

# The Life of David

## Week 5: David the Caveman

1 Samuel 19-21

Dr. Matt Cassidy ---- September 17, 2023

Well, good morning, Grace! Ha! No, it's a great morning. And here's why. We're going to look at and learn a critical lesson in the Christian experience together. Did you know that you could live an absolute surrendered to Jesus Christ where you would go anywhere to do anything with anyone, and it's very likely that God himself will lead you to a cave?

This lesson is from 1 Samuel. We're going to look at 1 Samuel 19-21. It absolutely changed my life, and mostly because it saved me from a great deal of confusion and doubt in a time when I probably would have quit following what I thought was God's direction in my life to go anywhere and do anything. And that's when I found out that a cave is a gift that God gives to His friends.

I remember it vividly because going anywhere and doing anything with anyone led me to going to seminary. And that was a time—particularly the first year or two—of prolonged isolation and loneliness. And I don't do well with loneliness.

And it all really started—I remember vividly—on July 4, 1982. I took a trip to Newport Beach in California, a showplace of southern California. And it was Fourth of July weekend, so I'm looking out over thousands of people enjoying themselves, and then watching the sun set. And it was stunning. It was the first time I'd seen the sun set over the Pacific Ocean. And between all the laughter and the beauty that was taking place all around me, it seemed to exaggerate and exacerbate my isolation and aloneness and even misery. I was just questioning what I was doing and why I was doing it. And then I heard a whisper from some sermons that I had heard some seven months before, accidentally. And to this day I remember where I was standing on that pier and I remember the names of those sermons: "Every Crutch Removed" and "For Cave Dwellers Only" by Chuck Swindoll.

And because of that I continued my journey with Jesus Christ, because I had learned that you can be in the absolute heart of God's will and still be in a cold, dark cave. You can be a child

of God and at the same time wonder where He is. You can pray that you could feel the very presence of God and also feel that He never answered the prayer. But in all of that, the truth remains that God is with you. He is with you there in the cave. That's the lesson you see in chapters 19 through 21.

### **Review of David's Life So Far**

We're looking at the super-charged life of David in the Bible. And up to this point we've seen that he's been anointed by God from the hand of Samuel and that he is God's chosen next king. And when he's anointed by Samuel, it says, "And the Spirit of Jehovah came powerfully upon David."

From there we see that everything that David touches wins. Everybody loves David. And the first person in Holy Writ—in the Bible—who acknowledges their favor and their enthusiasm for David is, oddly, King Saul himself in chapter 16.

And then last week we look at chapter 18, and there's a series of rapid stories of an accumulation of people loving David. The king's son, Jonathan, loves David. The military loves David. The women love David. King Saul's daughter, Michal, loves David, and David marries her—he marries the princess. In a summary of chapter 18 it says, "And all of Israel and Judah loved David."

### **Everything Begins to Change for David**

#### **1 Samuel 18:9**

**And from that time on Saul kept a jealous eye on David.**

And then it happened. It happened because of a song. And David didn't write the song. But it says, "And the women came out dancing, and singing, 'Saul has killed his thousands, but David his tens of thousands.'" And the Bible says that from that point on, Saul kept an envious, a jealous, eye on David. And do you know why? Because the Lord was with David.

The very next day after this song has gone viral David is in the presence of Saul playing his guitar to calm the savage beast. And no matter what song David sang, all Saul could hear was

“Saul has killed his thousands, David has killed his tens of thousands.” And in a fit of rage he grabs his spear and throws it at David. And David dodges it twice. He’s out to pin him to the wall.

### **1 Samuel 18:12, 14-15**

**Saul was afraid of David, because the Lord was with David but had left Saul.**

**<sup>14</sup> In everything David did he had great success, because the Lord was with him. <sup>15</sup> When Saul saw how successful he was, he was afraid of him.**

Here’s a summary of how things are working for David now in chapter 18, verses 12 through 16. It says, “And Saul was afraid of David.” Why? “Because the Lord was with David but had left Saul.” Everything David did had great success because the Lord was with David. The Lord was with him. And Saul saw how successful he was and he was afraid of him.

Chapter 18 is the zenith of David’s popularity and effectiveness at this part until the next book, 2 Samuel. I mean, if this is where the story ends, then God Almighty is the God of prosperity. We’ve got a prosperity gospel here. This is the God we want. You surrender your life to Him and everybody loves you.

### **Six Pillars Are Removed from David’s Life**

But then chapters 19 through 21 start happening and we find out that He’s the God who is and the God we need. And that’s the lesson here. It’s a major transition plot and mood, particularly in the life of David. He has God’s favor, but it appears that the sovereign God and the Creator of the universe, the Lord Almighty, the God of the armies, is just going to sit back and passively watch as Saul hunts him down and steals everything valuable in David’s life. And we watch in these three chapters as David is going to lose David. It’s like David is falling down six flights of stairs. And what’s worse, it appears that God has pushed him. These are three very fast chapters where six pillars that have strengthened David, supported David, maybe even helped define who David is, will be taken out and destroyed and systematically taken from him.

It's like there's a list of the people in David's life and the people who love David. And now it's a terminal list. They'll be scratched off, one at a time. In three chapters we'll watch David become dismantled. And it's part of the Christian experience.

### **Pillar #1: David's Status**

Pillar number one: David's status. It starts like this. David has been promoted at this point to be what would be considered as a general in the army. And it said previously that all the men in the military loved him because he was so successful. And this is the first pillar to be taken away. It says that David once again led the troops to attack the Philistines with such force that they were forced to run from David and his army. And what thanks does he get?

#### **1 Samuel 19:9b-10a**

**While David was playing the guitar for Saul, <sup>10</sup> Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear. But David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall.**

The very next verse says this: "While David was playing his guitar for Saul, Saul tried to pin him to the wall with his spear. But David eluded him as Saul drove the spear into the wall." That's the third time this has happened to David.

And so, David has to run for his life. And this is the cost for him: that he was once considered a hero and now he's going to be branded a traitor. He'll be an outlaw for as long as Saul is alive, because the Lord was with David. He hasn't done anything wrong.

### **Pillar #2: David's Wife**

The very next verse the second pillar is taken away: David's wife. David runs from that experience home, and when he meets with his wife Princess Michal, she's been watching and she sees from upstairs that there is a group of assassins sent by her father, King Saul, to take David's life. And she says to David, "If you sleep through, you'll be taken and killed before you have breakfast." And so, she lowers him down the window and he runs.

He'll be on the run for maybe ten years. It's hard to tell. But while he's away and unable to ever return home, King Saul will give his daughter Michal away to another man to be married. How great Thou art ...

### **Pillar #3: David's Mentor**

The very next verse—pillar number three: David loses his mentor. He runs from the arms of his wife and his house and he runs to Samuel. If you remember the judge and priest, Samuel was the one who anointed David. David goes there to clarify the dream that God has for him, because he's losing it. And he goes to Samuel and says, *Hey, do you remember? Help me believe. When you anointed my head with oil you swore I'd be the next king, I swear to God. But that just seems like a thousand years ago in a world that made sense to me. What's happening?*

And the passage says that Saul sent three detachments to Samuel to capture David. And this is going to cost David, because he will never see Samuel again. He won't even be able to attend Samuel's funeral, because he'll be living in the hills. And the reason that he's experiencing this is because David killed a loud-mouth punk who was mocking the name and the integrity of Jehovah God. David is being sifted of every dependence in his life.

### **Pillar #4: David's Friend Jonathan**

The very next verse David is falling down these flights of stairs, and this time he hits his head. This is his deepest injury. This is his greatest loss. I say that because the writer has committed the entire chapter (chapter 20) to this. His pillar number four is his friend Jonathan.

#### **1 Samuel 20:1**

**Then David fled from Samuel and went to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father, that he is trying to take my life?"**

It starts with verse one. "David had fled from Samuel, and he went to Jonathan and he asked, "What have I done? What is my crime? How have I wronged your father? Why is he trying to take my life?"

And then Jonathan says, *Whoa, David, I think you might be overreacting and maybe just a little bit paranoid. I'll do this. I'm having dinner with dad for the next two nights. I'll go and talk to him and I'll just ask him, "Are you after David? Why would you kill him?"*

And when Jonathan brings that up, Saul in his rage says, "You son of a treacherous woman!" (Whoa, what?)

### **1 Samuel 20:32-33**

**Jonathan asked his father: "Why should he be put to death? What has he done?"<sup>33</sup> But Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan to kill him. Then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David.**

And then it says this. "And Jonathan asked his father, 'Why should David be put to death? What has he done?' And Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan to kill him. And then Jonathan knew that his father intended to kill David."

So far, the only good thing that happened in this storyline is that Saul throws spears like a stormtrooper. He has four throws and zero kills. So, we have that going in David's favor.

But I want us to spend some time looking at the tremendous depth of injury that's caused by David here and his separation from Jonathan. This passage is the very definition of intimacy and interdependence with one another. It's about what real friendship is supposed to be about. They are combat brothers, but it's more than that. So, listen and weep.

### **1 Samuel 20:41-42**

**David saw Jonathan and rose from beside the stone heap and fell on his face to the ground and bowed three times. And they kissed one another and wept with one another, David weeping the most.<sup>42</sup> Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, because we have sworn, both of us, in the name of the Lord, saying, 'The Lord shall be between me and you, and between my offspring and your offspring, forever.'" And David rose and departed ...**

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with one another, David weeping the most. Then Jonathan said to David, ‘Go in peace, because we have sworn, both of us, in the name of Jehovah, saying, “Jehovah shall be between me and you, between my offspring and your offspring, forever.”’ And David rose and departed.”

This is a scorching experience for David. He’ll only see Jonathan one other time. It will be very brief, and Jonathan will show himself to be the tender friend, giving wisdom to David that he needs, and hope. And this last time that they’ll be together, Jonathan will say, “I know that Jehovah will make you the next king. I’ve got to run. Goodbye.”

The next time David sees Jonathan, David is presiding over Jonathan’s funeral.

The Lord was with David. And the Lord gives and the Lord takes away, and blessed be the name of the Lord.

### **Pillar #5: David’s Faith**

The very next verse, pillar number five, David loses his faith. David flees from that experience with Jonathan and goes to a little commune village. Think of it as a monastery. And the lead priest there is named Ahimelech. When Ahimelech sees David coming all by himself, it says he trembles, because something is wrong. So he says, “Why are you alone? Why is there no one with you, David?”

#### **1 Samuel 21:2**

**David answered Ahimelech the priest, “The king charged me with a certain matter and said to me, ‘No one is to know anything about your mission and your instructions.’ As for my men, I have told them to meet me at a certain place.”**

And so, David says this in verse 2. “David answered Ahimelech the priest, ‘The king has charged me with a certain matter and said to me, “No one can know anything about your mission or your instructions.” And as for my men, I have told them to meet me in a certain place.’” *I can’t tell you why I’m here, for the king has sworn me to secrecy.*

David, the man of integrity, the man after God’s own heart, is now lying to a priest so that he can get something to eat and some weapons. Where’s our hero at this point?

## Pillar #6: David's Self-Respect

The very next verse—ding! He's on the bottom floor. He's losing his own self-respect in this section. David can't find any place in Israel to run and hide, and so he goes to Gath, one of the capital cities of the Philistines. Some of you know Gath---Goliath of Gath—yeah, that's where Goliath comes from. That's his hometown. And he thinks he's going to be safer there than he is back in his own country. And when he goes to Gath and gets inside those gates, he hears through the sound system the number one viral song that everybody knows, and it goes like this: “Saul has killed his thousand ...”

### 1 Samuel 21:11

**But the servants of king Achish said to him, “Isn't this David, the king of the land? Isn't he the one they sing about in their dances: ‘Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands’?”**

Look what happens in verse 11: “But the servants of King Achish said to him, ‘Isn't this David the king of the land? Isn't he the one that sing about when they're dancing and singing, “Saul has slain his thousands and David his tens of thousands’?””

### 1 Samuel 21:12-13

**David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish king of Gath. <sup>13</sup> So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.**

And David sees everyone closing in on him, and this is what he does. “And David took these words to heart and was very much afraid of Achish the king of Gath. So he pretended to be insane in their presence; and while he was in their hands he acted like a madman, making marks on the doors of the gate and letting saliva run down his beard.”

He's clawing at the gates while he's slobbering all over himself. That's this defense here. The seventeen-year-old giant killer who we know—that young man—he's gone. Everything that



has supported David and held him up—those six pillars—every crutch has been removed from him.

And how do you know when you hit rock bottom? And I'm not talking about rock bottom from the consequences of your own choices. I'm talking about rock bottom because you have sworn to God that *I will do anything and go anywhere anytime*. Here's how you know. When you're clawing at the gates and acting like a rabid dog thinking that's the only way you're going to survive.

### **David at the Cave of Adullam**

In the very next verse, David flees Gath and goes to a small cave, and it's called the Cave of Adullam. Remember that—the Cave of Adullam. Remember that address, because it's very likely you'll be going there. Some of you have been. And it's in that cave that David writes some songs, some prayers. Here's one that I'd like us to pay attention to—Psalm 142:

**With my voice I cry out to Jehovah;  
with my voice I plead for the mercy of Jehovah.  
I pour out my complaints before him;  
I tell my trouble before him.”**  
**Look to the right and see:  
there is none who take notice of me;  
no refuge remains to me;  
no one cares for my soul.**  
**I cry to you, O Lord;  
I say, “You alone are my refuge,  
my portion in the land of the living.”**  
**Attend to my cry,  
for I am brought very low!**  
**Deliver me from my persecutors,  
for they are too strong for me!**  
**Bring me out of this prison,  
That I might give thanks to your name!**

David considers himself a prisoner now, but for what crimes? For being anointed by God and having the Lord with him? For killing a giant in defense of the name of God? He has served God faithfully. He's a worship leader, for goodness sake. And he's in this cave, the Cave of Adullam.

Know this: that the Lord was with David in the cave. David thought he was alone in the cave. He was alone with the Lord.

### Application

If you surrender your life to the Lord anytime, anywhere, to do anything, it's very likely you'll find yourself at this address—the Cave of Adullam. God will take you to a place where you're going to feel like you're helpless and alone in an absolute hostile world around you. And you'll find in that that you are not alone; that you're alone with the Lord. So, enjoy the company. Enjoy the company of the Lord. That's what you're to do.

We've seen this previously. Know this: let not the wise man put faith or hope in his wisdom, because you can't reason your way out of a cave. But what you can do is enjoy the mysteries of God—things you can't completely understand, but can enjoy.

“Let not the rich man put his faith in his riches.” Money is meaningless for cave dwellers. But you can be enriched by the presence of God. “Let not the strong person put hope in their strength,” because in a cave you'll be as weak as a newborn. But you can find strength in that weakness.

That's David's life. And so, what can we hope to grasp? What insights might we gather?

Here's what I did. I thought, *You know what? I'll go to other cave men and women—people who have been there because of their righteousness, because of their surrender to the Lord, and see if we can get some insights from them.* I went looking for people who would give their very lives—and some did—for the glory of God, and at the same time, as in this sermon, had every crutch removed, and they were for cave dwellers only.

**That's where faith begins ... in the wilderness, when you are all alone and afraid, when things don't make any sense.**

**---Elizabeth Elliot**

One of those is Elizabeth Elliot. Here's what she says about caves. "That's where faith begins ... in the wilderness." (Or call them caves.) That's where it starts. "...when you are all alone and afraid, when things don't make any sense." There it is.

**The cross is the gift God gives to His friends.**

**---Myles Connelly**

I love this quote the most. "The cross is the gift God gives to His friends." And to make this ours, we'll say, "The cave is the gift that God gives His friends."

Let's just make this Episcopal, okay? You know what that means. That means that you're going to say it out loud with me, okay? Let's say this out loud together. "The cave is the gift that God gives His friends." Know this to be true.

And God is generous, is He not? Yeah. And He's generous with caves. I mean, you can go through the history of the Bible. Joseph: "And the Lord was with Joseph." He gave Joseph a gift—no, he gave him a dream twice that he would rule over his family, he would rule over the world, and be part of salvation for hundreds and millions of people. And so, God gifted him with a cave. He's thrown into a cistern, which is a cave that's vertical. And then he's given over to slavery. And then he's put into a prison—not because of what he did wrong, but because he surrendered his life completely to the Lord. And it was in that prison, no doubt, that he found himself crying out to Jehovah, that "You alone are my refuge. You alone are my portion in the land of the living."

Keep turning pages in your Bible and you'll see Elijah: "The Lord was with Elijah." And the Lord emboldened Elijah to confront a wicked king and the blood thirsty queen Jezebel. And because of that they hunted him to kill him. And he ran and found himself in a cave. And when he was in the cave—read it—he says, "Where are you now, God? I'm feeling absolutely all

alone.” He fled for his life and felt like he’d fled from God himself. But it was in that cave, eventually, where he was able to hear the voice of God. And Elijah could sing. He could cry out to the Lord, that “The Lord alone is my portion. He alone is my refuge in the land of the living.”

In the New Testament, John the Baptist: “The Lord was with John.” And the Lord had him confront a king, and that king had him sent to a cave. That cave was a prison below the castle. And as he’s waiting, he starts doubting: *How could I be in the heart of God’s will and at the same time be in this cave? That doesn’t make sense.* So, he sends messengers to go and talk to Jesus. And some of them are saying, *Is this the plan?* And Jesus says, *Yeah, this is the plan.* The plan is that God is a generous God, and the cave is a gift that He gives those who are His friends. And it’s from that prison that John was able to sing out loud to the Lord, that the Lord alone is his refuge—the Lord alone.

You know, this is interesting. What about Jesus? The Lord was with Jesus. He was born in the cave. It is not beneath Yahweh himself to be born in a cave. But more importantly, it was where Jesus was born again ... in a cave. Not the cave in Bethlehem—the cave in Jerusalem. After He was crucified He was put into a tomb. And a tomb just so happens to be a cave. And that tomb was really a womb. Because when He came out He was born again in a glorified body, like never seen before in human history. And I think that is a clue to the mystery of cave dwellers. I think that’s where we can get some insight on how to live as cave men and cave women. Because the cave is the place God leads you to die, so that you might be born again ... sometimes again. It’s a place where He straightens some of our bent. The cave is a gift that God gives His friends.

And around here at Grace—don’t misunderstand—we’ll say sometimes that people need to be born again ... again. And the reason we say that is not because we think you can lose your salvation. Pump your brakes a little bit and pause. It’s because so many times—and it’s almost a qualification for leadership around here—we have people who surrender their lives completely to the Lord, and in their journey, God brings them to a place where they can’t reason their way out of it, they can’t pay their way out of it, they can’t power their way out of it. And they’re just so broken that they have a face down born again ... again experience where they leave their self-righteousness behind. It’s a place where you’re absolutely alone, but you’re alone with God. So, enjoy the company.

## **Psalm 142:5**

**I cry to you, O Lord; I say, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.”**

Let’s say it out loud again. Let’s memorize this, because it’s coming or it’s already happened in your life. Here we go ... the cave is a gift God gives to His friends. It’s a place where we find ourselves when we’re alone, every crutch removed, six flights of stairs. And don’t misunderstand—these are good things, these pillars that hold us up—family, our mate, our friends, the people who love us, a great career. All these things are taken out of our lives because maybe we built too much on them. And it’s in that moment when we find ourselves absolutely alone, but it’s alone with the Lord, that we can sing—let’s sing this together—let’s say Psalm 142 together: “I cry out to you, O Lord; I say, ‘You alone are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.’”

You alone are my refuge.

Think of the cave like this. Think of a cave like an oven, or even better, a kiln, where you put your soul in there and it burns away all of the impurities, or as many as it can handle in this season of life. So, your need for justice or your rights just end up in smoke. Or sometimes they’re just ashes.

Think of it this way. Some of you may have had this experience. When you look back at your life and maybe you were twenty-seven years old, and let’s just pretend, at twenty-seven you completely surrendered your life to the Lord, and you were the humblest a twenty-seven-year-old could ever be. A mentor told me this, and it made sense. At twenty-seven, that’s the humblest you could be.

But when you’re thirty-seven looking back at twenty-seven, that humility stinks of putrid pride. Because when you’re around thirty-six to thirty-eight, if you follow the map, you’re going to go to the Cave of Adullam. And He’s going to burn off that excessive self-righteousness. It’s the only way it can happen. It’s like a kiln. It makes you well. And in that kiln, you’ll cry out, “The Lord alone is my refuge in this land of the living.”

Think of the cave like a cocoon. We crawl and we fight for every inch as little caterpillars. But if we are to become like Christ in all of life, we were meant to fly. And the gap

between a caterpillar and a butterfly is a deathlike experience where the metamorphosis of life takes place. And so much has to radically change in our lives, of course it's painful. Everything has to be taken away so that everything can be added.

C. S. Lewis writes about this two or three times, but in *Mere Christianity* he does so graphically in a chapter called "Obstinate Toy Soldiers" where he's talking about how much has to happen for us to become living things, and how much has to be polished off us with sandpaper or polish, whatever it might be. It's work, and it's painful.

And then in a more graphic and illustrative way he does this in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series. (If you haven't read those, I highly recommend them.) But in *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Eustace gets what he deserves. He becomes himself. He becomes a dragon. And he hates being a dragon and he wants to shed his dragon-ness. And Aslan appears and says, "Well, you just need to scrape it off." And the more he scrapes, the more painful it is. But he can never scrape deep enough, and Aslan must do the surgery. Aslan and his claws must cut deeply. And that's how Eustace becomes like Christ in all of his life. It's his cave.

Here's a summary of the Christian experience. One day you're up killing giants, and in a short period of time, before the trophy even needs dusting, you're in this cave—the Cave of Adullam. So, it's happened before in your life if you're continuing to grow and become like Christ, and it will happen again.

### **Three Principles of Being a Cave Man**

So, here's three principles of being a cave man, if you don't mind; three principles about how to live in a cave as a cave man or a cave woman—truths you must submit to.

#### **1. It Is Christ-Like to Be in a Cave**

One: It is Christ-like to be in a cave. Personally, my experience has been that this is the most important of all, because it's about managing expectations. And it's about the God we want as being a prosperity God—a God that's more like a grandfather that grants us all our wishes. He's a genie where we rub the lamp. No, He's not the God we want; He's the God we need and the God who is.

And so, after your period of anger and frustration and confusion, finally dry, you can hear the whisper of His presence and then you can sing, "The Lord alone, the Lord is my refuge."

And here's why: because the cave is a gift that God gives His friends. So, it's Christ-like to be in a cave.

## 2. Hold on to God's Written Promises

The second truth is to hold onto God's written promises. If your faith is based on emotion, you're not going to survive the cave. Oh no. It has to be founded and built upon the absolute promises of God himself that are written in Scripture. You look in David's life—he's going back to the promises of Samuel (that was revelation at that time) and the written words of Moses. And now we have the Bible—the older and the newer Testaments. If you're chasing your dreams and your hopes, they'll be crushed. You'll never make it a week in that cave. Because God speaks to us in that cave in a whisper. And this is His heart language: Holy Writ—passages that you've already committed to reading and memory and meditation. And then the Lord himself, the Spirit of God, reminds you of those verses in these times of need. And if there's nothing there it's going to be very difficult to discern who's speaking to you.

Listen, if you wait for six pillars to get knocked out from underneath you, if you're waiting to fall down six flights of stairs before picking up your Bible and wondering what God is like—oh, I don't know what to say—good luck.

So, now ... this is why we do things around here the way we do things. Get in a Bible study. There are several around the city that are wonderful. We have multiple Bible studies here at our church. Join one so that you can know the native tongue of the God Almighty who whispers to you when you're in that cave.

## 3. No Deadlines on Understanding

Finally, this last one is that there are no deadlines to understanding in the cave. David's going to run for quite possibly ten years, the whole time. And listen—if he had a deadline—*I'll do this up to nine years*—he would have lost everything that he could have had, had he persevered to the end. In other words, “Do not grow weary in doing good”—my life verse, it seems like. Another great quote is “Fatigue makes cowards of all of us.”

Here's how it happens. We have this artificial deadline, and we'll say, *I'll live in this cave of misunderstanding or aloneness, or whatever it might be—I'll live for this long*. It's in our minds. And then we cross that threshold, and we say to ourselves, *It's not worth it any more*.

*Righteousness is not paying. I'm just going to do what feels good. There's no deadline to understanding cave dwelling.*

An acquaintance who used to attend our church lived a long time in a cave, and she knew the day it happened. Her husband took his own life and left her with a considerable amount of debt. It made national news. And she knew the rules of cave dwelling. She made a note to herself and said, *I will abstain from all forms of alcohol and all forms of sad music.* Because she knew that she didn't need any help with melancholy while she was in that cave. That's wisdom. She knew she was going to the cave. She knew God would be there. And she knew that she couldn't drink (wine) her way out of that cave.

Samuel never left the cave. He never saw his hopes and dreams fulfilled. If you remember the early part of the story, "Samuel, how long will you grieve Saul? I have anointed another one, a man after my own heart." And so, Samuel goes and anoints David. But when Samuel dies, it is under the realm of King Saul. Samuel dies in the cave. Because God never promises us that it will make sense and that He will fulfill His promises in our lifetime. So, we have to extend that deadline past our experience here on this planet. There is no deadline in understanding.

There it is—life in a cave. I hope it comes back to you like it came back to me and fortified my life in a time of need.

Here's the lesson. Let's read it out loud one more time: A cave is a gift God gives to His friends. So, let's pray like cave men and women, shall we?

*Lord, our lives are meant to be built on nothing less than Jesus Christ and His righteousness. We are meant to live our lives as Christ being our cornerstone—Christ alone. And Lord, we celebrate that You would love us so much that when we sometimes fortify our lives, build pillars of our lives on good things, like family and well-being and friends—those are still fragile. These are not meant to be foundations or even load-bearing walls.*

*And so, Lord, I'd ask that You would help us understand the love that You have for us; that You would reduce us to being alone with You, so that we might enjoy Your mysteries; that we might be enriched by Your presence, and that we might find strength in our weakness.*

*Lord, I am grateful that Your ambition for us is to live our lives built upon the foundation of Christ and Christ alone; to make Him our cornerstone. Lord, I would ask that You would*



*remind us of these lessons written in the Holy Bible so that we might know with great certainty that we can be in a cave in Your will and we are not alone. We're with You. You, Yahweh, are a cave-dwelling God. You are our only refuge. And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*