

1 Samuel 23

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Preacher: Jose de Segovia

[0 : 00] I don't know how many of you have seen this film which has been awarded with one of the Oscars! for the leading role of this actor. It's called The Theory of Everything. The Theory of Everything is a film about Stephen Hawking and it's based really about the book of his wife, his first wife who wrote a book, Traveling to Infinity.

In this book is the story of this marriage, a very peculiar marriage because of the illness of him but also the fame he's got.

Since the mid-80s he's probably a man popular for everyone in the world, representing what is science all about. And in this story, The Theory of Everything, really we don't think much about science but we see more about the frailty of life.

How small we are and how little control we have about everything. We hear from the very beginning the diagnosis, how he's ill and in such a serious condition.

And he was only 21. And his wife, who was going to be his wife Jane, was a believer, was a Christian.

[1 : 36] But Stephen Hawking has been well known and has been used until now by a lot of atheists who use quotations of Stephen Hawking and the criticisms he made about faith in relation to the with science. But one of the things which strikes you from this really honest story Jane Hawking has written about their marriage is the fact that this very same thing, the illness, brought Stephen Hawking to skepticism, cynicism.

He was very hard for faith and to believe in a God who was good. And for his wife, for Jane, was the reason to strengthen her faith, to face in the midst of darkness and difficulties and to see light in the future.

It's not that a picture of our experience. The very same thing brings people to doubt, to question faith, to think God is not fair, I cannot trust him.

And for other people, it's exactly the way God uses to bring them to faith and to worship him and to trust him more. So in this mystery of providence, we see that God uses sometimes circumstances which are not the basis of our faith.

It would be very difficult to understand it if circumstances are the reason you come to faith. But because it's not through circumstances we come to faith, no?

[3 : 30] Then we see that it's something different. What we see here in the 21st chapter of the first book of Samuel, you see David here.

This David that you see is full of doubts, questions, fears. And you see the king Saul, a sure of himself.

When he speaks to his men, no? He's saying in verse, you can read it here in the chapter, how Saul is saying that God has brought David into his house.

So he thinks he can understand providence. The king Saul is saying, I see that God is going to vindicate me. He's going to show everyone that he's the rebel and I am the anointed one, the king.

And he's a man, in a way, difficult to understand. Sometimes he seems to be a sure of himself.

Other times he falls in self-pity, no?

[4 : 42] When he speaks to his men and says, is no one going to have pity of me? To tell me where David is, no? So sometimes he feels very much alone.

And sometimes he's assured, no? That God is with him, no? And everything is going to be alright.

But David, certainly, we see in this chapter, is full of doubts and questions.

And he's asking God. That's the great difference. You see that Saul has slaughtered. The priest has alienated the word of God through the prophets.

And he doesn't hear God anymore. He's got not the influence of God in his life because he's so assured of himself and sometimes in his self-pity that he does not hear God anymore. But David is asking God. And not once, twice, three times. And he cannot believe what God is saying.

[5 : 48] He finds very difficult to accept the reality of what is happening. Because as you see in the beginning of this chapter, the Philistines are fighting against this town, Kayla.

And they are bringing in danger the future because they are robbing the threshing floors. And instead of Saul, David thinks that he must be probably the one who has to save Kayla. And he asks the Lord, shall I go and attack these Philistines? And the Lord said to David, go and attack the Philistines. But David, as you see soon, is almost alone with very few men full of fear and in weakness.

So the Lord said to David, go and attack the Philistines. But David's men said to him, behold, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Kayla against the armies of the Philistines?

So he cannot understand really what God is asking him. To go and attack the Philistines. To go and fight the enemies of God's people when he has no resources nor the power to attack them.

[7 : 09] So David inquired once again to the Lord in verse 4. And the Lord answered him again. Arise, go down to Kayla, for I will give the Philistines into your house.

And then David and his men went to Kayla and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with great blood. And we don't know why, but in that moment it seems that came to his mind this strange idea.

I have come to save these people, but I'm not sure about them. I don't know if I can be confident about what they are going to do with me.

So in some way he started to suspect that they were going to giving him up to his enemy, to Saul. And then he asked the Lord again, and he really cannot believe what is happening.

So God is asking him to go there, to save them. And when they are saved, they are going to giving him up to his enemy. So we see something of a greater son of David, Jesus Christ.

[8 : 22] Someone who came to save his people. And has this amazing purpose and will from the Father.

That he would be given up to his enemies. And in that night in Gethsemane, he is asking the Father if it is possible that the cup may be taken from him.

And we see in that awful, really holy moment, that he realizes what he is here for.

What is the purpose of his coming to this world. And God was speaking in that time to David through different ways.

You see the ephod that Abiathar uses. God answers in some way to his prayers. And in a way we are in a very different position to David.

[9 : 35] And we have to be honest and accept it. We don't have the promises of David. David was promised to be the king.

The anointed one. We have not got these promises. But we have other promises. Through his greater son, Jesus Christ. And these greater promises are for us so important.

As for David is to hear the words of Jonathan you hear afterwards. Because when Saul could not find David, Jonathan was able to find him.

And what Jonathan has to say to him is just to remind him the promises he has received from the Lord. So in a way the greatest encouragement we can have in this life is what we are doing together now this evening.

We are reminding ourselves, no? One, to each other, what are the promises of God. And the promises is that through another one, the anointed one, the Christ, there is hope and salvation for us.

[10 : 55] And this is in the form of a covenant, you see. When Jonathan came to David, he made a covenant with him.

To gave him assurance of what it was going to be God's purpose. And you see that Jonathan said to David, do not fear.

For the hands of Saul, my father, shall not find you. It is not an irony here. It is the son of his enemy who is saving him.

And the people he has come to save are the ones who are giving him up to his enemy. God works in strange ways.

You cannot understand many things, no? And how he is really doing things in our life. Here you see this great comfort he has found in the remembrance of these promises.

[11 : 56] This is a very important moment for both of them, for David and Jonathan. For Jonathan was this great choice.

Or he followed his own way, thinking that he could be the king instead of Saul. Or he accepted that God has chosen another one.

And he was going to be the king. If that was the case, he would have to give up everything he had in life to serve another one.

To realize that life was not around him, but around someone else. And this is faith. This is really what the gospel is saying to us.

Life is not about yourself. Our favorite subject. What we always think about. What we always speak about. Ourselves. It is about someone else.

[12 : 56] Jesus Christ. And to know that he has to be the king. Means that you give up. A lot of dreams.

Expectations. Illusions you have in your life. To be someone. To do something. Because then. You realize. That is. God's chosen one.

Who can give you hope. Meaning. And a future. And through this covenant. Between David and Jonathan.

He is reminded of this truth. That. God's promises are true. And he is going to be the king. And it is not. Terrible.

To read. That Jonathan is saying. That even his father. Is aware of that. It is amazing. Saul. Was. Deep. Inside himself.

[13 : 55] Sure. That he could not do anything. Against it. But that is the foolishness. Of unbelief. No. Unbelief. Can be so blind. No. There is a moment.

In the theory. Of everything. When they are having a discussion. About faith. A debate. Jane Hawking is. Is talking. At their home. With Stephen.

And Stephen mentions. The name of God. Speaking about the origins. Of cosmos. And there is a big smile. In Jane's face. So. God again.

Because she realizes. That. He is constantly speaking. About God. A God he doesn't believe. No. And. The truth is that. Atheists are so boring.

No. They always speak about. About God. The very thing. They don't seem to believe. No. But. When. Stephen realizes. That himself.

[14 : 51] No. Then there is a moment. Of silence. No. And he notices. That there is a contradiction. Between what he believes. No. And. And the very word. He is using.

No. To express. No. How. Life comes from. No. And. And how to understand. No. The possibility. Of. The origins. Of everything.

Relating to. To a being. No. Called God. No. And in a way. Unbelief is like that. No. Deep. Behind. The sophisticated arguments. The clever thoughts. No. The way. They can so intelligently. No. Try to argue. About something.

Them. You get sometimes. The impression. That deep. Very deep. In their hearts. They know what is true. Because. As many of us know.

[15 : 45] The greatest problem. Of faith. Is not intellectual. It's not something. To do with your head. The reality. Is that. It's a problem.

Which has to do. With your heart. With your will. If there is a God. You have to bow. To him. You have to give up. Many expectations.

Many dreams. Many thoughts. About yourself. Um. Saul. Was fighting. Against this reality. And at the end.

Of this chapter. No. You come to. To the. You come to this moment. Which is really. Breathtaking. No. Is around this. Mountain. No. In the midst. Of this desert.

No. Where you find. That. Is almost. In the hands of Saul. No. David. Is so much. In danger. No.

[16 : 40] That you think. That. He is going to be. Finally. Captive. No. In the hands. Of his enemy. And. The great surprise.

The. The really. Shocking thing. No. Is that. The very same. Enemies. From the first chapter. Are their personal. Savior. At the end. Of the chapter.

Because it was. The Philistines. No. Who. Brought. Saul. Out. Of his. Pursue. Of David. No. To. Face that situation. He had not faced. In the beginning. In the first verses. And that. Tell us. First. A lot. About. About. How. God.

Works. So. Mysteriously. In providence. When you think. What are. Your problems. In your life. You think. About. Maybe. Your illness.

[17 : 37] Maybe. Your needs. In the work. Your family. Situation. So many things. Which are now. In your mind. And you think.

If God. Change that. If. This is not a problem. Anymore. Then. Maybe. I could live. In a different way. I would be really happy.

But. What God is saying. Through his word. Is that. Sometimes. The very enemies. We are fighting. In our lives. The things. We think.

Which are the trouble. The problem. For us. Death. Can be. By God's providence. The tool. The instrument. He uses. To bring us to salvation.

That is the whole Bible. All about. The fact that God. Uses. Even the evil. The evil. To bring glory.

[18 : 35] To him. And. What is. The worst evil. Than. When he. The anointed one. The great son of David.

Came to this world. He was. Given up. To the hands. Of his enemies. When he was on that cross. It seemed that it was the end of the world. What happens. With God's purpose of salvation. What happens. With God's promises. And then you see.

The great difference. Between David. And his greater son. Jesus Christ. Because David was safe. In that moment. Of danger.

And God was glorified. Through his rescue. But we know. That God's greater son. Jesus Christ. Had to take from this cup.

[19 : 36] Had to drink. From God's wrath. Had to hang. On that cross. Had to suffer. From the hands of God. Such a horrible death.

You cannot even imagine. The darkness. Of it all. So that we. Could be rescued. He was not preserved.

So that we will be safe. He was not kept. Alive in that moment. So that we can have. We can have. Eternal life. Eternal life. And that is the great. Glorious message. Of the gospel. That. Because he was there. Lost.

In that. Terrible agony. We can have. The living hope. Through him. In that. In that. But it is true. That he didn't remain.

[20 : 33] Death. God. Raised him up. From the death. Through the resurrection. On the third day. So he was finally preserved.

And because he lives. Now. We. You and me. Can live. This is why. Our hope. Is based. On the death. And the resurrection. Of Jesus Christ. On the life. Of another one. The anointed one. The great son of David. Jesus Christ.

And when we realize that. We have to notice. That there are many things. We don't understand. In this life. But when we read this book.

When we think. About what Christ. Has done. For us. We realize. That we are. Under a greater shadow.

[21 : 30] Than our problems. And difficulties today. The shadow. Of the almighty. And when you are. Under his shelter. You are.

In the most. Safe hands. You can be in this life. That is what Paul. Is expressing. In the. Eighth chapter. Of Romans. When he says.

That nothing. Absolutely nothing. Can. Take away. From you. This. Safe salvation. You receive. Through Jesus Christ. Not illness. Tribulation. Even death. Can. Take apart. God's love.

God's love. For us. For us. God's love. God's love. For us. God's love. For us. God's love. For us. And. How much. We see this cross. In our minds. How much. We read these words.

[22 : 24] In this book. How much. We think. About Christ. How much. We realize. That. Our hope. Is based.

In that. Security. In that. Safety. We have. Through that covenant. That's why. The Lord Jesus Christ.

That night. When he was. With his disciples. He asked them. To take that cup. As a sign. Of that covenant.

The covenant. That we have. That we can be safe. Because. His body. Has been broken. Because. His blood.

Has been given. For us. I don't know. What is going to happen. About. Not only tomorrow. Or even today. God knows.

[23 : 20] Life is full of surprises. But. I know. We have. Eternal life. Through Jesus Christ. And what is this eternal life?

This eternal life. Means. To realize. That. Because of God's love. We are going to be. So sure. Of his love. For us. That there will be. No more doubt. No more question. We will know. That he loves us. We have spent. Our whole lives. Looking for love. Looking for someone. To appreciate us. To find the value.

And meaning. Of life. But the truth is. We are not going to find it. In anything. Or anywhere else. Apart from God. Through Jesus Christ.

[24 : 16] And this is the gospel. This is what saves us. And what transforms us. The fact. That. Through Jesus Christ. We can be accepted.

By him. Eternally. And what means. His acceptance. His acceptance. His acceptance. Is the eternal embrace.

Of these arms. Hanging on the cross. For us. Saying. You are my child. Forever. We have been looking.

For the love. Of this father. And in the midst. Of this darkness. Of this terrible struggle. Of so many difficulties. We all have doubts.

And questions. Is there a love. For us. Is there someone. Who really cares for us. That. But. That day.

[25 : 15] We will realize. That he loves us. And he loves us. Eternally. You know why? Because the one. Who is sitting. On that throne.

Is the slain. Lamb of God. We will never forget. That it is through that cross. Through that death. Through that slain.

Lamb. That we know. That he loves us. Forever. And we will see. Something of that love. For eternity. So much.

That if we could speak about. Moments. Or instants. Of time in eternity. There will not be enough. To realize. How much. We are loved. By him. So much.

That the only thing. We will do. Is to praise him. This is difficult to imagine. For us today. How can you praise him forever. Yeah.

[26 : 13] It doesn't seem human. Really. Yeah. Not to do anything. Apart from singing. You know. Saying how wonderful is him. It's difficult to imagine.

Why not. But why is it so difficult. Because we have not seen. Such a great love. And we will see him. Experience. The warmth.

The greatness. Of that love for us. And when you are moved. Then. Your heart speaks. And you say.

How wonderful. Is this person. You love. Because he has loved you so much. That he has given. His life for you. Shall we ask him.

To know this love. To experience. More. Of this security. That we are in his hands. To face. All sort of problems. And situations. Knowing.

[27 : 13] That we can be sure. That he is with us. And that he has. Eternal promises. And we can trust. Upon them. Knowing.

That. God's word. Is true. And he is going to fulfill. What he has promised. Shall we pray. Shall we pray.