

1 Samuel (Quality good)

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[0 : 0 0] the Lord should be pleased to help me I will ask you to turn again to the subject we tried to consider this morning from the first book of Samuel the 30th chapter and the last part of the 6th verse but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God we considered much perhaps that was of the first part of this text we looked at the circumstance and we looked perhaps rather more at the creature than at the Lord and I hope that this evening we should be led to consider what David considered yes

David truly had to consider his circumstance and he had to consider his need he had to look to those things that were round about him and so do we but when all is said and done all that which is of our circumstance all that is of ourselves is as nothing in this important question the most purposeful part of this text is that is he in whom David encouraged himself yes truly David was able to look upon the work of God he could see in those far off times the anointing oil he could see the word of the prophet he could see the preservation of God and oh he knew in so far as it had been revealed by the prophet the purpose of God but even this as it is considered and looked upon is not as looking upon the Lord oh it is the means whereby we are led to the Lord it is the means whereby our minds are turned to look upon the hand that blessed to look upon the heart that loved and to look in those ways that we should be brought not to encourage ourselves only in the work of our God but here as David did in the Lord his God in God himself yes

David was brought to consider and to consider with that reverent heart and with that desire which was before God the God of his protection not only the protection of his God but the God of his protection and the help the God of his help but not only the help of his God how truly we have on most occasions to see God by those revelations of his and we begin to understand him and to think upon him because of those revealed ways of his those ways in which he has showed himself to be our God but it is then that we are brought to consider the God of the revelation and not the revelation of the God let us then try to begin as David did to encourage ourselves in the Lord our God for it is a subject beyond a poor minister to try to speak upon for we have the whole word of God and it shows but parts of his ways it shows but parts of himself yes it is indeed the revelation of the Holy Spirit and as such it is true and as such it is authoritative but the more we look the more we are brought to realise how little we know how then can we as we try to look upon the Lord our God try to compass him inside a few short minutes a few words words but we must try to look at it as we have to look at anything and anything in nature we can see it in the part we look at the ocean we can see the surface perhaps we can splash in the edges of it we believe that we know a little eye and yet in its depth and in its immensity it is hidden from us so it is with God and yet we are shown we are shown in the word of God and in the dealings of

God we are brought to look to him to see not only those parts of his ways but to see that part of his glory as Moses did to see that part of his love as was shown by the prophets and those shown so especially by the Lord Jesus and then as we are brought we look beyond the gifts and we look to the giver what then did David look to in his distress and as I said this morning later in his sin he looked to God and oh he saw in those characteristics of the God that he saw that which encouraged him yes in his dealings in the first part but as he looked beyond the dealings it was then that he saw the depth of the encouragement the revelation in the dealings but the revealed God in that which was brought into David's soul as he encouraged himself not only to stop as he saw the past hand of God but to look for God and so must we our minds must be brought and our souls must be brought as it were into that captivity oh it will not be in our natural process of thought no we shall be in our natural spirit as a painter we shall produce the image but it will be but in a manner of portrait it will not be in a manner of reality but when our souls are drawn near unto God we see him in his life we see him in his power not by the image of it but in the reality of it in the knowledge of it and in the consciousness of God himself in our hearts

God in his power in his reality and then it is then that we are brought into this state of encouragement but how do we know how do we recognize how do we feel how is it brought into our soul's experience my friends will have to go into some weak but some natural illustrations even as David did in the in other parts of his life and I must not stop on them now for the moment but we must look just as we are brought to recognize those things in nature so are we brought to recognize those things in grace we are brought to understand natural love natural love is a gift of God but it is a gift in nature and as we are brought to manhood and to womanhood we begin to understand what natural love is but it is not until there is that bringing together that which we know in the natural way that we are able truly to enter into a realized experience of natural love yes first in the image in our hearts we begin to have some inklings some glimpses of it but as we are brought closer and we are brought into that union especially the union of marriage it is then that we understand a little more deeply what the love that has been placed in the hearts of the human creatures of the earth is and we begin to see it perhaps in a faint image of that which is the love of God and now we are brought only into this realization experimentally in the natural sense and we are brought only into the realization of

[9 : 08] God in the experience of our souls it is not something that we shall find by studying nor shall we find by natural seeking we shall need to find it by God himself in our hearts God in our souls God in our lives and we shall have to go into that experience before that we can enter into the depth of the encouragement that David found in the this time of his great distress for he was lifted above the distress he was able to look upon it and to see that it was that which was subject to the hand of God and then to see the God whose hand it was subject to he encouraged himself and now how can we so do it is easy to put the restrictions on it it is easy to say how difficult it is but oh this will not be the comfort of our souls the the things which we own and feel to be hard to be understood are easy to set forth but those things which our souls would enter into oh these must be set forth if the word of God is to be made a blessing to us if such a word as this is to be wrought as a blessing to our souls then not only must we know the the means of it we must know the experience of it and how do we find this experience or how does the

Lord bring us into this experience often in the same way that David himself was brought to encourage himself we are brought into affliction we are brought into need whether the affliction is temporal or spiritual it is no difference the Lord uses those means which he sees to be to his own to the fulfilment of his own purpose and as I believe we tried to think of it this morning the purpose is inevitably in all cases for his people for those who seek his face it is a purpose of grace and as it is a purpose of grace oh then as they are brought to look upon their God what do they see they see a God of comfort yes and here David began here David began in his distress to fear to know to enter into the comfort which came from his

God yes you will say comfort in the midst of the burnt ziklag comfort when all of his were taken from him comfort when those round about him spake of killing him yes I believe that when David encouraged himself in the Lord his God immediately there was comfort in his heart for he found that hope and when he found hope he found prayer prayer and when he found prayer he found God and when he found God he found that the things of this life subject to the hand of God were but those things for secondary consideration even important things like those things which had come upon him God was with him and in the presence of his God he knew that he had a power something to lean upon knowing himself David in one of the few times of his life was brought to realise his helplessness you think of David as his life had been lived yes he had to flee from

Saul but others had gathered to him yes he had many times had to escape from Saul yet he had escaped he felt the need of the help of God but he had escaped and now when he had been of course to leave those for whom he was prepared to fight yet he had Ziklag to go back to and now as he comes back to Ziklag he finds he had nothing all is gone all is taken nothing is left and David brought perhaps for the first time ever in his experience to that state of emptiness that time when there was nothing nothing nothing except God but David brought here that there was God nothing whatever round about him but God round about him nothing that he could in the natural sense lean upon but God upon whom he could lean

God still in the midst of him although he in the midst of distresses and here we see the wonder of our God the very present help in trouble therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed though the mountains are plunged into the midst of the sea it is here that we find that it is God it is not the things that are round about us not even the comforts that God has given the outward comforts but the inward comforts of the presence of God in our hearts in our very thoughts in our very souls before him it is then that we begin not to look at the means that God is pleased to use but to look to God and as we look to him and as we are enabled to see him and to know his presence it is then that we find that encouragement and that comfort later in his life and I have to go back to that same experience as I referred to this morning that David he looked upon God from a different viewpoint yes

[15 : 39] David had been brought into the fulfilment of the covenant of God the promise of God and the anointing oil and was sitting upon the throne and David's heart was lifted up yes he looked upon those things which God had given him and they were many and it was much to be thankful for and we should as we look upon the gifts of God be thankful for them but we should not lean upon the gifts of God no David had taken his eyes from the God in whom he encouraged himself and for the time being he looked only upon those things round about him and David no longer in helplessness but in a measure of self-sufficiency began to look into those wrong places until that time came when he grievously fell but he was brought then to see once more that he had nothing nothing to plead no righteousness nothing no excuse nothing that he could plead there had to be once more that emptiness of spirit as he was before God and once more when he looked to this

God he encouraged himself in God yes oh again turn your minds turn your thoughts to that 51st Psalm and see what David in the emptiness of his spirit and you will have to come here you will have to say nothing in my hand I bring simply to thy cross I cling no righteousness of my own and as the prophet said you will say David said Paul said in effect all my righteousnesses are as filthy rags are here David looked within and he saw no righteousness and yet he could look back and so could you and so could the prophet and so could Paul as he was brought to look back to see the goodness and the mercy of God and he said restore unto me the joy of thy salvation uphold me with thy free spirit oh in that beautiful penitential self the words of David showed that no longer did he look to

David no longer did he look even to the means which the Lord had been pleased to bless him with but he looked to God and he looked to God for forgiveness now just consider David's case there a moment guilty before God the sin of which he was guilty worthy of death worthy of death according to the Lord and according to the Lord this was the punishment but there was forgiveness with his God and when he looked away from the guilt when he looked away from the shame and when in that emptiness of spirit he looked toward his God he found that forgiveness he encouraged himself oh as David looked unto his God what did he see a God of judgment truly a God of mercy unquestionably a forgiving

God so he had revealed himself to be and David looked upon him and encouraged himself in seeking forgiveness in that knowledge of his God a forgiving God a loving God oh it did not make him careless about his sin no it made him very careful about his sin and oh it made him with that spirit of confession and repentance come unto his God and yet it was to God he looked how often and here again I must make the point I am not suggesting for a moment that any one of us has fallen outwardly into David's sin but we have that same sin sinfulness in our hearts and oh how often as we come unto that realisation of sin do we look within do we look for that which perhaps would mitigate the sin make it seem to be less in our sight that we should claim perhaps some reason for forgiveness how often then do we find in our own hearts even when we are brought into that consciousness of sin that it is not only to

God that we look no we look within we look at the circumstance we look at the excuse and then perhaps in a wrong spirit in a different manner we come unto God and when we come unto God it is then that we almost suggest that there is a good reason for forgiveness not so that we are brought into David's spirit against thee thee only have I sinned and done this great evil in thy sight oh it is then that the plea he cast himself upon his God yes he encouraged himself in the knowledge of a merciful God but then having encouraged himself so he rested upon that mercy there is no no resting for a sinner except in the mercy of God and as we are brought to look upon our God and see the mercy that is in his face to see that forgiving love which is revealed in God himself and in the Lord

[21 : 48] Jesus Christ it is then that we shall lean upon it but we shall not lean upon it while we are looking through in ourselves or looking for that which would mitigate the sin no we shall look to him only when in that sense of condemnation self condemnation we see only in the mercy of God is forgiveness yes I had not thought to come this way but these things are often and this you will know these are often led they are often directed and when we plead for direction when we plead that we might be led in the Lord's way then it is in the Lord's way that we must go and desire to oh the M.

I. I. sure he brings us into this thought again and again no help in self I find and it is only when we are brought into this true realisation in our souls that we shall find that we are always in that spirit of looking unto God looking unto Jesus oh this delusion of help from within ourselves this delusion of help from the world at large or even from our fellow creatures is often a hindrance to that coming unto God but when we are brought from the delusions it is then that we should be looking unto God and we should see that approachable God that is ours have you thought upon this David looked upon a God who was approachable here was a view of God that David was given yes he was given it in that way of his dispensation he said bring me hither the people that means whereby he could inquire of God but oh have you thought of your privilege have you thought of the grace it is given to you the evidence of the love of God that is before your eyes and sometimes perhaps in your heart in your mind and on those times of blessing when it is in your soul an approachable

God a God who has given an invitation to his people to draw near to him again and again in the word of God we will find words like this seek ye my face I said not unto the seed of Jacob seek ye me in vain a God showing himself to be a God who is approachable as it occurred to you when you have been desiring to draw near to your God what an immeasurable blessing it is that our God has shown himself to be approachable and the next time and it should be at all times and that next time when you feel that need of drawing near to him just stop for a moment and encourage yourself in the approachability of the Lord your God that he is pleased for sinners to approach unto him and I would just think too of that favor which is yours above even above the favor of David for you are able to see that means whereby you are able to come you look upon the gospel and you look upon the Lord

Jesus Christ and you hear his words and you hear his own declaration no man cometh to the father but by me ah would this be a restraint a restriction now here the words continue the blessed words of our blessed lord and he that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out I will in no wise cast out oh you think encourage yourself in the approachability of the Lord your God encourage yourself in the intercession of your Lord Jesus Christ encourage yourself that you have been brought into that attitude and spirit of prayer again and again encourage yourself that the Lord will even give to you those words from his holy book is any among you afflicted let him pray let him pray yes the encouragement is to pray not only have we an approachable

God but we have a God who brings to us even the very encouragement of his own spirit that we should encourage ourselves in that approach unto him that by prayer we should be brought into a spirit of communion with him and knowledge of his nearness oh my friends as you are brought to look upon the Lord Jesus Christ and as you are brought to think upon that blessed means by whom you are able to come into the very presence of God does this not in itself come as an encouragement to you oh for David in his distress here was his comfort here was his encouragement that he could draw near to his God to you in your name whatever the need might be here is your encouragement here is mine that I that you can draw near in the name of Jesus

[27 : 40] Christ to the Lord your God and with the assurance of the Son of God himself that no man shall be turned away oh dear him in one of the early hymns in our hymn book he gives to us such an encouragement about it yes he was seeking for mercy the hymn writer was seeking for mercy and he said the door of thy mercy stands open all day to the poor and the needy who knock by the way no sinner should ever be empty sent back who comes seeking mercy for Jesus is sake what a wonderful thought was given to the hymn writer yes he was only paraphrasing the word of God I know but he was given that grace and that help to set it forth in such a way that when we are prone to need and to encourage ourselves in the Lord our God here is the encouragement that we have a

God hearing prayer approachable another hymn on to approach my soul the mercy sea where Jesus answers prayer and humbly lie at his dear feet for none can perish there it is in such ways as this that we are enabled and encouraged to encourage ourselves in the Lord our God seeking my face all the words of grace that just those four little words just try and consider the God who speaks such words of encouragement seeking my face can you imagine anything more merciful anything more gracious anything more that could be in a God such as our God now that we sinners as the very dust of the earth yet hear the word of gracious invitation seat in my face and then

I thought that we could go a little further than this and look reverently at another what is the word I can use an attribute another revelation of our God a gracious attribute that which is as a as an indication of our God that when we are brought sometimes into times of trial into times of stress into times of felt need that our thoughts upon our God should be right thoughts yes they have to be right thoughts and have you considered our God in his immutability immutability not a word I love unchangeability not ever any change in our God no change of purpose no change of grace not and here

I speak reverently not one day to all his people and cold in his no not our God yes our hearts may be hot sometimes cold sometimes unchangeable is the word which is of our God not the word which is of us we are changeable creatures but we have an unchangeable God I wonder if David in his consideration had in his heart that Hebrew word which would be equivalent and as he thought upon the unchangeable nature of the God with whom he had to do he thought upon his promise and later perhaps he thought upon his covenant and he saw here was a God who had spoken his word and an unchangeable word and oh my friends there are times when we come very far short of this realization of our

God we look back upon blessings past and we long for the days that have been we long for that communion with our God that we believe we have been given in days past and perhaps our hearts and our minds would almost attribute to God the blame that that communion is no longer endured and even some of the hymn writers would almost suggest this that he hides his face yes the scriptures would bring to us this knowledge but it is only in the way that the sun hides his face the clouds pass over the sun but the clouds are of earth the sun is in the heavens yes the earth feels the coldness but not the sun the sun still shines in its warm and blessed be God it is the sun that disperses the clouds not the earth it is the sun and as the sun shines upon the clouds

[33 : 13] I thought here as the blessing is upon the affliction or as the forgiveness is upon the sin then the sun shines through the cloud but here we are thinking of the unchangeability of God it still is that shine of the sun behind the cloud yes the cloud may be the first thing in ourselves and often is we look upon the clouds and sometimes we feel the warmth through the cloud sometimes perhaps we in effect climb through the cloud into the warmth and sometimes the Lord in his mercy disperses the cloud and the sun shines freely upon us and we feel its blessed warmth upon us and here we have that same natural illustration for as we are brought to consider the unchangeability of our God his grace his love his face ever toward his people and when those times of apparent from our viewpoint separation are felt we shall always find that there is a cloud between we perhaps ought not to dwell upon the clouds because we want to dwell upon the sun we ought not to look at the hindrances and yet in faithfulness to our

God we must consider them what are those hindrances that sometimes bar us from that communion with God the greatest of them all is sin and yet this sin does not be seen as culpable as those things which are blatant and outward breaking of the commandments or turning from God no these are indeed grievous sins and must not be lightly passed over but sometimes the sins are so insidious so unobtrusive to our consciences that they come into our consciences as clouds as clouds which seem to shut us off in that communion with God in that consciousness of the sunshine of his love without hardly knowing the reason why and I have found myself and I have found sometimes when I have been brought to reflect and brought to see and brought to plead that there might once more be that communion that felt realisation of the blessings that Aaron so beautifully promised or Moses so

God so beautifully promised through Moses for Aaron to deliver to the people to know the light of his countenance upon me and then I have found why the things of this world perhaps the Lord's own parable would come into our hearts the deceitfulness of riches the cares of this world the things of the world oh so taking hold of our souls that there is no longer that spirit toward God and in our thoughts this afternoon we had to come here in measure and he comes back into my mind and I will read the passage to you but that we may not be here lead me in thy truth and teach me for thou art the God of my salvation yes perhaps we come here but here we must come if we are to find that cloud dispersed to find that the reality of our unchanging

God and here it is on thee do I wait all the day oh in our minds when our hearts when our souls are toward God the light of his countenance will shine upon us we shall see that the change was in here not in God we shall know that if there is any separation it is of the earth it is not of God our God is unchangeable his word is eternal his purpose eternal his love eternal have you found this sometimes to be a comfort to your heart when you felt to be in those places that are hard those places that are cold when sometimes you know not what there is in your soul and yet you look back upon times of realization of the love of God comfort yourself encourage yourself in the Lord your God where you have felt his love and where you have known it there may in your soul's experience be a cloud but it is of the earth it is of your heart it is not of your

God and there you will find your comfort and then in that approachability which is already considered oh plead with him that whatever there might be the son should help us again search me oh God and try my thoughts and see if there be any evil way in me and lead me into the life everlasting here then we find a thought a thought of comfort a thought of blessing as we are brought to consider our path is unchangeable oh another reminder came to my mind as these thoughts passed through my mind and in 339 unchangeable is with whatever be my frame his loving heart is still eternally the same my soul through many changes goes his love no variation knows encourage yourself in the unchangeable nature of your

[39 : 32] God whom once he loves he loves forever yes there is no change you cannot find an evidence in the word of God nor can you find a record of those sins where those who have hasted that the Lord is gracious have been left of him no you cannot find a record and if you carefully study those very difficult passages in the sixth chapter of Hebrews as to those that fall away oh if you read into them the truth of our God you will find that he is unchangeable that there truly his grace his blessing his love has been known in the soul of his people there eternally it remains our God is unchangeable he does not turn from his people nor does he let them quite turn from him he will never never leave us nor will let us quite leave him just looking to the words of the Lord

Jesus the hymn writers are good but the Lord Jesus Christ himself speaks with the authority of the son of God and he said no man is able to pluck them from my father's hand yes unchangeable unchangeable in his purpose of grace unchangeable in his love unchangeable in his dealings yes carefully considering unchangeable in his dealings all to this end that you should be brought to him all to this purpose that there shall be an eternity in his presence all to show forth his mercy his love that you in that eternal presence shall be looking unto him and the God of your encouragement you shall eternally find that you are encouraged in the Lord your God there is still life to live there is still that way in which we have to go there is still the fears that are before you

I know them not the fears that are before you I know the fears that are in my heart I know the burdens I know that I often come forth in a trust and in leaning upon a faithful unchangeable God a God who has showed to me again and again his approachability and yet I still come short in faith but however we look at our God however we are brought by his own blessed spirit to consider him we shall see that he is faithful and that he is watchful sometimes we almost forget this Peter when he walked upon water he called upon his Lord his Lord and Saviour his Master as if the Lord was not watching him sink to think that the Lord would have stood by and allowed him to sink beneath the waves when by his own direction he had walked upon them and yet

Peter cried Lord save me and often without this it is right that we should cry yes indeed it is this is prayer this is a God who is approachable but oh it is right too that we remember that even while we call upon him even when we are brought to see him yet all the time his watchful care is round about us my friends when the future looks fearful when the ways in which we have to go seem to us often to be difficult and unknown unknown to you unknown to me known to God Jesus we know and he is on the throne what does the word say the future all unknown Jesus we know and he is on the throne I think this is a note to rest on a note to finish on yes we know not the future but the Lord know the Lord know what does it tell us too as we look into

I think the epistle to the Philippians one of Paul's epistles where it says the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal the Lord knoweth them that are his yes he knoweth he knoweth his own and again the Lord will assure us of this that when he knows his own look into that precious and blessed prayer that we see of the Lord Jesus Christ in the 17th chapter of John all that thou has given me have I kept not one is lost yes the exception is given but then we know the exception there is but one exception already accepted look upon it as we see not one is lost not one can be lost it is impossible for the purpose of

[45 : 11] God is to all his people Israel shall be saved with an everlasting salvation Jesus we know and he is on the throne amen He Hymn 980 to 274 When sins and fears prevailing rise and fainting hope almost expires Jesus, to thee I lift my eyes to thee I breathe my soul's desire

In 980 ■■■hoen theICO But the people of God His will have become Over Centedar Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[50 : 05] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. O Lord, we have been brought to think upon thy goodness and thy mercy. Let us all dwell here. Let us enter a bit into that faith given to the hymn writer and find his assurance to be our assurance.

[51 : 43] We were able to sing with our voices indeed. Lord, help us to sing with our hearts and indeed to enter into those precious truths. Go with us our separate ways.

Take us each to our homes in peace and safety. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, the communion of the Holy Spirit, rest and abide with each one, with all thy people everywhere.

Amen.