**SECRET STRENGTH**

R. Giglio 10/14/21

When we last saw David, after he tried to secretly hide and find refuge in the Philistine city of Achish, he pretended to be insane so they wouldn’t try to kill him. And he ran off and hid in the Cave of Adullam “Dave’s Cave”.

There he cried out to the Lord in humility and repentance, and asked for God to rescue him from his enemies.

**1st Samuel 22:1 “**David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam.”

It was here that he wrote Psalm 142.

**Psalm 142 :5-6**

**5**I cry to you, Lord;
    I say, “You are my refuge,
    my portion in the land of the living.”

**6**Listen to my cry,
    for I am in desperate need;
rescue me from those who pursue me,

The Lord heard his cry and answered his prayer. Soon his family came to him to encourage him. Others who were in distress and discontent gathered around him and vowed to follow him.

He also was given Abiathar the priest who became very important to David as *High Priestand the counselor.)*

The Lord was with David and blessing him now, *because* David was seeking the Lord and no longer taking matters into his own hands.

At the start of 1st Samuel 23, he had a small but very committed army, he also had a spiritual covering and the *favor of the Lord.*

**Chapter 23**

**1st Sam 23**:**1-5** 1When David was told, “Look, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah and are looting the threshing floors,” **2**he inquired of the Lord, saying, “Shall I go and attack these Philistines?”

The Lord answered him, “Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah.”

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

**4**Once again David inquired of the Lord, and the Lord answered him, “Go down to Keilah, for *I am going to give the Philistines into your hand*.” **5**So David and his men went to Keilah, fought the Philistines and carried off their livestock. He inflicted heavy losses on the Philistines and saved the people of Keilah.”

The victory in Keilah is an example of how David is now operating in the *Power of God* and the *Will of God*, because he is *seeking God* and *obeying God.*

He is still begin pursued by Saul, he is still experiencing betrayal and rejection by those he meets, but he is no longer acting in desperation and self-sufficiency, he is acting in humility before the Lord and seeking and obeying God regularly.

That is the secret to success in everything we do in the Lord. Not being so sure of our self-sufficiency thinking that we are so good at what we do, that we can pretty much operate on our own without regularly checking in with God about for His direction of what we should do.

David has a clear enemy in Saul who wants to kill him, and intimidates others to turn against David, but as David continues to seek the Lord, God leads, guides and protects David every step of the way.

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

**9**When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, “Bring the ephod.”

(Ephod: A special priestly garment used during worship or coming before the Lord)

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**10**David said, “Lord, God of Israel, your servant has heard definitely that Saul plans to come to Keilah and destroy the town on account of me. **11**Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me to him? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? Lord, God of Israel, tell your servant.”

And the Lord said, “He will.”

**12**Again David asked, “Will the citizens of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?” And the Lord said, “They will.”

Even though David and his men just got finished rescuing the entire city and all of its people from the Philistines, God revealed to David that these same people would betray him and turn him over to Saul when he comes. (They probably feared Saul because of what he did to Nob.)

Although David must have felt betrayed by what the people of Keilah were about to do, he did not act in anger or bitterness toward them, he just moved on.

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

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

God was hiding and protecting David.

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

Jonathan was David’s closest friend. He honored his “covenant” with David and probably risked his life to go to him and encourage him and help him find strength in God. Jonathan tells David that his father would not touch him, that he would be king and, that Jonathan would serve as second to David. (Only the first two of those things eventually came to pass, Jonathan died fighting the Philistines with his father on Mount Gilboa at the end of 1st Samuel.). *This meeting at Horesh, was the last time these two would ever see each other.*

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

It seems that the Ziphites found that they could win the favor of Saul by disclosing David’s hiding place. They do it here, and again in Chapter 26 as well.

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

Horesh, Ziph, Maon, Arabah, Jeshimon and Hakilah are all in the wilderness, south of Hebron and due east of En Gedi along the Dead Sea.

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

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

(Sela Hammahlekoth means “Rock of Escape or “Cliff of Divisions”, either way this is the place where David and Saul eventually shout across to one another in Chapter 26.)

Saul’s army was about 3,000 trained militia men lead by Abner, his commander in chief. They had David pinned between the wilderness mountains and the Dead Sea. David could not have escaped if it were not for the interruption of the word about the Philistine attack back home. Saul’s army broke off their pursuit of David.

Only two chapters ago David was hiding in a cave alone and distressed.

Now his small army has grown to 600 and he is both inquiring of AND hearing from the Lord regularly.

He had victory over the Philistines in Keilah, had been able to elude Saul by going from place to place, and saw God miraculously save him from the hand of Saul just when it looked like he was going to be defeated.

David was no longer discouraged; he was acting in confidence and trust in God. He is also now documenting his feelings frequently by writing Psalms.

He is regularly humbling himself before the Lord and crying out to God for help.

This chapter correlates with Psalm 54, where we can find out exactly what his prayer and cry to the Lord actually was at that time.

**Psalm 54**

For the director of music. With stringed instruments. A *maskil*of David. When the Ziphites had gone to Saul and said, “Is not David hiding among us?”

**1**Save me, O God, by your name;
    vindicate me by your might.
**2**Hear my prayer, O God;
    listen to the words of my mouth.

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

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

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

**6**I will sacrifice a freewill offering to you;
    I will praise your name, Lord, for it is good.
**7**You have delivered me from all my troubles,
    and my eyes have looked in triumph on my foes.

***54:4“****Surely God is my help; the Lord is the one who sustains me.”*

This is key, “God is my help, He is the one who sustains me.”

David had no one to trust but God.

Ever since his time in the cave he has been on the run and had many troubles,

* The people of Keilah were about to betray him and turn him over to Saul.
* The Ziphites exposed his hiding place to Saul while he had taken refuge in Horesh.
* Saul was turning people against David but presenting himself to them as someone who is *acting on behalf of God*, and they too would *be blessed by God* to help him capture David.
	+ “(*The Ziphites): “Your Majesty, we will be responsible for giving him into your hands.”* ***21****Saul replied, “The Lord bless you for your concern for me.****22****Go and get more information.”*
* Even Jonathan, either because of his love for David, or just his own ambition, gave David *“Two Truths and a Lie”. (at least two things that came to pass, and one that never did).*

*He told David* that;

* My father Saul will not lay a hand on you.
* You will be king over Israel,
* I will be second to you (in the kingdom).

Jonathan was a well-meaning friend, but some of his words were misleading because they never came to pass.

*Have you ever felt betrayed, exposed, turned-against, and mislead by others?*

*It can happen to any of us, by anyone, even our closest friends.*

David was not discouraged, by all this. He had a *“secret strength”* that he would draw on in times of discouragement.

(It wasn’t the Sword of Goliath, because as far as we know, he never used it after taking it from Abiathar at Nob),

The secret to his *“secret strength”,* was that it was not his own strength, it was that he learned to find *strength in God.*

He learned how to find strength in God during that final visit with Jonathan, and it served him well for the rest of his days.

**1st Sam 23:16** “Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God.”

Anytime he felt weak or defeated, David could encourage himself in the Lord by *“finding strength in God.”*

*His Psalm during that time reflects this;*

**Psalm 54:1 “**Save me, O God, by Your name, and vindicate me by Your strength. (NKJV)

Toward the end of 1st Samuel, David finds himself in one of his most distressing points of life. His village of Ziklag is burned, his family and the families of all his men are taken captive, and his men turned on him and wanted to kill him.

What did he do? He encouraged himself in the Lord by *“finding strength in God.”*

**1st Samuel 30:6“**David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was *bitter in spirit* because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.”

**Example Apollo 12:**

*Apollo 12, Nov 1969. Rocket was struck by lightning twice during lift-off. It knocked out some of the internal control batteries. The mission was about to be aborted when a young technician in the control room named John Aaron famously said; “‘Tell him to try SCE to Aux’.*

*The Ground commander did not know what it meant but desperately repeated it anyway, “Try SCE to Aux!”*

*“Switching from SCE to AUX” basically means switching from the internal Signal Conditioning Equipment, to Auxiliary power which was an extra power source within the rocket but was not being used to power the controls.*

*The astronauts on board followed the command and the mission was saved. If they ignored this and tried to get by on their own internal power, they could have crashed and died.*

David did the same thing, he switched from his own power, to God’s power…

**He found “Strength in the Lord His God”**

What do *you* do when you’re distressed, discouraged and bitter in Spirit?

Do you despair?

Do you look elsewhere on your own for support, in people, in resources, in distractions?

Do you try to muster up enough strength and self-determination to struggle through it?

OR, do you find strength in God?

Find Strength in God.

It could be as simple as knowing what to do when your phone is about to die. You don’t press the buttons harder to get more juice, you don’t tap on it frantically or try to quickly find an app that will recharge your battery.

You simply surrender to the fact that your phone can’t charge itself, you need another power source.

The only difference is the God’s power is in you AND all around you.

 **“God is our power source!”**

**“Find strength in Him!”**

How can we find strength in God?

It’s simple… just surrender.

Surrender by declaring that you are weak, and completely dependent on Him.

It is not until we get to that point of admitting our weakness that we can switch from our power, to His power.

**2nd Cor. 12:9-10** “My strength is made perfect in weakness.” …For when I am weak, then I am strong.

**Let’s not pretend to be powerful, let’s welcome our weakness.**

**Because, when we are weak, He is strong!**

**When you are weak…**

**Find Strength in the Lord your God**