

Message #56**I Samuel 23:1-12**

What we have certainly seen in this book of I Samuel is that a person like David may be exactly in the bulls-eye of God's will for his life and look like he is a failure and loser.

David had been a faithful shepherd, who was taken out of that role as a young man and informed he would be the next king of Israel in perfect conformity to the sovereign will of God. David then went and fought Goliath and won and then he fought the Philistines and won. Then he married the King's daughter and perfect conformity to the will of God and then his world caved in. One commentator said if you study the Bible, apart from Jesus Christ, it is doubtful that any other person faced such terrible opposition as David.

David was attacked from every angle. But even when this was happening, he was interested in doing the will of God and one thing David did to cope with life and do the will of God was to pray.

David was a man of prayer. He talked to God. What we see here is this:

WHEN WE FIND OURSELVES UNDER ATTACK, WE ARE STILL RESPONSIBLE TO FAITHFULLY DO GOD'S WILL KNOWING THAT GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND A CRITICAL KEY TO THAT IS PRAYER.

David had fled to the cave of Adullam. It was here that God sent David his family, an army, a prophet and a priest. Now one reason why God did this was to encourage David.

However, God also had a future plan that was moving forward and this plan included David and his army fighting a good war. God has His reasons for doing and permitting everything.

If He surrounds you with faithful people, He has done this so that we may accomplish real victories for His real glory. The only way we will accomplish any victory is with prayer.

Prayer is a key to accomplishing the will of God in a victorious way.

Now the historical setting for this is stated in **verse 1**: the Philistines were fighting against Keilah and taking their food supplies.

Keilah was a city located in the south lowland plains of Judah (Josh. 15:21, 33, 44*). It was located about 3 miles south of the cave of Adullam, about 8 ½ miles NW of Hebron.

David learned of the trouble there and he decided that he needed to pray about what he should or should not do. He did not want to make a wrong move here, so he decided to pray. This is a very important development in the life and leadership of David. He is learning the importance of consulting God before you make any move.

In this context there are three Davidic prayers that are offered:

DAVIDIC PRAYER #1 – David asks God if he should go fight the Philistines. **23:2-3**

David was not getting direct revelatory messages every day from God. He needed to pray about things. He had gone to Gath, apparently without praying about it, and he had learned his lesson (21:10ff).

David was not about to go fight the Philistines without asking God. So that is what David did. He asked God whether he and his men should go help the people in Keilah. God's answer was very specific and very definite. In **verse 2**, God answered "yes." God told David to go and attack the Philistines and deliver the people in Keilah.

Now as soon as David knew the will of God, he communicated that to his men who responded by saying, "we are afraid" (**v. 3**).

At this point they were all hiding in a cave with David. While they were in that cave, they were afraid of Saul and they also were afraid of the Philistines.

Don't be surprised when you are really zeroed in on what God wants you to do if you do not discover you have some doubters.

There are some observations we want to make before we move on:

- 1) David's own personal survival problems did not mean he could stop helping others in their hour of need. He could not stop ministering just because he was afraid.
- 2) God had given David the manpower he needed to do the job. He did have the resources to defeat the Philistines.
- 3) God will use this crisis to show everyone His hand is still on David. David will have victory and those seeking to destroy him would be destroyed.
- 4) David was learning a very important lesson, and that is prayer is critical to survival in warfare. Don't just jump into things without praying about things.
- 5) David knew God's will and some did not have the confidence he had. Some close to you may challenge you and be skeptical, even when you know God's will.

DAVIDIC PRAYER #2 – David asks God again if he should go fight the Philistines. **23:4-9**

David was being questioned by his own men so he went back to God again and prayed and asking God His will in this matter. Again God answered that he was to go because He would give the Philistines into his hand. Two times David prayed and two times God said "go."

In **verses 5-9**, there are two results that occurred when David knew the will of God and did it:

Result #1 - David and his men went to Keilah and fought the Philistines and won. **23:5**

In response to answered prayer, David took his men and toppled the Philistines. He carried out a tremendous victory. He slaughtered the Philistines with great slaughter. He struck them down and delivered the people of Keilah. Notice he “led away their livestock.” Some of these would have been beasts of burden who would be able to transport food and weapons.

Result #2 - Abiathar the priest comes to David to warn him of Saul’s evil intent. **23:6-9**

Just as soon as David had a victory under his belt, another enemy, Saul, came against him. However, there was a faithful and loyal priest, named Abiathar, who got news of what Saul was going to do and he went and told David.

Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, who escaped to David, ran to David carrying an ephod (**v. 6**). Now an ephod was a sacred Jewish priesthood garment made of gold, blue, purple, scarlet and fine linen. It was the garment to be worn by the High Priest (Ex. 28:3-9). Obviously, after the priests had been killed by Saul, Abiathar got his hands on this robe and when he ran to David, he took it with him.

According to **verse 7**, when Saul learned that David and his band of renegades had gone to Keilah and secured victory over the Philistines, he interpreted it to mean that God had delivered David into his hands.

There are some very important things to observe here:

- 1) An open door of opportunity is not necessarily the will of God, even if one thinks and says it is. Saul truly believes this is God’s will, when in fact it is just the opposite.
- 2) People who are demonic truly believe God is doing things for them and leading them. People who are demonic believe in themselves and they believe God is leading them.
- 3) People who are demonic actually believe they are right with God. Religious leaders actually killed Jesus Christ thinking God was on their side.
- 4) Just because someone believes something doesn’t make it right or true. There is a way that seems right to a man whose end is disastrous judgment and death.

According to **verse 8**, Saul summoned all the people to go to Keilah to go to war against David. David had not done one thing wrong. He had just won another great victory for Israel and his payment was Saul wanted him dead.

Saul had a good number of diabolical agents who were with him in his evil. Evil people always find a group that will rally around them. Saul's plan was simple; he would go to Keilah and threaten to destroy the people unless they turned David over to him. But **verse 9** is so important, "David knew that Saul was plotting evil against him." Make no mistake about this; what Saul was wanting to do was evil. What Saul wanted to do to David was pure evil.

But he will never be able to do it because God kept David safe and kept him one step ahead of every move of Saul. This was part of God's protection. David was living and learning that God's hand was on him and no matter what Saul attempted to do to David, he would not be able to do it.

DAVIDIC PRAYER #3 – David asks God His specific will in regard to Saul. **23:10-12**

Once David knew Saul's intent, he again went to God in prayer. He is very specific in what he prays.

He asks God three questions:

Question #1 - Will the men of Keilah surrender him. **23:11a**

God's answer is yes. God knew exactly what they would do before they did it.

Question #2 - Will Saul come down to Keilah against David. **23:11b**

God's answer is yes. God knew exactly what Saul would do before he did it.

Question #3 - Will the men of Keilah surrender him and his men. **23:12**

God's answer is yes. God knew exactly what they would do to David and his men.

This shows you the work of Satan.

No matter how much you do for people, they will stab you in the back. They will not be loyal to you or your God. They will lie and deceive. But they will not ever be able to overtake you.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1. Prayer is essential to fighting a good fight for God.**
- 2. People doing evil will always have cronies and backers.**
- 3. People doing evil actually convince themselves they are doing God's will**
- 4. People doing evil will all eventually be destroyed by God.**
- 5. People who are faithful to God are protected by God and will be blessed by God.**