

Sunday Night Message

December 15, 2019

David's Reunion with Jonathan while Running from Saul

Topics – Saul; David; Philistines; Keilah; Betrayal; Ephod

Series – *1 Samuel*

Text – 1 Samuel 23

Introduction

When we last left David in chapter twenty-two he had delivered his parents into Moab to keep them safe from Saul who, no doubt, would have killed them or held them ransom to get to David. After bringing his family to Moab David went into the wilderness of Judaea into the Forest of Hereth (see map).

In chapter twenty-two we also witnessed the increasing insanity of King Saul as he had all of the inhabitants of the village of Nob slaughtered including eighty-five of the priests. Only Abiathar had survived, and he escaped to find refuge with David.

David will become one of Israel's greatest kings, but he had to pay a great price by way of obstacles on the way. Warren Wiersbe quotes from Booker T. Washington: "I have learned that success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life as by the obstacles which he has overcome while trying to succeed."¹

I. David Fights for Keilah (vs. 1 – 5)

David discovers that the Philistines were coming into the Land of Judah and were raiding the threshingfloors (or barns) of the village of Keilah (see map). Keilah was only twelve miles from Gath and was somewhat isolated from other cities in Judah. David has got enough of his own problems to keep him busy and he certainly didn't need to expose his location in a way that Saul would certainly find about, but he couldn't resist helping the people of God. He did the right thing, even at the risk of causing him and his men great harm.

Note – if Saul had been doing his job as king, he would have protected Keilah, but instead, he is hunting David.

- A. David Prayed (v. 2) – Helping the people of Keilah was going to pose a great risk for David and his men. David wanted to make sure God was for it.

David was a great man of prayer:

"As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice. He hath delivered my soul in peace from the battle that was against me: for there were many with me. God shall hear, and afflict them, even he that abideth of old." (Psalm 55:16-19a)

¹ Warren W. Wiersbe, *Be Successful*, "Be" Commentary Series (Colorado Springs, CO: Victor/Cook Communications, 2001), 123.

The Bible tells us to *"Pray without ceasing."* (1 Thessalonians 5:17) How much more should we pray when we are in the kind of trouble that David found himself in.

"The LORD is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous." (Proverbs 15:29)

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." (Philippians 4:6)

"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

"Prayer is of transcendent importance. Prayer is the mightiest agent to advance God's work. Praying hearts and hands only can do God's work. Prayer succeeds when all else fails." (E. M. Bounds)

"We can do nothing without prayer. All things can be done by importunate prayer. It surmounts or removes all obstacles, overcomes every resisting force and gains its ends in the face of invincible hindrances." (E. M. Bounds)

Illustration (Charles Spurgeon preached to over 10,000,000 people) Five young college students were spending a Sunday in London, so they went to hear the famed C.H. Spurgeon preach. While waiting for the doors to open, the students were greeted by a man who asked, "Gentlemen, let me show you around. Would you like to see the heating plant of this church?" They were not particularly interested, for it was a hot day in July. But they didn't want to offend the stranger, so they consented. The young men were taken down a stairway, a door was quietly opened, and their guide whispered, "This is our heating plant." Surprised, the students saw 700 people bowed in prayer, seeking a blessing on the service that was soon to begin in the auditorium above. Softly closing the door, the gentleman then introduced himself. It was none other than Charles Spurgeon. (*Our Daily Bread*, April 24.)

B. The Men Pause (v. 3)

The men knew that entering into a battle with the Philistines would expose them to Saul, not to mention the danger from the battle itself.

C. David Persists and Prays Again (v. 4)

David gets clarity from the Lord and this time is assured that he will be victorious over the Philistines.

D. David Proceeds in the Will of God (v. 5)

David is now assured that it was God's will to fight the Philistines and save the people of Keilah, and so there is nothing more to discuss. He needed only to obey.

II. David Flees from Keilah (vs. 6 – 13)

David knew that Saul would hear about his victory over the Philistines, and He also knew that Saul would pursue him. By the way, this was the story of David's entire time with Saul. David did the fighting, and Saul would just get jealous and attack David.

David enquired at the ephod, which was really just a tool for prayer. (See Exodus 28:6 – 30) According to Ryrie: "The *ephod* was a beautiful, two-piece, sleeveless garment, held to the body by a *curious girdle* (ornamental belt, v. 8) and joined at the shoulders by straps. On the straps were placed *two onyx stones* (possibly emeralds), with the names of six tribes on each stone. *ouches.*"²

In Numbers 27, the Bible speaks of asking counsel "after the judgment of Urim before the Lord."

"And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him (Joshua) after the judgment of Urim before the LORD: at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the children of Israel with him, even all the congregation." (Numbers 27:21)

David asks God two questions:

1. Would Saul pursue him.
2. Would the people that David just helped stab him in the back.

The people you help will often be the people who will hurt you. It's part of our fallen human nature. We naturally will do what we think is best for us, even when it is not the right thing to do. David does not take vengeance on these people; he just quietly leaves.

Practical Point – What kind of friend are you? Or, do you make decisions based on expediency or based on principle?

Notice in v. 13 – David now has six hundred men. Back in 22:2, he only had four hundred. It could very well be that some of the men from Keilah were upset about their city's decision to side with Saul, and decided to go with David.

Saul finds out that David left, and never does go down to Keilah.

III. Jonathan Finds His Friend and Strengthens Him (vs. 14 – 18)

David was obviously discouraged by the ungrateful treatment he received by the people of Keilah, but God sent him a friend. Even though others may turn against you, God will always supply you with people who will strengthen you.

² Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Ryrie Study Bible: King James Version*, Expanded ed. (Chicago: Moody Press, 1994), 135.

"A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother." (Proverbs 18:24)

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend." (Proverbs 27:17)

Jonathan reaffirms his commitment and covenant with David (See 1 Samuel 18:3 – 4; 20:11 – 16).

As we have already pointed out in past messages, David will honor his covenant with Jonathan when he becomes the king. He takes in Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, and allows him to live at his house and eat at his own table (See 2 Samuel 9)

IV. Saul Finds David's Location But is Forced to Forget About Him Temporarily and Fight the Philistines (vs. 19 – 29)

When David and his men left Keilah, he entered into the Wilderness of Ziph. The inhabitants of Ziph go up to tell Saul where David is, and David comes down to get him. Saul actually has David surrounded, and just when his victory seemed to be sure, he gets word that the Philistines had invaded Israel. Saul has to leave David, and defend the nation from the Philistines.

God protected David from Saul. He didn't have to take matters into his own hands. God did the work for him. God is sovereign. He will take care of your enemies.

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." (Romans 12:19)

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5:43-48)

All we need to do is what is right. Keep loving people that are hating on us; keep fulfilling God's will for our lives, and He will bring us the victory.

"And David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed: for the LORD God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee, until thou hast finished all the work for the service of the house of the LORD." (1 Chronicles 28:20)

DAVID'S FLIGHT FROM SAUL

- City
- ① Numbered movements of David
- ← Route of David from Saul (as far as Mizpah of Moab #5)
- ← Route of David from Saul (as far as Keilah #8)
- ← Route of David from Saul (as far as Wilderness of Maon #13)
- ← Route of David from Saul (as far as Ziklag #15)
- ← David's offensive actions (#16-19)
- ← David becomes king at Hebron (#20)
- ★ Battle scene

