh when throned in highest glory in Emmanuel it's with mercy and with judgment that's how the verse begins with mercy and with judgment my web of time he wove and e'en the dews of sorrow were lusted with his love

I'll bless the hand that guided I'll bless the heart that planned when throned in highest glory in Emmanuel I don't want to sing songs to a heavy heart I know what a struggle it is for faith to really believe I know what a struggle it is when the devil tempts I know what a struggle it is to say I will trust and not be afraid when all seems to go against you I remember my late dear mother who was very fond of her needle work and one day with her she was doing cottage and flowers and garden and a path and a gate and she turned to me and said what color shall I do the gate I looked at her and I said how about black she black and she paused yes black and you know we had a rather nice little time

[ 30 : 39 ] I never forgotten the black strand all together in beauty all in its right place is it not said that some of the most beautiful carpets that were made perhaps years ago I don't know about modern methods of course but there was the men would be down on the floor and the overseer would be in a gallery and say that strand there that strand there they couldn't see any beauty in it they couldn't see any purpose why that color should be there but when the work was done and they went up the gallery and looked down oh the beauty oh the beauty friend and it's that and it is true even of what man does but with God his way is perfect his perfect friend but God but God it's not often that

I refer to two scriptures by way of a text but I have been balanced in my mind that I thought I could do no other and I pursue now to the second portion just briefly but David now I said in this case David was obeying God now when David came back to Ziklag now Ziklag was his town he had been disobedient he had tried to find his own way out there it was that Saul was still pursuing him seeks after him and David gets so low and he says in his heart I shall now he doesn't say ah but God has helped me but God will help me but he says now I shall perish

I shall be consumed he says one day by the hand of Saul there's nothing better for me to do than to pray nothing better for me to do than to trust in my God nothing better for me to do than to look up but what does he say there's nothing better for me that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines seek an asylum there he doesn't seek God's guidance doesn't seek God's blessing he just takes his own step now you doubt this will be well acquainted with the Old Testament history that it soon came about that the Philistines wanted to go in battle against Israel and they wanted David to go with them to fight against his own people what a predicament what a situation and all because David had gone and taken his own step mercifully in the dark hour

God made a way of escape I haven't time you should know it well that David was sent back the Philistines were afraid and thought that he might betray them and so forth David goes back he goes back to his city and what does he find no city where's his wives gone where are the children gone everything burnt down to the ground very solemn David you should never have gone your own way never have done it and then darker still they weep they mourn and they lift up their voice and they cry so much that they no more power to weep anymore the depth of their sorrow the anguish the loss perhaps once or twice friend and I've known it there have been such an intensity of sorrow that we've been almost crushed and can't weep anymore not that perhaps necessarily weep literally but the sorrow so great so crushing and then even worse still

David's followers would threaten to stone him they were all discouraged but David here's the secret here's real religion he's a gracious God he's a throne of grace even for the wanderer for the disobedient one for the one that has failed the one that has gone his own way but David encourage himself in the Lord his God David you can't David did it might be said how could the man encourage himself everything had gone his city had been burned his dear ones had been taken captive his followers threatening to stone him deeply distressed could it be darker could it be blacker it couldn't be but David he went to his God it was as it were a renewing of his faith a strengthening of his trust the upward look to heaven

[ 36 : 13 ] I will lift up mine eyes under the hills from whence cometh my help and he encouraged himself in the Lord his God yes and he again now doesn't say it's best for me to go and do this better for me to do that I'll do this I'll do that I'll choose this path I'll go that way no bring the ephod you see as I've just explained it's like going to God in prayer waiting upon God for a word and David inquires shall I go after these enemy shall I if I do shall I overtake them and what does God say and it's a wonderful word and I hope it may be a word for you tonight pursue ready to give up feeling everything's against you feeling everything's so dark feeling never so weak never so perplexed never so unable to face up to things perhaps you're depressed perhaps you feel to be in a very low place

God says pursue pursue and thou shalt recover and without fail recover or but it's that word pursue go on still pray for God will all explain nor shalt thou seek his face in vain Jesus Christ your father son bids you undismayed go on but God but David and look as they go on there's that Egyptian left in the field to perish that's the treatment of a harsh Amalekite look at the kindness of David and his followers look at the instrument in God's hand look at the purpose of God in that one Egyptian slave nearly at death door is the link in God's hand and purpose and plan to direct David and to help him and there as he came upon the enemy the Amalekites he gained the complete victory and recovered all but

God but David but God but this poor sinner I close with this spiritual observation we read in the Ephesians and you hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and in sin we read there and let me turn it up that I may quote it accurately of the lost state the utter ruin that we are in because of sin and the apostle here says where in time past he walked according to the course of this world according to the prince of the power of the air the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience among whom also we all had our conversation fulfilling the lust of the flesh the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature the children of wrath even as others but

God that's tremendous though we were lost ruin sinking perishing dying far off from God disobedient but God who is rich in mercy for his great love wherewith he loved us even when we were dead in sin hath quickened us together with Christ by grace ye are saved but God amazing grace how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me I once was lost but now found was blind but now I see and again for scarcely for a righteous man will one die yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die but God commendeth his love toward us that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us but

God the God of love the God of mercy the God of grace gave the son of his love Jesus gave himself oh wondrous grace it was grace that taught my soul to pray and pardoning love to know it was grace that kept me to this day and will not let me go and we read again in the psalm like sheep they are laid in the grave death shall feed on them the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling but God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave he shall receive me he that receiveth sinners coming sinners to him won't cast them out but

[ 41 : 33 ] God will redeem my soul redeemed by the precious blood redeemed from the powers of sin and from Satan redeemed from the power of death redeemed from the power of the grave redeemed from the demands of the law that I have shattered and broken but God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave he will receive me he that receives me here on earth one day oh praise his name will receive us into glory thou shalt see my glory soon when the work of grace is done partner of thy throne shall be say poor sinner loves thou me but God but David the Lord bless his word amen