

Bibles???

The Word of God is the Absolute Truth and the Final Authority

This evening, we continue our study through the book of 1 Samuel,

For the past few weeks, we have seen David running for his life as a fugitive.

He is Israel's Most Wanted!!!

Wanted dead – not because of any offense he did – he is wanted because King Saul viewed him as a threat to his royal throne.

We have seen Saul's repeated attempts to kill David directly and indirectly and each attempt has failed miserably.

Poor David.

Why is God allowing this to happen?

This period of time in the life of David is important because all these events that God is allowing to happen in his life are all part of God's preparation for what God has in store for David.

And we will see that preparation continue in the two chapters we will be going through tonight.

Let's pray...

[1Sa 23:1-29 NKJV] 1 Then they told David, saying, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah (Kyla), and they are robbing the threshing floors."

As David is fleeing Saul, it is brought to his attention that Israel's perpetual enemy, the Philistines, are attacking the inhabitants of Keilah and stealing their food supply as well.

They were stealing the grain that the inhabitants of the city have worked hard for.

Now, months earlier this would have been David's responsibility as a leader in Saul's army.

He would have been the one who would come in a defeat the Philistines and protect the people.

The problem is that he is no longer a leader in Saul's army – he is a fugitive running around with a few hundred men by his side trying to not get caught.

Which brings me to my first observation, where is Saul in all of this???

He's is not doing his job protecting his people – he is so focused on going after David that he has abandoned his obligation as king.

Now remember, David could have easily said – “it's not my problem” – this is Saul's mess.

But God loved His people too much to let them suffer with an unfaithful king.

If Saul wasn't up to the task, God would raise up a man who was, and David was the one.

As God directed David to act like a king even if he was not the king yet.

2 Therefore David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines, and save Keilah."

Even though David had countless victories over the Philistines under his belt and even though it seemed like the compassionate thing to do to help out his fellow countrymen, David still inquired of the Lord.

We saw two different occasions in the book of Joshua the dangers of not inquiring of the Lord.

When they went to battle against Ai the first time(ch8), they didn't inquire of the Lord and they were defeated.

Then they make the agreement with the Gibeonites (ch9), once again they didn't inquire with the Lord – they allowed

themselves to be deceived because it appeared to be the right thing to do.

David asked God for directions and the Lord gave him directions.

We are starting to see a little of David's wisdom here -

3 But David's men said to him, "Look, we are afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" 4 Then David inquired of the LORD once again. And the LORD answered him and said, "Arise, go down to Keilah. For I will deliver the Philistines into your hand."

We read in chapter 22 that David's men were all outcasts – they were not army material. They all had issues.

And they really don't like the idea of going into battle – they know that Saul is already after them – why would they want to take on Israel's enemy also.

So, they make their argument to David – and David ponders it – and David once again inquires of the Lord and the Lord once again provides confirmation.

Even though 400 guys tell David one thing – the Lord tells him the opposite thing, and David chooses to obey God.

5 And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines, struck them with a mighty blow, and took away their livestock. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.

So, David does what the Lord commanded him and we see the outcome as the Lord is the one who gave them victory.

6 Now it happened, when Abiathar the son of Ahimelech fled to David at Keilah, [that] he went down [with] an ephod in his hand. 7 And Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah. So Saul said, "God has delivered him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars."

Abiathar was the one that escaped when Saul ordered the priests to be killed for helping out David (ch22)

And here he shows up with an ephod – which is an outer garment – almost like a vest or an apron that was used by the high priest to determine God's will.

And here in verse seven, when Saul hears that David is in Keilah – he seems to think that God has delivered David into his hands.

8 Then Saul called all the people together for war, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. 9 When David knew that Saul plotted evil against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." 10 Then David said, "O LORD God of Israel, Your servant has certainly heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. 11 "Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as Your servant has heard? O LORD God of Israel, I pray, tell Your servant." And the LORD said, "He will come down." 12 Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will deliver [you]." 13 So David and his men, about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah and

went wherever they could go. Then it was told Saul that David had escaped from Keilah; so he halted the expedition.

Upon learning that Saul was coming for him, David once again inquires of the Lord and finds out that the same inhabitants that he risked his life and the life of his men for will now turn and betray him by handing him over to Saul.

This just shows how fickle the human heart is –

They did it to Jesus – one day they are chanting Hosanna, Hosanna and a few days later, they are screaming crucify Him!!!

The truth is church, that betrayal and the feeling of being unappreciated is something that we will encounter repeatedly in our Christian walk.

And sometimes, it will come from the ones that we care about the most.

But this doesn't mean we stop being compassionate toward others.

We simply move on and do it unto the Lord.

14 And David stayed in strongholds in the wilderness, and remained in the mountains in the Wilderness of Ziph. Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.

Over and over again, we see David return to the wilderness in these chapters – and this is all part of the preparation or testing that David had to face.

You see, we already know that David was a good soldier and a great military leader. However, in the wilderness is where David would learn not to put his trust in men but to place his trust on the Lord.

We all need these wilderness testings to bring us closer to the Lord and make us better equipped to be able to serve Him.

15 So David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. And David [was] in the Wilderness of Ziph in a forest. 16 Then Jonathan, Saul's son, arose and went to David in the woods and strengthened his hand in God.

It's good to encourage others.

It's good to remind them of their strengths.

It's good to encourage people to just keep going.

But most important of all, is that we encourage them to be strong in the Lord.

Jonathan didn't show up to cry with David, he didn't show up to worry with David – he showed up to tell David to put away his sorrows and fear because the Lord was there.

God was going to deliver him.

Many times when we are down, we look for sympathy – at least I do. But, ultimately, what we really need is someone to come to us and strengthen our hand with God.

Someone like a Jonathan.

Don't just be a cheerleader.

Be a person who encourages others to find courage – not within them - but in the Lord.

17 And he said to him, "Do not fear, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find you. You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you. Even my father Saul knows that." 18 So the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. And David stayed in the woods, and Jonathan went to his own house. 19 Then the Ziphites came up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is David not hiding with us in strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hachilah, which [is] on the south of Jeshimon? 20 "Now therefore, O king, come down according to all the desire of your soul to come down; and our part [shall be] to deliver him into the king's hand."

So earlier, we saw David nearly betrayed by those in Keilah – here we see the inhabitants of Ziph seeking to betray him by telling Saul his whereabouts.

And for extra credit, you guys can read Psalm 54.

Because David writes that Psalm in response to their betrayal.

21 And Saul said, "Blessed [are] you of the LORD, for you have compassion on me."

Caution: Just because someone uses religious language ("Blessed are you of the LORD") doesn't mean that they are a nice person. When we started to see Saul's downfall, there were plenty of instances where he tried to make it seem that he was spiritual – when in fact, he wasn't.

22 "Please go and find out for sure, and see the place where his hideout is, [and] who has seen him there. For I am told he is very crafty. 23 "See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides; and come back to me with certainty, and I will go with you. And it shall be, if he is in the land, that I will search for him throughout all the clans of Judah." 24 So they arose and went to Ziph before Saul. But David and his men [were] in the Wilderness of Maon, in the plain on the south of Jeshimon. 25 When Saul and his men went to seek [him], they told David. Therefore he went down to the rock, and stayed in the Wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard [that], he pursued David in the Wilderness of Maon. 26 Then Saul went on one side of

the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. So David made haste to get away from Saul, for Saul and his men were encircling David and his men to take them.

Saul has David surrounded. They are on the same mountain – there is no way David can escape now.

27 But a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land!" 28

Therefore Saul returned from pursuing David, and went against the Philistines; so they called that place the

Rock of Escape. 29 Then David went up from there and dwelt in strongholds at En Gedi.

When it appeared there was no way out for David, God intervenes and delivers David without him shooting an arrow or throwing a spear.

David and his men knew that the Hand of God had delivered them that day so they build a memorial stone there to remind them of God's faithfulness.

And then David and his men move to En Gedi.

[1Sa 24:1-22 NKJV] 1 Now it happened, when Saul had returned from following the Philistines, that it was told him, saying, "Take note! David [is] in the Wilderness of En Gedi." 2 Then Saul took three thousand chosen men from all Israel, and went to seek David and his men on the Rocks of the Wild Goats. 3 So he came to the sheepfolds by the road, where there [was] a cave; and

Saul went in to attend to his needs. (David and his men were staying in the recesses of the cave.)

Once again, Saul finds out where David is and this time he brings with him 3,000 chosen men.

Remember, David only has 600 men. He is outnumbered 5 to 1.

And as they draw closer – Saul needs a potty break, and he goes inside to take care of business and it just so happens that it is the cave where David and his men are staying in.

4 Then the men of David said to him, "This is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will deliver your enemy into your hand, that you may do to him as it

seems good to you.' " And David arose and secretly cut off a corner of Saul's robe.

The men are telling David – this is your chance to take care of Saul and replace him as king.

One of the hardest lessons for us is to wait.

David's men thought that this opportunity to kill Saul was God blessing when in reality, it was God's testing.

God will often test us with what seems like a blessing that's ours for the taking. But unless we truly wait upon the Lord, that which we thought was a blessing can turn out to be a disaster.

David simply cuts a corner of Saul's robe.

It doesn't mean that Saul was wearing it when David cut it – he could have laid it on one side of the cave as he did his business.

5 Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe. 6 And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to stretch out my hand against him, seeing he [is] the anointed of the LORD." 7 So David restrained his servants with [these] words, and did not allow them to rise against Saul. And Saul got up from the cave and went on [his] way.

Why was David's heart troubled.

Because deep down inside he knew that it wasn't up to him to take down Saul.

The Lord had told him he was going to be king and he was going to wait for God's perfect timing.

He had every right to go after Saul after all the misery that Saul had brought him. But, instead he allows Saul to escape.

8 David also arose afterward, went out of the cave, and called out to Saul, saying, "My lord the king!" And when Saul looked behind him, David stooped with his face to the earth, and bowed down. 9 And David said to Saul: "Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Indeed David seeks your harm'? 10 "Look, this day your eyes have seen that the LORD delivered you today into my hand in the cave, and [someone] urged [me] to kill you. But [my eye] spared you, and I said, 'I will not stretch out my hand against my lord, for he [is] the

LORD's anointed.' 11 "Moreover, my father, see! Yes, see the corner of your robe in my hand! For in that I cut off the corner of your robe, and did not kill you, know and see that [there is] neither evil nor rebellion in my hand, and I have not sinned against you. Yet you hunt my life to take it. 12 "Let the LORD judge between you and me, and let the LORD avenge me on you. But my hand shall not be against you.

Turn with me to Romans 12.

[Rom 12:17-21 NKJV] 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but [rather] give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance

[is] Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 Therefore "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good. 13 "As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Wickedness proceeds from the wicked.' But my hand shall not be against you. 14 "After whom has the king of Israel come out? Whom do you pursue? A dead dog? A flea? 15 "Therefore let the LORD be judge, and judge between you and me, and see and plead my case, and deliver me out of your hand."

David is not giving Saul what Saul has been giving David.

David is letting God take care of handling Saul.

16 So it was, when David had finished speaking these words to Saul, that Saul said, "[Is] this your voice, my son David?" And Saul lifted up his voice and wept.

It appears that Saul is convicted by the words that David spoke.

Saul responded so emotionally because Saul lived on the delusion that David was out to get him, and David's refusal to kill Saul when he had the chance proved beyond doubt that this was false.

Notice that it was David's obedience to God and his love to Saul made all the difference in softening Saul's heart.

17 Then he said to David: "You [are] more righteous than I; for you have rewarded me with good, whereas I have rewarded you with evil. 18 "And you have shown this day how you have dealt well with me; for when the LORD delivered me into your hand, you did not kill me. 19 "For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him get away safely? Therefore may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day. 20 "And now I know indeed that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand. 21 "Therefore swear now to me by the LORD that you will not cut off my descendants after me, and that you will not destroy my name from my father's house." 22 So

David swore to Saul. And Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold.

Saul may have been sincere in the words that he spoke. He may have had good intentions.

However, the problem with Saul was the flesh.

Because it doesn't take long for Saul to return to his jealous ways.

Remember what I said a few weeks ago – repentance is not simply feeling sorry.

Saul felt sorrow when he heard the words of David.

But that sorrow did not lead to repentance.

Why? Because he was no longer walking with the Lord and therefore could no longer draw strength from the Lord to overcome the flesh.

It only takes two more chapters for Saul to attempt to kill David again.

Let's pray...

