

Saul pursuing David

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[0 : 00] 1 Samuel 23 verses 14 through 29. The text for the sermon is 1 Samuel 23 14 through 29.

There's a reason on that path from God's word. And David abode in the wilderness in strongholds and remained in a mountain in the wilderness of sick. And Saul sought him every day, but God delivered him not into his hands.

And David saw that Saul was come out to seek his life, and David was in the wilderness of sick in a wood. And Jonathan saw a 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 knows.

And they too made a covenant before the Lord. And David abode in the woods, and Jonathan went to his house. Then came up the disciples to Saul to Gibeah, saying, Does not David hide himself without any strongholds in the woods, in the hill of Hakela, which is on the south of Jeshimon?

[1 : 22] Now therefore, O king, come down, according to all the desire of thy soul to come down. And our path shall be to deliver him into the king's hand.

And Saul fed, Blessed be ye of the Lord, for ye have compassion on me. Go, I pray you, prepare yet, and know and see his place where his horn is, and who has seen him there.

For he told me that he dealeth very subtly. See therefore, and take knowledge of all the lurking places where he hides 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, I went to sit before Saul.

But David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon, in the plain of the south of Jeshimon. Saul also and his men went to speak him, and they told David.

[2 : 29] Therefore 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, and passed David and his men round about to take him. But there came a messenger unto Saul, saying, Haste thee, and come, for the Philistines have invaded the land.

Therefore Saul returned from suing after David, and went against the Philistines. Therefore they called at place, Selah, Amalekos.

And David went up from them, and dwelt in the stronghold at Ingevee. That's our text for this morning's service.

[3 : 33] Beloved brothers and sisters in the Lord's congregation, in 1 Samuel 23, King Saul is pursuing David. And you know, what tempted him to do that?

Saul had been out to assert himself. He was striving for his own power and glory. And therefore the Lord, the Lord had left Saul.

And he blessed David. The Lord had chosen David as the man out of his heart. Because of the growing prosperity of David, Saul distrusted and envied David more and more.

First, Saul tried to dispose of him inconspicuously by giving David dangerous tasks to perform.

When that was not successful, Saul pursued David openly. So David had to flee. He wandered from one place to another.

[4 : 46] But on all the other occasions of David's pursuits by Saul, the situation was never as critical as in our text, 1 Samuel 23.

And this is particularly obvious when we take note of what happened during and after the rescue of Keilah. In that place, in Keilah, David had a small foretaste of his future kingship.

There he was led by the Lord. And with the help of the Lord, he had delivered that city from that great enemy, the Philistines. Yes, in the first part of 1 Samuel 23, David was the triumphant conqueror.

But as we know, as we have read, he didn't gain much honor with that rescue action. For he learned from the Lord that Keilah would surrender him to Saul.

For Saul had learned what David had done in Keilah. So he was on his way to seize him there. And when David inquired of the Lord about what to do, he heard that that strong, the fortified city of Keilah would deliver him to Saul.

[6 : 16] That great fortified city therefore was not the right hiding place. If he would stay there, it would become his prison.

That must have been a bitter disappointment for David to be forced again to roam around and about in the wilderness seeking for a hiding place.

Now this morning, we will particularly, in particular, look at David's hiding place. What was David's hiding place?

That is the concentration of this morning when we look at God's word. What actually is David's hiding place?

And what does the Lord teach us in having recorded this story in his holy word? And so this morning, we will listen to his words followed that in an extreme crisis, the Lord teaches David and through David he teaches us where to find hiding place.

[7 : 30] In an extreme crisis, the Lord teaches David where to find his hiding place. And we will see first the actual secret of the hiding place and then the discovery of the hiding place and then the protection of David's hiding place.

Where do we find our hiding place? Where did David find his hiding place? We see the actual secret, the discovery, and the protection of David's hiding place.

From Keilah, brothers and sisters, David went into the wilderness of Sif and in his surrounding places. There, David hid in caves and holes in the woods or in the wilderness.

Yes, there he tried to escape Saul's hands in all sorts of ways. He appeared to be successful for those who continually searched for him.

He couldn't capture David. So at first, David's hiding place in the wilderness remained a secret. Saul did not discover him. Where Saul failed in the first place, his son Jonathan didn't.

[8 : 52] He found, Jonathan found out. the whereabouts of David. How Jonathan managed to do that isn't mentioned in the text and that's not important.

What we do have to take note of is that Jonathan used the knowledge of David's hiding place to support and to encourage his friend David.

And he did that in such a manner that the actual secret of David's hiding place is revealed. For what do we read? In our text, we read that Jonathan strengthened his friend David.

Jonathan must have realized what it had meant, what it meant for David to hide himself in the wilderness. Jonathan understood that through the actions of his father Saul, David was banished from the communion of his people.

In a way, David was expelled. You could say David was excommunicated through the actions of Saul.

[10 : 10] Excommunicated from Israel without being guilty. in such a situation of missing the support within the communion of God's people, Jonathan now encourages David.

He encouraged David to have his confidence in the Lord, in his God. Consider what Jonathan said to him. He said, Fear not, for the hand of Saul, my father, that hand shall not find you.

And take note what he also says, very convincingly, Jonathan assured David as follows, You shall be king over Israel, and I shall be next to you.

Also my father knows this, and he knows it very well. What do those words of Jonathan show us? Brothers sisters, they first revealed that Jonathan saw God's plan in both their lives.

And we also see that Jonathan then accepts God's plan. Not only God's plan for David, but also God's plan with himself, with Jonathan. Jonathan acknowledges that, the will of God in his life, and Jonathan steps back.

[11 : 32] He concedes to the place God allotted to him. God's plan. If we place his words in New Testament light, then we can say that Jonathan stepped back for Christ's sake.

Jonathan showed the power of true faith. He denied himself and followed God's way.

Jonathan, completely different than his father, Jonathan didn't envy David. Jonathan wasn't jealous on him. Jonathan was content with the position in which God placed him.

That position was under David. Jonathan's words did not only reveal Jonathan's humble faith, true faith, they also were of great comfort to David.

He encourages David. Yes, Jonathan's faithful attitude taught him to be patient in the deep crisis of his life as a fugitive for Saul.

[12 : 41] in this oppressive plight, David should not seek his hiding place in a city with strong walls, like Keala, for example.

His protection and victory would not come from people, not even from people that David had just delivered from their enemies. His true protection was, was the actual secret of his protection?

That's God. And so, God himself through Jonathan showed that he is the true protection for his people.

Through Jonathan, the Lord provided the protection David needed in very critical circumstances. For Jonathan directed David to God's sure promises, the perspective of the fulfillment of God's promises, they assured David that despite the heavy crisis, he had to endure, no matter how extreme they would become, yet, the Lord God would be faithful to his word, the Lord is always faithful to his promises.

God has insisted we must understand that this divine protection of David was not given to him because of David's own person. regarding all other events in the Old Testament history, we must have an eye for the revelation of God's history that we call the redemptive history.

[14 : 23] With David, that redemptive history, that history of salvation, that history already from the very beginnings of paradise, that history had come at an important momentum.

Who is David? David would be the first king, the first theocratic king. David would be the first one to show the glorious rule of Christ.

He would save his people to the honor and glory of God's great name. And so here in 1 Samuel 23, David as a servant of the Lord, was strengthened so that God's people would be ruled by the spirit of the Lord Jesus.

Yes, he, the coming Christ, was speaking here through Jonathan. He ensured that David would not follow a way of his own choosing, that David would not follow a way of human tactics, his own strength.

David's strength was not a city with walls, and his power was not in man and himself. David was directed to God's word, to his promises.

[15 : 51] God's love, God's promises, that we find rest in God's good pleasure without leaning on our own human schemes and ideals.

God's word teaches us here that we must accept God's guidance in our lives. So have your help in God who is your keeper, as a poet says in Psalm 121 and as we have acknowledged at the beginning of this service.

So indeed, David was not his own keeper. God was. The fact that David was saved in his hiding place there in the wilderness, in those strongholds, that was not due to his own strategies, it was not his own doing.

The secret of his hiding place and he was not his own cleverness. The actual secret was God's word to David, that word, that promise of making him king over Israel.

What do we see next? that at the end of Jonathan's visit, both friends strengthened their friendship. They again made a covenant before the Lord, like they had done before.

[17 : 23] We read about it in 1 Samuel 18. But this covenant was based on this new situation, assuring David the sure promises of God and that Jonathan acknowledges David's position, that David would be the king over Israel.

After they had made a covenant, Jonathan returned home. They could depart in peace because Jonathan acknowledged God's will in his life.

David was assured of God's help and protection. How secure was that protection? congregation? That question brings us to our second thought, the discovery of David's hiding place.

Congregation, in the concrete circumstances of his hiding place in the desert of Sid, was David actually saved? No, he wasn't.

For Saul did not sit still. He didn't sit idle. he continued to search for David. And in that search, he received unexpected help from the Siphites.

[18 : 37] They lived in the area of David's hiding. And this shows how actually unsafe the apparently safe hiding place in the wilderness of Sid was.

the Siphites would know the terrain of mountains and caves most probably better than David did. But it was their own territory.

Indeed, Saul couldn't get better spies for his intelligent service here. The Siphites breathed him on the exact location where David was hiding.

The king only had to come along with them and David delivered David into his hands. The brother says, how do we consider this reporting of David to Saul?

Wasn't it not mean from those Siphites to betray David? Yes, the Siphites strike us in an unsympathetic way.

[19 : 39] But before we judge those people as traitors, let us assess who was responsible for David's crisis, his plight. who made life hard to David?

You know that was Saul, his father in law. Saul was the lawful king in Israel. You know that also David continued to acknowledge Saul as such as the lawful king in Israel.

Israel. And so the Siphites also saw Saul as their king. Would they have already known something of what the Lord had in mind for David?

Most likely not. And moreover, we must remember that the Siphites would have been in danger if Saul had discovered that they knew all the time that they knew where David was hiding, and that they didn't report it to Saul.

Then they would have run the great risk of being considered traitors to the king. Then they had to count on bearing the same consequences as the people, the priests at Nob.

[20 : 55] We read about that in the previous chapter 1, Samuel 22. You know that all the priests at Nob were killed save Abiathar.

They were killed after Saul was told that David had been held by Himalek, the priest. If the Siphites would have chosen the side of David, yes, they could have expected the same treatment.

And besides all this, Saul's reaction to their report, their initial report, gives the strong impression that he wasn't even very convinced by the Siphites, by the information he received from them.

But he replied in a rather remarkable, long-winded way. He even seemed it appropriate to use the name of the Lord for his own case.

To be completely sure of David's hiding place, he put pressure, now Saul put pressure on the Siphites. And in this way, Saul made spies of his people to pursue his own evil schemes, namely to catch and kill an innocent man.

[22 : 09] Therefore, here, Saul is this soul and the entirely responsible person. Because of his envy and jealousy, he placed himself over against God's ruling in his life.

He resisted his will. Saul wanted to get David into his hands, no matter what it would cost. Meanwhile, David has changed his location.

Now he lived in the wilderness of Merion, you read. Now when this was reported, Saul with his men moved to those cliffs. He was sure, Saul, now he was sure of his cause.

And he grimly attacked it. Saul's tactic was powerful indeed. And he discovered the hiding place of David. And in this way, David entered that extreme crisis. he was in great danger, with Saul on his heels.

What would have gone through David's mind? Before, comforting and very convincingly, Jonathan had reassured David, the hand of my father shall not find you.

[23 : 25] And now look, Saul found him. And he was close on his heels. He was about to catch him. What an affliction. Had his trust in the Lord been too great?

Wouldn't it have been better if he had taken things in his own hands? Would it really, brothers and sisters? Why would God allow David, we now ask, why did God allow David to come in such an extreme crisis?

God to take refuge, to take God's hand to strengthen David, so Saul now was also an instrument in God's hand to test David.

God often leads his people through a training process of hardships and crisis. And the aim of this training school is that his people learn to take refuge, to take only refuge with the Lord, that they may surrender themselves totally to him.

They must learn that God is in control always, that God is the ruler of everything. God is strong to save from all dangers, even from the grave.

[24 : 47] God will give freedom, rest and peace, peace. But how did God do this in the actual situation of David, in David's particular case? David himself tried his utmost.

He did his utmost to escape Saul's hand, and he managed to make some diverting moves, attempting to make use of all the possibilities, of course, the possibilities that were offered by the wilderness.

And for a time indeed he was successful, but in the end he failed. David came into a snag, Saul went along one side, David and his men along the other side of that mountain.

Things had never been so critical for him. Saul was about to surround and capture David. There was no way out anymore. It was only a matter of a few moments, and Saul would apprehend him.

Yes, that's how critical the situation was for David. David. In that way, the Lord made him painfully feel how powerful David was as long as he had to depend on outward means and his own strength.

[26 : 04] But let's face it, if it had depended on David and all of his clever tactics, then he would have been caught, then he would have lost his freedom. even worse than the promise.

Remember the promise given to him, that he would be king, the theocratic king, the man of God's heart. That promise wouldn't have been fulfilled. Then Saul and the enemy of God would have triumphed.

Here I come to speak about the enemy of God. Since from God's word we know who was behind the actions of Saul. That was Satan, God's opponent, the murderer from the beginning.

In Saul's pursuings of David we see indeed the ongoing struggle between the seed of the serpent and the seed of the woman. Genesis 3 verse 15. That struggle is also fought here in our text.

And you know that struggle will end in the total victory of the son of David. And therefore in our text brothers and sisters there was much more going on than meets the eye.

[27 : 25] If David would have fallen into Saul's hand then the dragon of Revelation 12 would have won over the seed of the woman.

and then Satan would have won over Christ. Then not only David would have lost his freedom but then the road would have been blocked for the freedom of all God's people as included.

And that the whole world would have stayed in the grip of death and destruction and deep darkness, evil. the word of God in our text reveals then the human deliberations and activities and those activities and deliberations can be good in itself and sometimes also indeed necessary to be taken and to be used yet they cannot, they never ensure the safety and freedom of God's people.

God wanted to make his people, first David in us, he wanted to make us realize that we must completely rely on him as our covenant God, our faithful God, never on outward means.

That's why David was brought into that extreme crisis. He must acknowledge the power of God. He had to understand that God himself keeps the way open to the promised redemption.

[28 : 58] David would certainly play a role in the fulfillment of that promise but God would always remain in control. He would establish 1 Peter 5 Peter also says God will establish he will strengthen he will restore and bring to salvation.

When God's children are in such severe afflictions like David what must they do? They must lift their eyes on high. There is their help.

Now from another passage of God's word we know that through the grace of God's spirit David did well in the training school of God. From the psalm that we sang Psalm 54 we do know that David called to the Lord.

He said save me O God by thy name vindicate me by thy might hear my prayer O God and give ear to the words of my mouth. Now for us God preserved also that psalm in his word so that in our own life struggles in the present time we too we may flee to the Lord always for refuge to him only.

How clear is the instruction of our text indeed that when we are brought into deep crises that we then must take shelter with the Lord. We must find rest with him.

[30 : 37] Satan can be on our heels. And you know from 1 Peter 5 he's doing that he prowls around like a lion a roaring lion trying to snatch away our freedom in Christ.

Now what do you do when all your outward means and possibilities don't provide safety anymore? Are you then relying on your own power and resources?

no beloved the Lord says then you must fall on your knees take strength from him from the God of deliverance he is the God of deliverance salvation that's what we see in our last thought the protection of David's hiding place for deliverance salvation comes David's way and in a remarkable way David is rescued how does the Lord do that?

In order to rescue David the Lord called in take out the enemy of Israel the Philistines the Philistines saw the chance to attack Saul's territory now the king of Israel had left the country unprotected David by pursuing David saw the saw the saw the saw the saw the saw the attempt to catch David now he had to march toward the Philistines to protect his people against even greater disasters now in this manner the Lord worked here in an indirect way to allow David to escape and so after all we see that the hiding place in the wilderness appeared to be a real hiding place for David was protected there not because as we have seen of human tactics but because of the protection of the Lord our holy and sovereign God always remains in control he rules everything for the promotion of his work in the church he rules everything even the enemies of his church that's what we read in our text it is confirmed throughout the history your rich history here in

Scotland and also the history of his church everywhere in this world at this very moment we may witness also in this gathering we may witness God's preserving and protecting power it is because of God power that we are together despite all the attacks against the church all the persecutions and the opposition against his chosen people from within and from from without yet we know that the Lord he protects our hiding place he kept and he still keeps the way open for us to take shelter with him to abide with him in prayer and worship for what did that place in the wilderness where David was protected why did it receive a special name as we read it at the close of our text that name means rock of escape the place was given a special name of rock of escape deliverance you know that in the Bible it happens more often that a certain place gets a special name when God shows his power when he shows his deliverance there through such a name giving then a special event makes history and the aim is then that such an event of

[34 : 35] God's salvation it should be remembered it should be stored in the memories of God's people and families would come along those places then the children could and they should ask the parents why does the rock have that name and then the parents had to instruct her to answer because such and such happened there there the Lord remembered David his promises to David and he established his word there he also remembered us he remembered you he remembered the future's generations to save them to deliver and to protect them because of his word and so we now say as New Testament believers there at that rock God protected David he protects us for Christ's sake and so that name giving of that rock as the rock of escape means that

God includes all his people in David's learning process the story in 1 Samuel 23 is not just about David it's God's revelation instructing all his people us included he includes us also in that learning process David the whole nation of Israel also you and I must learn again and again and again to have God as our refuge to this end we receive instruction every Sunday through God's word so that we know God that we know him to be the rock of our escape to that end also the children the youth of the church receive instruction so that they can know that coming generation they have been delivered from the power of the evil one the devil we all receive the memory of God's great deeds and works of salvation so that we may have him as our actual hiding place beloved reviewing what we have seen now in our text this morning yes we give praise to our

God our great God we are assured once again we can we must rely on him not on our own power not on our own strength not on our own plans and outward circumstances but they don't guarantee true comfort and strength we must deny ourselves completely knowing with David and with all the saints the secret the actual secret of our hiding place behold God is my helper strong be assured and comforted with the enemy on your heels you are in Christ you are more than conquerors under God's protection in his hiding place amen let's pray heavenly father from the bottom of our heart we thank thee for the comfort of thy word we thank thee that thou have spoken to our hearts that we as thy children may lift up our heads continue to live with thee the true salvation that the

Lord Jesus Christ has obtained for us and so this morning thou hast showered thy great benefits thy gifts and thy graces upon us the forgiveness of sins everlasting righteousness and holiness father in a world that is still also persecuting thy people and making life hearts thy people in all temptations and also our own flesh and the actual circumstances of our lives thou knowest which they are also there in weakness we can also come to trust ourselves and yet father thou shown us another way thou art our hiding place in Christ the Lord and thou gatherest us in thy church church of the Lord Jesus Christ father we pray thee for this church also for this congregation bless them richly and that their witness may be clear to the world in order that all thy people are gathered and that we may see and trust the victory of the

Lord Jesus Christ they see this more and more also the coming of his day the evil doer will do more evil and we see it around us in the dark world father grant that thy people thy righteous people may do right and and be and be and be righteous and be righteous and through all this we are thy faithful servants a great miracle in this world we sinful people are deemed worthy and are made worthy through the blood of Christ to serve thee and to work towards a great day of triumph the Lord Jesus Christ appears on the clouds and establishes his eternal glory here for his sake Amen