

The Song that Saved King David's Life

(1 Samuel 29)

10/12/15; Wed PM Pine Grove

Introduction

A poverty-stricken Christian family lived next door to an unbelieving atheist family.

The Christian family was often without food, but the family always kept the faith that God would provide for them.

They prayed regularly and maintained their hope in the Lord in the worst of times.

The unbelieving family beside them often made fun of their faith, mocking the Christians trust in God even when things grew worse and worse...

The hard economic times were often what the atheist neighbors pointed at when saying why God could not be real..

On one occasion during a particularly difficult week, the Christian father was outside praying with his wife and children, and the atheist overheard the prayer...

The father was praying out loud for God to give them two loaves of bread so that they could get by until the next pay day.

Well, the atheist man was just so disgusted with such open shows of faith, that he took the last few dollars of what he had and went and purchased two loaves of bread and placed it at their door.

Then he went away and kept a close watch on their door.

When the Christian father opened the door, he called the entire family there to see the two loaves of bread.

“See, kids the Lord has answered our prayers and given us two loaves of bread. God always provides just what we need.”

Seeing his chance, the atheist jumped off his porch and ran next door.

There is no God and He didn’t answer your prayers.

I went down to the store and purchased the bread myself.

God didn’t give you that bread, I did.

There is no God.

The Father looked right at the man and said, “Oh God is real. He did answer our prayer and he did provide for our needs. Sometimes, He just uses the devil to do it.”

And the man was right.

Two loaves of bread ended up at his home.

That was the family’s prayer and that was the Lord’s answer and provision.

Didn’t really matter what means God used.

His people got what they needed when they needed it.

Tonight, in chapter 29, God is going to provide David another rescue, and He is going to use an unusual means of rescue.

Because God is going to use the enemy of David to save David.

God is going to use evil men to save God’s king.

Now if you have a good memory, this has happened before in David’s life.

Remember when he was on one side of the mountain and Saul was just on the other side in chapter 23?

Saul got a call that the Philistines were attacking, so he stopped the pursuit and allowed David to escape..

Well this time, the Philistines don't save David from a murderous manhunt of Saul.

But they do save David out of an almost impossible situation.

IF you remember from two weeks ago, David is in a tight spot.

He had escaped to the Philistines seeking safety from Saul,..

But while there, the Philistine king Achish gave him a city of his own.

They know that David is an incredible leader and warrior...

And while living in the land of the Philistines, David takes his men out and continues to wipe out the enemies of Israel...

When the Philistine king asks David how things are going, David tells him things are going good...

That he has been defeating the Israelites who live in the Negev of Judah...

David lies to try and protect himself from what he is really doing...

But it all catches up to him when the Philistine King Achish comes back to David and asks David to go with him for a real attack on Israel...

What is David going to do?

He would never attack Israel.

But he needs to keep up his deception or the Philistines may execute him as a traitor...

What is David going to do to get out of this?

And the hard part for us as readers is that the author of 1 Samuel left us with that cliffhanger all the way through chapter 28 with Saul and the witch..

Not a word was mentioned about David's situation...

Where was he while Saul was at the local psychic house?

Well, we are going to find out tonight in chapter 29..

Now, this section of 1 Samuel is arranged a little differently...

When chapter 27 ends, the Philistines and David are planning to go fight the Israelites...

In chapter 28, Saul goes to see the spirit medium on the day before the battle...

But here is chapter 29, we are going to take a step back in time...

Because chapter 29 speaks of the Philistines journey up to battle the Israelites....

Now you may ask why it is arranged this way...

And I would suggest this to you...

It was arranged this way to show the desperate situations of both David and Saul back to back..

David is desperate to know what to do to get out of his rock and a hard place situation...

And Saul is simply desperate to hear from God at all..

In the big picture, here you have two kings of Israel in back to back chapters and neither one of them are able to do a thing without the Lord's help...

Good lesson there for all of us...

If two of the most important men in the history of the world are dependent upon God, how much more should we be...

Just when you think that you have it all under control, you are then in real trouble...

The Christian life is not a struggle to stand on your own two feet....

The Christian life is a race to put ourselves in the Lord's hands...

And trust him with our lives...

With that said, let us look at the care that is found in God's hands in chapter 29...

So, let me offer two ways that God's hands protect his people in this world...

I. God's Hands Set Up Roadblocks for His People (1-5)

**II. God's Hands Clear Highways for His People
(6-11)**

Now, these ways are meat and potatoes for the Wednesday night crowd.

Nothing that we see tonight is going to make you re-think what you know about God...

These are just simply reminders of what we know to be true about the Lord...

If you look back over your life, you should be able to find examples of both of these principles..

We have even seen these already in 1 Samuel 29...

But again, repetition is the key to learning, and the key to learning is repetition...

And we need to be reminded of these things constantly...

Maybe one of you tonight is praying that God would create a new path for you, yet that isn't happening....

And maybe you need to be reminded that God puts roadblocks in our life for a reason...

Maybe you are asking God to throw up a roadblock, but things keep happening in your life to clear a new path for you..

Maybe tonight, you just need a reminder that God opens new paths for us in His own way and own time..

The Lord is the Lord of the open door and the closed door.

And both can be very valuable in our lives.

So, let's dig into chapter 29, and the first section will be looking at how God is going to rescue David but putting up an unusual roadblock for him...

I. God's Hands Set Up Roadblocks for His People (1-5)

Verses 1-2...

29 Now the Philistines gathered together all their armies to Aphek, while the Israelites were camping by the spring which is in Jezreel. 2 And the lords of the Philistines were proceeding on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were proceeding on in the rear with Achish.

Now, these verse are so important in establishing the time frame of what we see here in chapter 29...

Which is going to be a jump back in time from chapter 28...

In chapter 28, it was the day before the big battle and Saul needed guidance on what to do...

But as we get to chapter 29, we know that this goes back in time because we read in verse 1 that the Philistines are gathered at Aphek...

Now if you look at our map, you will see that Aphek is far south of where the battle will be fought...

So, this is a rest stop on the way to battle the Israelites...

When we left off in chapter 27, Achish is asking David to go with the Philistines to the battle...

And now in chapter 29, we are on the way to that battle...

They have left all the southern lands of the Philistines...

Gath, where Achish was king...

Ziklag, which was David's headquarters for 16 months in Philistia....

And all the Philistine army is making their way up to the battle which will be in northern Israel...

They will eventually make their way to Shunem and camp there opposite of Israel which will be in Jezreel and Gilboa.

But today, all the Philistines are getting together at the National Guard armory in Aphek to walk up together for battle...

Here are some pictures of modern day Aphek...

The remains of a fort are there today...

Here is an overhead shot of the old city.

Aphek is in the bottom left corner...

Here is one more picture of modern day Aphek, but I hope you get the picture...

The Philistines are marching north looking forward to a battle with the Israelites..

David is there marching north with them...

I am sure he is nervous...

How is he going to get out of this?

Maybe he has been praying to the Lord...

And we see that he has been walking with the group but where is he at?

He is at the back of the pack..

It is almost as if he is like the little kid who hates going to see the doctor...

So, he takes his time getting out of the car, and then he walks way behind everyone else to the door of the office...

It is almost like he hopes that something or someone is going to come and rescue him before the walks through the door..

Maybe the doctor will close for lunch...

Maybe, he can make run for it at the last second..

And though he is there, there is the hope that if he stalls just enough, he won't have to go...

That is what I see here with David and his men...

Just walking fast enough to keep up but there is no excitement in getting there..

They are in the back hoping for a way of escape....

And then we read this in verse 3...

3 Then the commanders of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul the king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or rather these years, and I have found no fault in him from the day he [a]deserted to me to this day?"

I'm would imagine that the commanders of the other Philistine soldiers do a double take when David strolls up in Aphek with Achish.

You can imagine the chatter for the Philistine soldiers...

“Is that David and his men?”

“What are they doing here?”

“That can’t be David.”

“Oh, that’s David. I know him when I see him.”

And so they ask Achish, “what is going on here. What are these Israelites doing here. Aren’t we on our way to fight them?”

And surprisingly, Achish defends David before these other Philistine commanders...

“Yea, that’s David. He deserted Israel, and he has been on our side for a while now.”

“And he’s a good guy.”

“He has been loyal to me for a while now. Guess what? He has even been wiping out Israelites while he has been staying in Ziklag.”

And you cant but see the humor here..

A Philistine king defending an Israelite soldier who had made a living wiping out Philistines..

But Achish could have talked all day about how good David is, but the commanders were not buying into it...

Look at verses 4-5...

4 But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, “Make the man go back, that he may return to his place where you have assigned him, and do not let him go down to battle with us, or in the battle he may become an adversary to us. For with what could this man make himself acceptable to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of [b]these men? 5 Is this not David, of whom they sing in the dances, saying, ‘Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands’?”

Everyone in Israel and even in Philistia knew that number 1 hit...

“Saul has slain his thousands,
And David his ten thousands.”

Those words rang out with joy from the mouth of every Israelite....

But put fear in the heart of every Philistine..

And now here was David in the camp of the Philistines in Aphek getting ready to head north with them to fight the Israelites...

In the minds of all the Philistine commanders, something ain't right...

And they can't tell Achish fast enough...

"Get David and his men out of here."

"He may turn on us in battle. We don't need and we don't want his help."

He can't be trusted...

And then they break out in the David Disco Dance Song...

Now, how is that for a turn of events in David's life..

Here he is halfway to the battle against his own people..

Wondering how he is going to get out of this mess, and now, the Philistine commanders come to his rescue...

In David's life, he has been saved twice by the enemy Philistines.

What we learn here about how God works?

He works quietly at times..

David probably never saw this coming..

Yet God had a plan to get him out of this desperate situation...

I would also say that God works up to the very last minute.

David probably hoped that God would have stepped in before he packed all his gear and headed to battle with his men...

But God had a plan that required David to stay in his situation until the very last moment...

I would also add this...

God works to our amazement sometimes...

This is not the normal way for God to rescue David...

Why not just send a plague to kill all the Philistines and let David escape without a scratch?

However, God rescued David in a way that was most unusual...

He put people in David's path to block his way..

And that is what we see so often...

God rescues by a roadblock at times...

We have all had those where God used whatever means necessary to keep us out of trouble and temptation...

And that is the way that God's hand of protection works at times..

It works quietly, it works to the very last minute, and it sometimes works in a surprising way.

Let's look at one more truth about God's hand of protection in the final section...

At times, God's hands set up roadblocks for His people...and at other times...

II. God's Hands Clear Highways for His People (6-11)

Look at verses 6-7....

6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "As the Lord lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army are pleasing in my sight; for I have not found evil in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, you are not pleasing in the sight of the lords. 7 Now therefore return and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines."

Achish even apologizes to David on behalf of the Philistine commanders...

"David, you have been a loyal man to me. So sorry but the commanders won't let you go with us into battle."

Now, we almost chuckle here because we know that David has not been loyal to the king of the Philistines...

He has been lying to him for the whole time he was in Ziklag.

The reason that Achish hasn't found evil in David is because David has killed everyone to prevent them from telling the Philistine king the truth...

Either way, Achish is sending David away on good terms in his mind...

Almost ashamed by the behavior of the Philistine commanders...

For us the reader, we know that the commanders of the Philistine army were right..

David has no intention of fighting against Israel..

To David, the only good Philistine is a dead Philistine....

But David is going to keep up his deception all the way to the very end...

I would suggest to you that David had to keep his face from breaking into a big smile when those commanders told Achish that David couldn't go.

I would suggest to your that David's men had to swallow the shouts of joy that came into their mouths when they found out they couldn't go.

When I was a kid, I despised family reunions.

We would all load up into the car and go spend a Sunday afternoon with 4th cousins that I didn't know and great aunts kissing you with red lipstick.

But my grandma always wanted us to go and meet the family.

It made her happy for all of us to go, so she could show us off..

But for me, it was Sunday afternoon.

I wanted to play football in the yard and ride bikes and anything else I could do other than..

Going to a church fellowship hall and staying for hours staring at walls...

But I couldn't get out of it...

However, I remember one Sunday when we scheduled to go and it was raining.

The reunion was planned for a public park but the rain had ruined the setup..

So, my grandma came to me and told me that we couldn't go.

I was so excited, but since I was supposed to enjoy these things, I looked at her and said...

“Oh wow, that is so bad. I really wanted to go. Are you sure we can’t go anyway?”

I didn’t mean a word of it, but I thought it was good for my relationship with my grandma to look disappointed even though I was not disappointed at all.

And that is what I think we see out of David in verse 8...

8 David said to Achish, “But what have I done? And what have you found in your servant from the day when I came before you to this day, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?”

I suggest to you that David didn’t mean a word of this...

He had no intention of fighting against his fellow countrymen...

Remember that he refused to lift a finger against Saul on two occasions...

Why would he now be ready to cut off Saul’s head in battle...

To me, this is nothing but more deception on David's part...

But whatever it is, the fact is that God has rescued David and now God is going to use Achish is going to clear the path for David to go back home...

Verses 9-10...

9 But Achish replied to David, "I know that you are pleasing in my sight, like an angel of God; nevertheless the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He must not go up with us to the battle.' 10 Now then arise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who have come with you, and as soon as you have arisen early in the morning and have light, depart."

Don't you just love how God works?

He uses the Philistines to block David's path and rescue him from trouble...

And then God uses a Philistine king to clear the road for David to go back home...

And understand this...

David is the one who got himself into this mix with his departure to the Philistine land and then his deception while he lived there..

In a very real sense, this is all David's mess....

But isn't God good to clean up our messes?

Isn't He worthy of our praise when he keeps us from trouble even when we don't deserve it?

Isn't His faithfulness to His children so unlike our faithfulness to our children?

What is a favorite phrase of many parents?

"You got yourself into this mess, so you need to get yourself out of it."

And I don't totally disagree with that philosophy at times...

That may be a good parenting strategy at times..

But aren't you so grateful that God doesn't leave us in our messes forever...

But he rescues us from trouble...

And get this...

He does it time and time and time again...

There is no limit to how many times God will run to our rescue...

He doesn't have a chart and when you get past 10 rescues that you are then on your own...

No, he rescues and protects and shields over and over and over again...

His mercies are new every morning morning, right?

Let's look at this final verse...

Verse 11...

11 So David arose early, he and his men, to depart in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

Again, I don't want to make much of this...

But please notice the difference in how this chapter ends compared to chapter 28...

In chapter 28, Saul was in trouble...

He needed to hear from God and he went to all the wrong places and people to solve his problem...

And when the chapter was over, Saul left the witch's house and according to the final verse of chapter 28, it was night...

And now here we are in chapter 29...

David also has a problem...

He needed a rescue from God...

And God provides us through the Philistines...

And David leaves this scene when?

The next morning when it was light...

I think that is an interesting way to end both of these chapters...

For Saul, his life is dark and about to get much darker...

For David, his life is bright and about to get much brighter...

And it all goes to having access to God's Word...

Without God's Word, there is darkness...

But with God's Word and his guidance, there is much light....

Remember Psalm 119:105...

Your word is a lamp to my feet And a light to my path.

And we see such a good picture of that in the ending of these two chapters...

Saul is with God's Word and his feet have no lamp to light the way...

David is a man with access to God's Word and his pathway is full of light...

Conclusion

As I think about how to summarize this...

I have one thought..

Oh, how good it is to know the Lord and to have access to His Word and to live under His protection...

Saul seeks out the Lord and looks in all the wrong places...

David simply lives out his life and everywhere he turns the Lord is there..

Saul can do no right...

And David can do no wrong...

Saul cannot do enough to earn back the Lord's protection...

David can't mess up enough to lose the Lord's protection...

And how do we come to terms with that?

Saul became a man who forgot that the Lord desires obedience from the heart...

And David was a man who always remembered to love God from the heart...

Let us pray.