

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

Saul fell to the ground in terror at Samuel's words, but the fact that you allowed Samuel to speak to Saul was a great mercy. It teaches me that you are not willing that any should perish, and that even at the end, you are reaching out to sinners and calling them to repent (cf. 1 Kgs 22:13–23). I praise you for your mercy and grace! Hallelujah!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me how David once again sought refuge with the Philistines. The first time David fled to Gath he was armed and alone, and Achish, who probably knew little or nothing about Saul's desire to kill him, felt threatened. This time David entered Gath as an infamous outlaw, a would-be usurper of Saul's throne who was so feared by Saul that he had been repeatedly hunted by thousands of Saul's best men. Achish welcomed David, gave him Ziklag as a base, and rejoiced to see David attacking various cities in Judah (or so he thought). David's act was so convincing that Achish invited him to join the Philistines in their final showdown with Saul. Only the other commanders' stubborn distrust of David saved him from a prickly situation. When Saul realized how large the Philistine camp was, he panicked. He sought your guidance and direction, but you were silent. Saul discovered to his dismay that "The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous" (Prov 15:29). In desperation he sought for a medium who could bring Samuel up from the dead. This further sin showed that he was still unwilling to repent, and Samuel, whom you allowed to speak to Saul, told him that he and his sons would soon be dead. Saul could have repented then, but instead he confirmed a parable Jesus told many years later: "They will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead" (Luke 16:31 NIV). How tragic that Saul would throw away this last precious chance to humble himself before you!

### *Reflection*

Saul told Samuel, "God has turned away from me and answers me no more" (1 Sam 28:15). Yet Saul was not the victim of some divine caprice, for Samuel made it clear that Saul had first turned away from you. Those who refuse to do what they know is right should not be surprised when you refuse to give further guidance.

### *Request*

Father, save me from the terrible fate of Saul. Keep my heart broken and contrite before you, and help me resist the temptations of the enemy!

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for being "gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love." You relent in bringing disaster when we return to you (Joel 2:12–14). Praise the LORD!

In Jesus' name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: "Lost Forever" – Barney E. Warren.*

*Meditation Verse: 1 Samuel 28:18.*