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Safety And Security Are In The Lord

"Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
and a light unto my path."

PSALM 119:105



JOHN WEAVER

WEAVER BIBLE COLLEGE

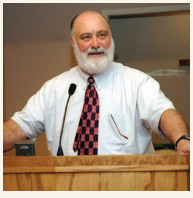
The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe.

PROVERBS 18:10

Safety cannot finally be separated from the government of God. John Weaver considers the limits of human confidence, the obligation to act wisely, and the dependence of His people on divine preservation. These messages ask how trust in the Lord should shape the believer's understanding of danger, duty, and security.

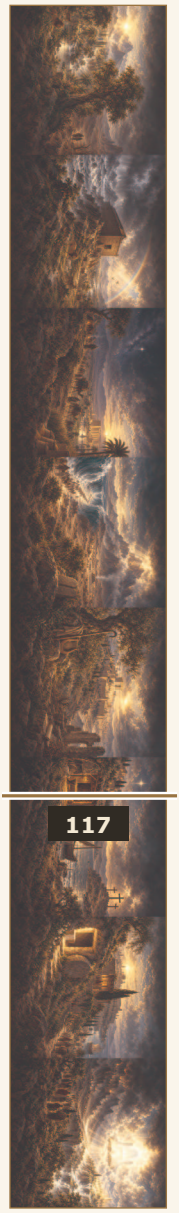
“We must learn that true safety, protection, and security are in the Lord.”

JOHN WEAVER



John Weaver

John Weaver's sermons form the teaching collection presented by Weaver Bible College. This volume gathers his teaching from that collection.



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Safety And Security Are In The Lord

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CHAPTER 1

Safety And Security Are In The Lord

Part One of Two

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 23:1-11 (KJV)

Today we begin the message entitled, "Safety and Security Are in the Lord." It will be presented in two parts. In 1 Samuel chapter 23, beginning with verse 1, we read:

"Then they told David, saying, Behold, the Philistines fight against Keilah, and they rob the threshing floors. Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go and smite the Philistines, and save Keilah. And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah, how much more then if we come to Keilah, against the armies of the Philistines. Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into thine hand."

> So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their cattle, and so smote them with a great slaughter. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah. And it came to pass when Abiathar, the son of Ahimelech, fled to David to Keilah, that he came down with an ephod in his hand. And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand, for he is shut in by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And Saul called all the people together to war to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men. And David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him and said to Abiathar the priest, bring hither the ephod. Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, Thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake. Will the men of Keilah deliver me into his hand? Will Saul come down as thy servant hath heard?"

O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down. Then said David, Will the men of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up. Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah, and he forbear to go forth. And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds, and remained in the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand. And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life, and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood.

And Jonathan Saul's son arose and went to David into the wood and strengthened his hand in God. And he said to him, Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee. And thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee. And that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the Lord, and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house.

Introduction: The Illusion of Governmental Power

The title of this message is "Safety and Security are in the Lord." Most people believe that they are in serious trouble when the government is after them. Whether the government is seeking them lawfully or unlawfully is beside the point. Many believe that all hope is gone when an all-powerful government is after them. Of course, in reality, there is no such thing as an all-powerful government except for God's government. Man's government is always limited. It does not matter how rich or how powerful; it is always limited. Man is not God. Government is not God.

However, when one understands the resources, the money, the technology, and the multiplicity of agencies that are available to governments, it tends to cause concern, especially when such a government is a rogue government or a tyrannical government. In our text, such a government existed under King Saul. He had money, he had men, he had a war machine, and he had a multitude of people that would aid and abet him in his search and destroy mission against David. Saul did not want David for a trial, an apology, or to make amends or rectify the situation between himself and David in any way whatsoever. Saul simply wanted David dead, and he was doing everything that he could to make it happen. Saul planned and schemed and sought to kill David. Yet God providentially preserved David and protected him. Saul could not accomplish his mission.

God's Sovereignty Over Wicked Rulers

The Scripture says that Saul sought David every day. Why could Saul not kill David? The answer is that God is greater than all of the governments of men. God rules over all. God is sovereign and quite capable of restraining or overturning the desires, the wills, and the edicts of the governments of men.

God frustrates and infuriates the wicked. The wicked and the evil design evil against God's people, and when they do so, God uses it as an opportunity to manifest and demonstrate His judgment and His justice. At the same time, as He issues forth His justice and His judgment against the wicked, He protects and preserves His people as well.

We do not have to read this text in the Bible to know that wickedness abounds. We do not have to read history to know that wickedness abounds; all we have to do is look around and see wickedness on every hand from the powers that be. The only wickedness and the only evil that is going to transpire or come to pass is only that which God allows, which will ultimately redound to His honor and His glory. What will not redound to His honor and His glory, He restrains.

I want you to turn. Hold 1 Samuel. We're coming right back there. But turn to Psalm 76 and look at verse 10. Psalm 76 and verse 10. And stay there because then we're going to go back to Psalm 7 just momentarily. But I want you to look in Psalm 76 and verse 10, and look what the Bible says very clearly, very plainly. Psalm 76 and verse 10, the Bible says this, "Surely, surely, that is most certainly, surely the wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Literally, it's "surely the wrath of man shall keep a Sabbath unto thee." The wrath of man, ultimately, is going to redound to God's honor and God's glory. What will not redound to God's honor and God's glory, God will sovereignly and powerfully restrain.

Biblical Examples of Divine Justice

Now this principle and this truth is enunciated over and over, not only in the life of David, but also throughout scripture. God, in His all wise providence, uses the wrath of man to accomplish His will while at the same time preserving and protecting His people. You have to remember that wicked Haman was hanged on the same gallows that he prepared for Mordecai while Mordecai escaped. You have to remember that Daniel was delivered from the lion's den while his enemies who conspired to have him thrown into the lion's den were left to the mercies of the lions themselves and the lions devoured them.

Now I want you to look back at Psalm 7. I want you to see what God says concerning the wicked. Look in Psalm 7 and let's begin reading there with verse 15. This is a wonderful passage. Psalm 7 verse 15, God says this through David. Talking about the wicked. In fact, you could go back to verse 14 just to show we're talking about

the wicked. "Behold, he travaileth with iniquity," that is the wicked man, "hath conceived mischief and brought forth falsehood." So what has the wicked man done in verse 15? "He made a pit and digged it," look what God says, "and has fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate." And the pate, of course, is the crown or the top of the head. So God says in His justice, He brings the wickedness of the wicked back down upon the top of their head.

I'm excited and I'm encouraged. I'm just waiting to see what God's going to do with a number of folks in this country. Because they will fall in the pit which they have dug. And God is going to bring their wickedness down upon their own head.

Often, we think that everything is going wrong, especially when we are suffering for doing that which is right. We have to remember that the safest and most secure place on the entire planet is right smack dab in the middle of the will of God. He is our refuge. The Bible says in Proverbs 18:10, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and are safe.”

Our Lord protects us, and as He does, we are safe and secure. No one, no government, and no combination of governments can harm us when the sovereign God of heaven and earth is protecting us.

Look back at 1 Samuel 23:14. This is basically the theme of this chapter and of today’s message and next Sunday’s message as well: “And David abode in the wilderness in the strongholds, and remained in the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hand.” Can you imagine that? Saul, the king, with all of the soldiers, all of his men, and everything at his disposal, sought David every day. Yet God sovereignly protected him and delivered David not into Saul’s hand. I want you to see in this message and the message next Sunday the divine safety and security that we find not only in the life of David, but that which God also prepares and preserves for His people.

Providential Endeavors: David's Obedience at Keilah

In the first thirteen verses, we read about providential endeavors. The Philistines were attacking Keilah and robbing the threshing floors, and David heard about it. This passage also shows us the heart of David. David had been wronged by King Saul, by the powers that be and the government of the land. Although David was absolutely, totally, and completely innocent, Saul sought to kill him every day. Moreover, citizens were seeking to help King Saul capture David. Saul was a Benjamite, while David was a Judahite.

But remember that in the region of Judea, where the tribe of Judah lived, the tribes of Benjamin and Simeon also lived. Simeon, Benjamin, and Judah were all in the region of Judah, the tribe and land there of Judea.

Although Saul has been seeking David's life, and although David has been wronged and is innocent, David is not interested in revenge. If he had been like the average individual, when he heard that Keilah was being invaded and robbed, he might have said, "Good, they're getting what they deserve." Keilah was in Judah, and some men, if they had been wronged as David had been, might even have joined with the Philistines and exerted their revenge. But David was not like that. He was not the average man, and he was not vengeful or interested in revenge. The only thing that entered into his mind was saving his people, delivering them from the hand of the Philistines. The Philistines were invading Keilah and robbing the threshing floors, but David thought only of saving his people.

He thinks of nothing but being a help to his brethren. He was willing to risk his life, the lives of his men, and everything to save the inhabitants of Keilah. Keilah was in the land of Judah. David has not only heard about the invasion, but also the theft and wickedness taking place there. Yet David does not automatically assume that he is to be the deliverer. He does not immediately conclude that this is his assignment simply because he knows of the need.

David does not jump the gun and run off to war. He asks God for permission and direction. In verse 2, 1 Samuel 23:2, we read: "Therefore David inquired of the Lord, saying, Shall I go and smite these Philistines? And the Lord said unto David, Go and smite the

Philistines and save Keilah." The only reason there was any hesitation was the fear in the hearts of David's men. In verse 3 they said, "And David's men said unto him, Behold, we be afraid here in Judah. How much more then if we come to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?"

In 1 Samuel 22:5, the prophet Gad had told David to get out of the hole, his hiding place, and into the land of Judah: "And the prophet Gad said unto David, abide not in the hole, depart and get thee into the land of Judah."

Then David departed and came to the forest of Hareth. David was in a hole, a hiding place, and the prophet of God said, “You go to Judah.” So David went to Judah and hid in the forest.

Now, here is what his men said: “We’re afraid here in Judah. We’re this much closer to Saul, much easier to reach and get to. How much more if we go to Keilah?” Keilah was not all that far from Jerusalem. It was farther south, between Hebron and Jerusalem. The problem with Keilah was that it was a city with gates and bars.

David wished to allay the fears of his men, so he decided to check again. “Then David inquired of the Lord yet again. And the Lord answered him and said, Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will deliver the Philistines into thy hands.” God had now given absolute assurance that David would conquer the Philistines. David obeyed the Lord and went down to Keilah. “So David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their cattle, and so smote them with a great slaughter.”

Now watch this statement: “So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah.” David obeyed the Lord. He not only saved the inhabitants of Keilah; he saved their properties as well.

If we read no further than verse 5, we might think this was the end of the story: “David saved the inhabitants of Keilah, and everyone lived happily ever after.” But it did not work like that. That was not the end of the story. Have you ever wondered how it is possible to get into trouble just by obeying God? How is it possible to get into trouble just by obeying God and doing His will? We tend to think that if we obey God, we will never have problems, difficulties, or adversaries.

The Reality of Trouble in Obedience

This passage teaches us differently. I want you to note that when David went and saved the people of Keilah, entering that city with gates and bars, Saul rejoiced. He was not rejoicing that David had saved the inhabitants of Keilah or their property. Look at verses 7 and 8. In 1 Samuel 23:7–8: “And it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah. And Saul said, God hath delivered him into mine hand, for he is shut in by entering into a town that hath gates and bars. And Saul called all the people together to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men.”

First, it is impossible to move without producing friction. Every time you move—whether you walk, lift your hand, or reach for a coffee cup—you cannot move without producing friction. Let me say it another way: the doors of opportunity always swing on the hinges of opposition. No matter what you do, no matter how right, holy, and godly it is, you will always have problems.

Do you know what the Apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 16:9? “For a great door and effectual is open unto me and there are many adversaries.” A great door and effectual is open unto me, and there are many adversaries. Let me spell it out: when you and I seek to obey God, and when we do obey God, there will be problems. We will have adversaries.

Our Lord has never promised us a bed of roses. If He had, you would have to remember that roses have thorns. Our Lord said in John 16:33, “In the world you shall have tribulation.” We must expect trouble, problems, and adversaries in anything and everything that we do. We cannot live without trouble, problems, and adversaries.

David had done that which was right and holy. He was fulfilling the will of God, while Saul was using it as an opportunity to kill him. That brings us to the second truth in this passage: not everyone will appreciate or like our efforts in obedience. The mere fact that we are Christians, that we want to obey our Lord and please Him, and that we want to do what is right and holy, will not please everyone. Especially, it will not please those in positions of authority and power.

It did not matter to King Saul that David had obeyed God. It did not matter to King Saul that he had saved the inhabitants of Keilah. It did not matter to King Saul that David had preserved the wealth of these people. It did not matter to King Saul that David had personally inquired of God, and that this was God's will for him. The only thing that excited Saul was, “I've got him where I want him; now I can kill him.” Isn't that amazing? David's act of obedience only gave hope to King Saul that God had delivered him into his hand.

Look in verse 7; look at it: “Then it was told Saul that David was come to Keilah, and Saul said, God hath delivered him into my hand, for he is shut in by entering into a town that hath gates and bars.” Here's what Saul knew: if David stayed in one place, sooner or later he was going to be captured. Wherever he was staying, sooner or later he was going to be overrun by the enemy.

I do not normally watch movies, and I do not normally recommend movies. But I want to tell you about two movies that are very old, which I saw years and years ago. The only reason I mention them is because they exemplify this one biblical truth. Some of you will remember the movie “Red Dawn.” The Russians were paratrooping in on the school grounds and conquering everything. The only thing that was really unbelievable about that movie was that it was a bunch of teenagers. Young Patrick Swayze was the star. There was a group of teenagers waging guerrilla warfare who finally overthrew the Russians, and I think there were some Cubans in it as well.

One movie demonstrated the fact that an organized army had planned an organized invasion so thoroughly that everyone was basically captured except a few teenagers who got away. Those teenagers used hit-and-run, or guerrilla, tactics, obtaining much of their equipment from the enemy. It showed the advantage of a small group over an organized army.

The other movie was called "Taps." George C. Scott played the commandant of a boys' military school, which the powers that be wanted to turn into a shopping center. He did everything he could to keep the school, but finally suffered a heart attack and died. The young boys—some nine or ten years old and some teenagers—did not want their military school to close. After their commander died,

they went into the armory and took out the .50-caliber machine guns and all the other guns. They dug foxholes, sandbagged around them, set up their machine guns, and said, "You're not going to take our school. That's all there is to it."

The next scene showed tanks around the perimeter, helicopters flying over the school, and soldiers totally surrounding it. The only thing that kept the soldiers from conquering the school was that a bunch of children were inside, and they simply did not want to kill them.

These two movies illustrate a biblical truth. You cannot successfully defend a building or a city on a permanent basis. The only way to fight an organized army is in an unorganized manner. Look at how the Indians fought, how the Viet Cong fought, Che Guevara, and all the other hit-and-run guerrillas. Smaller armies finally wore down or defeated much larger armies because they used guerrilla tactics.

So when Saul said, "God had delivered him into my hands, because he's gotten into a city with bars and gates," he believed that sooner or later the supplies would run out, the men would be killed, and he would have David, as long as David stayed right there.

Fourth, understand this: the Lord came to David's aid. If we are obeying God and are in the center of God's will, it does not matter what problems we face, what trouble we see, or what adversaries rise against us. If we are in the middle of God's will, doing what God has ordained us to do, inevitably and invariably, He will always come to our aid.

Look in 1 Samuel 23, beginning at verse 9. The Bible says, “And David knew that Saul secretly practiced mischief against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, bring hither the ephod. Then said David, O Lord God of Israel, thy servant hath certainly heard that Saul seeketh to come to Keilah to destroy the city for my sake.” Notice that. Saul was not only interested in killing David; he was going to kill anybody who harbored David. “Will the men of Keilah deliver me up into his hand? Will Saul come down as thy servant hath heard? O Lord God of Israel, I beseech thee, tell thy servant. And the Lord said, He will come down. And David said, Will the men

of Keilah deliver me and my men into the hand of Saul? And the Lord said, They will deliver thee up. Then David and his men, which were about six hundred, arose and departed out of Keilah, and went whithersoever they could go. And it was told Saul that David was escaped from Keilah, and he forbear to go."

The Fickleness of Human Nature

The interesting thing is this: God sovereignly helped David. He told David what would come to pass. He said, "Yes, Saul will come down," and, "Yes, the men of Keilah will deliver you up if you stay there." It is just that simple.

Fifthly, see and understand the fickleness, ungratefulness, and baseness of human nature. David had just saved the inhabitants of Keilah and their wealth. I can assure you that these people were temporarily thankful and grateful. However, temporary thankfulness does not change individuals into courageous, selfless beings. Had it not been for David and his men, the inhabitants of Keilah would have been slaves, dead, or poverty-stricken. Yet, to save their own lives, they would readily and quickly deliver David and his men to King Saul. In other words, they would sacrifice their Savior to save their lives.

What are we to learn? We must not expect most people to help us or to fight for us.

We must not expect most people to help us or to fight for us. Most people would sell their own mothers down the river to save their lives or to gain a few extra shekels. If they would do that to their own mother, do you think they are going to help you? Do you think they are going to fight for you? If you do not understand this point, consider most families.

How many children readily and truly appreciate the devotion, the sacrifice, and the love given to them by their parents? How many teenagers gleefully and eagerly go against everything they have been taught and have no consideration for the property and possessions that their parents have labored for and acquired with sweat, blood, and tears? I dare say, and I would probably guess, that each of us has

been stabbed in the back by those whom we have helped, worked with, and for whom we have prayed.

Hold 1 Samuel 23, but turn to Matthew chapter 10. You need to see this passage and understand what I am telling you. Look what our Lord said: "Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men. For they will deliver you up to the councils, they will scourge you in their synagogues, and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak. For it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child, and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."

Notice verse 22: “And you shall be hated of all men for my name's sake, but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.” But notice: he said, “Brother shall deliver up brother.” Brother? “Father against the child, and the children shall rise up against the parents.” Wow! You know what God is telling us? You cannot trust most people, even those that you have helped, and even those that profess to be your friends.

One of the most harmful and hurtful things about betrayal is that it is certainly painful when your family betrays you. But turn in your Bible to Psalm 55 and see what David said about his betrayal. Look at the heartache David is expressing in this passage, beginning with verse 12:

“For it was not an enemy that reproached me, that I could have borne it.” You expect this from an enemy. “Neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me, that I would have hid myself from him. But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide and mine acquaintance, we took sweet counsel together and walked in the house of God in company.”

Did you hear what David said? “It wasn't an enemy that gave me the problem; I expect that from my enemies. Neither was it he that hated me that magnified himself from me. I could have gotten out of his presence. But it was thou, a man, my equal, my guide and mine acquaintance. We took sweet counsel together in the house of God and walked in company. You were my friend. And here you are; you have betrayed me.” It hurts when your family and your friend turn on you.

We must determine in our hearts that, as Christians, we will never act in such a wicked and ungodly manner. We have to learn to be true and faithful even unto death. We cannot betray our brethren. We cannot betray an innocent individual to save our lives, our property, or our goods.

Our Lord said in Revelation 2 and verse 10: “Fear none of those things which you shall suffer. Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that you may be tried, and you shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.” David endeavored to be true and faithful, even in light of the baseness, ingratitude, and unthankfulness of the people of Keilah.

Providential Encouragement

We must do the same. Our obedience cannot be diminished or curtailed simply because of the wickedness of others. We cannot cease doing that which is right just because others are ungrateful or unthankful. We must obey and do right if no one else in the entire world obeys and does right. God sent David to Keilah. David endeavored to obey God, and he did. In that endeavor, there were problems, trials, troubles, and adversaries.

Providential Encouragement: Jonathan's Visit

You do not necessarily look for an easy way; you look for the right way, the biblical way. In verses 15 through 18, we see providential encouragement: “And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life, and David was in the wilderness of Ziph in a wood. And Jonathan Saul's son arose and went to David into the wood and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee, and thou shalt be king

over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee, and that also Saul my father knoweth. And they two made a covenant before the Lord, and David abode in the wood, and Jonathan went to his house."

You talk about providential encouragement. Saul was consistently seeking to kill David. In fact, the Scripture says Saul sought him every day. Saul was relentless. He never gave in or gave up. He wanted David dead.

First Samuel 19 shows the extent of it: "And Saul spake to Jonathan his son, and to all of his servants, that they should kill David." Saul wanted anybody and everybody to kill David if they could. "And Saul sought to smite David even to the wall with the javelin. But he slipped away out of Saul's presence, and he smote the javelin into the wall, and David fled and escaped that night. Saul also sent messengers unto David's house to watch him, and to slay him in the morning. And Michal, David's wife, told him, saying, If thou save not thy life tonight, tomorrow thou shalt be slain. So Michal let David down through a window, and he went and fled and escaped. And Michal took an image and laid it in the bed, and put a pillow of goat's hair there for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth."

When Saul sent messengers to take David, she said, "He is sick." Saul sent the messengers again to see David, saying, "Bring him up to me in the bed, that I may slay him." He was intent on killing David. In 1 Samuel 23, verses 15 through 18, Saul had been seeking David every day to kill him, yet he could not find him. God in His sovereignty shields us and hides us from our enemies, but He allows our friends to know where we are and to find us.

Saul, with all of his soldiers, servants, and intelligence, could not find David, yet Jonathan, Saul's own son, knew exactly where David was and went to him. Jonathan and David either kept in communications, or Jonathan simply knew. He knew very well that God had appointed David to be the next king. Thus Jonathan, who was supposed to inherit the kingdom from his father Saul, sought David out, encouraged him, and let him know that Saul's hand would not prevail against him. He told David, "Look, even my father knows that the kingdom is going to be yours."

Everything Jonathan did was consistent not only with his friendship with David, but also with his duty to his father and to the king. He knew that God had delivered the kingdom into David's hand. He also knew that his father was acting unconstitutionally—wickedly, unbiblically, and ungodly. He was not obligated to help his father commit murder. In fact, Jonathan, by his own interference at times, kept his father from killing David. Jonathan was as loyal as he could be to his father, while at the same time remaining loyal to his friend.

Matthew Henry writes, "True friends will find out means to get together. David, it is likely, appointed a time and place for this interview. And Jonathan observed the appointment, though he exposed himself thereby to his father's displeasure, and had it been discovered, it might have cost him his life. True friendship will not shrink from danger, but can easily venture and will not shrink from condescension, but can easily stoop and exchange a palace for a wood to serve a friend." The very sight of Jonathan was reviving to David; besides this, Jonathan said that to him which was very encouraging.

Matthew Henry describes Jonathan's friendship first as that of a pious friend: "As a pious friend, he directed him to God," the foundation of his confidence and the fountain of his comfort. He strengthened David's hand in God. David, though a strong believer, needed help from his friends for the perfecting of that which was lacking in his faith. Jonathan helped him by rendering him of the promise of God, or by reminding him of the promise of God, the holy oil wherewith he was anointed, the presence of God with him hitherto, and the many experiences he had of God's goodness to him. Thus he strengthened his hands for action by encouraging his heart, not in the creature, but in God. Jonathan was not in a capacity of doing anything to strengthen David, but he assured him that God would.

Secondly, Jonathan was a self-denying friend. He took pleasure in the prospect of David's advancement to that honor which was his own birthright. In verse 17 Jonathan said to David, "Fear not, for the hand of Saul my father shall not find thee, and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee, and that also my father

knoweth." Jonathan was willing for David to be king and willing to take second place; willing for David to be exalted and willing for himself to be debased.

Matthew Henry says, "This resignation which Jonathan made to David of his title would be a great satisfaction to him and make his way much more clear. This he tells him, Saul knew very well. Jonathan having sometimes heard him say as much, whence it appears that a wicked man as Saul was, to persecute one whom God favored, and what a foolish man he was in thinking he would prevent that which God had determined and which would certainly come to pass. How could he disannul that which God had purposed?"

Thus far, Jonathan is a pious friend and a self-denying friend; he is also a constant friend.

He renewed his legal friendship with him. They made a covenant now this third time before the Lord, calling the Lord to witness to it. True love takes delight in repeating its engagements, giving and receiving fresh assurances of the firmness of the friendship. Our covenant with God should be often renewed, and therein our communion with Him kept up. David and Jonathan now parted, and never came together again, so far as we find in this world. Jonathan said what he wished, not what he had ground to expect, when he promised himself that he would be next to David in the kingdom. So Matthew Henry points out that Jonathan was a pious friend, a self-denying friend, and a constant friend.

Our Father is so gracious to us to allow us to have friends like that in life. We may not have a multitude of such friends, but we have a few who are kind, loving, true, and faithful. We need to learn to be that kind of friend to others. The Bible says in Proverbs 20 and verse 6, "Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness, but a faithful man, who can find?" So the question is this: Will you be found a faithful friend? Are you a friend like Jonathan?

Applications: Endeavor, Encourage, Choose Friends Wisely

We have seen providential endeavors and providential encouragements today. Have you undertaken an endeavor for the

Lord lately? What are you doing for the Lord? What is your mission, goal, and purpose? Do you have a plan of action? You do not have to undertake a dangerous mission as David did. You just have to undertake something that is biblical, just, and right. Do you realize that some people have a mission just to tarry by the stuff?

What do I mean by that? When David went after Nabal, the Bible says in 1 Samuel 25 and verse 13, "And David said to his men, gird you every man on his sword. And they girded every man on his sword, and David also girded on his sword. And there went up with David about four hundred men and two hundred men abode by the stuff." In other words, two hundred had to stay and watch and protect the stuff.

They were not able to go to battle. When Ziklag was burned with fire, David had six hundred men. Ziklag was David's own city before he was made king, and all six hundred men had their families there. Ziklag was attacked and burned with fire, so David went after the men who had attacked it and taken their wives and families, as well as those of his men. The Bible says that two hundred of the six hundred men were so weak and weary with weeping that they could not cross over the brook Besor. David left them there to tarry by the stuff, in 1 Samuel chapter 30 and verse 10. When David and the four hundred rescued all their families and recovered their belongings, the wicked men with David said, "We will give every man his wife and every man his child, but we will not give them the goods; we will keep those for ourselves." David said in verse 24, "Who will hearken you in this matter?"

“But as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarryeth by the stuff, they shall part in part alike.” Do you realize that some people have a mission, purpose, or ministry just of tarrying by the stuff? Someone has to keep others going. What have you done for the Lord lately? What is your mission, purpose, or endeavor? Is God enabling you to do something, if nothing else, other than tarry by the stuff and enable others to do the fighting?

The second application is this: Have you encouraged anyone lately? Everyone needs encouragement; some need it more than others. You should not need encouragement to do that which you know is right anyhow. You should simply do it. But I will confess that

occasionally it is encouraging and uplifting to have someone come along, pat you on the shoulder, and say, “That was great. That was a good job. Thank you for helping me, or thank you for doing that.”

Everybody needs encouragement. There is no problem there. But are you not only willing to encourage others, but also willing to take second place, as Jonathan was? In 2 Chronicles 31:4, the Bible says, “Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites that they might be encouraged in the law of the Lord.” In other words, God says to keep them going so they can do what they want and need to do. In 2 Chronicles 35:2, “And he set the priests in their charges and encouraged them to the service in the house of the Lord.”

Encouragement is biblical and right. Before this day is over, encourage someone—biblically and scripturally. Encourage them to holiness, righteousness, godliness, obedience, and integrity. There are so many trials, tests, temptations, allurements, and seductions. Encourage someone to do that which is right, holy, and godly, and to stand, as the Apostle Paul said, “and having done all to stand.” Everybody needs encouragement.

There is a third application we need to seriously consider: We need to choose our friends carefully.

Not everyone who shows himself friendly is a true friend. There is a vast difference between an acquaintance and a friend. “A friend loveth at all times,” the Bible says, and “faithful are the wounds of a friend.” A real friend will hurt you if it will help you. He will hurt your feelings if it will help you do what is right. But God says that “the kisses of an enemy,” or the flattery of an enemy, “is deceit.”

We need to learn to choose our friends. We need to make sure that they are true friends, but we also need to learn to be true friends ourselves. We must learn that true safety, protection, and security are in the Lord. Saul sought David every day, but the Lord delivered him not into his hands.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We are thankful for the lives of David and Jonathan and for the applications we can receive from this truth and their lives. I pray, Father, that You would enable us to encourage each other to be true

friends, to be godly, to trust only in Thee, and to seek Thee for true security and safety. For Thou art the one who does indeed preserve us from those who hate us and from all our enemies and adversaries. Give us grace, Lord, to trust Thee, to bow to Thee, to love Thee, and to live for Thee. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

CHAPTER 2

Safety And Security Are In The Lord

Part Two of Two

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 23:19-29 (KJV)

Review of Part 1

1 Samuel 23:19-29:

"Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in the strongholds of the wood, in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south of Jeshimon? Now therefore, O king, come down according to all thy desire of thy soul to come down, and our part shall be to deliver him into the king's hand."

And Saul said, "Blessed be ye of the Lord, for you have compassion on me. Go, I pray you, prepare ye it, and know and see his place, where his haunt is, and who hath seen him there. For it is told me that he dealeth very subtly. See, therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth

himself. And come ye again to me with a certainty, and I will go with you, and it shall come to pass, if he be in the land, that I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah." And they arose and went to Ziph before Saul.

But David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon in the plain, on the south of Jeshimon. Saul also and his men went to seek him. And they told David, whereof he came down into a rock and abode in the wilderness of Maon. And when Saul heard that, he pursued after David in the wilderness of Maon. And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain. And David made haste to get away for fear of Saul. For Saul and his men compassed David, and his men round about to take them. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, "Haste thee, and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land." Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David, and went against the Philistines.

Therefore they called that place Sela-hammahlekoth. And David went up from thence, and dwelt in the strongholds of En-gedi.

We began looking at 1 Samuel chapter 23 to demonstrate that true safety and security are in the Lord our God. I hope you will see the truth of Proverbs 18:10: "The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe." As we looked at the first 18 verses, we saw how King Saul was incessantly, constantly, and continually seeking David's life. In fact, the Bible says in verse 14, "Saul sought him every day." The entire government of Saul was summoned to find David so that Saul might kill him. Time and time again, they sought for David, and time and time again, they failed.

Here is a truth that I want you to understand: the entirety of Saul's government was seeking after David, yet they could not discover him or capture him. All the governments of men put together cannot capture one man unless God delivers him into their hand.

Verse 14 gives us the theme: "And David abode in the wilderness and the strongholds, and remained in the mountain in the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God

delivered him not into his hand." So God sovereignly and powerfully protected David and preserved him.

Last week we were able to cover only two points from this chapter. First, we saw providential endeavors, where David and his men risked their lives to save the inhabitants of Keilah and their possessions. It was Saul's responsibility to do that. Saul was king, the one ordained of God to bring forth justice and judgment and to protect the righteous. But Saul failed in his responsibility, and God sent David and David's men to accomplish this task. Saul was far from helping the inhabitants of Keilah.

Apply this to our modern-day situation: an ungodly man is not normally inclined to do anything that is godly and right. Saul had turned against God and His Word, and he was certainly not about to do that which was godly and right.

Providential Escapes

We have seen providential encouragement. Saul could not find David, yet Jonathan his son knew exactly where David was. Jonathan went to David and encouraged him in the Lord.

Jonathan was a pious friend, a selfless or self-denying friend, and a constant friend. He was willing to take the back seat to David. He told David, "Saul, my father, doth know that you're going to be king, and I'll be second to you." In other words, he was willing for David to be king. He did not have to have the kingdom. God had designed for David to have it, and that was Jonathan's heart's desire. He would take the back seat. Thus David had a wonderful friend in Jonathan.

Providential Escapes: The Ziphites' Betrayal

The third point is providential escapes, found in verses 19 through 26. In considering this great escape that God provided for David, I also want you to see the depth of the depravity of man.

There is nothing more thrilling than an escape, unless it is a very narrow escape, which really tends to get the adrenaline flowing. Many will remember a war movie from years ago titled "The Great Escape," with Steve McQueen and a number of other folks. It is an excellent movie. I have seen it a number of times. It showed how

these men were breaking out of the Stalag, or prison, during the German occupation. It was a tremendous movie.

When wickedness seeks to prosper at the expense of righteousness, we are doubly thankful for what we would call a narrow escape. Saul had been seeking David, but he could not find him, so he went back to Gibeah. Gibeah was Saul's place of residence and also the place where he held court. While Saul was at Gibeah, the Ziphites came and brought him a proposal: If he would come, they would turn David over to him. They knew where David was. How did they know where David was? David was hiding himself in the wilderness of Ziph.

John Gill said, “Hachilah is called by Jerome Ekelah and he speaks of a village of that name seven miles from Eleutheropolis and of Jeshimon as ten miles from Jericho to the south near the Dead Sea on the top of the hill which has an ascent of thirty furlongs or about four miles. Jonathan the high priest built a castle and called it Masada, often spoken of by Josephus.”

You remember Masada, the high mountain that the Romans had to build a road up to in order to attack the inhabitants there. From Masada, you could see the panorama of the whole area, the entire vicinity. Undoubtedly, the Ziphites on that mountain could see very clearly, way off in the distances, and they saw David and his men as they went back and forth in the wilderness. In fact, the Bible says that he was on the hill of Hachilah in verse 19: “Then came up the Ziphites to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself with us in the strongholds of the wood in the hill of Hachilah, which is on the south side of Jeshimon?”

Once David had been observed, they hastened to King Saul and said, “We found him.” Then they came to Saul with this proposal: “Now, therefore, O king, come down according to all thy desire of thy soul to come down, and our part shall be to deliver him into the king’s hand.”

The Ziphites were not only willing to betray David here in 1 Samuel chapter 23; in 1 Samuel chapter 26 and verse 1, they were willing to betray David a second time: “And the Ziphites came unto Saul to Gibeah, saying, Doth not David hide himself in the hill of

Hachilah, which is before Jeshimon?" Twice, then, they were willing to betray David. They volunteered to betray him, for they were under no obligation to report him to Saul. David was not a criminal, and David was not seeking Saul's life. Saul was seeking David's life.

Saul did not threaten the Ziphites, examine them, or send people there asking, "Have you seen him?" No. They volunteered to deliver David into Saul's hand. In fact, they were worse than Judas. At least Judas said, "What will you give me?" They asked for nothing. They were simply willing to betray David because they knew that Saul was thirsting after his blood.

Several questions should arise in our minds, and they must be answered if we are going to see the greatness of man's depravity and also the greatness of God's deliverance: Why would the Ziphites betray David to Saul? What made their betrayal so wicked? And how close was David's escape from Saul?

Before answering these questions, notice the sanctimonious, hypocritical attitude of Saul. This same attitude is manifested in our politicians today; we see it on every hand because it abounds in wicked rulers. When the Ziphites volunteered to betray David, Saul said, "Blessed be ye of the Lord, for you have compassion on me. Go, I pray you, and prepare yet, and know, and see his place where his haunt is."

"And who hath seen him there? For it is told me that he dealeth very subtly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hideth himself. But come ye again to me with a certainty, and I will go with you, and it shall come to pass. If he be in the land, I will search him out throughout all the thousands of Judah."

This unhappy, wicked king blesses those men who are ready to betray David and his men. He views their betrayal as having pity upon him, saying that he is in his palace, suffering at the hands of David. This attitude of King Saul is manifested even today. In 1 Samuel 22:7-8, Saul said to his servants that stood about him, "Hear now, you Benjamites, will the son of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards and make you all captains of thousands and captains of a hundred? That all of you have conspired against me,

and there is none that showeth me that my son have made a league with the son of Jesse. And there is none of you that is sorry for me and showeth unto me that my son hath stirred up my servant against me to lie and wait as it is this day."

Can you hear this pathetic murmuring? “Would you not have compassion on me? None of you are sorry for me. Nobody’s looking after me. No one’s taking care of me. If you really loved me, if you really concerned yourself, you would be wanting to help me.” His attitude is, “If you’re not for me, you’re against me. If you’re not with me, you’re against me.” I think we’ve heard that before—not just from our Lord, but from one of our presidents. We hear that all the time: If you don’t support this program, or stand with me on this, then obviously you’re against me as well.

So poor Saul thought David was the source of all his troubles. He would not blame himself or take responsibility. Let me tell you, if you go back to 1 Samuel chapter 15, it was not David who disobeyed God; it was Saul. Saul rejected the commandments of God, turned against God, and was rejected by God Himself. Yet Saul said, “I want you to have compassion on me. I want you to be sorrowful for me because everybody is against me.” Well, they should have been against him.

How many Christians do you know with the same attitude? How many politicians do you know with the same attitude? The truth is this: We blame everything on everybody but ourselves. Our sins are our own. We are the transgressors; we are the ones who have sinned. We bring trouble and condemnation upon our own heads. We are the problem. Everyone in this room can quote 2 Chronicles 7:14. What did God say?

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves..." You know the verse. The problem is with us. We need to repent and cease blaming others. Saul is saying, "I'm blessing you for betraying innocent individuals." He is blaming all his troubles upon David and accusing David of acting subtly, while acting subtly himself. Then he says, "Now here's what I want you to do. You go and spy out where he is. You find out where he is certainly. And when you find out, you come back and tell me, and then I'll take all

my men, and we'll go down, and we have to go through the thousands of Judah. We'll do it until we find him."

Saul is accusing David of acting subtly while acting subtly himself. He is trying to find out exactly where David is so that he will not spook his prey. Note what he is doing. Most tyrants and most wicked politicians set up their targets for destruction and let other people do the dirty work: "You find him and I'll come get him."

Why the Ziphites Betrayed David

Now, why would the Ziphites betray David to Saul? In all probability, it was done for self-preservation and self-interest. They not only feared for their lives, but also wanted to endear themselves to Saul, who held governmental, military, and political power. When I tell you that they acted out of self-preservation, the question automatically arises: What spooked them? Why were they afraid? Why would they think Saul would harm them?

Look back in your Bibles to 1 Samuel chapter 22, beginning with verse 6. I want you to see what Saul has just done. "When Saul heard that David was discovered, and the men that were with him, now Saul abode in Gibeah under a tree in Ramah, having a spear in his hand, and all his servants were standing about him, then said Saul to his servants that stood about him, Hear now, you Benjamites, will the son

SCRIPTURE READING - 1 Samuel 22:7-19 (KJV)

> "Of Jesse give every one of you fields and vineyards and make you all captains of thousands and captains of hundreds, that all of you have conspired against me, and there is none that showeth me that my son hath made a league with the son of Jesse, And there is none of you that is sorry for me, or showeth unto me, that my son hath stirred up my servant against me, to lie and wait as it is this day."
>
> "Then answered Doeg the Edomite, which was set over the servants of Saul, and said, I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob to Ahimelech, the son of Ahitub. And he inquired of the Lord for him," which is a lie, "and gave him vittles, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine. Then the king sent to call

> Ahimelech the priest, the son of Ahitub, and all his father's house, the priests that were in Nob, and they came, all of them, to the king. And Saul said, Hear now thou, son of Ahitub."
>
> And he answered, "Here am I, my lord." And Saul said unto him, "Why have you conspired against me, thou and the son of Jesse, in that thou hast given him bread and a sword, and hast inquired of God for him, that he should rise up against me to lie in wait as it is this day?" Then Ahimelech answered the king and said, "And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David, which is the king's son-in-law, and goeth at thy bidding, and is an honorable in all of thine house. Did I then begin to inquire of God for him? Be it far from me. Let not the king impute anything unto thy servant, nor to all the house of my father, for thy servant knew nothing of all this, less or more."
>
> Then the king said, "Thou shalt surely die, Ahimelech, thou and all thy father's house." And the king said unto the footmen that stood about him, "Turn and slay the priests of the Lord, because their hand also is with David. And because they knew when he fled, and did not show it me." But the servants of the king would not put forth their hand to fall upon the priests of the Lord. Then the king said to Doeg, "Turn thou, and fall upon the priests." And Doeg the Edomite turned, and he fell upon the priests, and slew on that day fourscore and five persons. That's 85 persons.

"...that did wear the linen ephod." Now watch: "...and Nob, the city of the priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women and children, sucklings and oxen and ass and sheep with the edge of the sword." What did Saul just do? He just murdered an entire city because he said, "You knew when David fled, and you didn't tell me." The truth of the matter is that Ahimelech and all those people were absolutely totally innocent.

If you will go back to verse 1 of chapter 22, look at how David deceives Ahimelech. He could not tell him the truth: "David therefore departed thence and escaped to the cave of Adullam."

Chapter 21 is what I want. "Then came David to Nob, to Ahimelech the priest, and Ahimelech was afraid at the meeting of

David, and said unto him, Why art thou alone, and no man with thee? And David said unto Ahimelech the priest, The king hath commanded me a business, and hath said, Let no man know anything of thy business, whereabout I send thee, and what I have commanded thee, and I have appointed my service to such and such a place."

"Now therefore, what is under thine hand? Give me five loaves of bread in mine hand, or what there is present." And the priest answered David and said, "There is no common bread under mine hand, but there is hallowed bread, if the young men have kept themselves at least from women." And David answered the priest and said unto him, "Of a truth, women have been kept from us for about these three days, since I came out, and the vessels of the young men are holy, and the bread is in a manner common, yea, though it were sanctified this day in a vessel."

So the priest gave him hallowed bread, for there was no bread there but the showbread that was taken from before the Lord to put hot bread in the day when it was taken away. Now therefore a man of the servants of Saul was there that day detained before the Lord and his name was Doeg, an Edomite, the chiefest of the herdmen that belonged to Saul. And David said unto Ahimelech, "And is there not here under thine hand spear or sword?"

David told Ahimelech, "For I have neither brought my sword nor my weapons with me, because the king's business required haste." Ahimelech showed him the sword of Goliath, the Philistine, whom David slew in the valley of Elah. It was wrapped in cloth behind the ephod. David said, "There is none like that, give it to me." David had answered the priest that the king had commanded him on business and told him not to tell anyone. He explained that he did not have his weapon because he had left in too big of a hurry.

Ahimelech gave David the bread and the sword, but he did not inquire of God for him. He did absolutely nothing for him. Yet Saul came along and said, "You knew when David fled and you didn't show me." Ahimelech rightly and truthfully answered, "He's your son-in-law. There's no one more honorable in your house than David. He's the one that obeys you. How would we know?"

Innocence has never deterred a tyrant or a murderer. The mere suspicion that Ahimelech had helped David was sufficient, not only for Ahimelech's murder, but for the entire priestly family and all those who lived in Nob. The Ziphites therefore had reason to fear Saul. They probably knew about the murder of Nob's inhabitants. If Saul would slay the Lord's priests, he certainly would not hold back against a normal everyday citizen.

However, they were craven and cowardly because they were as bad as Saul. They were willing to sacrifice David and his innocent men to preserve their own lives and gain favor with Saul. They were willing to betray an innocent man and his men and endear themselves to Saul at the price of their heads. Thus they were as wicked as Doeg, and as bad as Saul himself.

The Wickedness of the Betrayal

What made their betrayal so base and so wicked? You can understand self-preservation, but you cannot understand preserving your life with the lives of innocent men. David was of the tribe of Judah. In 1 Chronicles chapter 2, verses 12 through 16, we read: "And Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat his firstborn, Eliab, and Abinadab the second, and Shimea the third, Nethaneel the fourth, Raddai the fifth, Ozem the sixth, David the seventh, whose sisters were Zeruiah and Abigail, the sons of Zeruiah, Abishai and Joab, and Asahel three, and Abigail bare Amasa, the father of Amasa was Jether the Ishmaelite." Here David is listed as being of the tribe of Judah.

Verse 42 continues: "Now the sons of Caleb, the brother of Jerahmeel, were Mesha his firstborn, who was the father of Ziph? And the sons of Mareshah, the father of Hebron." So Ziph was the grandson of godly Caleb. The Ziphites were Judahites, David's own tribe; they were Caleb's good stock. Thus David's own kindred were willing to sacrifice David and his men in order to save themselves. Caleb was a good, godly, and faithful man, as you know.

Yet Caleb had another descendant who was not so good or godly. In 1 Samuel chapter 25, verse 3, we read about Nabal: "Now the name of the man was Nabal and the name of his wife was Abigail. She was a woman of good understanding and of a beautiful

countenance, but the man was churlish and evil in his doings, and he was the house of Caleb."

Caleb and Joshua were the only two spies who brought back an honest report when Moses sent them to spy out the land. Caleb was the man who said, "I want that mountain. Give me Hebron. Give me that mountain." And God did give it to him. Now the Ziphites, descendants of Caleb and members of the tribe of Judah, were betraying David and his men, who were Judahites as well.

We need to learn a very important lesson. Not all descendants of godly men turn out to be godly themselves, and not all descendants of patriots turn out to be patriotic themselves. It is possible to destroy a good and godly heritage that has been passed down from generation to generation. It is not only possible; it happens. Look at what happened to the Ziphites. I can assure you, Caleb would be enraged at his descendants.

Psalm 61:5 says, “For thou, O God, hast heard my vows. Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.” Did you hear what he says? “Thou hast given me the heritage of those that fear thy name.” I come from a goodly stock. I come from believers. God has given me a heritage, yet it is possible to destroy that heritage.

Now, hold 1 Samuel 23, but turn to Psalm 54. See Psalm 54 in light of 1 Samuel chapter 23. It is important that we read the heading of Psalm 54 before we read the Psalm, because you are going to understand why David wrote it. It happened during this time, in 1 Samuel chapter 23. The heading reads: “To the chief Musician on Neginoth, Maschil, A Psalm of David, when the Ziphites came and said to Saul, Doth not David hide himself with us?” Psalm 54 was written when the Ziphites were betraying David to Saul. Now let us read these seven verses.

David says, “Save me, O God, by thy name, and judge me by thy strength. Hear my prayer, O God, give ear to the words of my mouth, for strangers are risen up against me, and oppressors seek after my soul. They have not set God before them. Behold, God is mine helper, the Lord is with them that uphold my soul. He shall reward evil unto mine enemies, cut them off in thy truth, I will freely sacrifice unto Thee, I will praise Thy name, O Lord, for it is good. For

He delivered me out of all trouble, and mine eye hath seen His desire upon mine enemies."

Our Lord said in Matthew chapter 10, "...and a man's foes shall be they of his own household." Look at Psalm 54:3. What does David say when the Ziphites go to betray him? He says, "For strangers are risen up against me." Strangers? They were Judahites, and yet he calls them strangers.

The Hebrew word for "stranger" literally means a foreigner, a stranger, or a prostitute. David is saying, "These are supposed to be my people, but they've so prostituted themselves, they're strangers to me." They were not only Israelites; they were David's own tribe of Judah, and yet he calls them strangers. Why? Because they were strangers to faith, character, integrity, and honor. No doubt godly Caleb would have described them the same way. They may have had the blood of Caleb, but they did not have the character of Caleb.

Look at verses 4 and 7. David says, "Behold, God is mine helper. The Lord is with them that uphold my soul." In verse 5: "He shall reward evil unto mine enemies." Skip down to verse 7: "For He had delivered me out of all trouble, and mine eye had seen His desire upon mine enemies."

The Ziphites are referred to not just as strangers, but as enemies. They lost the godly heritage given and passed down to them through Caleb. What has happened to the godly heritage in America? We have become a nation of strangers—strangers in our own land, alien to our God and His law. We marvel at how America turns her back upon her friends, but we should not marvel, for we have turned our back upon God. If we have deserted, forsaken, and betrayed the one true and living God, it is nothing to betray people or nations. What has happened to America's godly heritage? We are ruled by men who hate God and God's law. Betrayal has become a way of life for Americans. Since we have betrayed our God, it is a small step to betray others. We have enemies in control of our government because we have become enemies to God. We have forsaken our own heritage. This is the baseness and depravity of betrayal: it was done by David's own people, kindred, and tribe.

David's Narrow Escape

Third, you have to ask this question: How close was David's escape? We have several adages that are applicable: “It's too close for comfort,” or, “He made it by the skin of his teeth.”

Saul had come out with his army to the mountain where David was. Saul was on one side of the mountain, and David was on the other. Saul was wise; he knew he was chasing David around the mountain. Therefore, he divided his forces and sent some to cut David off as David came around the other side.

Verse 26 says, “And Saul went on this side of the mountain, and David and his men on that side of the mountain, And David made haste to get away for fear of Saul, for Saul and his men compassed David, and his men round about to take them.” Saul had divided his men and basically had David cornered. Had God not sovereignly, miraculously, and powerfully intervened, humanly speaking, David would have been captured. David made his escape by the skin of his teeth.

Providential Emergencies and God's Sovereignty

Now, I want you to see my last point: providential emergencies. Look in 1 Samuel chapter 23 at verses 27 and 29: “But there came a messenger unto Saul saying, Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land. Wherefore Saul returned from pursuing after David and went against the Philistines.” A messenger came to Saul saying, “Haste thee and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land.”

I find this extremely interesting. What did David pray? In Psalm 54 and verse 3, David said, “Behold, God is my helper. God, the Lord is with them that uphold my soul.” He said, “God is my helper.” Certainly God helped David in this providential emergency. Just when it seemed David was going to be captured, Saul had to quit the chase. David was extricated from Saul's snare by the skin of his teeth.

What did they say in verse 27? “Haste thee and come for the Philistines have invaded the land.” This had to be a special kind of emergency. Did anybody send Saul word and say, “Haste thee and

come! For the Philistines have invaded Keilah?" Uh-uh. Saul didn't care about Keilah or its inhabitants. Why would Saul be concerned now? The answer is that undoubtedly the Philistines were robbing and raiding where Saul had private interests.

It was his own property that was at stake. Suddenly, it was an emergency, and he had to go protect what he had. Have you ever stopped to think how many times emergencies have saved our lives and protected us, though we have absolutely no idea what has happened? An emergency comes up, and we have to quit something.

We have to stop what we are doing, and we are aggravated and irritated. Yet, in the providence of God, He arranged that emergency to preserve our lives. When the Philistines invaded the land, they did not intend to help David. They did not say, "Saul is after David. Let's invade some of Saul's territory and save David's life." The Philistines hated David. Once David was made king, they came up to attack him again.

The point is this: God is absolutely sovereign. Although our enemies mean it for evil, God means it for good. God is never at a loss to save us, even if He has to use those who are against us. Thus God sovereignly and powerfully delivered David. Look in verse 29. After God had sent this providential emergency, the Philistines invaded the land, and Saul had to leave. He had to quit the chase.

"And David went up from thence, and dwelt in the strong holds of En-gedi." Note the wisdom David exercised. He was not presumptuous. He did not say, "Praise the Lord. The Lord has just protected me and preserved me here. I think I'm going to stay here." No. He knew that Saul knew where he was, and he knew how close he had come to being captured. Although David trusted God, he used wisdom to get out of harm's way.

It is wise, when God delivers us, not to linger in the place where He delivered us. David said, "I'll find another stronghold." It is foolish, rash, and a tempting of God to plunge knowingly and premeditatedly into danger, thinking, "God's just going to protect me." God gives us wisdom and common sense, and He teaches us to use the means He has placed at our disposal. When David escaped with the skin of his teeth, he got out of there.

Look at the latter part of 1 Samuel 23:14: “And Saul sought Him every day, but God delivered Him not into His hand.” Can you imagine that? The only reason, humanly speaking, David was not captured is that God sovereignly and providentially did not deliver David into the hand of Saul.

Applications for Believers

Let me make several applications. The first is this: We must draw near to God as danger draws near to us. The safest place to be is right smack dab in the middle of the will of God, wrapped in His protective embrace. Proverbs 18:10 says, “The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and are safe.”

We need to learn that the more dangerous it becomes in our lives, in our environment, and in our surroundings, the closer we need to draw to God. You look at the riots and the home invasions. I would rather God keep me from those things than protect me in one of those things. I do not mind His protecting me in one, and I would certainly ask Him to, but I much prefer not even to be in that situation at all. The more danger surrounds us, the closer we need to get to the Lord.

Here is a second application, based upon 1 Samuel 23:14: “And Saul sought Him every day, but God delivered Him not into His hand.” Especially a Christian man is immortal until God is through with him. Stop and think about that. I do not care how great, powerful, or multitudinous our enemies are. They cannot touch us until God is through with us.

We may as well be men and women of courage and determination, for we serve the Lord God, and He is the one who holds our souls in life. Psalm 66:9 says, “Who holdeth our soul in life,” and “suffereth not our feet to be moved.” I want to leave you with Psalm 37:28: “For the Lord loveth the judgment, and forsaketh not His saints.

“They are preserved forever, but the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.” God does not forsake His saints. Since He does not forsake us, we may as well be courageous and bold.

I read an article this morning concerning a pastor friend of mine who died recently, Pastor Jim Grove. We have his wife on the prayer

list. The article, written by an atheist, commended Pastor Grove, describing how courteous, courageous, and visible he was. Every year, when they had the fair in Pennsylvania and the atheists had their booth, Pastor Grove would come by and engage them. He would preach to them and reason with them, but he was always courteous and courageous. The atheists said, “We will miss him this year at our booth.”

Isn’t that amazing? We might as well be courageous. We do not have to be uncivil or unkind, but we might as well be courageous because God holds our souls in life. Until God is through with us, we are immortal; we cannot die until He determines.

Safety and security are in the Lord.

Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, we bow to Thee this day. We thank You for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We thank You, Father, for Your gracious, sovereign protection. Help us, Lord, to flee to Thee, to trust in Thee, to look to Thee, and to lean upon Thee. Lord, Thou art our protector, our shield, and our buckler. Without Thee, Lord, we are nothing; without Thee, we are lost. O God, grant us Thy sovereign safety and security and preserve us for Christ’s sake. As Thou dost preserve us, make us bold and courageous, and make us, heavenly Father, submissive to Thee in all things. In the name of Jesus Christ, we ask and pray. Amen.

Source Notes

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