

36. The Book of 1Samuel—22:6-23

“Unintended Consequences”

(2/14/16)

A few years ago I remember seeing a title to an article that caught my eye—the article was entitled *“Parachuting Pussycats”*.

Well you can imagine that after seeing that title I just had to read the article—I kept it, let me read part of it to you:

“Fifty years ago, a malaria outbreak occurred among Borneo's Dayak people. The World Health Organization came to the rescue. They sprayed the people's thatch-roofed huts with DDT and set in motion a life-and-death illustration of the importance of respecting the natural order. The pesticide killed the mosquitoes, but it also killed a parasitic wasp that kept thatch-eating caterpillars under control—the result? People's roofs began caving in. And then things really got bad. The local geckos feasted on the toxic mosquitoes and got sick. Cats gorged on sick geckos and dropped dead. And then, with no cats, the rats began running wild, threatening the people with deadly bubonic plague.

The World Health Organization was in a quandary. What unexpected disasters might occur if it now poisoned the rats? Then someone determined that they needed to reintroduce part of the natural order that had collapsed—specifically, cats to eat rats.

So one morning, the Dayak people heard the droning of a slow-flying aircraft. Soon the sky was littered with parachutes bearing pussycats to earth. Operation Cat Drop delivered 14,000 felines to Borneo. They hit the ground (feet first I suppose) and began taking care of the rats.

The story of the parachuting pussycats, while funny, makes a serious point—mess with the natural order and there will be consequences to pay...”

The author goes on to say that even as there is a natural order that God has ordained in nature there is also a moral order that He has established—violate it and there will be consequences to pay.

The author goes on—

“The object of life is to live in accordance with that moral order. It's tragic the way so many people go through life fighting against it. We want to enjoy sex on our terms and not on God's terms (the way God designed it—only in the context of marriage). And the result—we end up with dejection, family dysfunction, disease etc.

If God designed the physical universe (as the evidence indicates) then isn't it reasonable that He would teach us to behave in a way that conformed to His created order? Morality is cooperating with God's natural order for mankind—this is what Christians believe by faith...

The good life can't be found when you live in opposition to the natural order—regardless of what the world says. In the end, God's moral demands are the only path to health and happiness. If you don't believe that, just ask the people of Borneo. They discovered what happens when you tamper with the natural order and were rescued from mosquitoes, rats, and the World Health Organization bureaucrats by parachuting pussycats.”

Aside from the obvious lessons—what's my point?

The point is that sin often brings with it consequences—unintended consequences from actions that have been entered into hastily with little or no thought—careless and often selfishly motivated actions.

Unintended consequences were the result of David lying to Ahimelech.

I. The Reality of Unintended Consequences

As we studied last time in 1Samuel 21 King Saul was determined to kill David so that he could never replace him as king of Israel.

The last time David stood before Saul he threw a spear at him causing David to flee for his life—this now begins a ten year period where David is a fugitive running from Saul.

David runs to a town called Nob—a town where the priests of Israel lived including the High Priest, a man named Ahimelech.

Apparently David reasoned that because of his friendship with Samuel, the prophet, he would find refuge and help among the priests there at Nob.

But when David got there and was alone (he was a general in Saul's army and didn't have his men with him)—Ahimelech got concerned and asked him about it.

And David, not wanting to let on that he was a fugitive running from Saul, lied to Ahimelech telling him he was on a secret mission for the king and that his men were waiting for him in a secret location.

You see David in trying to protect himself lied to Ahimelech and inadvertently put him and all the priests of Nob in the crosshairs of Saul's murderous, psychotic rage against David.

What happened was that while David was there talking with Ahimelech there was another man in the room—a guy named Doeg.

1 Samuel 21:7 (NKJV)

⁷ Now a certain man of the servants of Saul *was* there that day, detained before the LORD. And his name *was* Doeg, an Edomite, the chief of the herdsmen who *belonged* to Saul.

The Edomites were descendants of Esau the twin brother of Jacob—and the perennial enemies of the Jewish people.

They were considered gentiles, those outside the covenant of God's people, and therefore pagans.

Why Doeg (“dog”) was there in the Tabernacle area we’re not told only that he was “**detained before the Lord**”.

It could be that he had converted to Judaism and was detained by some defilement (being a herdsman he could have come in contact with a dead animal which would have rendered him unclean until he went through the proper ceremonial procedure to be cleansed).

Some believe he was there paying some kind of vow he had made to the Lord—although I doubt it.

I mean seeing what kind of man he was I can’t imagine he was there fulfilling any kind of spiritual vow—but rather he was probably fulfilling some kind of ceremonial (religious) requirement related to his employment for Saul, the king of Israel.

There are a lot of unbelievers who go through the religious motions to fulfill the requirements of their religion or church affiliation—but are not born again.

The Church today is full of “Doegs”—people who come to church, light the candles, get the ashes put on their foreheads and go through the motions but who are nothing more than religious unbelievers.

God doesn’t want religion from you He wants a relationship with you...

It says that Doeg was the **chief** of Saul’s herdsmen—the word translated **chief** means *mighty*, but can also be used to mean *violent* or *obstinate*.

Before we’re done looking at Doeg he will show himself to be a violent and obstinate man.

1 Samuel 22:6-23 (NKJV)

⁶ When Saul heard that David and the men who *were* with him [v.1-5] had been discovered--now Saul was staying in Gibeah under a tamarisk tree in Ramah, with his spear in his hand, and all his servants standing about him--⁷ then Saul said to his servants who stood about him, "Hear now, you 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 All of you have conspired against me, and *there is* no one who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and *there is* not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as *it is* this day."⁹ Then answered Doeg the Edomite, who was set over the servants of Saul, and said, "I saw the son of Jesse going to Nob, to Ahimelech the son of Ahitub."¹⁰ And he inquired of the LORD for him, gave him provisions, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."¹¹ So the king sent to call Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests who *were* in Nob. And they all came to the king.¹² And Saul said, "Hear now, son of Ahitub!" And he answered, "Here I am, my lord."¹³ Then Saul said to him, "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse, in that you have given him bread and a sword, and have inquired of God for him, that he should rise against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day?"¹⁴ So Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And who among all your servants *is as* faithful as David, who is the king's son-in-law, who goes at your bidding, and is honorable in your house?"¹⁵ Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? Far be it from me! Let not the king impute anything to his servant, *or* to any in the house of my father. For your servant knew nothing of all this, little or much."¹⁶ And the king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech, you and all your father's house!"¹⁷ Then the king said to the guards who stood about him, "Turn and kill the priests of the LORD, because their hand also *is* with David, and because they knew when he fled and did not tell it to me." But the servants of the king would not lift their hands to strike the priests of the LORD.¹⁸ And the king said to Doeg, "You turn and kill the priests!" So Doeg the Edomite turned and struck the priests, and killed on that day eighty-five men who wore a linen ephod.¹⁹ Also Nob, the city of the priests, he struck with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and nursing infants, oxen and donkeys and sheep--with the edge of the sword.²⁰ Now one of the sons of Ahimelech the son of Ahitub, named Abiathar, escaped and fled after David.²¹ And Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the LORD'S priests.²² So David said to Abiathar, "I knew that day, when Doeg the Edomite *was* there, that he would surely tell Saul. I have caused *the death* of all the persons of your father's house."²³ Stay with me; do not fear. For he who seeks my life seeks your life, but with me you *shall be* safe."

Of course David never intended for any harm to come to Ahimelech or the priests and their families living in the city of Nob when he came to Ahimelech and lied to him by saying,

"I'm on a secret mission for the king" instead of telling him the truth *"I'm a wanted man, Saul wants to kill me and I'm running for my life."*

But unfortunately that's the problem when we sin—it often results in unintended consequences.

I mean if he had told Ahimelech the truth it would have at least given him the opportunity to decide for himself if he wanted to put himself in harm's way by helping David.

But out of selfishness and a reckless disregard for anyone else—David never gave Ahimelech the chance but rather chose for him and put him in danger by lying to him.

And then it seems to me, to add insult to injury, David excused himself and put the blame on Doeg for what happened to the priests and people of Nob.

In David's mind the only wrong he was guilty of was not killing Doeg when he had the chance because he admits he knew that Doeg would surely tell Saul of his meeting with Ahimelech.

And while he is willing to take responsibility for Doeg's actions **"I have caused *the death of all the persons of your father's house*" (v.22)**—he seems blind to the fact that he set in motion the events that led to the slaughter of all those people by his initial deceitfulness.

If we violate God's moral order (His commandments) we never do so without consequences.

Those consequences affect us directly—but often 'spill over' and affect others around us with consequences that we never intended them to suffer—

The result—people get hurt—often the people we love the most.

Listen, we need to understand that what man calls '*unintended consequences*'—God calls "*the law of sowing and reaping*".

This is a law that was first put in place by God at creation and first mentioned in Genesis 1:11—a law to govern the sowing and reaping of crops—that everything planted would bring forth after its kind.

In other words if you sow corn you're not going to harvest wheat—if you sow tomato seeds you won't reap watermelons—it's the law of sowing and reaping—you reap what you sow.

However God later expanded it to include the sowing of actions and the reaping of consequences.

These consequences are not always negative—it all depends upon the actions sown whether the consequences will be good or bad.

If a husband and wife sow love, kindness, unselfishness and fidelity into their marriage they will reap a blessed, happy and fruitful marriage.

If on the other hand they sow anger, bitterness, selfishness and unfaithfulness into their marriage they will reap a lot of bad fruit that will poison and destroy that marriage.

If a person sows years of smoking, drinking or drug abuse into their body—they will reap lung cancer, cirrhosis of the liver or some other illness—again you reap what you sow.

Now even as the principle of sowing and reaping applies to the physical and temporal—it also applies to the spiritual and eternal—

Galatians 6:7-8 (NKJV)

⁷ Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. ⁸ For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption (hell), but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life. (Comment)

I. The Reality of Unintended Consequences

II. The Remedy for Unintended Consequences

A. Consider your ways

Once again unintended consequences happen when people opt for immediate pleasure and gratification but don't consider the long term consequences.

If we're talking about sexual gratification—the consequence will be an unwanted pregnancy, an S.T.D. of some kind or possibly (if it's adultery) the destruction of your marriage and family.

We also see this quite a bit today with people desiring to have as many material possessions as possible as quickly as they can so they put everything on credit cards until it leads to bankruptcy.

The devil wants us to live in the moment and opt for immediate gratification to all our selfish and sensual desires.

But God wants us to **“consider our ways”**—in other words to give careful thought to where the road will lead that we're contemplating going down.

The Psalmist said the reason so many people reap negative consequences in their lives is because they don't stop to consider what the outcome of their actions will be—they don't consider their ways!

The way to avoid negative consequences is to **“consider your ways”**—to look beyond the immediate gratification to the long term effects of what you are planning on doing.

So the first remedy for unintended consequences is to consider your ways—the second is to:

B. Fear God

In the book of Proverbs we read—“*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—the fear of the Lord is to hate evil*”.

Psalm 36:1 (NKJV)

¹ An oracle within my heart concerning the transgression of the wicked: *There is no fear of God before his eyes.*

Jeremiah 2:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Your own wickedness will correct you, And your backslidings will rebuke you. Know therefore and see that *it is* an evil and bitter *thing* that you have forsaken the LORD your God, And the fear of Me is not in you,," Says the Lord GOD of hosts.

Psalm 10:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Why do the wicked renounce God? He has said in his heart, "You will not require *an account.*" [there will be no day of reckoning—no consequences for their actions]

Revelation 20:12 (NKJV)

¹² And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is *the Book of Life*. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.

The good news is that God loves you so much He will use the negative consequences of your actions to bring you to Him.

➔ The story of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-24).

Proverbs 14:14 (NKJV)

¹⁴ The backslider in heart will be filled with his own ways, But a good man *will be satisfied* from above.

When God commands us not to do something it isn't to limit our enjoyment in life—it's to protect us from painful unintended consequences—

Psalms 18:30 (NKJV)

³⁰ *As for* God, His way *is* perfect; The word of the LORD is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him.

In contrast—those (like the children of Israel in Jeremiah's day) who don't fear the Lord and refuse to consider their ways by living for the moment and walking in rebellion and disobedience to what He has said—here are the consequences they will reap:

Jeremiah 6:15-19 (NLT)

¹⁵ Are they ashamed of their disgusting actions? Not at all—they don't even know how to blush! Therefore, they will lie among the slaughtered. They will be brought down when I punish them," says the LORD. ¹⁶ This is what the LORD says: "Stop at the crossroads and look around. Ask for the old, godly way, and walk in it. Travel its path, and you will find rest for your souls. But you reply, 'No, that's not the road we want!'" ¹⁷ I posted watchmen over you who said, 'Listen for the sound of the alarm.' But you replied, 'No! We won't pay attention!'" ¹⁸ "Therefore, listen to this, all you nations. Take note of my people's situation. ¹⁹ Listen, all the earth! I will bring disaster on my people. It is the fruit of their own schemes, because they refuse to listen to me. They have rejected my word.