

March 22, 2015
Port Gardner Church
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God Provides
1 Samuel 23:1-29

1 Samuel 23:1-29 [1] Now they told David, “Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are robbing the threshing floors.” [2] 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.” [3] But David’s men said to him, “Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to **(Kaylah)** Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?” [4] 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.” [5] 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.

[6] When Abiathar the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand. [7] Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. 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.” [8] And Saul summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men. [9] **David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod here.”** [10] 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. [11] 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.”** And the LORD said, **“He will come down.”** [12] 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.”** [13] Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. [14] 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.

[15] David saw that Saul had come out to seek his life. David was in the wilderness of Ziph at Horesh. [16] And Jonathan, Saul’s son, rose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God. [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. Saul my father also knows this.” [18] And the two of them made a covenant before the LORD. David remained at Horesh, and Jonathan went home.

[19] 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? [20] 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.” [21] And Saul said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, for you have had compassion on me. [22] 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. [23] 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.” [24] And they arose and went to Ziph ahead of Saul.

Now David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the Arabah to the south of Jeshimon. [25] 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. [26] 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. As Saul and his men were closing in on David and his men to capture them, [27] a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Hurry and come, for the Philistines have made a raid against the land." [28] So Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines. Therefore that place was called the Rock of Escape. [29] And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of Engedi.

Outline:

Vs 1-7	David Delivers Keilah
Vs 8-13	David Escapes Saul and Leaves Keilah
Vs 14-18	David in Ziph / David and Jonathan Renew Their Covenant
Vs 19-24	The Ziphites Betray David to Saul
Vs 25-29	David Escapes from Saul in the Wilderness of Maon

Believers are always at risk. If you want a quiet existence, avoid Christ and His will. David, God's chosen, is a wandering outlaw on the run from Saul. His life is always at risk. As believers, we are always going to be in the middle of it. In the thick of the battle. It's no place for wimps. Yet, if you are like me, you can be overwhelmed easily. But there is always help for us.

God always provides for His people. David bears witness to this in Psalm 54. God provides for us in three ways.

1. Divine Access 23:1-13

We like to be informed don't we... We all have our own intelligence network don't we... Someone is always telling us something. Someone is always telling David and Saul something. Someone is always giving us information. We all have an intelligence network just like David and Saul. We all have some kind of access to information.

We hear information and we make decisions. Sometimes it's just information that we file away, and sometimes it is critical life altering information that must be put to use immediately. And we are the judge. We make the judgement.

If you are like me, it's easy to use your intelligence network to make decisions. We check our sources, and make a call. David has his sources, but even David cannot see the future. Even David is limited in his intelligence gathering.

When I feel limited in my intelligence gathering, when I don't have the clearest or best information... many times I get stuck... almost paralyzed. I need information. I need access. I don't know which way to go. When I get in these spots, I get anxious, I get nervous and I usually make poor decisions.

Look at David. David is a follower of God. He is truly a man after God's heart. He loves God and trusts God. And David has Divine Access.

David has access to God and God's guidance through the priest that Saul has driven into David's presence. David has given refuge to the priest that escaped Saul's wrath. Saul has rejected God's leading, David has welcomed God's leading.

Now wouldn't it be nice if we could have that same kind of precise, specific answering to our questions of God? I mean, here is David and he asks a specific question and gets a specific answer. That certainly doesn't seem to happen to me very often if at all. So why does David get this kind of access and I don't?

Well, it's probably because I don't need it. I'm not the chosen King of Israel.

Dale Ralph Davis says *"In truth, it does my ego no damage to concede that David's function in salvation history is far more crucial than mine. The fortunes of the kingdom of God in this world rest far more on David's preservation than on mine. What was essential for God's elect king to have he received. For me, it is not so essential."*

In principal, there is no difference between David and myself. David accessed God through the appointed priest. **And we enjoy this same privilege today.** Because Christ is a much greater priest than Abiathar.

Hebrews 4:14-16 [14] *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.* [15] *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.* [16] *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.*

We, like David, have Divine Access to God himself. In fact, our access is even greater than that of David.

2. Divine Encouragement 23:14-18

Saul is looking for David. Saul wants to kill David. Saul cannot seem to find David. How is it then that Saul's son, Jonathan, can find David?

God always brings us the encouragement we need, right when we need it most. His timing is perfect. Jonathan comes to David and "strengthens David's hand in the Lord". What an amazing oasis Jonathan was to David in the wilderness of Ziph.

Jonathan reaffirms God's promise to David. *"Don't be afraid, for the hand of Saul my father will never find you, but you will reign over Israel, and I will be second to you; moreover, Saul my father knows this."*

Sometimes, just the presence of an encouraging friend makes all the difference. Just having Jonathan near is encouraging to David. But our personal presence does not have the same abiding encouragement that God's sure word does.

Being all cuddly with people does not give God's encouragement. Merely identifying with a person's personal suffering does not bring relief or healing. Real encouragement comes by reminding one another of the promises of God. **Encouragement from God for the people of God comes from the word of God.**

Dale Ralph Davis says, “Solid encouragement comes not from emotional closeness but from God’s speech”

Look at David’s situation. He has saved the people of Keilah from destruction yet he cannot trust them to help and encourage him in his journey.

How many times has this happened to you? You’ve invested in a friendship and relationships and in the end, you have been betrayed? David can only trust in God. He can only trust Jonathan if Jonathan trusts in God as well. Jonathan reaffirms God’s promises to David. **This is how David knows he can trust and be encouraged by his dear friend.** It is not the friendship that David relies upon, it is Almighty God. Do you see the difference?

David and Jonathan are dearest friends for one reason. Their friendship is based in a love and fear of God himself.

Think about your friendships. Do you have a Jonathan in your life? Who are the people that are *not* like Jonathan? Do you need to make some changes?

Who have the godly encouragers been in your life? Are you listening to them? Are you heeding their encouragement? Do their words align with God’s words? Do they speak God’s words to you? Do they repeat them in you ears? **How are you responding?**

And how about this... are you a godly encourager? Are you a Jonathan, or are you something else? Do you have godly friends, and if not, could it be that you are not encouraging others with the affirmations of God and His promises?

Do you want godly friends and godly friendships? Be like Jonathan. If you don’t have these kinds of friends, try speaking God’s words to them. See how they respond.

I had a Christian friend. Everytime I spoke the things of God to him, he changed the subject. He continually rejected God’s words. I realized over time that he was not interested in the things of God. He just liked “hanging” out. While there can be nothing wrong with this kind of friendship, I learned that he would never be a dear friend like Jonathan was to David. He would always struggle, and in many ways, he would encourage me to struggle as well. And he was of little encouragement to me, and in the end, I was of little encouragement to him. Why? Because our friendship was not submitted to Christ. Our purpose, did not include the most important aspect of our life. Jesus Christ.

If you love a friend, you MUST point them to Christ. There are only two reasons why you wouldn’t share Christ with a friend.

- 1. You don’t love them.** There is no other explanation for your inability to share the most important information in your life with a person **you say you love.** You just plain, do not love them. You don’t care if they die in their sin. Don’t lie to yourself. You don’t love them. You are more concerned with how you “look” to them, than you do about their eternity.
- 2. You don’t know Jesus at all.** You say you do. You think you do. You may even want to know Him. But you don’t. Because if you did, you would want everyone to know... especially

your closest friends. Don't pretend. Don't make excuses. Don't try and justify your inability to share Jesus. Be honest with yourself. It's imperative. Even for your own salvation.

The last way that God provides for us...

3. Divine Providence 23:19-28

God provides His Divine Providence to David in the face of a nearly fatal betrayal. The people of Ziph, maybe those that want to find favor with Saul, betray David and tell Saul his location. This is a real nail biter of a situation. Saul is tightening the noose. He is closing in.

But look and see what happens: a messenger comes to Saul and says "Quick! Come on! The Philistines have made a raid upon the land" So Saul turned back from pursuing David. WHAT A MIRACLE!

Have you ever experienced a miracle like this? Right up until the end. Right before the hatchet was to fall. Right before the death bell was tolled?

We can read this and think, "wow, David sure was lucky" or we can read it with the clear vision of faith, exulting in the endless variety of ways that God delivers his servants. We have to laugh at the humor of it all. David, the conqueror of the Philistines. And yet it is the Philistines that save David from certain death. Can you not marvel at God's timing and sense of irony?

God's plans are always perfect... and sometimes ironic! This is so often the mark of God's providence. The strange twist, sometimes with a touch of humor.

These verses teach us what providence means, the strange ways that God works to keep his people on their feet. But the question for us is... Is this providence only reserved for God's great leaders and servants? No. It is for all who will believe.

Don't you have stories to tell? Don't you have experiences of divine providence? Shouldn't you be dead by now? Shouldn't you have been destroyed? Is it only in ancient Bible texts that God's providence is made known?

David has been saved... again. But Saul is not gone for good. David's distress is not over. And neither is ours. But look at the resources that God gives His servants in the middle of our trials and sufferings. Look what He gives us so that we may withstand the pressure of them.

It is true that the darkness may still be near. But could it be that part of it is the shadow of Almighty God?

We, as followers of Christ have the ultimate in divine providence. We have Jesus Christ. We have the high priest that gives us divine access, divine encouragement and divine providence.

The ultimate in divine providence is the salvation afforded us in Christ. Saved once and for all eternity. Sure troubles may come, darkness may be near, but Christ has saved us, and we now dwell with Him and He with us... forever. God be praised.