

# Making Lemonade Out of Lemons

*3-Year Bible Reading Plan*

By Dr. Jeff Meyers

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** 1 Samuel 22:1-4  
**Preached On:** Sunday, December 1, 2019

**Crossroads Ministries**  
301 S. 8th Street  
Opelika, Alabama 36801

**Website:** [www.fbcopelika.com](http://www.fbcopelika.com)  
**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers](http://www.sermonaudio.com/jeffmeyers)

Tonight I've entitled the message "How to Make Lemonade Out of Lemons," but a better title might be this, "How to Get Out of the Cave." David's gonna find himself running into a cave and hiding all alone without direction, without purpose, without influence, and without impact. We're gonna see him emerge from that cave tonight and see how the Lord works through his life. So I invite you tonight, I'm gonna read the entirety of chapter 22. We're gonna focus just on the first part but I think it's important to get the whole picture of what's happening if we're gonna follow his lead. I want to hear the whole story so beginning in verse 1 of chapter 22, it said,

1 David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's house heard it, they went down thither to him. 2 And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men. 3 And David went thence to Mizpeh of Moab: and he said unto the king of Moab, Let my father and my mother, I pray thee, come forth, and be with you, till I know what God will do for me. 4 And he brought them before the king of Moab: and they dwelt with him all the while that David was in the hold. 5 And the prophet Gad said unto David, Abide not in the hold; depart, and get thee into the land of Judah. Then David departed, and came into the forest of Hareth. 6 When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, (now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having his spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him;) 7 Then Saul said unto his servants that stood about him, Hear now, ye Benjamites; will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards, and make you all captains of thousands, and captains of hundreds; 8 That all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that sheweth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, and there is none of you that is sorry for me, or sheweth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? 9 Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub. 10 And he enquired of

the LORD for him, and gave him victuals, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. 11 Then the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob: and they came all of them to the king. 12 And Saul said, Hear now, thou son of Ahitub. And he answered, Here I am, my lord. 13 And Saul said unto him, Why have ye conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread, and a sword, and hast enquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as at this day? 14 Then Ahimelech answered the king, and said, And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son in law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is honourable in thine house? 15 Did I then begin to enquire of God for him? be it far from me: let not the king impute any thing unto his servant, nor to all the house of my father: for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more. 16 And the king said, Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou, and all thy father's house. 17 And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, Turn, and slay the priests of the LORD; because their hand also is with David, and because they knew when he fled, and did not shew it to me. But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the LORD. 18 And the king said to Doeg, Turn thou, and fall upon the priests. And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons that did wear a linen ephod. 19 And Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen, and donkeys, and sheep, with the edge of the sword. 20 And one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped, and fled after David. 21 And Abiathar shewed David that Saul had slain the LORD'S priests. 22 And David said unto Abiathar, I knew it that day, when Doeg the Edomite was there, that he would surely tell Saul: I have occasioned the death of all the persons of thy father's house. 23 Abide thou with me, fear not: for he that seeketh my life seeketh thy life: but with me thou shalt be in safeguard.

You know, oftentimes in our culture we like to experience movies, stories, books, or even what we know as soap operas, and dare I say, they can't get any better than this. You see this story of a young man related to, married into the household, and befriends the son of the king who's on the run. You notice the difference that David is in this cave and Saul is sitting under the tree, his men are gathered around, his javelin in his hand, and he is going to see to it that this man, his son-in-law, that his life is taken. And we could spend an eternity discussing all of the issues that Saul had tonight but I want to focus more on David. What allowed David to come out of the cave because the threatenings of Saul did not lessen, in fact, they only intensified, the people who surrounded David were much different when he got out of the cave than before he went in there, and I want us just to see some precepts and some principles of life that help us make lemonade out of lemons or help us get out of the cave.

The first one, and this is really a continuation of this morning, that we have to determine the difference between the circumstances that are allowed and personal rebellion. For those of you that were not here this morning, I'm gonna repeat just a little bit of this morning's message from chapter 21. King David found himself in a place that nobody wants to be. He found himself all alone. His relationship with his wife would never be again. His relationship with his best friend and his personal bodyguard and protector would never take place. Samuel, his priest and friend, was not a part of the picture. He was all alone in a foreign land with foreign people and he knew not where the next day would take him, and it was not because of his personal rebellion. It was not because of his personal sin. And allow me to reiterate what I shared this morning, anytime we're dealing with life as we would not have it, we need to ask ourselves is this because of my own sin. David modeled this in Psalm 139 where he said, "Search me, O God, show me where the sin is in my life." Anytime life's not going the way you want it to go, hit your knees and say, "God, is this because of me? God, is this something that I have done against you? Am I in sin?" If he does not reveal it to you, then understand that just because there are circumstances around you that are unfavorable does not necessarily mean it's because of you and your personal rebellion against God. Now here's the good news. If it is because of sin and we repent it and confess it, the Bible says he's willing to forgive it and we can go on. Well, if it's not our sin, then we may not be able to escape the circumstances so quickly but isn't it good to know that even as you walk through circumstances that you may not enjoy, that it's not because of you, it's not because of your own shortcomings, your own failings, your own misgivings in life.

When we look at Scripture, the one person who comes to my mind is the Apostle Paul. The Apostle Paul literally took three beatings within an inch of his life for the sake of the Gospel. Was it because he was in sin? Let me quote him from the book of Romans, "God forbid we would say that." He was so faithful to the things of the Lord, he was so despised for his faithfulness to the Lord that even in the name of religion they beat him to within an inch of his life. Several times they went to bury him. I mean, they thought it was over and they discovered later that he was in some type of induced coma and/or unconsciousness that the Lord awoke him out of. Consistently through Scripture, we find that both men and women had to walk through difficult times in life because of the circumstances that were allowed by God, not because of their own personal rebellion, and those circumstances are allowed as we saw this morning, because the Lord desires more of us in the days ahead and so as we walk through those difficulties, as we continue to trust the Lord, we become strengthened by him for greater things even in the days ahead.

Secondly, that the treatment that we receive by others never is an excuse for revenge. When somebody does you wrong, it is never right to wrong them back. The Bible says in the book of Deuteronomy 32 as well as Romans 14, "Revenge is mine saith the Lord." It's not yours. You don't have the privilege of saying, "I'm gonna get you on," on behalf of God. Now you don't have that privilege and I don't have that privilege. In fact, there is even prayers that are offered in Scripture even at the voice of King David where he calls upon the destruction of his enemies by the Lord's direction and not by his own.

Revenge is not that which we have the privilege of and Saul, can we just get in the flesh for a moment? If anybody deserved revenge it was him. I mean, if anybody deserved what was coming to him, it was King Saul. Every time we turn around, he's doing somebody and particularly David wrong, and as you read the story of his relationship with David, they find themselves later in a place known as Engedi. They're up in the caves and they're there kind of playing a game of cat and mouse. It's one of those famous Bible stories that we put in the children's books oftentimes and I think as adults we sometimes forget the significance, that David crawls into the cave of Saul and what he does is he takes a piece of his garment, he cuts it with his knife so that later when Saul is cursing him, he can tell him, "Hey, I had the opportunity to take your life but I was not going to touch God's anointed."

Now if you've had the privilege of traveling to or seeing images of what you and I know as the Middle East, in particular Israel, when you go into that area known as Engedi, you really get a visual for the caves that they dwelt in. They appear to be these rocks that are sheered, in other words, they're complete what I would call just, you know, a zero degree, they're straight up and down, and there are holes in these rocks that have been dug out. I'm gonna be honest, I don't know how they got into their homes. I mean, I know they had a system and I know they were in a lot better shape than I'm sure all of us are, but it amazes me how they got in there, much less went from one place to the other. Why is that important? Because David would have to have exhausted himself to even do what he did and you would think if you're gonna put that much energy into it, you're gonna "finish the deal." He went to that much labor, that much time, that much energy to prove a point to Saul that he was not an agent of revenge.

You know, there's another individual in Scripture that if I were to give them an excuse for revenge, it would be who we know as Job. Job is that character found, it's that book of the Bible that is right before the book of Psalms. Job walks through life and I cannot image experiencing what he experienced at the Lord's allowance. He lost the entirety of his family. He lost, well, I say the entirety, he lost his children, he didn't lose his wife. His wife told him to curse God and die. He lost his children. He lost his fortune. And there he is sitting on a dunghill. Don't you love how the Bible pictures where he was? He's sitting on a dunghill, he's got sores from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. He's taking sharpened edges of pottery to scrape the sores out of his misery. He is all alone as far as relationships are concerned, and the Bible says that three of his friends showed up.

Now if you're ever on social media and somebody wants to befriend you and their name is Zophar, Bildad or Eliphaz, decline it. Again another reason we don't name any of our children those names. In the name of friendship, they berate him verbally. They blame him for all the misgivings not only of his life but other people's as well. They come up with all kinds of theologies and constructs that are contrary to the totality of the person and the nature of God. When you get to the end of the story, another character shows up by the name of Elihu. He shows up and he basically just pours gasoline on the fire, so to speak. When you get to the end, God shows up and basically God says, "Alright, here's the deal. I'm going to give you grace. I'm going to honor you. I'm going to bless you, but your friends, no, they're not getting away with this." And you know what? You never see

Job say, "Atta boy, God." You never see Job said, "It's about time." Even though they mistreated him for what some people believe could have been seven years during that story's time frame, he did not even delight in the revenge of God. We should never allow how others treat us to be an excuse for an acting revenge on them.

Third, and this may be the most pertinent for some of us. When life gets tough, you might be surprised to find out who your real friends are. You know, oftentimes we want our friends to be that which we want them to be and rarely who the Lord desires them to be. Look back up in verse 2 of chapter 22. I want you to notice who David is a magnet for. When he comes out of the cave it says, "Now everyone that was in distress, everyone that was in debt, and everyone that was discontented." This is a financial guy's nightmare right here. This is everybody whose life was absolutely falling apart, everybody whose life was in a tailspin. All of a sudden David becomes a magnet for them and you get to the very last statement and it says there were about 400. Now allow me to fast forward for just a moment. Go to chapter 23, verse 13. When we continue the story it says, "Then David and his men which were about 600," in other words, they attracted more of them that were distressed and discontented and in debt.

Oftentimes we want those who are closest to us to be those who appear to be the best on the outside. These were those that were struggling, these were those who much like David in chapter 17, would make the statement, "Is there not a cause?" You know, one of the things I've learned about people who are in distress, debt and discontented, is they're just desperate enough for the Lord to use them. They're just in the place where the Lord can shape them and mold them because they're no longer trying to do it in their own energy. And when we find ourselves in the cave of life, when we find ourselves walking a path in life that we may not truly appreciate in life, we might just be surprised who the Lord brings to be our friends. You know, that's not the time where we can say, "Oh, you don't match the optics test." None of these guys would have been the ones that David would say, "Oh yeah, you look like the part here." Do we not remember Gideon and the famous 300 men? It wasn't the ones who he would have naturally chosen. They weren't the number that he would have chosen but they were the right ones because they were chosen of the Lord.

You know in recent days, our senior adult ministry made one of their endeavors, their journeys across the land, one of the trips, and it was one of the ones that I was actually consulted on. You say, "Well, why would you be consulted on a senior adult trip?" Because they were going to Texas and as most, you know, trips like that, they're interested in where they're going to eat and they wanted my opinion as to the different places and such. So I got to be a consultant on this endeavor and, you know, afterwards they came back and started sharing some of the stories, but in one of the places that they went and I knew this would happen, it's one of those places that has a stigma to it because of its, I guess its just legendary status in movies and such, is a place known as the Alamo. Yeah, the Alamo is not much bigger than this room. It's not real impressive. In fact, today in our 21<sup>st</sup> century culture, it's actually tucked between larger building and if you didn't know where you were going, you probably wouldn't find it unless you just stumbled upon it.

But the Alamo, it's one of those stories and you don't have to have any connection to Texas for it to be relevant because everybody knows, "Remember the Alamo." It was the Alamo of which only had one sole survivor, one of the women of the fallen soldiers who got the story back that rallied the proverbial troops for Texas to gain its independence. But what's interesting about the Alamo isn't the fact of the number of men that were willing to give their lives or the famous story about the man who drew the line in the sand and said all who are willing to die, step across, those who are not, go home. There's lots of fabulous stories but if you've ever visited it, and today with the wonderful world of the internet, you don't have to physically be there, you can go and pull up pictures, is when you go into the Alamo, this is what gets me, is when you look not just at the names but the places that people came from to fight. A lot of people think, well, it was the Texans. There wasn't a single Texan there. You do realize there wasn't a Texas then. There were those from Louisiana, Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, the United Kingdom. Even though there were less than 200 men who gave their lives in that very iconic battle, they were from dozens of different places. How do you gather those people from those places? And by the way, if you begin to study the men who died at that famous Alamo event, most of them were leaving disparaging environments. Nobody just woke up and said, "Man, I'm going to the Alamo. That might be a nice place to visit." No, because death at the Alamo was actually more appealing than life where they were coming from.

I remind people all the time and as a native Texan I can say this. Everybody talks about, "All you Texans kinda got a chip on your shoulder." I remind them, you realize the people that started Texas were the criminals from other places, right? I mean, that's really what took place. Why would a bunch of people who were discontented, why would those who were in debt, why were those that were in distress, why would they be willing some to travel around the world, others just across what we know as state lines, to a sure death? You know, the men that gathered around David are a whole lot like the men who gathered at the Alamo.

A lot of people don't know the story behind the story. The reason the Alamo became the Alamo is because of the Battle of Goliad. Goliad is the little area tucked down in southeast Texas. It had a little mission there. The opposing, the enemy, the troops came in and those that were in the fort, they were greatly outnumbered. It wasn't even a fair fight. The opposing army came and said, "Here's the deal. If you will unconditionally surrender, let us take the fort, you can just go back to your families and we'll call it a day." Well, guess what they did? They gave up. They were outnumbered 10 to 1, 12 to 1, whatever it was and they said, "We're done with this." Then the general that day decided to go back on his word and he took them down to the river and it's a very famous event in the history of that time period where they had a jar of beans, black beans and white beans, and if you drew a white bean, they'd let you live and go home. If you drew a black bean, they killed you and dumped you in the river.

Why is that significant? Because that's the story that got back to Tennessee and to Georgia and to Alabama and Louisiana. How dare they treat them like that? How dare they lie? How dare they manipulate? That's not right. Can we put the same story on 1

Samuel 22? How dare Saul act this way? How dare Saul take the future king and take his life or desire to? How dare Saul take his wife from him? How dare Saul threaten his own son over a friendship with David? Who shows up to those battles? The distressed, the discontented, and those who were in debt who would rather die with David than be in their present condition. You know, it's interesting that we all say, "Remember the Alamo," right? We all know about David's mighty men, do we not? It was the distressed and the discontented. And so when you find yourself walking through life like David was, you might just be surprised who your real friends will turn out to be. Don't give them the optics test. The Lord's bringing them to you for a reason.

Next is you can have the assurance that you're not the first and you won't be the last to walk through these pathways. What David was walking through here in 1 Samuel 22 as these men gathered around him as Saul desired for his life, as the javelins were flying, so to speak, this isn't the first person dedicated to the things of the Lord that found himself in a position of death that was impending and the distressed that had gathered around him. Allow me to remind us of Joseph. I mean, Joseph was the beloved of his father, Joseph was the one with the coat of many colors, Joseph was the one who his own brothers sold him. They sold him unto slavery and if death happened, so be it. Who did the Lord gather around Joseph? Read his story in Genesis. He gets put in prison with a false accusation and the prisoners gather around him and they build an entourage around him. We have no record of Joseph saying, "Oh, you don't meet the optics test." What do we see Joseph doing? We see Joseph walking the same path as David, just a different day and a different place.

How about Noah? Imagine building a boat for 120 years and people making fun of you every day that you're doing it? Now don't get me wrong, I don't want to build a boat for 120 years without power tools, okay? But the Bible says they mocked him. I don't know what would be worse, well, I know what would be worse, having to build a boat without power tools or having people tell you that you're ignorant and dumb for doing it. They mocked him. You know how long? For 120 years. That's how long he was building that boat. We have assurance as we walk through the difficulties of life, the caves of life, we're not the first ones to walk through and we won't be the last.

Last but not least and this is really a focus on the slaughtering of the priests in the last part of this chapter, I want to conclude tonight with an analysis of or an observation of uncontrolled rage. We've addressed how David walked through this and how we should walk through the same circumstances, but you have to admit it just doesn't make sense. Why would Saul be so desiring of his death? Why would Saul be so angry? Why would he be willing not to just go after one of the priests but after 84 of them? By the way, I don't know if you realized when we read through the story, he's mad at the priest for the priest doing his job well. It was the job of the priest to confide in others and to give comfort to others and to be benevolent to others. It wasn't his job to share the community's business and yet Saul's like, "Why didn't you tell me this?" Because it was none of his business, that is why. It doesn't make sense, why would you kill the priest? It doesn't make sense, why would you kill them all? It doesn't make sense, why would you be so ravaged about this?

I'm gonna give you what I like to call a Meyerism. I'm sure I took this from somebody else but I don't know who it was and so I don't mean to plagiarize and if anybody has the original thought, please let me know and I will give you full credit. Here's the statement that I've said time and time again: if it doesn't make sense in life, in other words, in this situation why are they so angry, why does it seem to be, if it just doesn't make sense, then either A, somebody's making money, or B, somebody's trying to cover something up. If it doesn't make sense somebody's making a financial killing on this thing or somebody's trying to cover their own hide. Now let that just kind of settle for a moment. That's a pretty good ism, isn't it? When somebody does something that just doesn't make sense, when we finally get the whole story it's either A, because they were making a lot of money doing it, or B, is they were trying to cover up their own issues by doing what they did.

So what was Saul doing? Was he making money off of chasing David? No, he's actually burning through the cash. It would have been very expensive to take his prize military men and to hunt him down. In fact, earlier in the story he's hunting David, he had to go back and fight another war real quick and then come back. This was a costly experience. So he wasn't making money so we can eliminate that which means it's B, he was covering something up. What was he covering? His own sin. Remember chapter 15 where the Lord said, "You are no longer going to be the king of Israel." He had sinned against the Lord. He had offered a sacrifice and in an inopportune and improper way. Remember that famous statement where the Lord said that rebellion is witchcraft and idolatry and that stubbornness is as idolatry? He was trying to cover his own sin and when we try to cover our own sin, we try to take others out so we're not discovered.

When we're walking through the difficulties of life that are not a byproduct of our own rebellion against God, let me wrap this up for you because this ought to bring some sincere sense into your life, you're walking through circumstances where others are contrary to you, they're working against you, they're working with others to manipulate the situation, they're either A, making money, or B, they're trying to cover their own sinful condition. More often than not it's B on the options. Saul was trying to cover his own sinful conditions. When the Pharisees looked up at Pilate in reference to Jesus and said, "Let his blood be on us and all other generations," what were they doing? Making money? Nope. They were covering their own sins. They didn't want their own sins discovered so they wanted to try to change the situation so the focus would be altered.

These priests are eliminated. The house of faith has been altered. Although there's great personal application here, allow me to transition more of a corporate model. Do we not see what's happening in chapter 22 happening in our culture today? Those who are in power, those who have authority, those who have the ability to maneuver the system are systematically, strategically hunting down people of faith to silence them and/or in some cases, worse, to eliminate them. Why would our culture want to do that?

Now let me pause for just a moment. Let me tell you why it doesn't make sense. It doesn't make any sense. When's the last time you rolled into a community and saw a local



atheistic hospital? When's the last time that a natural disaster occurred and other than what we know as the Red Cross and the Salvation Army, it was somebody other than a people of faith who showed up? When everything goes bad in our culture, who are the ones who bring the medical assistance? Who are the ones that bring disaster relief? Who are the ones giving of their financial resources? The people of faith, right? So it doesn't make sense. Why would you want to eliminate us? Why would you want to get rid of those who do so much to help and to benefit when the "government" can't get their act together to get there and help? We show up and we give of our own resources. It doesn't make sense. Why would you want to get rid of those who honestly you can't do without?

Well, it may make money, I don't know if it does or not, but I can tell you what it does do: it's covering their own sins. If we can silence the people of faith, if we can silence the church, if we can put them out of business, then no longer do we have to hear that we're sinners. We no longer have to hear that one day we will stand before God. We no longer have to hear that we will face an eternal consequence for our rebellion against God. You see, the story of Saul and David has a lot of application to our own personal lives but it has a huge implication for the culture that we're living in. Our secular world in a lot of different facets is Saul. They're sitting under the tree. They've got their javelins ready and they're systematically eliminating any voice of faith. Anybody who sided with or appeared to side with David is the enemy and they must be eradicated.

It doesn't make sense. I mean, after all, it was David that they sang the music about. It was David that everybody was excited to see. Why would you get rid of him? Because Saul wanted to cover his own sin. Ladies and gentlemen, whether you know it or not the story of David is your story as a believer in Jesus Christ. So what did he do? He got out of the cave, he allowed himself to be surrounded by those he would not have personally chosen, he did not enact revenge on the ones who despised him, he trusted God to do so, and here's the good news, I've read the end of the story, who wins in the end? God does. So let us tonight in our personal situations as well as our corporate environment, let's not seek revenge. Let's not seek punitive damages. Let us gather among ourselves as believers and let the Lord work in our own midst.