

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 6TH-7TH, 2024 // 1 SAMUEL

DELIVERANCE (1 SAMUEL 23:1-14)

There was an extremely vulnerable town named Keilah, situated close to Philistine territory, that was being attacked.

- It was Saul's job to make sure Keilah was protected from foreign invasion, but Saul's military focus at this point was on finding and killing David.
- David heard of this attack and sought the Lord's guidance on how to respond (vs. 1-2).

David's willingness to seek the Lord's direction shows his wisdom, godliness, and humility.

- God directed David to attack Keilah, but when he gave the order to the men, they were afraid and unsure (vs. 3).
- Once again, David inquired of the Lord to confirm the direction he'd received—and once again, God spoke and told David to go (vs. 4).
- Seeking confirmation from the Lord is wise.

God spoke to David and assured him of victory if David obeyed, and as David stepped out in obedience, God gave him total victory as the city of Keilah was liberated (vs. 5).

- God kept His promise to David and blessed David's obedience and faith.
- Sometimes, God will call us to do big things that seem scary—but we can trust that if God has truly guided us to do it, He will give the victory.

As David moved into Keilah, Abiathar the priest came to him with the ephod—part of the ceremonial dress of the high priest (vs. 6).

- One of the functions of the ephod was that it was used by the priests of the Lord to determine God's will and direction.
- David is serious about seeking divine guidance and direction before he makes any decision—he wants God's will and purposes.

Saul, on the other hand, seems to presume to know God's will because of certain circumstances that happen to line up with what he wants (vs. 7).

- When Saul finds out David is in Keilah, he comes to the conclusion that God has blessed and given him victory over David (vs. 8).
- *"Because I want this, and the opportunity has presented itself, it must be God's will!"*

If we truly wish to listen to God's voice, we must be *discerning* to know what is from God and what isn't.

- If you want to know and become familiar with God's voice, open your Bible daily and read with an expectant, humble heart. Be still, get quiet, and go to Him in prayer.
- A wise way to discern what we think we've heard from God is through Scripture, community, spiritual accountability, and godly counsel.

David hears that Saul is plotting against him, and his first action is to seek the Lord's guidance and direction on what to do next (vs. 9-13).

- God led David out of danger in Keilah through a true word of the Lord. David departed Keilah and went into the hill country of the Wilderness of Ziph (vs. 14).
- Saul heard that David had departed and called off the expedition to Keilah, but still searched for David.

We can live in disobedience and rebellion against God by not obeying His Word and commands and still seek out God's blessing and presume to have it when we actually don't.

- Just because our circumstances align with what we want doesn't mean certain decisions are God's will for us.
- You can't live in God's will and purposes for your life while you're disobeying God's commands.

A RENEWED COVENANT (1 SAMUEL 23:15-18)

The Wilderness of Ziph in Horesh is a very remote and destitute area adjacent to the Dead Sea (vs. 15).

- God was providing for and protecting David, but by no means was this wilderness a comfortable or easy place to be.
- Sometimes, God does lead us to uncomfortable, difficult places to refine our character and show us His perfect provision and protection.

It's in this desolate, lonely, uncomfortable, and difficult place that Jonathan comes to David to strengthen and "encourage him in his faith in God" (vs. 16).

- Jonathan couldn't fix David's problems, and he really couldn't give David many answers to his questions.
- Jonathan could encourage David and assure him of God's provision and plan.

Jonathan reminds David of God's promise that David will someday be king and assures him that, when that day comes, Jonathan will be loyal to him as second-in-command (vs. 17).

- Even if it was lonely, difficult, painful, and uncomfortable in the wilderness, God was still faithful to His promises, and God had a plan for David.
- Sometimes, we just need to be reminded of that by a word of encouragement.

"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up..." (1 Thessalonians 5:11).

- True biblical, spiritual encouragement is to impart courage to a person so they can be sustained in the midst of a difficult or painful situation.
- This is done by pointing them to God's work, purposes, gifting, and plans in their lives.
- If you see God working in someone else's life, tell them about it!

Even the enemy (Saul) knew that God's purposes for David would come about, but still he was fighting against God's will.

- Once again, David and Jonathan confirm the covenant they had made in the Lord's presence (vs. 18).
- Jonathan went home, and David stayed in the wilderness—yet now his strength and faith has been renewed.

WHY DO YOU NEED TO BE IN CHURCH?

"not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

- When we're out in the wilderness under the attack of the enemy, we need encouragement and strength in our faith in the Lord.

A NARROW ESCAPE (1 SAMUEL 23:19-29)

The residents of Ziph came to Saul in Gibeath and conveyed to him where David was hiding in the wilderness (vs. 19).

- The Ziphites extend an invitation to King Saul to come down to Ziph and pursue David.
- Most likely, this was a way to try and protect themselves (see 22:14-19).
- David will reflect on this later and see this as an act of betrayal in Psalm 54.

Saul was so spiritually warped and twisted that he considered the betrayal of an innocent man as an act deserving of the Lord's blessing (vs. 21).

- Saul instructs the Ziphites to give him the exact coordinates of where David is because David is "extremely cunning" (vs. 22-23).
- It's not that David is cunning, crafty, or sly; it's that God has been protecting David from the hand of Saul.

Saul and his army pursue David and his men into the wilderness of Maon (vs. 24-25).

- Saul and his army were on one side of a mountain (separated by a ridge), and David and his army were on the other side (vs. 26).
- Even though David and his men were hurrying to get away, Saul's army was closing in fast.
- Unexpectedly, a messenger came to Saul and drew him away from David (vs. 27).

The Philistines had attacked, and now Saul's army must respond—so Saul broke off his pursuit of David to engage the Philistines (vs. 28).

- Was this a coincidence? David didn't think so.
- God's protection and hand to deliver David and his men was so evident and obvious that they made a memorial of that spot and named it: "the Rock of Separation" (escape).
- God works in mysterious ways.

God is so powerful and sovereign that even acts of betrayal and backstabbing can't prevent His purposes and perfect will in our lives (Gen. 50:20, Matt. 26:14-16).

- We can trust God and surrender to Him when we find ourselves in situations like this.
- Taking matters into our own hands only shows that we're not trusting God and His timing and plan to deliver us from evil.

SEEKING GOD'S GUIDANCE & TRUSTING HIS PLAN.

- Four times (vs. 2, 4, 10, 12) in this chapter, David seeks guidance from the Lord before He acts.
- David's obedience leads him to a lonely, uncomfortable, and difficult wilderness.
- Despite all of this, David's trust and obedience display the glory of God through the Lord's supernatural protection and provision.
- Are we seeking the Lord's guidance? Are we trusting where He may lead us?

DOING THINGS MY WAY AND PRESUMING GOD'S BLESSING.

- Twice in this chapter (vs. 7, 21), Saul presumes that God has blessed him in his violent, wicked pursuit of David.
- Saul is wicked, rebellious, and disobedient to the commands and Word of God!
- Saul's flawed reasoning is, "Because I want this and the opportunity has presented itself, this must be God's will and blessing upon my life!"
- We often tragically confuse our own will and wants with the will and blessings of God.

WE CAN GET CONFUSED AND PURSUE...

- An ungodly romantic relationship out of loneliness or discontentment—and confuse the person's presence in our lives and our desire to not be lonely with God's blessing (even though the relationship is sinful).
- An unwise financial decision made out of impatience or materialism—and confuse a "good deal" and easy financing with God's blessing (even though the debt is enslaving).

WE CAN'T LIVE IN GOD'S WILL AND PURPOSES FOR OUR LIVES WHILE WE'RE DISOBEYING GOD'S COMMANDS.

- It's presumption and foolishness to assume that God must be in something simply because my opportunity to act aligns with my own desire for that thing.
- If my acting means compromise or disobedience to anything God's already spoken, it's not from God, even if others are telling me it is.
- If we want to live in God's will and purposes, we must seek the Lord's direction and guidance BEFORE we make the decision.
- We must be willing to LISTEN to godly counsel and spiritual authority for confirmation of what we think we've already heard.
- We must be patient and unwilling to compromise.

"WAIT FOR THE LORD; BE STRONG, AND LET YOUR HEART BE COURAGEOUS. WAIT FOR THE LORD." PSALM 27:14

- We can trust God enough to wait on His perfect timing.
- We can trust God enough to obey, even when our obedience leads us to difficult places.
- We can trust God enough to choose the path of honor even if we've been shown dishonor.