

G'day Church Family

There are Bibles in front of you

And we're looking at 1 Samuel chapter 23

There's the usual outline for you to take notes - if you wish

Let me ask God for His help and understanding

Let' me pray first, though...

## Intro

[PowerPoint 1-Spear at David]

So last week we learnt about David on the run from King Saul who is out to kill him

And remember last week too - Saul accused Ahimelek, the priest, of helping David and this is what Saul said to Ahimelek in chapter 22, verse 13

[PowerPoint 2-1 Sam 22:13]

<sup>13</sup>... "Why have you conspired against me, you and the son of Jesse [David], giving him bread and a sword and ***inquiring of God for him*** (pause)

It begs the question - how often do we ***inquire of the Lord?***

[PowerPoint 3-Question]

Regularly?

Occasionally?

Never?

Is God our first resort?

Or our last resort?

Do we inquire of the Lord, before every decision, before every event, before we set out for the day?

Or only when we're in bother?

(pause)

In this passage David *asks God before he acts.*

## CONSISTENT (1 Sam 23)

In this chapter David is consistent in His communication with God

Let's see - by looking at *2 case studies* from this chapter

### Case Study #1 - David asks God if he should help the city of Keilah (1 Sam 23:1-6)

Case Study #1 - David asks God if he should help the city of Keilah - that's in vv1-6

- We pick up the story in v1 of 1 Sam 23
- David is informed that the Philistines are attacking Keilah [#1 on the map]  
[PowerPoint 4-Keilah-Map]
- The Philistines are stealing grain from the threshing floor at Keilah - which means the people of Keilah will starve  
[PowerPoint 5-Case Study #1]
- Now remember, David is on the run - he could have said "no way, I can't help" but he doesn't
- It begs the question - though - why people came to David for help and not King Saul?

- But David doesn't just act impulsively
- If David goes to fight the Philistines, is he overstepping his authority?  
Remember Saul is the King - he should be making the decision to fight the Philistines?
- So, in V2 - David *inquires of the Lord* - firstly - David asks should he fight the Philistines or not?
- And the Lord answers - Yes!
- But David's men are not so keen on the idea of fighting the Philistines
- They're afraid - see v3
- So, David inquires of the Lord a second time - out of compassion and respect for his men
- And God promises in v4 - He will give David and his men victory over the Philistines
- And that's exactly what happens in v5 - it's a heavy defeat for the Philistines
- And the people of Keilah are saved
- We are also given some very important information - in v6

#### [PowerPoint 6-Ephod]

- The surviving priest Abiathar has the ephod [Explain] with him
- Which enables David to **inquire of the Lord**

#### [PowerPoint 7-Urim & Thummim]

- The ephod has 2 other stones - Urim and Thummim [Explain]

## Case Study 2 - David asks God if he should flee from Keilah (1 Sam 23:7-29)

Case Study #2 - David asks God if he should flee from Keilah - that's in vv7-29

### [PowerPoint 8-Case study #2]

- V7 - *Saul naively thinks God has delivered David into his hands* - because David is in the city of Keilah - which is a city with walls and gates - so his exit could be blocked
- Saul still doesn't accept the fact that *God has rejected him as king* - and is with David as his anointed one
- So, *Saul* decides to **attack** the city of *Keilah* where David is - v8
- Ironically - Saul didn't help Keilah when they were being attacked by the Philistines - but *he's happy to attack his own people* to get David
- Meanwhile - David hears about Saul's plan and consults God through Abiathar and the *ephod* - v9
- David asks God - **2 questions** - in v10-12 - *will Saul attack* and destroy Keilah because of David? God says - Yes. *And will the people of Keilah betray* David to Saul? And again - God says - yes
- So, David escapes
- Saul hears about the escape and abandons his plan to attack Keilah

### [PowerPoint 9-Map]

- David and his men escape to stay in the strongholds and hills of the Desert of *Ziph* [#2 on the map] - Saul is unable to find him there

- Even **Jonathan**, Saul's son, comes to reassure David - that his father, Saul, will not harm David - and to assure David that he will become king. Jonathan realizes God is in control
- The **Ziphites betray** David to Saul [So David - God's anointed one has been betrayed by the people of Keilah and Ziph - this should remind us how Judas betrayed God's anointed one, Jesus]
- Saul **naively** says to the Ziphites in v21 - "*the Lord bless you for your concern for me*"
- **Saul just can't get it - that God is not on his side**
- Saul wants the Ziphites to get **more info** on David's whereabouts
- Meanwhile David and his men move South to **Maon** [#3 on the map]
- Then we have this **funny scene** - in v26 - where Saul and his men are going around one side of the mountain and David and his men are going around the other side of the mountain (like playing peek-a-boo with your grandchildren)
- It just so happens, before Saul can catch up with David -that a messenger arrives to say the Philistines are raiding the land - in v27
- Saul abandons his pursuit - and the place when he gives up chasing David - in v28 is called - **Sela Hammah-le-loth** - "*The rock of parting*"
- David escapes again to En Gedi [#4 on the Map]

### [PowerPoint 10-Summary]

What we see in these 2 case studies of David is that:

- David consults the Lord before he acts

- And God answers in different ways - through His words - through the Ephod - and through circumstances - sending Jonathan - sending messengers to warn David - and the Philistine attacking

We can deduce from this - that God wants us to pray - He wants us to ask - He does listen - and He does act according to His will - and according to His timing and His purposes

He can even use evil intentions - like Saul's evil intentions - to achieve His purposes and preserve His anointed - David

Nothing is impossible for God!

We can also see that David is **consistent** in his communication with God

## PERSISTENT (Luke 18:1-8)

### Case Study 3 - The Parable of the Persistent Widow

Case Study #3 is from our NT passage from Luke 18:1-8 [please turn there now]

[PowerPoint 11-Case study #3]

Jesus tells a parable -

A parable – *is a simple story with the purpose of illustrating a spiritual lesson*

The purpose of the parable is given in v1

***“to show the disciples (and us) that we should always pray and not give up”***

The parable is about an - unjust judge whom eventually gives the widow justice because of her persistence in continually asking the judge for justice.

The judge neither feared God nor cared what people thought (v2) but he grants the widow her request because as he says in v5 "*this widow keeps bothering me*"

On first reading of this parable the story might seem to make a comparison between the judge and God - saying the judge and God are alike - and teaching that God's people have to be like the widow and cry out to God day and night before their prayers are answered. But Jesus surely intends to give us a contrast of how different the judge and God are - not a comparison of how alike they are!

Jesus is saying here - "If in the end an unjust judge can be worn down into giving a widow woman justice - how much more will God, who is a loving Father, give His children what they need"

- the key verse is verse 7 - and Jesus is saying that God is not like the judge  
 Reading verses 6, 7 and 8 - *Listen to what the unjust judge says [he gave in because the widow kept bothering him] - verse 7 - And will not God bring about justice for His chosen ones who cry out to Him day and night? Will He keep putting them off [like the judge did]*  
*Verse 8 - I tell you, He [God] will see that they get justice, and quickly...*

As Jesus' disciples - it's important that we practice constant contact with God, who we know always hears our prayers.

God's answer may not always be what we hope for - sometimes a human father has to refuse a request for a child, because He knows that what the child asks for would hurt the child - not help the child. God is like that too.

So, God's answer may not always be what we hope for, it may sometimes be **NO**, it may sometimes be **WAIT**. But we learn by experience that as often as we pray, so often we will be answered quickly.

As His chosen ones, we should pray day and night - not because He doesn't listen - but precisely because He does listen

Having such faith as to take everything to the Lord in prayer, has to be cultivated even when we understand the principle - sometimes the answer to WAIT comes quickly but the waiting may be long time - which is why Jesus says at the end of v18 - *when the Son of man comes - will he find faith on earth?* In other words, will Jesus find people with faith - who are prepared to wait on God - and trust Him in all things?

As an aside - some people ask me what's the point of praying - if God knows the outcome already and He knows whether the answer - is yes, no or wait? Why bother?

My answer would be 2-fold:

- a) First - you can't have a close relationship with anyone if you don't communicate - God talks to us through His word - we talk to him through prayer - that's how we develop a close relationship with Him
- b) Second - prayer is not just about asking God for things - there are 4 types of prayers - Adoration (Praise), Confession (Repent), Thanks and Supplication (Shopping List)

So, the parable teaches us to be **persistent** and **constant** in our prayers knowing God is infinitely better than a non-believing secular judge - who eventually gives in.

We will never grow weary in prayer - and our faith will never falter - if after we have offered to God our prayers and requests - we add the perfect prayer ending "*Thy will be done, Lord*"

## Application

[PowerPoint 12-Apps]

3 applications to take home today:

[PowerPoint 12a-App1]

1. Even though David is not King (Saul is) and even though David is on the run and could have said - sorry I can't help the people of Keilah right now. He showed compassion to the people of Keilah and risked his life for them. In the same way, Jesus showed compassion for the people of Jerusalem - in Luke 9:36 - *When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.*

What about us? Do we show compassion all the time? Even when we have our own struggles - like David and Jesus did? Or do we only show compassion - when we're feeling ok?

[PowerPoint 12b-App2]

2. God saves and protects David. Which reminds us of God's protection of us. David saves and protects the people of Keilah. In the same way, Jesus saves and protects His people for all eternity. We all need Jesus as our Lord and Saviour?

[PowerPoint 12c-App3]

3. We must be *consistent* and *persistent* and *constant* - when we talk to the Lord in prayer. David and the widow serve as examples of how our prayer life should be with God. Are we challenged about our prayer life from these case studies, this morning/evening?

## Challenges

Back to our original questions

How often do we inquire of the Lord?

Regularly?

Occasionally?

Never?

Is God our first resort?

Or our last resort?

Do we inquire of the Lord, before every decision, before every event, before we set out for the day?

Or only when we're in bother?

Do we thank Him for the day?

Do we confess immediately we do wrong?

Or do we just have a shopping list when we pray?

## [PowerPoint 13-Challenges]

Let me leave us with a couple of challenges...

The Apostle Paul says this in Philippians 4:6

## [PowerPoint 13a-Challenge 1]

**Phil 4:6** - Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

Are we praying in every situation?

(pause)

[PowerPoint 13b-Challenge 2]

The Apostle Paul also says in Ephesians 6:18

**Ephesians 6:18** And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.

Are we praying on all occasions?

Are we praying all kinds of prayers?

Let me pray now...