

“DAVID: THE OVERCOMER”

1 Samuel 22:1-5

To say that David’s life had bottomed out would not be out of line. At one time he was famous; now he is a fugitive. Anointed by Samuel to be the next king of Israel, now he was being hunted down like a criminal. Things had not turned out the way David expected. Could he overcome his problems and reach his full potential?

You may be in the same place. Things have not turned out the way you thought they would. Goals have not been reached. Problems are weighing you down. You need to know that your problems are God’s sharpest tools! With that in mind, let’s dig into our text tonight.

1 Samuel 22:1... So David departed from there and escaped to the cave of Adullam; and when his brothers and all his father’s household heard of it, they went down there to him.

(1) So David therefore departed from there—David had been through a lot. He had fame, a recent marriage, dangers from the Philistines, repeated attempts on his life, and a heartbreaking farewell to Jonathan, the bizarre scene at Gath, and the realization of his fugitive status.

(1) And escaped to the cave of Adullam— David originally went to Gath because it was not safe for him in Judah. But as it turns out, it was not safe for him in Gath either. So, he left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam.

- He couldn’t go to his house
- He couldn’t go to the palace
- He couldn’t go to Samuel
- He couldn’t go to Jonathan
- He couldn’t go to his dad and mom’s home

■ He couldn't go to the tabernacle

He could go to a humble cave and find refuge. Adullam was about half-way between Gath and David's hometown of Bethlehem. The nearby caves formed an ideal hiding place for the future king.

In fact, the name "Adullam" means refuge, but the cave wasn't to be David's refuge. God wanted to be David's refuge in this discouraging time. Most archaeologists believe that the Cave of Adullam was not too far from the place where David defeated Goliath, in the hills of Judah. I wonder if David thought about how far he had fallen . . . from a great victory to running around like a fugitive making a cave his "hide-out."

Do you want to know what was going on in his mind and heart? He wrote Psalm 142 while he was in this cave. The prelude to the psalm reads like this:

"Prayer for help in trouble. Maskil of David, when he was in the cave. A Prayer"

Let's look at the contents of Psalm 142.

Psalm 142:1–4... I cry aloud with my voice to the LORD; I make supplication with my voice to the LORD. **2** I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare my trouble before Him. **3** When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, You knew my path. In the way where I walk They have hidden a trap for me. **4** Look to the right and see; For there is no one who regards me; There is no escape for me; No one cares for my soul.

Yes, the cave provided a physical refuge for the anointed future king of Israel. However, God and God alone could and would be his spiritual refuge in a time like this!

Psalm 142:5–7... I cried out to You, O LORD; I said, "You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living. **6** "Give heed to my cry, For I am brought very low; Deliver me from my persecutors, For they are too strong for

me. 7 “Bring my soul out of prison, So that I may give thanks to Your name; The righteous will surround me, For You will deal bountifully with me.”

Let’s look at Psalm 57 which David also wrote in the cave of Adullam.

Here’s the prelude to this psalm . . .

Prayer for Rescue from Persecutors. For the choir director; set to Al-tashheth. A Mikhtam of David, when he fled from Saul in the cave.

This psalm has a different feeling attached to it. It describes David as the Lord strengthened him in the cave and prepared him for what would come next.

In this psalm we see . . .

- **David’s humble heart (1)**
- **David’s prayerful heart (2)**
- **David’s discerning heart (4,6)**
- **David’s worshiping heart (5,9,11)**
- **David’s committed heart (7)**

This runs contradictory to what we often think and how we often act. We assume that we have to get out of the mess we’re in before we can experience genuine change. David’s transformation occurred while he was still in the cave, while he was still battling conflicting emotions and experiences!

(1) And when his brothers and all his father’s household heard of it, they went down there to him— David’s *family* came to him. No doubt his family was motivated to do this partly because of their fear of Saul’s reprisals.

Earlier his older brothers gave him a hard time (1 Samuel 17:28). I’m sure this was due to jealousy over the fact that they had been passed over when

Samuel came to anoint the next king of Israel. David, the youngest son, received the anointing because he had a heart for God!

1 Samuel 22:2... Everyone who was in distress, and everyone who was in debt, and everyone who was discontented gathered to him; and he became captain over them. Now there were about four hundred men with him.

God called an unlikely and unique group to David in the cave of Adullam.

- **These men were in distress.** Their own lives weren't easy. They didn't have it all together. They had problems of their own, yet God called them to David at the cave of Adullam.
- **These men were in debt.** They hadn't seen a lot of success in the past and were stung by their past failures.
- **These men were discontented.** The Hebrew word for "discontented" means *bitter of soul*. They were sick of life under King Saul. So, God called them to David at the cave of Adullam.

Once David came to the throne, there were a lot of people who wanted to be around him. These men came to David when he was down and out, hunted and despised. Ironically, these are the kind of people who were drawn to the Lord Jesus

(2) And he became captain over them— This was not a mob. This was a team that needed a leader. David did not allow this group to become a rebel army aligned against King Saul. He shaped and molded them into a crack unit of soldiers.

(2) Now there were about four hundred men with him—David was the one anointed by God to be the next king over Israel, and he became Israel's greatest earthly king. God called these 400 men to come to David. He needed them and they needed him!

Likewise, King Jesus is in heaven. He's gathering a company of people who are in distress, in debt, and discontented. He is training and preparing them for the day when He shall come to reign.

1 Samuel 22:3... And David went from there to Mizpah of Moab; and he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and my mother come *and stay with you until I know what God will do for me.*"

(3) He said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother come and stay with you"—David took his parents to Moab because his great-grandmother Ruth was a Moabite.

Ruth 4:13, 16-17... So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.... **16** Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse. **17** The neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

David wanted his parents to be safe from any vile actions that King Saul might take.

(3) Until I know what God will do for me—David knew he was called and anointed to be the next king of Israel, but he had no idea how God would get him there. David had to trust God's heart and obey when he didn't know how the Lord would work.

1 Samuel 22:4... Then he left them with the king of Moab; and they stayed with him all the time that David was in the stronghold.

They stayed with the king of Moab the whole time that David was in the stronghold.

1 Samuel 22:5... The prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah." So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth.

(5) The prophet Gad said to David—David enjoyed the support of the prophets. Saul fell into disfavor with them because he consistently resisted the Word of God and was disobedient to the Lord’s commands. David, on the other hand, received God’s word and sought to obey the Lord.

The prophet Gad, first mentioned here, appears to have served David throughout his career. He produced archived records of David’s life.

1 Chronicles 29:29... Now the acts of King David, from first to last, are written in the chronicles of Samuel the seer, in the chronicles of Nathan the prophet and in the chronicles of Gad the seer.

(5) Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go into the land of Judah—This probably wasn’t what David wanted to hear but he obeyed anyway. David had to learn to trust God *in the midst of danger*, not on the other side of danger. All of this was preparation for the kingdom he would one day rule.

(5) So David departed and went into the forest of Hereth—This forest was west of the Dead Sea in the land of Judah.

CONCLUSION

I want to close our time tonight by asking you a thought-provoking question. What do you do when life doesn’t turn out the way you thought it would? I mean David is in a cave, a stronghold, and a forest. He’s a fugitive, not a king living in a palace. We learn three things from David . . .

1. Serve God Where You Are.

That’s what David did in verses 1-2. He ministered to his family and to those who were in trouble. He did not become passive or paralyzed. He did not sit around and pout. He acted; he organized; he planned; he served where he was.

1 Peter 4:19... Therefore, those also who suffer according to the will of God shall entrust their souls to a faithful Creator in doing what is right.

2. Continue To Seek The Lord's Will.

That's what David did in verses 3-4. He wants to learn what God will do for him. David is not seeking his own will in this matter, but God's will. He is not trying to force what he wants to happen, but he wants to know what God will do for him.

3. Obey The Word Of The Lord.

That's what David did in verse 5. David actually had three prophets who guided and instructed him in his life . . . Samuel, Nathan and Gad. You can always tell a person's heart towards God by the way they respond to God's word.

Hebrews 4:12... For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Do these three things and you can be an overcomer in the most difficult season of your life!