

Discernment and Trust

1 Samuel 23:1-29

¹ When David was told, "Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors," ² he inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" The LORD answered him, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah."

³ But David's men said to him, "Here in Judah we are afraid. How much more, then, if we go to Keilah against the Philistine forces!"

⁴ Once again David inquired of the LORD, and the LORD answered him, "Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand." ⁵ So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah. ⁶ (Now Abiathar son of Ahimelek had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.)

⁷ Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "God has delivered him into my hands, for David has imprisoned himself by entering a town with gates and bars." ⁸ And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.

⁹ When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod." ¹⁰ David said, "LORD, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. ¹¹ Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? LORD, God of Israel, tell your servant."

And the LORD said, "He will."

¹² Again David asked, "Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?"

And the LORD said, "They will."

¹³ So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there.

¹⁴ David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him, but God did not give David into his hands.

¹⁵ While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. ¹⁶ And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. ¹⁷ "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." ¹⁸ The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.

¹⁹ The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon?" ²⁰ Now, Your Majesty, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for giving him into your hands."

²¹ Saul replied, "The LORD bless you for your concern for me. ²² Go and get more information. Find out where David usually goes and who has seen him there. They tell me he is very crafty. ²³ Find out about all the hiding places he uses and come back to me with definite information. Then I will go with you; if he is in the area, I will track him down among all the clans of Judah."

²⁴ So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon. ²⁵ Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David.

²⁶ Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, ²⁷ a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land." ²⁸ Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth. ²⁹ And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

David's Relationship with God

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- David trusts in the Lord. David learned to look to God in all his circumstances, and God has never failed to direct him. Now that David is in a difficult situation, he continued consult God before he did anything. He wanted to know God's direction for him. He understood that only God can deliver him, only God can help him. David have come to an important realization that God is with him, and God will guide and direct him in the circumstances that he is in.
- David asks God very specific questions, he wants God to direct his every step, because he knows he must fully depend on God. He knows the cruelty and wickedness of the enemy that is after him (Saul put to death 85 priests and their family). He knows the danger; and he knew only God can deliver him.

God was with David

1 Samuel 16:13

¹³ So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and **from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David.**

1 Samuel 16:18

¹⁸ One of the servants answered, "I have seen a son of Jesse of Bethlehem who knows how to play the lyre. He is a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man. And **the LORD is with him.**"

1 Samuel 18:12, 14

¹² Saul was afraid of David, because **the LORD was with David** but had departed from Saul. ¹⁴ In everything he did he had great success, because the LORD was with him.

- David acknowledges God's presence with him. God is there to guide and lead him. When he faces opposition, David understood that it does not mean that God has abandoned him. He understood that the challenges he faces is a result of evil. There is opposition but he knew that God has a plan for him, a path that God is leading him through.
- Jesus himself faced opposition in his ministry. But he was not shaken by the opposition. He knew specifically what he came to do, and he knew the Father was with him.
- The early church faced opposition. They were persecuted and martyred. But, they knew that God was with them, and they were not afraid to continue witness for the Lord.
- The presence of God makes a massive difference when we experience God for who he is. That is why Jesus, being called, "Emmanuel": God with us, is such good news to those who know God.

- There are forces that will come against the people of God, there will be spiritual warfare when we choose to follow and obey God, but the Lord is with us. He will not leave or forsake us. He will lead and guide us.

God Ministers to David

⁶ (Now Abiathar son of Ahimelek had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.)

- God knew how challenging it was for David, and God sends people to minister to David.
- David was on the run for his life, it was difficult, he was alone, and the Lord sends him a priest to assure him of God's presence. That was what David needed and God ministered to him.
- Saul had the opportunity to seek the Lord through the priests, but he chose to kill them instead. Then, the only priest who escaped went to David. It is amazing how God works and fits the pieces together.

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¹⁵ While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. ¹⁶ And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. ¹⁷ "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father Saul will not lay a hand on you. You will be king over Israel, and I will be second to you. Even my father Saul knows this." ¹⁸ The two of them made a covenant before the LORD. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.

- When David was hiding in the wilderness, in fear of his life, God sends Jonathan, his best friend to bring assurance and comfort. Jonathan spoke of the Lord's divine plan and protection upon David.
- Interestingly, Jonathan says that even Saul knows of God's plan. Saul himself knew that he would not be able to hurt David, but he was too stubborn to repent and obey God.
- What is also incredible is while Jonathan went to David and came back, day after day Saul searched for David, but God did not allow him to find David.
- Saul was disobeying the Lord and wickedly plotting David's murder, yet arrogantly uses the name of the Lord to fulfil his own purpose, claiming that the Lord is blessing him (*⁷ Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, "God has delivered him into my hands).* But, God deliberately kept him from David.
- God was with David. God was protecting David, and God knew that it could be very discouraging being in constant run from the enemy, God sends a priest and a good friend to meet his needs.
- God ministers to us through the spiritual community he has placed us in, the church. And God sends friends who would speak the truth to us, reminding us of God's plan for us. He brings people that would journey alongside us, and would pray and seek the Lord together.

God is Greater

¹⁹ The Ziphites went up to Saul at Gibeah and said, “Is not David hiding among us in the strongholds at Horesh, on the hill of Hakilah, south of Jeshimon? ²⁰ Now, Your Majesty, come down whenever it pleases you to do so, and we will be responsible for giving him into your hands.”

- When we choose to pursue God, we will face opposition. There will be people who would make wicked plots against us. David understood that and, in his lifetime, he faced many wicked plots.
- The Ziphites are a group of people from Judah, David’s own tribe. David must have felt very betrayed by their actions, being betrayed by his own people.
- There is no doubt that they were trying to gain Saul’s favour by reporting the whereabouts of David. They took advantage of David’s weakness and used it for their own benefit.
- David continued to look to the Lord in prayer.
- Psalm 54 is a prayer David wrote when the Ziphites went after him.

Psalm 54:1-7

*¹ Save me, O God, by your name;
vindicate me by your might.*

*² Hear my prayer, O God;
listen to the words of my mouth.*

*³ Arrogant foes are attacking me;
ruthless people are trying to kill me—
people without regard for God.*

*⁴ Surely God is my help;
the Lord is the one who sustains me.*

*⁵ Let evil recoil on those who slander me;
in your faithfulness destroy them.*

*⁶ I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you;
I will praise your name, LORD, for it is good.*

*⁷ You have delivered me from all my troubles,
and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes.*

- David was in distress. He cried out to the Lord. Every time he cries out to God, God meets him, and David receive the strength and assurance to face his troubles.
- It was out of the many difficult times that David wrote many psalms. Prayers during challenging times are an acknowledgement of God. Our prayers during our difficult times can be meaningful for our faith. God ministers to us through our prayer. Our faith grows as we learn to trust and depend on God.

²⁴ So they set out and went to Ziph ahead of Saul. Now David and his men were in the Desert of Maon, in the Arabah south of Jeshimon. ²⁵ Saul and his men began the search, and when David was told about it, he went down to the rock and stayed in the Desert of Maon. When Saul heard this, he went into the Desert of Maon in pursuit of David.

²⁶ Saul was going along one side of the mountain, and David and his men were on the other side, hurrying to get away from Saul. As Saul and his forces were closing in on David and his men to capture them, ²⁷ a messenger came to Saul, saying, “Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land.” ²⁸ Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to meet the

Philistines. That is why they call this place Sela Hammahlekoth. 29 And David went up from there and lived in the strongholds of En Gedi.

- The intensity of the chase: Saul was getting really close to David, and at that nerve-wrecking moment, the Philistines became a threat and Saul had to turn away to meet them. God appears and saves David from Saul.
- We are not spared from challenges. We will go through difficult times. Sometimes, we may go through the great intensity that David went through; the fear, the loneliness, that toils on us. But, God will always prevail. He is greater, stronger than any giants in our lives. Nothing is impossible with Him. He holds everything in his hands. He is calling the shots. He is watching over our every step. We can take comfort in knowing that, and we can trust him for direction and guidance.

The good news is God does not abandon us to face these trials on ourselves. The word became flesh and dwell among us. Jesus took the form of a human, he identifies with us and embraces us in our sin and suffering. He faced opposition, he went through difficult times; he understands our struggles and pain. And through what he did on the cross, he delivered us from our greatest enemy: our sin. We are no longer slaves, we are free, and we have the presence of God, the Holy Spirit with us at all times. Emmanuel, God with us. Like David, we can talk to God, we can learn to depend on and trust God. No matter what comes our way, we can be confident that God is not far away, he has not abandoned us. He has delivered us, and he will continue to do so.

Prayer Items

Discernment and Trust

- Revelation of the presence of God with us – Emmanuel
- Learn to trust and depend on God's direction and guidance
- The church: a place where God uses to minister to us and use us to minister to others
- Assurance that God will prevail; He is greater than the enemy

Life Church

- God's direction and guidance during this season
- God will help us to be an effective witness for His glory
- We may reach out to the lost and see many come to Christ
- We may grow in love and unity in Christ that overcomes all social and racial differences
- Grow in our commitment to live for Jesus Christ
- Leadership
- Ministries: Life Explorer, Redeeming Roses, Destiny Kids & Teens, Sunday School, Lifeline, Cell, Worship, Life Seed
- Workplaces, schools, neighbourhood: May the Lord teach us how to represent His goodness and faithfulness

Covid-19 Pandemic

- Healing and deliverance
- Front-liners: strength
- Vaccine
- Economy
- Foreigners, those who are vulnerable; lonely, isolated and depressed
- Good governance
- Compassion: People in power and with resources will show compassion and love to those who are in need

Healing

- Si Yun & Jayden
- Suba

Malaysia

- Flood victims
- Leadership and good governance
- Church
- Unity and peace