

Not really a sermon series on David because this drama has two leading men, **Saul and David**.

Their stories are not separate and sequential, but inextricably parallel and intertwined.

Act 1: Saul is on stage alone. He is faithful to God for a while, then stops listening and makes decisions counter to God's direct commands.

Act 2: God speaks.

“(Saul), you have rejected the word of the Lord, and he has rejected you from being king over Israel. ... The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this very day, and has given it to a neighbor of yours, who is better than you.

Moreover, the Glory of Israel will not recant or change his mind; for he is not a mortal, that he should change his mind.” (15:26, 28)

If *your* boss stopped by with this message, wouldn't you know you'd been fired???

But somehow, **ASTONISHINGLY**, Saul fails to make the connection and step down!!

He just **DOESN'T LEAVE**. He doesn't leave the battlefield, he doesn't clear his desk, he doesn't vacate the palace. He stays on stage, playing the role of king. For **YEARS**.

Meanwhile, God appoints his replacement, but there's no room on the stage for David, because Saul is still there!

So David enters the West Wing not as the sitting President, but as a musician, playing soothing music for Saul.

He's not in the Oval Office, he's in the orchestra pit.

Imagine this: George Bush Sr. refusing to acknowledge the inauguration of Bill Clinton, and then asking him to play background music for the Oval Office instead.



The first time Saul had to sit up and pay attention to David was in our story from last week about David and Goliath.

It was Saul's first war w/o the empowering hand of God. He has no guidance, no courage, and is at a stalemate for 40 days.

David arrives on the supply line and is gifted by God with perspective, courage, a battle plan and victory. Using his shepherd's tools, he takes down the giant named Goliath, and saves Israel from slavery under the Philistines.

From then on, Saul comes to respect David's military skill:

1 Samuel 18:5-9 David went out and was successful wherever Saul sent him; as a result, Saul set him over the army. And all the people, even the servants of Saul, approved. ... And the women sang to one another as they made merry, 'Saul has killed his thousands, and David his tens of thousands.'

“Saul was very angry, for this saying displeased him. He said, ‘They have ascribed to David tens of thousands, and to me they have ascribed thousands; what more can he have but the kingdom?’ **So Saul eyed David from that day on.**”

The side eye. Squinty. Suspicious. Saul is afraid David will succeed and equally afraid he won't. He wants to co-opt David's talent and good fortune for the good of the kingdom, but also wants to eliminate David as the competition.

Saul's rage escalates. In chapters 18 and 19 alone, **Saul makes six attempts on David's life.**

18:10f “Saul had his spear in his hand; and Saul threw the spear, for he thought, ‘I will pin David to the wall.’ But David eluded him twice.”

18:12f Sends David to war. “Saul thought, ‘I will not raise a hand against him; let the Philistines deal with him. ...’”

18:25 “Now Saul planned to make David fall by the hand of the Philistines.”

19:1 “Saul spoke with his son Jonathan and with all his servants about killing David.”

19:10 “(Saul) sat in his house with his spear in his hand, while David was playing music. Saul sought to pin David to the wall with the spear.”

19:11 “Saul sent messengers to David’s house to keep watch over him, planning to kill him in the morning.”

The irony in this story?? It keeps saying that *Saul* is afraid of *David*!!!

Imagine being David!

How many times would *you* return to someone's house after they hurled a spear at you, trying to pin you to the wall???



What's more, this lunatic is your *boss*??

- You aren't safe at home.
- You get sent on the most dangerous assignments at work.
- Your boss makes up work to put you in danger,
- and finally sends in a hit squad????

This is your life, and you keep showing up for it??

Wish we heard more about what David was thinking in these chapters!! Saul is still center stage in the story.

All we know is that David survived each attempt on his life and had unusual military success.

Now, imagine being Saul.

How different would Saul's story have been if he had relinquished his crown when God told him to?

What if he had listened to the Director and exited the stage so Israel's story could go on with its new leading man, David?

What if Saul had walked into the new story that God had for him?

Would he have been spared the ugly descent into madness that we witness over the next 23 chapters of 1 Samuel?

Might he have found peace and productivity in a different future?

While God fires Saul in no uncertain terms in 1 Samuel 15, God also welcomes Saul's repentance and his renewed worship later in the same chapter. (15:30-31). **Saul's relationship with God wasn't over just because his job was over.**

What future did he miss because he refused to let go of his past?

What future did Israel miss because Saul refused to let go? Our choices have far reaching consequences for many others beyond ourselves.

Eugene Peterson, in **Leap Over A Wall** says,

“The story of David begins in the middle of another story. (Saul’s) All stories do. We never get a clean start in this business of life. The tablet is already scribbled all over, smudged with ink stains, blotted with spilled coffee. Saul has made a mess of things. A royal mess. He had been given a job to do and had ruined it. David is now assigned to do well what Saul had done badly.” (p.32)

The rest of the story is about how God works amid the mess. A redemptive story is written on smudged, scribbled pages.

The show goes on even with two leading men struggling for power on stage. They will take turns being the hero and the villain.

David makes as big a mess as Saul before his story is over, and God will work to redeem that too.

Which character do you resonate with most right now?

When have you been Saul?

When have you been David?

How did God work to redeem the mess?