

LVIII. FAITHFUL CHRISTIANS INQUIRE OF THE LORD: 1 Samuel 23:1-14

INTRODUCTION/DOCTRINE. *Faithful Christians inquire of the Lord, act accordingly, and God blesses them for their obedience.* That is the main truth we can learn in 1 Samuel 23:1-14.

This is our 58th sermon in the book of 1 Samuel, though we have not been here for some time. We typically bounce between an Old Testament book and a New Testament book, as well as cover some Psalms in the summertime. So last summer we paused 1 Samuel and got back into 1 Corinthians. Then we paused 1 Corinthians and went to the Psalms. Now we are back and will Lord willing finish out the book of 1 Samuel this go round. Then, Lord willing, we will go back to 1 Corinthians and finish that book!

QUESTION. Why study the book of 1 Samuel?

Let me give you five quick answers.

A.I) The book of 1 Samuel is in the Scriptures, therefore God wants us to know it (Deuteronomy 29:29).

- “The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law” (**Deuteronomy 29:29**).

A.II) The book of 1 Samuel is God-breathed, therefore it is profitable (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

- “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work” (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**).

A.III) The book of 1 Samuel is the Lord Jesus’s family history (Matthew 1:5-6).

- “and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king.” (**Matthew 1:5-6**).
- **BOYS AND GIRLS...**

A.IV) The book of 1 Samuel will help us see our need for a true Prophet, Priest, and King (1 Corinthians 10:11).

- “Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were

written down for our instruction..." (1 Corinthians 10:11).

- This will become more and more evident as we continue to study this book.
- **We need a Prophet who lives longer than Samuel, a Priest better than Eli, a King better than Saul and more excellent than David, and we have one. His name is Jesus!**
 - **BOYS AND GIRLS...**

A.V) The book of 1 Samuel will help us delight in Jesus all the more, who is the true King, the true Son of David (John 5:39).

- "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me" (John 5:39).
 - **Come with me again and search the book of 1 Samuel, seeing that it ultimately testifies about Christ!**

OVERALL CONTEXT: The book of 1 Samuel begins about 1140 B.C. and moves us from the time when God's people had Judges to when they have Kings. It ends about the year 1055 B.C.. The book of Judges repeatedly says, "There was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes." 1 Samuel shows us the beginning of the founding of the Throne of David, which the LORD promises will have a King whose reign will never end.

Now, this book can be divided into three basic parts with three different characters being the main focus of each part. I want to remind you of this before we jump back into 1 Samuel so you can see the forest before examining the trees. We need to see the trees but we do not need to miss the fact that the trees make up a forest.

Textual Block	Primary Focus	Summary Section
1 Samuel 1-7	Samuel	1 Samuel 7:15-17
1 Samuel 8-14	Saul	1 Samuel 14:47-52
1 Samuel 15-2 Samuel 8	David/I	2 Samuel 8:15-18
2 Samuel 9-20	David/II	2 Samuel 20:23-26
2 Samuel 21-24	Kingdom	

SPECIFIC CON(TEXT). David has been anointed King, but has not yet assumed the throne. Saul is still king, and Saul hates David. Therefore David is on the run from King Saul. Saul is so wicked that just before this chapter he commanded a man named Doeg to slaughter the entire city of Nob, because the priests had previously helped David when he was fleeing from Saul's wrath. When Doeg slaughtered the city one of the priests, named Abiathar, escaped and made it to David for safety. Now look at **1 Samuel 23:1** to understand the specific context of

where we are today.

1 Samuel 23:1 "Now they told David, 'Behold, the Philistines are fighting against Keilah (Keh-eelah) and are robbing the threshing floors (barns and threshing floors were outside the city, so they made easy prey for the Philistines).'"

Note, in 1 Samuel 22:5 the Prophet Gad, who is now with David, told him to go into the land of Judah, so David went into the forrest of Hereth. Now in our passage today we see exactly why God providentially placed David in southern Israel—so that the Lord would have David near Keilah and He could have David go save the people from the Philistines.

NOTE, we do not always see why God commands certain things, but His commands are always good and wise and will lead to His glory and our good.

DOCTRINE. Faithful Christians inquire of the Lord, act accordingly and God blesses them for their obedience.

OUTLINE. There are at least SEVEN particular truths we need to learn from this passage that we can apply to our lives for the glory of Christ.

I. SUPERIORS NEED TO INQUIRE OF THE LORD AND ACT ACCORDINGLY (1 Samuel 23:2).

1 Samuel 23:2

"Therefore David inquired of the LORD, 'Shall I go and attack these Philistines?' And the LORD said to David, 'Go and attack the Philistines and save Keilah.'"

- **POOLE:** "David inquired of the Lord; . . . by Gad, who was a prophet, 2 Samuel 24:11, and David's seer (1 Chronicles 21:9), and was now with David (1 Samuel 22:5); for Abiathar was not yet come to him (1 Samuel 23:6)."

David had the Prophet Gad with him, yet we have the Prophet Christ, and He was perfectly and sufficiently revealed Himself in His written Word.

2 Peter 1:19 "We have the prophetic word more fully confirmed, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place."

Q. What does this mean for us?

I) Husbands.

II) Fathers.

III) Mothers.

IV) Employers.

V) Pastors.

VI) Magistrates.

VII) Any kind of leader.

II. SUPERIORS NEED TO JUSTIFY THEIR LEADERSHIP WITH THE WORD OF THE LORD (1 Samuel 23:3-4).

1 Samuel 23:3-4

"3 But David's men said to him, 'Behold, we are afraid here in Judah; how much more then if we go to Keilah against the armies of the Philistines?' 4 Then David inquired of the LORD again. And the LORD answered him, 'Arise, go down to Keilah, for I will give the Philistines into your hand.'"

- **POOLE:** "David inquired of the Lord yet again; not for his own, but for his soldiers' satisfaction and encouragement, as Gideon did (Judges 7)."

TRAPP: "For the confirmation and encouragement of his soldiers, whose rule should have been [done] neither rashly nor [nervously]."

Q. What does this mean for us?

I) Husbands.

II) Fathers.

III) Mothers.

IV) Employers.

V) Pastors.

VI) Magistrates.

VII) Any kind of leader.

III. INFERIORS NEED TO FOLLOW THE LEADERSHIP OF THEIR SUPERIORS (1 Samuel 23:5).

1 Samuel 23:5

"And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah."

Q. What does this mean for us?

I) Wives.

II) Children.

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III) Church Members.

IV) Employees.

V) Citizens.

VI) Any one who has chosen a leader to follow.

NOTE, This also highlights the need to choose, so far as it depends on

you, the best leaders possible, who will lead you according to the Word of the Lord as revealed in the Scriptures.

NOTE:

- **TRAPP:** "God may be safely and must be faithfully followed, whithersoever he leads us: neither must we stand casting of perils."

IV. THE LORD BLESSES OBEDIENCE TO HIS WORD (1 Samuel 23:5).

1 Samuel 23:5

"And David and his men went to Keilah and fought with the Philistines and brought away their livestock and struck them with a great blow. So David saved the inhabitants of Keilah."

David along with his men obeyed the Word of the Lord, and the Lord blessed their obedience with victory over their enemies.

We need to apply here some general truths here concerning the simplicity of obedience and blessing. Let me give you four particulars:

I) The Lord will bless you with happiness when you obey His Word (James 1:22-25).

– James 1:22-25

"22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing."

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Q. Do you want to be supremely happy?

A. Set your heart and prayers and words and actions toward obedience.

II) The Lord will bless you with peace of conscience when you obey His Word (2 Corinthians 1:12).

– 2 Corinthians 1:12

"For our boast is this, the testimony of our conscience, that we behaved in the world with simplicity and godly sincerity, not by earthly wisdom but by the grace of God, and supremely so toward you."

Q. Do you want to have peace of conscience?

A. Set out to obey the Lord for the glory of the Lord as your chief aim in life.

III) The Lord will bless you with prospering when you obey His Word (Psalm 1:3).

– **Psalm 1:3**

"He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers."

True prosperity involves God enabling you to glorify Him and enjoy Him, no matter the situation, no matter your station, no matter your circumstance. Life is about glorifying and enjoying God, and if you obey Christ, He will bless you with prosperity!

Q. Do you want to true prosperity in this life?

A. Set out to obey the Lord for the glory of the Lord.

IV) The Lord will bless you with treasure in heaven when you obey His Word (Matthew 6:19-21).

- **Matthew 6:19-21** "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Q. Do you want treasure in heaven?

A. Set out to obey the Lord for the glory of the Lord.

When you disobey the Lord, repent, confess, trust Christ's gospel, and be forgiven:

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

V. THE BLESSING THAT COMES FROM OBEYING THE LORD DOES NOT INCLUDE FREEDOM FROM PERSECUTION IN THIS LIFE (1 Samuel 23:6-8).

1 Samuel 23:6-8

"6 When Abiathar (*the Priest*) the son of Ahimelech had fled to David to Keilah, he had come down with an ephod in his hand. 7 Now it was told Saul that David had come to Keilah. And Saul said, "God (*not the LORD*) has given him into my hand, for he has shut himself in by entering a town that has gates and bars." 8 And Saul

summoned all the people to war, to go down to Keilah, to besiege David and his men."

- **POOLE:** "[This was] the high priest's ephod, in which were the Urim and Thummim, Exodus 28:30."
 - Therefore David surely inquired of the Lord through Abiathar via the Urim and the Thummim.

The blessing that comes from obeying the Lord does not include freedom from persecution in this life. In fact, it is typically quite the opposite.

The more you obey the Lord, the more the wicked will hate you. The more you submit to Christ, the more the hypocrite will try to harm you.

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Think of David and Saul.

Think of Christ and the Pharisees.

Think of Paul and both the Jewish leaders and the Roman Magistrates.

VI. SOMETIMES THE PEOPLE YOU HELP THE MOST WILL SEEK TO HURT YOU THE WORST (1 Samuel 23:7-12).

1 Samuel 23:9-13

"9 David knew that Saul was plotting harm against him. And he said to Abiathar the priest, 'Bring the ephod here.' 10 Then David said, 'O LORD, the God of Israel, your servant has surely heard that Saul seeks to come to Keilah, to destroy the city on my account. 11 Will the men of Keilah surrender me into his hand? Will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? O LORD, the God of Israel, please tell your servant.' And the LORD said, 'He will come down.' 12 Then David said, 'Will the men of Keilah surrender me and my men into the hand of Saul?' And the LORD said, 'They will surrender you.'"

You cannot love your neighbor simply to get favors from them or a good response from them in return. You must love your neighbors first and foremost out of love for Christ. You must love your neighbor, in obedience to the Lord, in spite of what that neighbor might do to you.

Matthew 5:46-47 "46 For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? 47 And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"

I do not mean to say that you should refrain from exercising wisdom and discernment.

I do not mean to say that women should pick up hitchhikers.

I do mean to say that if you are going to love your neighbor, and especially your brothers and sisters in Christ, you are going to be opened up to all sorts of vulnerabilities and betrayals. You will at times be taken advantage of. You will at times be betrayed. Yet you will always be storing treasure for yourself in heaven.

For as Christ says, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me" (**Matthew 25:40**).

VII. THE LORD WILL PRESERVE HIS PEOPLE (1 Samuel 23:13-14).

1 Samuel 23:13-14

"13 Then David and his men, who were about six hundred, arose and departed from Keilah, and they went wherever they could go. When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he gave up the expedition. 14 And David remained in the strongholds in the wilderness, in the hill country of the wilderness of Ziph. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not give him into his hand."

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And the Lord is ultimately preserving David because of His promise to David and His ultimate promise of Christ, who would come from David's line.

CONCLUSION.

Q. Did you notice how David ultimate typifies Christ in this passage?

A. David inquired of the Lord, obeyed the Lord, led his men to obey the Lord, and went to save his people. Yet His people end up betraying him.

So it was with Christ.

Yet Christ did not escape from the city with His men like David.

Christ was the truly innocent one who let himself be handed over to the enemy;

He let Himself be bound and taken captive;

He let Himself be beaten and scourged;

Christ let Himself be falsely tried and shamefully convicted of crimes He did not commit;

He let Himself be spit, mocked, and reviled;

Christ let Himself be nailed to the cross;

He willingly took on Himself the wrath of God due to us for our sin, so that all who receive Him by faith would have eternal life.

Jesus is like David, but better. He is the King that can defeat not only your external enemies like David could; Christ is the King who can defeat

your internal enemies, sin and death.

John 1:11-13

"11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

Q. Don't you want to trust in this grace-filled King for salvation, and obey Him to glorify His name? **A.** Do it and you will be blessed.

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Introduction and Why Study 1 Samuel

1. The sermon gives five reasons to study 1 Samuel. Which one most motivates you personally, and why?
2. How does Deuteronomy 29:29 help us think about studying "ordinary" historical books of the Bible?
3. In what ways does 1 Samuel prepare us to see our need for a better Prophet, Priest, and King than Samuel, Eli, Saul, or even David?
4. How does John 5:39 shape the way we should read this chapter—what should we be looking for besides David's example?

Context

1. Where is David at this point in the story (anointed but not yet king, fleeing Saul)? How does the massacre at Nob and Abiathar's arrival set the stage?
2. The notes say God placed David near Keilah for a purpose even when David may not have seen it yet. When have you later seen why God led you somewhere you did not understand at the time?
3. Why is it important that David inquires of the Lord before acting, even though he already has a prophet (Gad) with him?

Main Doctrine

1. Restate the main doctrine in your own words: "Faithful Christians inquire of the Lord, act accordingly, and God blesses them for their obedience." What part of that chain do you find hardest?

I. Superiors Need to Inquire of the Lord and Act Accordingly (1 Samuel 23:2)

1. David asks a specific, practical question: "Shall I go and attack these Philistines?" What kinds of decisions in your life require the same kind of inquiry rather than assumption?
2. The sermon applies this to husbands, fathers, mothers, employers, pastors, magistrates, and any leader. Pick one role you hold. What would "inquiring of the Lord" look like this week in that role?
3. We have "the prophetic word more fully confirmed" (2 Peter 1:19). How is searching Scripture different from (and better than) David's inquiry through Gad?

II. Superiors Need to Justify Their Leadership with the Word of the Lord (1 Samuel 23:3–4)

1. David's men are afraid. Why does David inquire again rather than simply commanding them?
2. How should a leader use God's Word to give courage rather than just to win an argument?
3. In your home, workplace, or church, when has a leader's return to Scripture helped fearful people move forward? When has the absence of that made things worse?

III. Inferiors Need to Follow the Leadership of Their Superiors (1 Samuel 23:5)

1. David's men go even though they were afraid. What does faithful following look like when you still feel the risk?
2. The notes list wives, children, church members, employees, and citizens. Which of these is most relevant to you right now, and what would obedience look like without becoming passive or unthinking?
3. Why does the sermon add a note about choosing the best leaders possible "so far as it depends on you"? How do we hold that together with the call to follow?

IV. The Lord Blesses Obedience to His Word (1 Samuel 23:5)

1. The sermon lists four blessings of obedience: happiness (James 1:22–25), peace of conscience (2 Corinthians 1:12), true prosperity (Psalm 1:3), and treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19–21). Which of these do you most need to believe today?
2. How does the sermon define "true prosperity"? How is that different from common ideas of blessing?

3. What should we do when we have not obeyed? Walk through 1 John 1:9 together.

For children: Do you want to be truly happy? What does the Bible say we should set our hearts on?

V. Blessing Does Not Mean Freedom from Persecution (1 Samuel 23:6–8)

1. David obeys and saves Keilah—then Saul immediately moves against him. Why is it important not to treat obedience as a deal that buys an easy life?
2. “The more you obey the Lord, the more the wicked will hate you.” Where have you seen a milder version of this?
3. Compare David/Saul, Jesus/the Pharisees, and Paul/the authorities. What pattern do you see?

For children: Think of David and Saul, or Jesus and the Pharisees. Why did doing the right thing not make everyone like them?

VI. Sometimes Those You Help Most Will Hurt You Worst (1 Samuel 23:9–12)

1. The men of Keilah would surrender David after he saved them. How does that challenge “I’ll help them so they’ll be loyal to me”?
2. Read Matthew 5:46–47. What is the difference between loving for return and loving out of love for Christ?
3. The sermon balances this with wisdom (e.g., not picking up hitchhikers). How do we love sacrificially and exercise discernment?
4. How does Matthew 25:40 reframe the cost of being taken advantage of?

VII. The Lord Will Preserve His People (1 Samuel 23:13–14)

1. David leaves Keilah and Saul cannot seize him: “God did not give him into his hand.” How does this comfort you when obedience still leaves you in “the wilderness”?
2. The notes say God is preserving David because of His promise and ultimately because of Christ. How does that bigger story keep us from reading this chapter as only “be like David and you’ll be safe”?

Christ in the Passage

1. In what ways does David typify Christ here (inquiring, obeying, leading, saving, being betrayed)?
2. Where is the comparison not exact? Why is it good news that Jesus did

not escape the city the way David did?

3. Read John 1:11–13. How does this chapter push us toward receiving the true King rather than only admiring David?

Personal and Group Application

1. Where do you need to inquire of the Lord again this week instead of acting on fear or habit?
2. Is there a place where you are a “superior” who needs to justify a decision with Scripture? A place where you are an “inferior” who needs to follow?
3. After studying this, what one act of obedience—small or costly—will you take, knowing blessing may include hardship and that the Lord preserves His people?

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

(YouTube did not produce a transcript)