

Sermon Series: When Relationships Collide
To Be Used With: Session Two “Its Not About Me”
Sermon Title Possibilities: It’s Not About Me!
Sermon Text: 1 Samuel 24:1–22

Introduction:

Anne Lamotte said “You can safely assume that you’ve created God in your own image when it turns out that God hates all the same people you do.” To be human is to have enemies. We either know people we have a hard time loving, or we know people who have a hard time loving us, or both. Jesus assumed we would have enemies when he said “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you” (Matt. 5:44). The question is not whether or not we have enemies. The issue is whether or not we will love and pursue them at great cost to ourselves. Let’s read about how king David responded to Saul even though he desired to take David’s life.

[Read 1 Samuel 24:1–22]

We clearly see a collision in worldviews between these two men. Saul displayed his own fear, paranoia, and jealousy toward David. David acts in humility and courage in how he handles Saul’s opposition. This story is a wonderful example of what it means to pursue our enemies and live out the truth: It’s not about me! I want to show you four truths that can help all of us resolve conflict between us and those who may oppose us.

Point 1: Resist Harming Those Who Oppose You (vv. 4–7).

David’s men sought to persuade David to attack Saul. “Here is the day of which the Lord said to you, ‘Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you’” (v.4). In all fairness, David had every right to harm Saul since David was now the rightful king of Israel. He even buys into this idea by sneaking near Saul and cutting off a piece of his robe. But afterward David’s heart struck him. He would not seek the harm of the Lord’s anointed king. David is affirming Saul’s worth and respecting that though he is a flawed and sinful man, yet he is still the king God initially chose for Israel.

This is an important point for us as we deal with conflict. It’s not about us! We so quickly see the hurt others cause us and the pain they have inflicted on us, and we forget many sacred truths about them. They are created God’s image. If they are Christians, Christ redeemed and purchased them. If they are not Christians, they desperately need the Gospel. If we could see past the hurt, our hearts should be struck. We will want to move toward them and display humility and patience.

We must also be aware that others may urge us to listen to our natural instincts to fight back. Even well intentioned Christians may encourage us to fight with the weapons of this world. We must be careful to heed any advice that may hinder reconciliation and growth between us and those who oppose us. How easy would it be to write someone off when perhaps God is doing something bigger in both our lives!

Application: In what ways are you only seeing the hurt someone is causing you? How can you affirm their worth and value as a person created in the image of God?

Point 2: Make The First Move To Reconcile (vv.8-15)

David seeks reconciliation with Saul. At great cost and risk to himself, he pursued Saul to clarify and resolve the situation. Saul need not fear David. Saul need not believe the lie that David was his enemy. David wanted to clarify this. Saul should fear David as he should fear a dead dog or a flea (v.15).

This is how we should approach our enemies. Sitting back and waiting for them to make the first move feels natural and justified. But God gives us the strength and courage to move toward our enemies first. David is helpful here for a two reasons. First, he confronts Saul's paranoia. He says, "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm?'" (v.9). Often conflicts arise because of what we heard about someone or what they heard about us. We have no evidence that David wanted to harm Saul. Saul believed a lie. David gently confronted him on this.

Second, David clarifies his intentions with Saul. He meant him no harm. "But my hand shall not be against you" (v.13). The longer a conflict festers and grows, the more slanted our views of others become. What began as a small point of contention can turn into a major misconception. We must seek to clarify our motives and intent as we pursue others and seek to reconcile with them.

Application: Who are you avoiding that you should pursue? Are you waiting on them to move first? Why not rather go to them, clarify the situation and gently confront what has perhaps turned into a misconception?

Third Point: Agree To Do Each Other Good (vv.16–22).

David and Saul reached an agreement. While Saul's promise will only be temporary (1 Sam. 26), David would keep his word to Saul. He would do Saul and his house good as long as he was king. We see evidence of this in how David responds to Saul's death (2 Sam. 1:17–27) as well as the story of Mephibosheth (2 Sam. 9).

Evidence of true reconciliation is continuing love and goodness. Conflict always gives us a chance to get closer to one another, grow in our own understanding of ourselves and others, and glorify our God. If a genuine commitment to do one another good is not reached, then reconciliation has not taken place. C.S Lewis said, "Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea until he has something to forgive" (C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity,). Many of us love the idea of reconciliation and doing good to our enemies, but when we have to do it, we see our true intentions and motivations.

Application: Why are we so reluctant to do good to those who have opposed us? How can we overcome this and truly seek the good of others? Are you committed to the good of those who previously opposed you?

Conclusion

It's not about me! David is a great example of what this looks like in real time. He resisted harming Saul, he moved first, and he sought the good of his enemy. We have much to learn from David. Unfortunately we know there were times in David's life where he thought it was about him. We can look after other episodes in his life and conclude that he is not a perfect model always.

However, there is a Greater David. Jesus Christ is the True King, who, at infinite cost to Himself pursued us by dying and rising in our place. God's Son became God's enemy on the cross to make us, God's enemies, into God's sons and daughters. Romans 5:8 says, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." We were enemies with God, but He resisted harming us, He moved first, and He is now committed to our good in all things (Rom. 8:28).

When this truth resonates in our hearts we can move toward each other with humility and patience. We can truly understand that it's not about us.

Greg Breazeale (M.Div. New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, D.Min. student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary) is senior pastor at Metro East Baptist Church in Wichita, KS. He and his wife Heather have two sons, Cross and Rhyse, and are expecting their third child in August. He blogs at yearnforGod.org. Twitter: [@pastorbreaaz](https://twitter.com/pastorbreaaz).