

## Commentary on the Gospel for Fri, Jan 19th 2018

If we are honest, we can all certainly more easily relate to Saul than to David in this lesson, despite the fact that we want to be like David. We want to be the good person, the hero, the one with the legitimate power. But when we have it, do we use it well? If we have power and privilege, we fear it will be taken from us more than we confidently use it to empower others and further God's purposes. This story reminds us that the defensive approach actually makes us more vulnerable. We are most exposed to our enemies when we seek to destroy them, as was the case with Saul in the Old Testament story today. I think the story about Saul and David reminds us that in our power and privilege, God is with us and will protect us from our enemies, even if they are our own demons. God protects us because God expects us to use our power and privilege to responsibly carry out God's purposes. In this story, David appears to Saul as the Christ who seeks reconciliation. This can be the case for us also. The Psalm reminds us that God intends for us all to be reconciled to himself in Christ. That needs to happen every day, because we need rescuing from ourselves as much as from our enemies. The story of Saul and David is an everyday drama in our lives as well.

When the Lord delivered Saul from David that day in the cave, the story reveals something large about God's plan for Saul, and certainly about God's plan for David. Saul was reminded that God's plan included his responsibilities to David as a father figure, but also God's plan included Saul's salvation. The story was not about a good guy and a bad guy. This event also made clear to Saul that David would become the next king and through David all of Israel would be reconciled to God. We are always part of a drama much bigger than ourselves.

To me the story is not just about that historical drama of the succession of power in ancient Israel, it is a reminder that God treats us all better than we can imagine being treated under the circumstances of our own doing. We are like Saul in thinking that someone is out to harm us. Perhaps that is often true, but God confronts us in these moments of insecurity and gently reminds us that God is more concerned with our lack of faith in God's purposes than with evil doers of our definition. In these moments of challenge, God bids us to go about our work, using any power and privilege we have to further God's purposes. The act on our insecurities is a waste of our talents, our power, our privilege and a betrayal of the Christ who reconciles all things to himself. And so today, we pray, "have mercy on me, O God; have mercy on me....for your mercy towers to the heavens, and your faithfulness to the skies!"

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