

1 Samuel 23 – Hide And Seek

October 9, 2022

Background

1. God cares for his people in difficulty by hearing and answering their prayers.

Now they told David, "Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors." Therefore David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" And the LORD said to David, "Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah." 1 Samuel 23:1–2 (ESV)

But David's men said to him, "Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?" 1 Samuel 23:3 (ESV)

Then David inquired of the LORD again. And the LORD answered him, "Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand." 1 Samuel 23:4 (ESV)

- There is a close connection between the commands of God and the promises of God. If God commands something, he often follows it with a promise that will always prove true.

"Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land."
Ephesians 6:2–3 (ESV)

Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9:7 (ESV)

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.
2 Corinthians 9:8 (ESV)

And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. 1 Samuel 23:5 (ESV)

But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Ephesians 5:3 (ESV)

Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.
1 Corinthians 6:18 (ESV)

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous. Hebrews 13:4 (ESV)

When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand. 1 Samuel 23:6 (ESV)

Also put the Urim and the Thummim in the breastpiece, so they may be over Aaron's heart whenever he enters the presence of the Lord. Thus Aaron will always bear the means of making decisions for the Israelites over his heart before the Lord. Exodus 28:30 (NIV)

Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah... 1 Samuel 23:7 (ESV)

...And Saul said, "God has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." 1 Samuel 23:7 (ESV)

And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. 1 Samuel 23:8 (ESV)

David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him... 1 Samuel 23:9 (ESV)

...And he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod here." 1 Samuel 23:9 (ESV)

Then David said, "O LORD, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, please tell your servant."... 1 Samuel 23:10-11 (ESV)

...And the LORD said, "He will come down." 1 Samuel 23:11b (ESV)

Then David said, "Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?" And the LORD said, "They will surrender you." 1 Samuel 23:12 (ESV)

Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go... 1 Samuel 23:13 (ESV)

...When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. 1 Samuel 23:13 (ESV)

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. 1 Samuel 23:14 (ESV)

- God responded to David when he prayed in his distress. Jesus does the same thing for us when we call out to him.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:15–16 (ESV)

2. God cares for his people in difficulty by providing godly friends.

David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. 1 Samuel 23:15 (ESV)

And Jonathan, Saul's son, rose and went to David at Horesh,... 1 Samuel 23:16 (ESV)

1. Jonathan took the initiative and went to his friend in need. We must do the same.
2. Jonathan didn't need to be told of David's discouragement. He cared enough about David to sense his discouragement.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3–4 (ESV)

...and strengthened his hand in God. 1 Samuel 23:16 (ESV)

3. Jonathan encouraged David by reminding him of God's promises that would never fail.

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." 1 Samuel 23:17 (ESV)

I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better. Philippians 1:23 (ESV)

For we know that if the tent that is our earthly home is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. 2 Corinthians 5:1 (ESV)

And the two of them made a covenant before the Lord. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home. 1 Samuel 23:18 (ESV)

3. God cares for his people in difficulty by providential rescues.

Then the Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah, saying, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hachilah, which is south of Jeshimon?"

1 Samuel 23:19 (ESV)

Now come down, O king, according to all your heart's desire to come down, and our part shall be to surrender him into the king's hand." 1 Samuel 23:20 (ESV)

And Saul said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, for you have had compassion on me." 1 Samuel 23:21 (ESV)

Go, make yet more sure. Know and see the place where his foot is, and who has seen him there, for it is told me that he is very cunning. See therefore and take note of all the lurking places where he hides, and come back to me with sure information. Then I will go with you. And if he is in the land, I will search him out among all the thousands of Judah." 1 Samuel 23:22–23 (ESV)

And they arose and went to Ziph ahead of Saul... 1 Samuel 23:24 (ESV)

...Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon. 1 Samuel 23:24 (ESV)

And Saul and his men went to seek him. And David was told, so he went down to the rock and lived in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. 1 Samuel 23:25 (ESV)

Saul went on one side of the mountain, and David and his men on the other side of the mountain. And David was hurrying to get away from Saul... 1 Samuel 23:26 (ESV)

...As Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them,... 1 Samuel 23:26 (ESV)

...a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land." 1 Samuel 23:27 (ESV)

So Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was called the Rock of Escape. 1 Samuel 23:28 (ESV)

And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi. 1 Samuel 23:29 (ESV)

...And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand. 1 Samuel 23:14 (ESV)

Applications

1. **While God's faithfulness was never in doubt, David's faith was being tested every day as he ran for his life. God allowed these hard times in David's life not because he didn't love him but because he did love him. God was proving and improving David's faith. God also loves us. He allows hard times into our life to prove and improve our faith.**

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. James 1:2-4 (ESV)

In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 1:6-7 (ESV)

2. **In difficulty, we are not alone. God helps us the same way God helped David.**
 - A. **God answers our prayers for grace in our time of need, just like God answered David's prayers through Abiathar.**
 - B. **God provides Christian friends to encourage us when we are down and to remind us of God's promises of his love and care for us that will never fail.**
 - C. **God provides providential protection in our life until we have accomplished the work God has given us to do. Like David, this often comes at the last minute.**

Life Group Questions

1. What is one thing you didn't understand from the message? What from the message stuck out as important?
2. When going through life's difficulties, we often forget that God has a good purpose in hard times. He is proving (1 Peter 1:6-7) and improving (James 1:2-4) our faith through difficulty. How does this change the way you view the difficulties you are facing today?
3. See Proverbs 18:24 and Hebrews 3:13. Do you have a faithful Christian friend in your life to encourage you when you are down like David had Jonathan? Share about your faithful Christian friends and thank God for them.
4. Read Hebrews 7:23-25, which talks about Jesus as our high priest. Why is it better for us to have Jesus as our high priest in heaven than for David to have Abiathar and the ephod as his high priest on earth?
5. God's providential care often provided last-minute rescue in David's life. Can you think of a time when God rescued you from certain at the last-minute? Can you think of other times in the Bible when God rescued people at the last minute from certain disasters? See Exodus 14 + 15, Acts 12.
6. **Extra Credit:** In the churches of Revelation, we read about many of them facing hard times. (See Revelation 2:10, 2:17, 2:26-28, 3:21) What were the rewards held out to them for faithfulness to Christ in their trials? What does this teach us about the lasting rewards for spiritual perseverance outweighing the temporary relief of spiritual compromise or failure?