

[No doctrine is a given unless it has been found in the Word given by the Holy Spirit and received by you. If you have observations or questions, feel free to send me an email with your comment or observations at [tbeachhead@comcast.net](mailto:tbeachhead@comcast.net). Thank you for taking the time—Pete Mehegan, the Scribe.]

Remember: Be good to one another. Be sensitive and kind. Let God heal our hearts...and guide our discussions. **PLEASE PRE-READ THESE NOTES AND CHOOSE THE DIRECTION THAT IS APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR GROUP.** BE COGNIZANT OF YOUR GROUP'S TIME AND BE SENSITIVE! **Some groups would like to dwell on a single idea. Let the Spirit be your guide. Never feel obligated to complete this study.**

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Note: I have highlighted suggested discussion questions that Pastor Mark has raised this week, 1/19. Let's allow the Holy Spirit to guide all our discussions, using the highlights as trail blazes. **The purpose is to minister to one another.** I include each of the passages mentioned in full, to facilitate the enjoyment of these notes. Footnotes are not meant to distract. This week's footnotes include:

1. [On goodness and mercy following me all the days of my life.](#)
2. [On Saul \(or Isaiah the prophet\) "lying naked" among the prophets.](#)

\*\*\***Important:** At the very [end of these notes](#), I've included passages that were mentioned in this week's message for deeper study using SOAP journaling to help further your study during the week. \*\*\*

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Before the sermon, as usual, the message began with a video, with a husband saying, "There is no way that love can be true love unless there be a sacrifice.

1. Did you hear that? How does that fit into this theme of desert to destiny?
2. What were your thoughts?
3. Did you agree? Do you have a testimony?

Pastor outlined the sermon ahead in an email. These were the points he said we would examine. Which relates to your own situation?

- **How hurtful relationships may lead us into a "wilderness" season, and how God uses it for our good.**
- **Why character is formed in the wilderness and why that formation matters.**
- **How tempting shortcuts can actually hinder God's greater plans for us.**
- **How life's challenges, though difficult, are often preparation for something greater.**
- **Why the wilderness is a testing ground where we prove our faithfulness in small things.**

Pastor began with a few observations and prayer points. Take a moment to pray for each:

- ⊕ The inauguration. You're looking at this after the fact. It is now the aftermath, and a new beginning. Take a moment to pray for each in government to be guided by the Holy Spirit, and for all subterfuge to be flooded with light.
- ⊕ The cease fire with Hamas and the surrender of hostages. Pray for all that comes to your mind.

- ⊕ The fires in California. Pray for all you know to be relevant, especially for friends and family. Ben Mehegan, once a drummer on Richie's worship team, now lives in LA, and he is safe. He asks that we pray for the outreach of all who are reaching out to their neighbors. If you want to donate to help those who have been afflicted and bereft, Pastor mentioned Foursquare Disaster Relief. Look it up: <https://foursquaredisasterrelief.org>.

Pastor began with a review, and observed what we have already discovered: We run into difficulties in life. We have discovered that we expect to be tempted, and that temptation will challenge us personally in life. We will encounter difficulty. Everything we are used to and that has functioned in the past seems to be "blowing up on us." Things are not working anymore, and the cost of repair rises past our own capacity to pay. Mark says, "I asked the Lord, 'What is happening. What is this all about,' and He answered, 'You DO want to go into the desert, right?'" Mark responded hesitantly, "Well...yes." He continued, "A lot of times as leaders, we are taken through those things we are actually going to be speaking on. That's why I've learned to be so cautious when choosing the topic I'm speaking on."

1. What do you see?
2. How are you doing?
3. Remember again this maxim, "Faith that isn't tried is only theory." How does faith that has been tried trump theory every time? What is the reward of experience?

Mark continued, "We are going through a wilderness time. Even in this building: Recently our furnace has gone out. Our sprinkler system went this past week. They had to come in yesterday for an emergency repair to our sprinkler system. These are expensive, unanticipated repairs. Thankfully, we could have church today."

1. Looking at this, were you aware of the cost of opening the doors to church on Sunday?
2. Are you aware of the needs of those around you, or are they hidden from you?
3. Who is aware of your own needs? To whom do you turn in emergencies?

So Pastor prayed, "Lord, what is going on?" and he heard this answer, "You say every day that I am your provider. Here you are getting so stressed out. Yes, it is money. And yes, money is important, but why are we getting so anxious? Are we getting anxious because the need is out of our control? Are you looking to feel secure? Or to understand what it means to trust fully?"

1. Describe how you feel when you are in control, compared to when things spiral out of control.
  2. Describe the strength of your partnership with God, especially in times of trouble.
  3. Describe a time when things were out of control, and you were surprised by an unexpected solution that brought an end to anxiety.
- I. **How hurtful relationships may lead us into a "wilderness" season, and how God uses it for our good.**

Mark began, "So we're continuing on this journey from deserts to destiny with David. David spent some time in the wilderness before he became the king. He was a shepherd boy, overlooked when Samuel came to anoint the new king over Saul.

He continued, "The story of David is fascinating. Being the youngest of eight brothers, he was not even considered a prominent member of the family. He was ignored when Samuel came to the family to anoint a new king. Jesse had gathered seven brothers together at Samuel's behest, and had left David, the youngest, out in the field." He asks, "How would you feel?"

1. Answer him.

2. Do you know this story?
3. How does Samuel know that none of the seven is the one? Who is in control?
4. What is David's first mighty act? (1 Samuel 17)
5. How did David prepare all his life for his first mighty act, his encounter with the giant Goliath?
6. When David showed up at the battlefield to bring food to his brothers, what was his reaction to Goliath's challenge?
7. What was his brothers' reaction to his reaction?
8. Have you ever been misunderstood or looked down on? Do you have a testimony?
9. Describe Saul's jealousy after David's humiliating success?
10. Where does David go when Saul turns on him?
11. How does David respond to a toxic relationship that began with such promise? Does he seek revenge?
12. How does God intervene? Look at what happens to Saul as he pursues David to kill him. (1 Samuel 19:[22](#)Finally, Saul himself left for Ramah and came to the large cistern at Secu, where he asked, "Where are Samuel and David?" "At Naioth in Ramah," he was told. [23](#)So Saul went to Naioth in Ramah. But the Spirit of God came upon even Saul, and he walked along prophesying until he came to Naioth in Ramah. [24](#)Then Saul stripped off his robes and also prophesied before Samuel. And he collapsed and lay naked all that day and night. That is why it is said, "Is Saul also among the prophets?"—See footnote 2.)

II. **Why character is formed in the wilderness and why that formation matters.**

Pastor then took us to Psalm 57, a song which David wrote as he was being pursued by Saul and his army. Take the time to read it together.

1. Do you write songs when you're being pursued by a strong enemy? Have you ever?
2. Looking at the psalm, what do you see?
3. How many verses in the psalm point to David and his needs that are out of his control?
4. How many verses remember God and His power?
5. How many verses feature a prophecy foretelling God's expected response?
6. Look at verses seven and eight. What are David's weapons?
7. Are these physical weapons or spiritual weapons?
8. Are they effective against the works of the enemy? Explain?
9. Look at verses 6 and 11. Why does David repeat Himself?
10. What is his purpose in repeating this imperative? Who will be the first to fulfill it?
11. Who decides what is exalted in your life? Who is in control of your priorities?
12. Look up 1 Samuel 22:[1](#)So David left Gath and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and the rest of his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. [2](#)And all who **were distressed or indebted or discontented** rallied around him, and he became their leader. About four hundred men were with him. If this were your army of followers, how would you feel? Would you write a song about it?
13. Knowing many of these later became David's "mighty men," how does God relate to the distressed, the indebted and the discontented?
14. How did David relate this new "team"? Does he ever reject them?
15. Looking at the psalm, summarize how David kept himself on target and intentional despite circumstances and less than optimal companionship.
16. Pastor took the time to remind us that "...God sees what people don't." Look again at the Psalm. How important was this realization to David?
17. How did he keep this truth in mind in the face of danger and rejection?

18. What was David's impact on his newfound followers/army?
19. God called David "a man after my own heart..." years before he was born. Looking at this psalm, how do you know David was this man?
20. What is your heart after?
21. Pastor emphasizes, "God's calling is not dependent on human approval, but on God's divine purpose." Explain.

He continues, "I have prayed that every one of you could see that you have a specific plan and purpose, that God has designed each of you uniquely, maybe not to be the king of a nation, as David, but that God has unique a purpose and a plan for you; that you begin to have a vision for that...maybe realize that you can stop just living for yourself more, that you can release more of that which you were holding on to, and turn away from what you stumble over...", whatever has caused you distress or discontent, or put you in debt.

1. How do you think David's undisciplined band of followers became an army that could win a nation to David's side? Have you ever been to boot camp? Explain.
2. Looking at God's choice of "mighty men," where do you fit in that army?
3. How do you think David's example helped in their training?
4. How did love unite this army?
5. Did David seek to be loved? What made him admirable?

In contrast Pastor Mark examined Saul's jealousy: Saul's response to the crowd's song, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands," (1 Samuel 18:7), was not to realize that he was put at the head of the nation for a season, but he forgot his calling and he got jealous." His heart went from humility in service, to his own ambition and desire for power and control.

1. Explain. How did Saul's motivation change?
2. Have you ever seen this in leadership? (Be kind, cautious and unaccusatory.)
3. How effective was Saul's rule after he shifted away from humble service?
4. What did Saul lose when he turned on David?

### III. **How tempting shortcuts can actually hinder God's greater plans for us.**

Look up 1 Samuel 24:<sup>3</sup>Soon Saul came to the sheepfolds along the road, where there was a cave, and he went in to relieve himself. And David and his men were hiding in the recesses of the cave. <sup>4</sup>So David's men said to him, "This is the day about which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do with him as you wish.'" Then David crept up and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe. <sup>5</sup>Afterward, David's conscience was stricken because he had cut off the corner of Saul's robe. <sup>6</sup>So he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the LORD's anointed. May I never lift my hand against him, since he is the LORD's anointed."

1. What do you see? What do you notice?
2. Is this *before* or *after* Samuel had anointed David king?
3. Look at verse 4. Have you ever thought random circumstances were "guidance from God?"
4. Instead, we see that David, in fact, was being tested. Have you ever noticed that sometimes circumstances are merely a test and not a call to action?
5. Examine this question carefully: How is it that David **absolutely knows** that this is not the propitious time for his rise to the kingdom?
6. Whose plan is it? And so, Who will bring it about? Is it guaranteed?

7. Look at Proverbs 20:21 *An inheritance hastily gained [by greedy, unjust means] at the beginning Will not be blessed in the end.* (Amplified version) Explain what David decided in light of this proverb. What was his promised inheritance?
8. This proverb was written in or after Solomon's day. How did David already come to understand the principle? How does a relationship with the Spirit help make healthy decisions.

Pastor looked at David's mindset. He said, "At this moment in time, David decided, 'Even though Saul is acting badly, even though he is chasing me, for some reason God, Who anointed Saul, has also kept him to be the king.'" Mark continued, "This is very important for us to realize: We have to let God deal with people in His time and in His way. It's too easy for us to get agitated with people, and to try to take matters into our own hands."

9. Look up 1 Thessalonians 5: [24The One who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.](#) What do you see? Again, Who will bring it about? Is it guaranteed?
10. Seeing this context, what did David know that He would He do?
11. Given the principle from Proverbs, why is it dangerous to choose a shortcut?
12. Re-write the story. If David had assassinated Saul while the latter was "covering his feet" in the cave, how would the nation have responded to David as the new king?
13. Pastor paraphrased Proverbs 20:21 above, saying, "Taking shortcuts might seem appealing but shortcuts often lead to regret." Do you have a testimony?
14. Pastor offered an alternative, "I've learned that going slower, and taking time in prayer, making sure that Audra and I move in unison...if you don't want to blame swap, make sure decisions are made together...and avoiding shortcuts will always be the best approach." What do you think?

IV. **How life's challenges, though difficult, are often preparation for something greater.**

Approaching his conclusion, Pastor pointed out that though this wilderness was a real, physical wilderness, for David, it was also an unprecedented, unanticipated emotional and spiritual one. We often take these challenging times in our own life, and become emotional and physically spent. He said, "If you are currently facing the physical challenge of a chronic, physical disease that is draining you, don't allow it to discourage you. Let it become a spiritual journey knowing that God does some of His greatest work in the midst of those deepest, most painful times." (Look up what Paul told the Colossians in [3:2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.](#))

1. Does this help? How have you faced your present challenges?
2. What did David set his mind on?
3. What did he recall, to help him apply and keep to this principle?

V. **Why the wilderness is a testing ground where we prove our faithfulness in small things.**

A. **Reliance on God**

1. See that David learned to lean on God as his refuge and strength. With an army of three hundred of the "3-d's", the distressed, the indebted and the discontent, he did not turn to men, even in considerable numbers, to console him or supply needed hope. He relied solely on God's protection and provision. In doing this, David was able to lead and to shepherd the 3-d's into each becoming members of a mighty army before God. Pastor asks, "When the shepherd boy became a

shepherd to these...was God preparing him to shepherd a nation?" Answer him.

2. Look again at Proverbs 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; 6 in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.* Explain what Solomon learned from his father David.
3. Did this strategy work for David? Explain. (Did David know what he was doing by precedent and previous example? Or was he blazing his own trail? Then, explain how he knew in advance the outcome by trusting in the Lord and not in his own understanding?)
4. Pastor said, "That's probably for me one of the most painful things I've learned, because I don't *have* a lot of experiences to guide me, and sometimes it's easier to rely on my own wisdom. But, God is teaching me that my own wisdom is not good enough. I learned that God will put me in circumstances where my own wisdom cannot get me out of the difficult place I am in, and I *need* God's wisdom, God's provision and God's help. Learning to rely on Him is the very thing God desires for us.

#### **B. Leadership through humility**

1. To review, David's ability to lead a group of 3-d's largely from a single tribe, and to transform them into a united and mighty army prepared him to be king over the twelve tribes. How did the pressure of the circumstances humble David?
2. Look again at God's requirement of us: Micah 6: 8 [He has shown you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you but to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?](#) This was written four hundred years after David. How did David fulfill God's requirement?
3. List the three steps Micah enumerates. What is each required for each step to be met?
4. Look at the conclusion to Ecclesiastes in chapter 12:13 *When all has been heard, the conclusion of the matter is this: Fear God and keep His commandments, because this is the whole duty of man.* How does this fit?
5. How many times need we be told, before we finally understand?

#### **C. Character over comfort**

1. Pastor said, "Don't jump out of the wilderness experience." Explain.
2. He said, "Some of you have had dreams and prophecy and you're waiting for these things to come to life." Does Proverbs 20:21 speak to your circumstances?
3. How is merely recalling the promise the first step toward its fulfillment? How does that change the way you pray today?
4. Pastor points out that David waited years for God to move on his behalf...and then the nation made him king. Moses waited forty years in the desert. What does this suggest?
5. God does things that a shortcut doesn't solve, "...where the character God is working in us is actually the character of Christlikeness that He wants others to see in us. As David, given the perfect opportunity, chose not to retaliate or grow bitter, God has given us this key." He adds, "This is the heart, and it's keeping the heart soft and pliable to the Lord, easy to shape and to mold." What do you see?

6. Why does God want you to have a soft heart? Are you, too, perhaps surrounded by the 3-d's lacking a shepherd?
7. Look up Luke 14: *2When Jesus noticed how the guests chose the places of honor, He told them a parable: 8"When you are invited to a wedding banquet, do not sit in the place of honor, in case someone more distinguished than you has been invited. 9Then the host who invited both of you will come and tell you, 'Give this man your seat.' And in humiliation, you will have to take the last place. 10But when you are invited, go and sit in the last place, so that your host will come and tell you, 'Friend, move up to a better place.' Then you will be honored in front of everyone at the table with you. 11For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and the one who humbles himself will be exalted."* Apply this parable to what David did.
8. Apply this parable to yourself. How do you do in situations like this? Have you ever sat in the wrong seat, and been moved away from the upper table?
9. Have you ever sat in the wrong seat, and been moved up to a place of honor?
10. Pastor pointed out, again looking at David, that it is very easy to get bitter when rejection comes from the family. This may have happened to you. He said, "Let go of that. Trust me with your family. Trust me with those who wronged you. Do you trust me?" Answer him. To what degree do you trust? Have you set any limits?
11. David chose to be a leader whose first priority was to honor God, even in his failures. He would always return to the Lord. (Read psalm 51.)

**Practical steps:**

- ⊕ **Trust in God's timing.** You cannot know about God's timing, because God's ways are not our ways. God's timing is not our timing. You must allow God to be God.
- ⊕ **Don't take matters into your hands. Resist the urge to retaliate or manipulate outcomes.** When facing injustice, resist the urge to retaliate. Review the notes above, and see David's opportunity to retaliate, and the reward he received for resisting the urge. Concerning manipulation, compare David's choices to Saul's decision, when Samuel's arrival at Gilgal was delayed so that his armies were beginning to leave him: 1 Samuel 13: *6Seeing that they were in danger because their troops were hard-pressed, the men of Israel hid in caves and thickets, among the rocks, and in cellars and cisterns. 7Some Hebrews even crossed the Jordan into the land of Gad and Gilead. Saul, however, remained at Gilgal, and all his troops were quaking in fear. 8And Saul waited seven days for the time appointed by Samuel, but Samuel did not come to Gilgal, and the troops began to desert Saul. 9So he said, "Bring me the burnt offering and the peace offerings." And he offered up the burnt offering. 10Just as he finished offering the burnt offering, Samuel arrived, and Saul went out to greet him. 11"What have you done?" Samuel asked. And Saul replied, "When I saw that the troops were deserting me, and that you did not come at the appointed time and the Philistines were gathering at Michmash, 12I thought, 'Now the Philistines will descend upon me at Gilgal, and I have not sought the favor of the LORD.' So I felt compelled to offer the burnt offering." 13"You have acted foolishly," Samuel declared. "You have not kept the command that the LORD your God gave you; if you had, the LORD would have established your kingdom over Israel for all time. 14But now your kingdom will not*

*endure; the LORD has sought a man after His own heart and appointed him ruler over His people, because you have not kept the command of the LORD."*

1. How did Saul seek to manipulate the troops and the circumstances?
2. Was Saul given ample instruction? What was he lacking?
3. Explain the relationship of patience to faith. How does a willingness to wait demonstrate faith?
4. What were the consequences of disobedience?
5. What can we learn from Samuel's response to Saul's action?

⊕ **Stay faithful in small things. Whatever season you are in, be faithful with what God has placed in your hands.**

1. Review Jesus' teaching from Luke 16:*9* *tell you, use worldly wealth to make friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, they will welcome you into eternal dwellings. [10Whoever is faithful with very little will also be faithful with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much.](#) *11*So if you have not been faithful with worldly wealth, who will entrust you with true riches? How does this apply here?*
2. What little things do you have that you can and do use for others?
3. How did David show himself faithful before his small army of 3-d's?
4. Besides Samuel's anointing, that had been done in secret, what else did David have to work with? How did his past experience help him in his decisions?
5. How do you think the songs he had already written help him? Musicians, how do you think his harp helped him? What is the impact of song on distress?
6. Have you written anything in the past that could help you through, today?

⊕ **Find your refuge in God. Turn to Him in prayer, in worship in scripture, especially when life feels overwhelming.**

1. Reread Psalm 57. Read it again. Make it personal. Respond to your current trials using these words. Record your own response when you do.
2. What happens when we take our refuge in what the world offers, in encounters, in social media, or in binge streaming? How does the world mask and distort the meaning of refuge?
3. If 50% of Church-attending men are currently turning to pornography, what does that say of our understanding of refuge?
4. What steps must be taken to find real refuge?
5. Pastor says, "All these things are symptomatic of other issues. These represent our efforts to cope through life's challenges." Why don't any of them work?
6. He then prophesied, "The Lord is telling us to move to Him. When we're going through the difficult things, we cannot jump to the escape the world offers. We need to jump to Him Who is our Refuge and our Strength." React to this. Does it inspire ideas you can manage?

**Conclusion:** Pastor said, "I just want to remind us that the wilderness is not the end but the beginning. It is God's way to prepare you for your destiny. When we begin to see that, we are going to have the confidence to say, 'This is not merely an awful time of life that I need to escape from or to just get through, but it's actually the opportunity God gives me to shape me, mold me and to build that critical relationship of trust with Him that will prepare me for, indeed catapult me into my destiny.'"

1. Respond.



2. Can you say those words? Can you tape them to your mirror to remind you?
3. Write down what you already know of your destiny. Revisit that note daily!

Pastor continued, "David is a great example for us. His preparation was long. Maybe not as long as some, but it felt long. You would know if you've been walking through a difficult season for a length of time, every year that goes by can seem like an eternity." He encouraged us, "Allow God to move in the middle of that. Lean hard into Him. Keep your heart soft. Don't get bitter or resentful. Move into a place where you say, "God you are my strength and my refuge. In you I will trust."

1. What is your response?
2. Jot down the new thoughts that came to you.
3. Jot down those ideas you had forgotten, and of which you were reminded in this message.
4. Pastor spoke of his first days attending Grace Capital, and then his rise to worship leader. Trace his steps as we just traced David's. Do you see a common thread?
5. Look at your own thread. What do you see?

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### **The Follow-up Application**

1. Use the [SOAP journal studies](#) below throughout the week.
2. Examine Micah 6:8 this week, and make a list of steps you can take to apply this verse to your leadership and your destiny.
3. Take ownership of Psalm 57 and let it become your own personal response to what you are currently facing. Write down what comes to your mind.

### **Take the time to pray.**

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#### **Scribe's Notes:**

1. **On goodness and mercy *following* me all the days of my life**—The Hebrew word David used in this song is רָדַף, *radaph*. Strong's says "*it primarily means to pursue or chase. It is often used in the context of pursuing an enemy in battle, chasing after someone with intent to capture or harm, or metaphorically, to follow after something with diligence and intent.* When you know that God's goodness and His mercy are stalking you relentlessly...pursuing you as in a battle...how does that comfort you? Does it change your perspective on this so beloved song?
2. **On Saul lying "naked" among the prophets**—There are two places in the Old Testament, with Isaiah and here with Saul, where the one prophesying is said to be "naked." In fact, Isaiah walked naked for three years, and Saul lay naked on the ground prophesying. These are very important old testament, i.e. biblical examples of the prophetic ministry taken to the extreme. Those who judge today's prophetic ministry for its sometimes extreme outward appearance should remember these and other stories in the Old Testament narrative, and Agabus's own behavior

when he took Paul's belt from off him and bound his own hands with it. This being said, it's important to remember that the Bible is consistent, and nudity is always depicted as representing our shame. Ham and his descendants were cursed because he saw his father's nakedness. Commentaries are quick to point out that "naked" in the Hebrew narrative rather suggests that Isaiah and Saul stripped off their upper, outer garments that depicted their rank and office. Isaiah took off his sackcloth...the "mantle" he had chosen to walk in, ever mourning before a disobedient nation. Jews would understand that he walked in a loin cloth, as the most poverty stricken would, to foretell the destiny of that nation in visible, unforgettable detail. Saul, when he prophesied, took off all his royal regalia, and stripped himself of office and rank to prophesy as one of the people, bereft of position and power.

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**For further study:**

Take a moment each day this week to apply the **SOAP**... (**S**cripture—Copy the scripture. / **O**bservation—Write what you see. / **A**pplication—What is God saying? / **P**ray—What is your response?) ...method to some of the scripture we looked at this week:

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| Monday: Proverbs 20:21                       |
| Tuesday: 1 Samuel 17:26                      |
| Wednesday: 1 Samuel 17:34-37                 |
| Thursday: Psalm 23:5-6, 1 Thessalonians 5:24 |
| Friday: 1 Samuel 19:23-24                    |
| Saturday: Psalm 57                           |
| Sunday: 1 Samuel 22:1-2                      |

Once again, some passages suggested here have more than the usual number of verses. This is not to increase the burden but to provide clarity of context. Pick the verses that speak to you most clearly, and run these through the SOAP steps.