



SEEKING THE LORD • God Protects, Directs, and Provides for David

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

I Samuel 23:1-29

In this lesson, we see a lot more of the same thing: Saul pursuing David; David running from Saul. The chapter begins with a rumor of another war. Even though David is running from Saul, he seeks the Lord as to whether he should fight the Philistines or not. David wins the battle and by this time, Saul is in Keilah. David is pretty nervous but God is still in control, keeping His promise to His anointed king. The end of verse 14 says, “And Saul sought [David] every day, but God did not give him into his hand.” God uses Jonathan to give David some much needed encouragement, as he tells David that “the hand of Saul shall not find you” (v. 17).

Later on in the chapter, stubborn Saul (which would be a great name for a rock band) is still chasing David. The humorous part is that they are on different sides of the same mountain. Just in time for David, a messenger comes to Saul saying that the Philistines have once again launched an assault on the land. This chapter shows us the wonderful sovereignty of God and that He has grace and mercy on David in keeping him safe from the hand of Saul.

David Saves the City of Keilah (23:1-14)

As the chapter begins, David hears that the Philistines are fighting in Keilah. David twice asks God, “Shall I go?” God confirms His answer both times with a resounding yes. David and his men went down to Keilah and “struck them with a great blow” (v. 5). You’d think that the Philistines would have learned their lesson by now, but apparently that memory loss from earlier is still plaguing them. After David defeats the Philistines, he hears word that Saul is in the same area he is. Even during David’s confusion and fear, he takes time to seek the Lord (vv. 10-12). God is always near us and all we must do is call on Him. James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” This chapter (as is a lot of I Samuel!) is about calling on the Lord and drawing near to Him during trouble.

By God’s grace, David escapes from Saul again. In verse 14 we are told that God is the one saving David. “And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the Wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand.” Lead your group to the freedom-giving truth that God is completely sovereign and will not let any man overpower His plan and purpose.

Saul Pursues David...Again (23:15-29)

What’s the Big Idea?

Despite Saul’s ongoing pursuit, God will not let David fall into Saul’s hands. God delivers David from Saul’s pursuit as David seeks the LORD for guidance and draws encouragement from Jonathan. In the same way, God delivers us through His Son Jesus, the great high priest, to give mercy and grace when we need it.

What’s the Problem?

During times of trouble, we worry and forget that God is faithful and that no man can overpower His will.



Sooner or later Saul is going to have to give up on catching David, right? You would hope so, but for now at least, Saul continues to have tunnel vision, focusing only on David's capture. After David leaves Keilah to go through the hill country, Jonathan finds David and encourages him in the Lord. Jonathan promises David that Saul will not find him and that David will soon be king. Jonathan even says that "Saul knows this" (v. 17). No doubt David appreciates this. Remember that we are commanded to do this as well. Proverbs 27:17 says, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another." We were not created to deal with hostility alone. God has given us Christian brothers and sisters to run this marathon of life with.

David keeps moving as Saul keeps pursuing. After a few stops at random places, they find themselves in the wilderness of Maon, on a mountainside. They are on different sides of the mountain while Saul and his men are closing in as David is running away. In verse 27, we again see God's sovereign work in the situation. God sends a messenger to Saul telling him that the Philistines have sent another raid on the land. Saul, being the king, leaves to protect the nation and his people. David escapes and "went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi" (v. 29).

Conclusion

Whenever David sought the Lord, his life was spared. Throughout the past three lessons or so, we have not seen Saul seek the Lord once. God is clear in what He expects from people regarding their dependence upon Him. And He is just as clear when He says how He will treat us: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (Prov. 3:34; 1 Pet. 5:5b). Your group should see how we can learn from David's example of complete faith in God during awful circumstances. Tell them to look to Jesus, the great shepherd and overseer of their souls (1 Pet. 2:25), for divine help and direction.

What's Our Response?

We need to turn to God for help and direction, trusting that He is faithful.

What Are the Questions?

I Samuel 23:1-29

LAUNCH

What is your first impulse other than God when you need guidance or direction?

EXPLORE

Read I Samuel 23:1-14

1. Describe the crisis that draws David into action as this narrative begins.
2. What is David's first response to this crisis?
3. How does Saul react in verses 7-9 when he learns that David is at Keilah?
4. How does David respond when he hears this news?
5. What does verse 14 say about how God shows up in this situation?

Read I Samuel 23:15-18

6. What does God do to show His faithfulness to David in verses 15-18?
7. How specifically does Jonathan encourage David?

Read I Samuel 23:19-29

8. What is David's predicament in this section?
9. How does God deliver David?
10. Read Psalm 54. How does David process his experience with the LORD?

APPLY

11. Read Hebrews 4:14-16. What connections do you see between the way David sought the LORD through Abiathar, the priest, and the way God calls His followers to seek Him through Jesus, our great High Priest?
12. Read 2 Timothy 4:16-17. What parallels do you see between the encouragement that Jonathan offered David and the encouragement Jesus offers us as His followers?
13. How does David's experience and Hebrews 4:14-16 motivate you to make God your first impulse when you need guidance or direction?
14. How does Jonathan's manner of encouraging David challenge you as you seek to come alongside the people in your life who need encouragement?
15. Look at Psalm 54 again. Think about a situation you're facing that requires God's help, sustenance, or deliverance and talk about how you can trust Him with what you're facing.

What Are the Answers?

1. The people of Keilah need help because the Philistines are plundering them.
2. He seeks the LORD's direction.
3. He plans to besiege the city and capture David.
4. He seeks the LORD's direction again.
5. He prevents David from falling into Saul's hands.
6. He brings Jonathan to encourage him.
7. He encourages him in God by reminding him of God's promises to him and by making another covenant with him.
8. The Ziphites tell him David's location, and Saul moves to capture him.
9. He draws him away with the news that the Philistines are attacking.
10. He cries out for God's help and affirms Him as the one who helps, sustains, and delivers him from all trouble.
11. Just as David drew near to God through the priest, we can draw near through Jesus to receive mercy and grace to help us in our time of need.
12. They both stand by when no one else does, and Jesus' encouragement provides strength as well as deliverance.
13. Allow the group to discuss.
14. Allow the group to discuss.
15. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. 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. Saul my father also knows this."

I Samuel 23:17