

Christmas @ RBCC slide
The Crown series graphic w/email slide

Norman Rockwell painting

https://www.oilpainting-repro.com/im/articles/Rockwell_MerryChristmasGrandma....jpg

Luke 2:7

And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a **manger**, because there was **no room** for them in the inn.

Matthew 2:1-3a

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of **King Herod**, wise men from the east arrived in Jerusalem, ² saying, “Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw His star at its rising and have come to worship Him.” ³ When King Herod heard this, he was **deeply disturbed** ...

God’s goodness (His will, His grace & mercy) will always face **adversity and opposition**.

→Dangers ...

→Design ...

I Samuel 21:1-2

David went to the priest **Ahimelech** at Nob. Ahimelech was **afraid** to meet David, so he said to him, “Why are you **alone** and no one is with you?” ² David answered the priest Ahimelech, “The king gave me a mission, but he told me, ‘Don’t let anyone know anything about the mission I’m sending you on or what I have ordered you to do.’ I have stationed my young men at a certain place.

Danger: **Backsliding** = *an interruption or a step backward in our spiritual growth*

We can be IN God’s will and OUT of God’s will at the same time!

{same slide; one at a time}

4 Precursors to a Backslide:

Spiritual isolation

Self-focus

Losing sight of God’s sovereignty

Temptations become serious options

I Samuel 21:3-6

³ Now what do you have on hand? Give me five loaves of bread or whatever can be found.”

⁴ The priest told him, “There is no ordinary bread on hand. However, there is **consecrated bread**, but the young men may eat it only if they have kept themselves from women.” ⁵ David answered him, “I swear that women are being kept from us, as always when I go out to battle. The young men’s bodies are consecrated even on an ordinary mission, so of course their bodies are consecrated today.” So the priest gave him the consecrated bread, for there was no bread there except the **Bread of the Presence** that had been removed from the presence of the Lord ...

Design: Embrace the “daily bread” principle of God’s provision

I Samuel 21:7-9

⁷ One of **Saul’s servants**, detained before the Lord, was there that day. His name was **Doeg** the Edomite, chief of Saul’s shepherds. ⁸ David said to Ahimelech, “Do you have a spear or sword on hand? I didn’t even bring **my sword or my weapons** since the king’s mission was urgent.”

⁹ The priest replied, “The **sword of Goliath** the Philistine, whom you killed in the Valley of Elah, is here, wrapped in a cloth behind the ephod. If you want to take it for yourself, then take it, for there isn’t another one here.” “There’s none like it!” David said. “Give it to me.”

Danger: Fighting with the same **weapons as the enemy
(~forgetting where our help comes from)**

I Samuel 17:45

David said to the Philistine, “You come against me with a sword, spear, and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the Lord of Armies ...”

Ephesians 6:10-11

¹⁰ Finally, be strengthened by the Lord and by His vast strength. ¹¹ Put on the **full armor of God** so that you can stand against the schemes of the devil.

I Samuel 21:10

David fled that day from Saul’s presence and went to **King Achish of Gath**.

Danger: putting our **hope in the wrong things**

{all together; one slide}

In Gath:

- **David is taken captive**
- **David fakes insanity**

Psalm 56:3-4

³When I am afraid, I will trust in you. ⁴In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?

Psalm 34:4-6, 8

⁴**I sought the Lord**, and He answered me and rescued me from all my fears.

⁵Those who look to Him are radiant with joy; their faces will never be ashamed.

⁶This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him and saved him from all his troubles.

⁸**Taste and see that the Lord is good**. How happy is the person who takes **refuge** in Him!

Design: Weakness (→Humility) that leads to renewed (or deeper) dependence

1 Samuel 22:1-5a

So David left Gath and took refuge in the cave of Adullam. When David's brothers and his father's **whole family** heard, they went down and joined him there. ²In addition, every man who was **desperate, in debt, or discontented** rallied around him, and he became their **leader**. About four hundred men were with him.

³From there David went to Mizpeh of Moab where he said to the king of Moab, "Please let my father and mother stay with you **until I know** what God will do for me." ⁴So he left them in the care of the king of Moab, and they stayed with him the whole time David was in the stronghold.

⁵Then the **prophet Gad** said to David, "Don't stay in the stronghold. Leave and return to the land of Judah." So David left ...

Design: Moving from "What about me?" to "What good can I do?" {self → serve}

Design: Delight in and direction from the Word of God (→*What does the Bible say?*)

Psalm 119:24

Your testimonies also are my **delight**; They are my **counselors**.

The best and safest place to be is fully in the will of God.

Luke 1:31-33

³¹ Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him **the throne of his father David**. ³³ He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and **His kingdom** will have no end.”

I Samuel 22:6-19

- Doeg the informant
- Saul kills Ahimelech & the priests

2 Thessalonians 2:7

For the **mystery of lawlessness** is already at work ...

2 Corinthians 2:11

... that Satan will not outsmart us. For we are familiar with **his evil schemes**.

I Samuel 22:20-23

²⁰ However, one of the sons of Ahimelech ... escaped. His name was Abiathar, and he fled to David. ²¹ Abiathar told David that Saul had killed the priests of the Lord ... ²³ Stay with me. Don't be afraid, for the one who wants to take my life wants to take your life. You will be safe with me.”

I Samuel 23:1-2

It was reported to David, “Look, the **Philistines** are fighting against Keilah and raiding the threshing floors.” ² So David **inquired** of the Lord: “Should I launch an attack against these Philistines?” The Lord answered David, “Launch an attack against the Philistines ...

Danger: Do not let our “problems” become our purpose

I Samuel 23:15-16

¹⁵ David was in the Wilderness of Ziph in Horesh when he saw that Saul had come out to take his life. ¹⁶ Then Saul's son **Jonathan** came to David in Horesh and **encouraged him in his faith in God** ...

Design: Being strong in the faith is a **community project**
(AND ... helping others come to faith is a community project.)

{come up individually; new slide each time}

3 Questions:

- **Diagnosis:** *What is the enemy's strategy against this person or place?*
- **Prognosis:** *What might God's better plan be for this person or place?*

- **Prescription:** *What can I do now—prayerfully & practically—to thwart Satan’s plan and to serve God’s better purposes for this person or place?*

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