

I SAMUEL 22-23

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to I Samuel chapter 22 as we continue our study through the Word of God.

As we have seen in our study of I Samuel, David is on the run. Saul, the King of Israel wants David dead because he sees David as a threat to his kingdom, his power.

David was not the threat; it was God who was going to remove Saul but in Saul's mind he thought that if he got rid of David then his position as King was secure.

Now think about this for a minute.

David loves the Lord. David is serving the Lord. And yet, look at all that is happening to him. It just doesn't seem fair. It just doesn't seem right!

And as we look at David's situation, you may be thinking, ***"I feel that way. Why in the world am I doing what I am doing when all I do is get beat up?"***

In saying that, let me share this with you so you can see that these stories are for us, to help us to grow, to mature in the Lord and to see that all we do for the Lord is not in vain, it is not empty, it will accomplish what God wants it to accomplish. (I Corinthians 15:58)

We are told,

Who would want to be a Christian in today's world? Faith in Jesus Christ is not a passport to fame and fortune, or even pleasure and comfort.

In many parts of the world it invites hardship and even persecution.

While there are distorted forms of Christianity that promise health and wealth for the followers of Jesus, the Bible speaks repeatedly of the suffering that will come to those ***"who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus"*** (2 Timothy 3:12).

While God's grace is freely given, and Jesus has paid the necessary sacrifice for us, Jesus himself taught those who would follow him to "*count the cost*" and to expect to suffer (for example, Matthew 5:11; Luke 14:25-33; John 16:1-4).

So who would want to be a Christian in today's world?

In the first century world, the Apostle Paul answered that question: not many impressive people by the world's standards.

For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

Most Christians will be unimpressive people in this world's terms. In this context Paul calls this God's *wisdom*.

If not many of the famous, not many of the powerful, not many of the wealthy will want to be Christians in today's world, it does sharpen our question: Who *would* want to be a Christian in today's world? And where is the *wisdom* in God's doing things this way?

We are going to get a glimpse into these strange ways of God as we continue to follow David on the run from the powerful King Saul.

- John Woodhouse, 1 Samuel – Looking for a Leader, pp. 425-426

Keep in mind that we would never have had David go through all that he has gone through and will go through before he is the King in Israel. We would just place him as King.

But God knows exactly what David needed and thus, we see these are lessons to learn and apply to his life.

The same is true for us. If we really knew what would happen in our life and we could change them, I think many of us would.

But if we did, we would miss out on those lessons that God has for us so that we may grow and be used by Him.

I have thought about this and for me, as hard as things have been in my life, I would not change anything because God allowed them for a reason and my prayer is that I would learn those lessons so that I may grow in Him and be used by Him.

That is the life of David, as we will see.

Last week we left off with David running to the Philistine city of Gath for safety, thinking he would be safe from Saul there and no one would recognize him.

Are you kidding me! David slew their secret weapon Goliath, they had a top 10 song in the land that people were singing. Casey Casim played him on Israel's top 40 songs, for those of you who are old enough to remember Casey Casim, and they sang, "**Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands**" and no one would recognize him?

Once the Philistines recognized that this man was David, David pretends to be mad, insane. He has spit running down his face, he is scratching at the doors and thus, the King tells his men to get rid of this insane person, he has no need of him.

And that is where we will pick up our study this evening, in I Samuel chapter 22, starting in verse 1 as David is freed from the city of Gath, from the hands of the Philistines.

But where will he go?

Let's read on and see.

I SAMUEL 22VERSE 1a

As David flees Philistine territory, he heads for safety to the cave of Adullam, which was located in the valley of Elah, just north of where David killed Goliath.

Interestingly enough the word, “Adullam” means “*refuge*” and David went there for refuge, for safety. He could not go home anymore, he could not go to Samuel anymore, he obviously could not go to Saul anymore, and thus, what else was he to do?

For David, what he needed to do and what he eventually will do is that he will take refuge in the Lord!

The cave of Adullam became David’s camp – one of his hideouts in Israel.

And as David sees himself in this mess, he is discouraged. He went from the height of slaying Goliath to now running for his life and hiding out in a cave from King Saul.

And I believe that it was out of this that David wrote Psalm 142.

The introduction to this Psalm says this, “*A contemplation of David. A prayer when he was in the cave.*”

And this is what David cried out to the Lord, “I cry out to the Lord with my voice; With my voice to the Lord I make my supplication. I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare before Him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, Then You knew my path. In the way in which I walk They have secretly set a snare for me. Look on my right hand and see, For there is no one who acknowledges me; Refuge has failed me; No one cares for my soul. I cried out to You, O Lord: I said, ‘You are my refuge, My portion in the land of the living. Attend to my cry, For I am brought very low; Deliver me from my

persecutors, For they are stronger than I. Bring my soul out of prison, That I may praise Your name; The righteous shall surround me, For You shall deal bountifully with me.”

Psalm 142:1-7.

Notice that this was a lesson for David, to trust, to rest in the Lord.

David’s strength, his safety was not in this cave but in the Lord as He cried out to the Lord and David also wrote Psalm 57 during this period of time as the introduction to this Psalm tells us, *“A Michtam of David when he fled from Saul into a cave.”*

And this is what David wrote, **“Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; And in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, Until these calamities have passed by. I will cry out to God Most High, To God who performs all things for me. He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah God shall send forth His mercy and His truth. My soul is among lions; I lie among the sons of men Who are set on fire, Whose teeth are spears and arrows, And their tongue a sharp sword. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the earth. They have prepared a net for my steps; My soul is bowed down; They have dug a pit before me; Into the midst of it they themselves have fallen. Selah My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast; I will sing and give praise. Awake, my glory! Awake, lute and harp! I will awaken the dawn. I will praise You, O Lord, among the peoples; I will sing to You among the nations. For Your mercy reaches unto the heavens, And Your truth unto the clouds. Be exalted, O God, above the heavens; Let Your glory be above all the earth.”** Psalm 57:1-11.

You see, David’s situation did not change, but his focus did. He looked to the Lord to be the strength of his life and not himself.

We may find ourselves in a cave like David, on the run in a sense and yet, we can take refuge in the Lord. He can be our strong tower from our enemies if we are willing to go to Him and rest in Him instead of doing it on our own, in our own strength, which will never work!

VERSE 1b-2

I am sure David was discouraged, maybe down and what does the Lord do.

Our gracious Lord takes care of David.

But how?

David is down, alone and the Lord brings to him his family, the ones who were against him at one time are now there to encourage him. Keep in mind that Bethlehem was not too far away from this cave of Adullam and maybe David's family thought it would be safer to go to this cave with David since Saul is so unstable, who knows what he will do.

But in either case, and I think both do apply, as we will see when we get to verse 3 of this chapter, but what we see here is that they comforted David during this time.

Not only that, but there are 400 men who join with him. That number will increase to 600 men as we read on. (I Samuel 23:13)

Now keep in mind these are not the movers and shakers of society. These are not your high-class important people.

These men that came to David were a bunch of malcontents, they were dissatisfied with their present situation they were in, dissatisfied with life itself probably!

These were men who were fleeing from trouble, men who owed money, men who were ostracized by society, and they came to David!

Now David does not say, *“Thanks for nothing Lord! Isn’t there anyone else you could have sent me besides these men? I am in enough trouble and now I have to deal with these guys!”*

No, David becomes their leader and this rag tag group of men, who are nothing more than outcasts of society, become mighty men of God because David, by his life, teaches them lessons of faith!

Do you think our witness impacts those around us?

You bet it does and that is what we see here with David. These men were trouble and now, through the witness of David and the grace of God, they are trouble for the enemies of God!

Now when we read of these guys, don’t get the wrong idea because we are just like them.

Let me explain it this way and I think you will see what I mean.

People are funny today. They are looking for that perfect church and I will let you in on a little secret. There is no perfect church. The church is made up of people, enough said!

We are broken. We are discontented. We are the outcasts of society. We have all kinds of issues. And we gather together as a body of believers and the church really is a hospital so that we can be healed by the Word of God opened up to us by the Spirit of God.

As we surrender our lives to the Lord, as we submit to Him, He is transforming us into mighty men and women of God.

You see, who is the captain of your life?

And as you read this story you can see that David is a type of Christ.

Remember what Jesus said, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

Matthew 11:28-30.

That was truly David here!

And listen to what Redpath wrote regarding this picture that is being painted for us here.

He wrote, *“Do you see the truth of which this Old Testament story is so graphic a picture? Just as in David’s day, there is a King in exile who is gathering around Him a company of people who are in distress, in debt, and discontented. He is training and preparing them for the day when He shall come to reign.”*

He also wrote, *“These are the kind of men who came to David: distressed, bankrupt, dissatisfied. These are the kind of people who come to Christ, and they are the only people who come to Him, for they have recognized their distress, their debt, and bankruptcy, and are conscious that they are utterly discontented. The sheer pressures of these frustrations drives them to the refuge of the blood of Christ that was shed for them.”*

What a beautiful picture this is!

VERSES 3-4

Now why in the world would David bring his parents to Moab for safety?

Yes, Saul was a man out of control and maybe if he couldn’t find David, he would put to death his parents or even his entire family! Maybe he would arrest them to get to David!

But again, why Moab?

Keep in mind that David's great-grandmother, Ruth, was a Moabite. (Ruth 1:4, 4:18-22).

Thus, David had Moabite blood in him! That is very possible.

Also, look at the love and concern he had for his parents. He was more concerned about the welfare of his parents than about his own life!

That is the heart of Christ and that is what should be manifested in our lives. And here's the thing in regard to David. He knew that the Lord anointed him to be King but how and when that was going to happen, what was going to transpire until that time he did not know.

Thus, he wanted his parents safe, and he brought them to Moab to live until he knew what the Lord was going to do, how God would work this all out!

VERSE 5

Why did this prophet Gad, with the inspiration of the Lord, want David to go to the forest of Hereth instead of hiding out where he was?

And keep in mind that Gad wants him to go back to the area where Saul's power was.

I think God wanted David in the place where he was involved. Yes, David could have sat it out on the sidelines waiting for Saul to die or be removed, but God had other plans. He wanted him to be active and the same is true for us. It is in the midst of danger, the midst of battle where we will grow and if we are doing nothing, we will not grow in the Lord!

VERSES 6-8

Saul is feeling sorry for himself, and he is whining, complaining because he sees that the world revolves around him and his world is a little shaky right now! In other words, this is nothing more than a pity party! Saul does not seek the Lord because he did not have a love for God, a relationship with God!

And think about the situation that David was in. When it was just David, one person, it is easy to hide. But now there are 400 men with David and thus, it is a lot harder to hide out with that many men! And before long, Saul's network of informants found them and let Saul know where David and his men were, but not the exact location where they were hiding out!

Once Saul founds out where David is at, he appeals to his men, his family, the Benjamite's by telling them that David is not going to provide for them like he would.

Thus, ***"Why are you against me? Why are you not exposing the sin of my son who is against me? Why are you not telling me where David is?"***

And notice that Saul does not speak of David kindly, he does not say, ***"David, that giant killer"*** or ***"David, the man of God"*** or ***"David, the one who has defeated the Philistines in battle."***

No, he says, ***"the son of Jesse."*** He can't even call him by name, David!

What is interesting is that Saul's men knew the integrity of David, that he did no wrong to deserve this treatment, to deserve death and thus, they said nothing.

VERSES 9-10

That dirty dog Doeg.

He has no problem telling Saul what Ahimelech did for David, making this priest look like he was conspiring against Saul, and he wasn't.

Ahimelech had no idea that Saul wanted David dead because David lied and told him that he was on a secret mission for Saul.

Ahimelech was in no way an accomplice with David but that is not how Saul will see it as he hears these lies from Doeg!

Keep in mind that the name "**Doeg**" means one who acts with unrestraint or one that can't rest, one that is restless.

He is like Satan, moving about like a roaring lion, going to and fro, very restless, seeking whom he may devour!

And look at how this all plays out!

VERSES 11-15

The priests, along with Ahimelech come before Saul as he called for them and Ahimelech can't figure out what the problem is here.

David has been good to Saul, he is family, married to his daughter and if there was anything going on between Saul and David, he knew nothing about it.

That was the truth; he was not lying or making this up!

But Saul, in his paranoia, thinks that Ahimelech and David are out to kill him and that is the farthest thing from the truth!

How is Saul going to respond to what Ahimelech has told him?

He should have accepted it, but he will not.

We will see that as we read on in the next few verses.

VERSES 16-19

Isn't it interesting that Saul refused to kill the enemies of the Lord, the Amalekites when he was commanded to do so, (I Samuel 15), and now, the priests of God he is willing to put to death, why?

Because in his mind the Amalekites were not a threat to him, he took from them what he saw was good and did not utterly destroy them.

But these priests were, in his mind, going against him and thus, he wanted them dead!

Saul is spiraling out of control and thank God that his men refused to obey his command to kill these priests.

And think about it, Saul could have had them put to death for their rebellion, but they realized it was better to obey the Lord than an earthly King!

But here is Doeg, not a Jew but an Edomite and he has no problem killing all these priests and destroying the city.

We see 85 priests, their families, their animals all wiped out by the command of Saul and the hand of Doeg!

Look at how this bitterness in Saul exploded outwardly in his wrath and what happened with Saul can happen to us if we let bitterness grow in us.

J. Vernon McGee had this to say regarding this incident. He wrote,

The bitterness and vengeance of this man Saul was terrible.

Bitterness is something that we need to beware of today.

We are warned about it in Hebrews 12:15 which says, ***“Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled.”***

When bitterness gets into the hearts of God’s people, it is a vicious and an awful thing.

I have seen it in churches. I have seen officers of the church use their positions, not to bring glory to Christ, but to vent their spleens, bitterness, vengeance, and hatred against someone else.

It is a terrible thing when bitterness takes over, and this is what happened in Saul’s case.

He was definitely Satan’s man . . .

- J. Vernon McGee, Thru the Bible Vol. II, p. 168

VERSES 20-23

Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, escapes and tells David all that Saul and Doeg had done. The destruction and devastation upon Nob and the killing of all the priests and their families, except for Abiathar, who escaped.

And David recognizes that it is his fault that this has happened. If he would have spoken the truth to Ahimelech at least he would have been warned about Saul, but this took him and the rest of the priests by surprise.

David did not blame Saul, he could have, but he placed that responsibility on his shoulders. If he had not lied to Ahimelech, put this priest in the middle of his problem, this would not have happened!

And David does repent for his actions.

How do I know?

Because in Psalm 52, written about this experience, we see that take place.

Again, the introduction to this Psalm says, *“A contemplation of David when Doeg the Edomite went and told, Saul, and said to him, ‘David has gone to the house of Ahimelech.’”*

David wrote, **“Why do you boast in evil, O mighty man? The goodness of God endures continually. Your tongue devises destruction, Like a sharp razor, working deceitfully. You love evil more than good, Lying rather than speaking righteousness. Selah You love all devouring words, You deceitful tongue. God shall likewise destroy you forever; He shall take you away, and pluck you out of your dwelling place, And uproot you from the land of the living. Selah The righteous also shall see and fear, And shall laugh at him, saying, ‘Here is the man who did not make God his strength, But trusted in the abundance of his riches, And strengthened himself in his wickedness.’ But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God; I trust in the mercy of God forever and ever. I will praise You forever, Because You have done it; And in the presence of Your saints I will wait on Your name, for it is good.”** Psalm 52:1-9.

David despised what Doeg did and it caused him to not only repent of his lies, but to draw close to the Lord and trust in Him.

What a great lesson for us, no matter what the Doeg’s in our life may do, may we look to the Lord and walk by faith!

As this chapter closes David tells Abiathar to dwell with him and he will be safe because Saul is not only after Abiathar, but he is also after David.

The same is true for us. The Doeg’s and Saul’s of this world will come after us and the only safety we will find is in the arms of our Lord. May we not forget that!

One more point before we move on. The picture that is painted here for us.

David is King, but he's yet to take the throne.

In the meantime, he's gathering up society's rejects - and his followers are objects of persecution.

Saul, the usurper sits on the throne, and vents his rage on David's merry men.

And it's all a picture of Jesus. Though Jesus is King of the earth, Satan still sits on the throne. He too is a usurper, and he persecutes Jesus and His followers.

But one day, King Jesus will take the throne, and rule over the earth.

Satan will be judged, and the followers of Jesus will reign and rule with Him. *What a day!*

I SAMUEL 23

VERSES 1-4

Here we see that Keilah was being attacked by the Philistines. They were coming in at harvest time and stealing their grain.

Keep in mind that David is hiding out in the stronghold there in Judah and Keilah was located about 18 miles southwest of Jerusalem, in the plains of Judea.

What is interesting here is that they come to David for help and not King Saul.

Why is that?

Saul was not doing what he needed to do as King, protect his people. He was more interested in protecting his own position and to do that, he is on the hunt for David, to kill him!

Thus, they come to David for help!

There is a lesson here for us. You see, whenever God's people are divided or caught up in conflict over an issue, be it spiritual or secular, the enemy moves in and tries to exploit that controversy.

Saul was fighting against David, as I have said, and he was not as concerned with the Philistines.

Thus, the Philistines believed they could take advantage of the situation, and they did, until David caught wind of what was taking place.

The Philistines were no fools. The men of Keilah had done all the work, harvesting their crops, and the Philistines were coming by the threshing floor and robbing them. This was their livelihood. It is what they lived on and what they sold for money to help them throughout the year.

That is why we saw Boaz, in the book of Ruth, sleeping by the threshing floor, protecting his harvest from invaders.

When David hears of what is going on in Keilah, he brings this to the Lord, the right thing to do.

Keep in mind that Saul does not do that, he is a man filled with fear and not faith and in the end, it will destroy him!

So as David brings his request before the Lord the Lord told David to go and attack the Philistines.

Great, and as he tells his men, they are not too sure about this.

They told David, ***“Are you kidding me? We are no match for them. If we are hiding out here in fear, then how are we going to go up against this army? We are only some 400 men!”***

Notice here that David is leading these men and instead of getting angry at them, he just brings his request before the Lord again. But this time it is really not for him but for his men so that they can see that God is in this.

And this time the Lord not only tells David to go and fight against the Philistines, but the Lord will give David and his men this victory.

VERSE 5

Here is the problem many times for Christians. They know what God's will is, they have prayed about it, and then, nothing.

They don't take those steps of faith even though they know what God wants them to do.

Why is that?

Sometimes it is fear. Sometimes it is just rebellion. Sometimes we just think it is much harder than we can deal with.

Think about David and his men. They were outnumbered. They were hiding from King Saul. They had so many things against them and yet, they walked by faith!

And it was God who gave them this victory over the Philistines.

God made a promise to them, but then they needed to walk by faith!

And that is true for us.

And just imagine how the faith of these men grew in the Lord as they obeyed the Lord's command and God gave them a great victory, they rescued the people of Keilah!

David was an example to these men what faith looks like!

VERSES 6-8

Isn't this interesting. Saul *wouldn't* go to Keilah to save the people from the Philistines, but he *would* go there to try and save himself from David.

Saul was completely motivated by self-interest.

So as Saul gets word that David is in Keilah and in his own twisted mind he thinks that God has trapped David there so that Saul could kill him, that was the farthest thing from the truth!

Saul was not seeking God's will but his own selfish will and as he saw David within a city that has gates and bars, he thought he has got him. In other words, he saw David as a sitting duck, a dead man and he calls for his men to go to war not against the Philistines, not against the Amalekites, not against the Edomites, not against the Moabites but against David and the people of Keilah, the ones that Saul refused to protect against the Philistines in the first place because he was so focused upon killing David!

What a sad state for Saul and yet, he is there because he refused to surrender to God's will and he is doing his own thing, which is never good!

VERSES 9-12

First of all, what is this ephod that Abiathar had?

This was most likely the ephod of the High Priest, which had the breastplate of judgment attached to it. (Exodus28:15, 28).

And in the pouch of this breastplate were two stones, and they were known as the Urim and Thummim, (Exodus 28:30) and they were used to discern the will of God.

That is probably what David used to discern if he should fight against the Philistines, and I believe it is what is being used here.

How did they discern the will of God using this Urim and Thummim?

These words mean, “*Lights and Perfections*” and we are not sure how they were used.

Some feel that one stone was white and the other black and the “*yes*” answer from the Lord was the white stone and the “*no*” was the black stone that the priest pulled out of this pouch.

Others feel that it would light up and give you the answer.

I am not going to speculate any further because it will get us nowhere but here is the thing. This ephod, with the Urim and Thummim was more valuable, more helpful to David than a thousand soldiers because it helped him to discern the will of God!

In a sense we have a Urim and Thummim to use today, it is called the Word of God and it tells us what is right, what is wrong, how to get right when we have gone astray and how to stay right or as Paul tells us, “**All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.**” II Timothy 3:16-17.

You see, today, if we have the same focus on God’s Word, He will guide us just as the Lord was guiding David.

There is a story of one old preacher who was asked to explain the Urim and Thummim.

He said, “*Well, this is how I understand it. When I need to know God’s will, I get out my Bible and I do a lot of usin’ and thummin’ through my Bible, and God always speaks to me.*”

The bottom line is this; more Christians would know God's will if they did more usin' and thummin'!

As you read this story, it is kind of shocking! As David inquires of the Lord, the Lord tells him that the men of Keilah will deliver him into Saul's hand.

Now that can't be too encouraging. He just saved them from the Philistines and now they are going to turn him in, why is that?

Because they knew what Saul did to the priests and the city of Nob, destroying them and their city and they felt if they did not give David up, they would be in jeopardy of being destroyed by Saul and no one would be able to save them, not even David!

So what is David going to do?

Let's read on and see.

VERSES 13-14

Now did God's Word fail here? The Lord told David that the people of Keilah would turn him over to Saul, but it did not take place.

No, God's Word did not fail. Look at what is said. If David remained in Keilah the people would turn him over to Saul and thus, David leaves the city and in doing so he probably spared the city and the people from the hands of Saul!

Notice that the army of David is growing, it is up to 600 men, and they are hiding out in the area around the Dead Sea, the southern tip of the Dead Sea in the Wilderness of Ziph.

Interestingly enough, the name "**Ziph**" means, "*refining place*" and it is quite possible that there was a smelter in this area to refine the iron ore into iron.

It was not a comfortable or easy place to be. Yes, God guided and protected David, but again, it wasn't comfortable or easy. This was a needed time for God's work in David's life.

Look at what God is doing here. He became a man after God's heart in the shepherd's field, but he became a King in the wilderness.

Like it or not, it is also the place where our faith is tempered, in the Wilderness of Ziph. And yes, it is difficult, but necessary.

For Moses, he spent 40 years in the wilderness as a shepherd before God sent him to Egypt to lead his people out of Egypt and to the Promise Land.

We get upset many times when we spend a week in the wilderness; imagine 40 years of training before God used you.

In fact, the world would look at this 80-year-old man, Moses, and put him in retirement. He could in no way complete the task. But God was just done schooling him and he was now ready to be used!

Learn the lessons that God is teaching you and don't fight the desert times, grow in them!

And look at the heart of Saul; he is spending every day of his life coming after David to kill him!

He was supposed to be the King but now his time, his energy, his resources are all being spent on killing one man, one of his brethren, David instead of the enemies of God!

Don't let bitterness, anger cause you to try to kill the reputation of another man or woman of God because God will watch over them as He is watching over David, and you will find yourself on your own going nowhere fast!

VERSES 15-18

To be around people like Jonathan is wonderful!

You see, as these two men who loved the Lord and each other in the Lord met, David must have been down, maybe discouraged and we are told that Jonathan “**strengthened his hand in God.**”

In other words, Jonathan encouraged David not by saying, “*Don’t worry be happy!*” but in the Lord!

I like the way the Poole puts it as he writes, “*He comforted and supported him against all his fears, by minding him of God’s infallible promises made to him, and his singular providence which hitherto [up till now] had and still would be with him.*”

That was Jonathan. And folks, keep in mind that we are not going to be able to rescue everyone, we are not going to have all the answers to what others are going through, we might not be able to stay with them, but we can strengthen them, we can encourage them in the Lord!

What a precious gift that is! It is great to be around those who build you up, encourage you. It is also difficult to be around those who are always dragging you down, discouraging you.

Jonathan’s heart was right with God, and it showed in his actions towards David. May we, like Jonathan, be people builders instead of the wrecking crew!

Keep in mind that David and Jonathan have already made a covenant, and I think they are just reaffirming it here.

Jonathan tells David that he would be the next King in Israel and that David would be kind to Jonathan and his family.

And tragically, this is the last time on this side of heaven that these two men will see each other but because of their love for the Lord, they would see each other in heaven!

VERSES 19-23

Notice the contrast between Jonathan to the Ziphites.

Jonathan built up, strengthened David while the Ziphites are looking to destroy David!

The word, "**Ziph**" means, "*Mouth or mouthful, falsehood*" and what their mouth was full of was deceit, treachery!

And as they were willing to expose where David was at, Saul, in his warped mind thinks that these people are blessed of God when in reality they are servants of Satan just as Saul was!

It is during this time that David wrote Psalm 54, which has an introduction that tells us this fact as it reads, "*A contemplation of David when the Ziphites went and said to Saul, 'Is David not hiding with us?'*"

And this is what David wrote, "**Save me, O God, by Your name, And vindicate me by Your strength. Hear my prayer, O God; Give ear to the words of my mouth. For strangers have risen up against me, And oppressors have sought after my life; They have not set God before them. Selah Behold, God is my helper; The Lord is with those who uphold my life. He will repay my enemies for their evil. Cut them off in Your truth. I will freely sacrifice to You; I will praise Your name, O Lord, for it is good. For He has delivered me out of all trouble; And my eye has seen its desire upon my enemies.**" Psalm 54:1-7.

Notice what David is doing in this situation. He calls out to God to help him, and even though he knew his enemies and what they were capable of doing, his trust was in the Lord to deliver him.

He was not bitter towards Saul or the Ziphites, how do I know that?

Because he was able to freely sacrifice to the Lord, to praise God and if you have bitterness in your heart, it is not easy to praise the Lord!

It is as Redpath said, *“Observe how David left the treachery of his supposed friends with the One who is sufficient to deal with them. He is now looking at God. First he was looking at his enemies and these supposed friends of his, but now he sees them through God. If you begin with God, your enemies grow small. If you begin with the enemy, you may never reach God.”*

These are very wise words that we can apply to our lives or should apply to our lives.

VERSES 24-26

Now we see a kind of cat and mouse game between Saul and David.

Saul is closing in on David and David tries to keep a step ahead of him.

But now they are on the same mountain, on different sides and Saul does what he can to capture David. He encircles this mountain or hillside and is closing in on David, they are trapping David and his men, and from all practical purposes, it looks like David is a dead man!

When we look at things through the eyes of man, they often look hopeless, there is no way out, we are dead!

But the Lord never tells us to look at things through the eyes of man but through the eyes of faith and when we do the perspective we have will change.

In Psalm 5:11-12 we are told, **“But let all those rejoice who put their trust in You; Let them ever shout for joy, because You defend them; Let those also who love Your name Be joyful in You. For You, O Lord, will bless the righteous; With favor You will surround him as with a shield.”**

In Psalm 32:6-11 we are told, **“For this cause everyone who is godly shall pray to You In a time when You may be found; Surely in a flood of great waters They shall not come near him. You are my hiding place; You shall preserve me from trouble; You shall surround me with songs of deliverance. Selah I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will guide you with My eye. Do not be like the horse or like the mule, Which have no understanding, Which must be harnessed with bit and bridle, Else they will not come near you. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; But he who trusts in the Lord, mercy shall surround him. Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; And shout for joy, all you upright in heart!”**

And in Psalm 125:1-2 we are told, **“Those who trust in the Lord Are like Mount Zion, Which cannot be moved, but abides forever. As the mountains surround Jerusalem, So the Lord surrounds His people From this time forth and forever.”**

You see, who are you trusting in? Are you trusting in your own strength, your own wisdom, your own resources?

If you are you will be discouraged, you will be down.

But don't look at life like that, look at life through the eyes of faith that are focused on the Lord and see the salvation that He will bring to the situations you are facing! He will surround you; He will watch over you, and all you need to do is walk by faith and that downcast spirit will be lifted up in the Lord!

Remember, when things look bad, and the enemy seems to encircle you, God has a plan to get you through the situation.

It is as Paul said in I Corinthians 10:11-13, **“Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”**

God will see us through, may we trust in Him and walk with Him!

VERSES 27-28

Saul had David, he was a dead man and yet, out of the blue, or really out of heaven here comes this report that the Philistines had invaded the land, and Saul turns his attention from trying to kill David to protecting his kingdom.

That is interesting to me because before, with the inhabitants of Keilah who were being attacked by the Philistines, Saul did not help them but was more interested in killing David.

But now he forgets David and goes after the Philistines.

Why the change?

We don't know for sure, but it truly is God's perfect timing!

You see, God delivered David from Saul and He will do the same for us if we would only trust in Him!

VERSE 29

As Saul goes to fight against the Philistines David and his men flee to En Gedi, which is a beautiful oasis in the desert, and we will talk more about this place where David is hiding out next time.

How many times in our lives do we feel like we just don't know what to do? I am sure all of us have felt that way and maybe you are feeling that way right now.

Let me give you this example to help give you direction.

During the reign of Jehoshaphat, the King of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, we see three nations rise up against them.

We see the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Edomites, and there was not a lot the King could do except bring it to the Lord and he did.

And in II Chronicles 20:5-12 we are told, **“Then Jehoshaphat stood in the assembly of Judah and Jerusalem, in the house of the Lord, before the new court, and said: ‘O Lord God of our fathers, are You not God in heaven, and do You not rule over all the kingdoms of the nations, and in Your hand is there not power and might, so that no one is able to withstand You? Are You not our God, who drove out the inhabitants of this land before Your people Israel, and gave it to the descendants of Abraham Your friend forever? And they dwell in it, and have built You a sanctuary in it for Your name, saying, “If disaster comes upon us - sword, judgment, pestilence, or famine - we will stand before this temple and in Your presence (for Your name is in this temple), and cry out to You in our affliction, and You will hear and save.” And now, here are the people of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir - whom You would not let Israel invade when they came out of the land of Egypt, but they turned from them and did not destroy them - here they are, rewarding us by coming to**

throw us out of Your possession which You have given us to inherit. O our God, will You not judge them? For we have no power against this great multitude that is coming against us; nor do we know what to do, but our eyes are upon You.”

We too may not know what to do in a given situation but that is not the point. May our eyes always be upon the Lord for He surely knows what to do and He will show us the path we are to take.

May we be looking to Him as David was!

And, as we are told in II Chronicles, **“Now all Judah, with their little ones, their wives, and their children, stood before the Lord. Then the Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah, the son of Jeiel, the son of Mattaniah, a Levite of the sons of Asaph, in the midst of the assembly. And he said, ‘Listen, all you of Judah and you inhabitants of Jerusalem, and you, King Jehoshaphat! Thus says the Lord to you: “Do not be afraid nor dismayed because of this great multitude, for the battle is not yours, but God’s.””** II Chronicles 20:13-15.

May we not forget that fact. The battle is the Lord’s, and I would not want it any other way!