



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor
April 30, 2017

1 SAMUEL 23:6-18

1 Samuel Series

Let's pray before we come before the Lord today.

[PRAYER] Lord, we would feel aimless or not know what to do, we'd lack guidance if it weren't for your word and for the power that it has to not only lead us everyday, but to just affirm who we are in you. So we're coming before you now as we open your word in hope and in faith that you will bless us with a word from the Lord today that we can use that will be that powerful word that is not just on the written page, but that applies to our own hearts. We thank you for your Holy Spirit who illumines the word for us so that we can understand it and it makes sense. Lord, we know that sometimes when nonbelievers look at it, it doesn't make sense to them unless they're coming to know you personally. But we thank you for your Spirit that lives inside of us that illumines your word and helps us to understand it in complete thoughts in ways that apply to our lives. We're grateful. Lord, we understand that your word is a light for us that guides our path, but it also illumines the very parts of our heart that need to be adjusted and changed. So we stand before you open now and ask that you would speak to us and teach us from your word. In Jesus' name, amen.

We serve a God who speaks. God is a speaking God. When He created the world He used words to create the world. He often used prophets to speak His word to other people. God is interested in speaking to us. That is different than other kinds of religions. In fact that's what the Bible says. Even as Paul is referring to the pagans, to other people who are not believers, he says these words – *You know that when you are pagan somehow or another you are influenced and led astray to mute idols.* These are idols that can't talk. They're just mute idols. But our God is a speaking God. It's very interesting that this verse right here appears in 1 Corinthians 12:2 in a passage about spiritual gifts and spiritual giftings, many of which are word gifts that are used to share God's message with other people.

Today we're going to look at a passage of scripture in 1 Samuel 23 that I'm impressed of the number of times that God is either speaking, or people are inquiring of Him, or people are speaking for God, or God is speaking through people. It's just really interesting to see what happens in this passage, which led me to this fascinating study about God speaking to us and our ability to speak on His behalf.

So I want to talk to you today about speaking on behalf of the Lord. Here's why. Sometimes you have this sense, don't you, if that person would just get that biblical idea then they would be doing that much better in their lives. You get that impression. You have that sense, but sometimes you don't know how to present it or share it.

Scott Turansky - Calvary Chapel Living Hope

What I want to do today is I want to share with you a concept that I find in this passage where there are actually three different ideas that we're going to see. One represented by David, another represented by Saul, and another represented by Jonathan, the three guys in the story. Each one brings to this picture an idea of God speaking to us or we being this pass-through where God speaks through us. I think if we put all three ideas together there is created a sweet spot. This sweet spot is this place where God's word can flow through us and have an impact on other people. So I'm going to show you what we're doing here in the story of David and Saul and Jonathan, but then I want to take you into the New Testament and talk a little bit more about how we can speak on God's behalf and how we need to do that. If we're going to do it we need to do it carefully.

So let's look at 1 Samuel 23. This is picking it up in verse 6. This is where we're going to start and this is just a parenthetical statement that's thrown in here. We're going to look at it first before we look at the rest of the verses. Remember that David is running for his life from Saul. Saul is out to kill him. Saul is looking for ways to kill him. David who has been promised this ability to be the king is now waiting for that to take place, but in the meantime he is running for his life.

So the verse reads this way: *(Now Abiathar son of Ahimelek had brought the ephod down with him when he fled to David at Keilah.)* Now we're going to learn more about this ephod and how it's used in the passage. We're going to see more about this principle talked about here. But it's introduced here, so I want to introduce it in our understanding of this passage here as well.

So what I want to do is just look at the principle first. Here's the principle: To pass on messages for God you must be listening to what He's saying to you. In that case it's an ephod. We don't have an ephod today; we have God's word itself. If you want to hear God speak, you go to His word. He's going to speak to you through His word. That is our standard. Any other messages you think you have from God must come underneath the authority of God's word. But in that time they didn't have the Bible and the ephod was one of those methods for determining God's will. We're going to see it more as we go forward here. But I want you to see the first circle that is represented in the diagram that I created where the sweet spot is this. We must hear from God.

We don't just want to be going around and sharing our opinion with someone else as if it were God's word. We have to hear what God has to say to us. So I would encourage you to be in the word regularly because as you're in the word regularly then God will bring about experiences in your life where you can use that word and share it with others.

We're going to come back to this idea because this is only the parenthetical thought. We'll see it developed a little bit more in the passage.

Let's go on and read more about what's happening in the passage to see the other elements in it. Now we're going to look at Saul. *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." And Saul called up all his forces for battle, to go down to Keilah to besiege David and his men.*

I find it fascinating that Saul says, “*God has delivered him in to my hands.*” It’s a false statement. We’ll contrast it with verse 14 in a few minutes because verse 7 and 14 say the opposite thing. Because God did not give David into Saul’s hands. But notice what it says. *Saul was told that David had gone to Keilah, and he said, “God has delivered him into my hands.”*

Here’s what Saul’s error is. Saul is believing that because something good has happened to me that it must be God. That’s what he believes. Saul is on this path to kill David. So since there is now this opportunity that exists, he’s saying it must be God that did this.

We have to understand that just because something good happens doesn’t mean that God is in it. Certainly God is good and He gives us all kinds of good things, but because something bad happens in our lives (suffering, for example) doesn’t mean that God isn’t in it. God is often working through suffering to build through us the character that we need in our lives. We can’t evaluate whether something is from God or not based on whether it’s good or not good.

Saul says, “*God has delivered him into my hands.*” He’s mistaken. He’s wrong. He believes that God is doing something that is leading him into the right direction, but he’s wrong. It’s just fascinating to me that some people today can believe that God is doing something and He’s not doing it. He’s not doing what they think He’s doing. It’s just because something has happened in their life that’s providential.

Since I’ve started playing golf, I heard a statement, kind of a quote. Maybe you’ve heard this statement in another context, but it’s said often in the game of golf that even when you hit a good shot and it actually gets on the green or something then someone will say something like this: Even a blind squirrel finds a nut every once in a while. The point they’re trying to say is just because you got it on the green doesn’t mean that you’re all that great of a golfer. It may just mean by accident it got there.

There’s sometimes when good things happen in a person’s life and it’s not God working. It may be something else. In fact when I’m working with young people I like to ask them and help them understand the power that Satan has to destroy us. So I put three different boxes up there that are tied together. This is the black box, the gray box, and then the white box. I’ll say to them, “How far can Satan go in this? Does he go all the way to the edge of the black box?”

“Oh yeah. He’ll go all the way there.”

“How far can he go into the gray?”

Some will say halfway, others will say three-quarters of the way, others will say all the way into the gray.

I’ll say, “Okay, what about the white. Can he go?”

“No, he doesn’t go into the white,” many will say.

But the interesting thing is that 2 Corinthians tells us that the devil masquerades as an angel of light. Pretends to be something good when he isn’t. So it’s very dangerous for us to make an assumption that just because things seem to be going our way that somehow God is directing us through that.

Here's a man who has killed. Just in our last chapter he killed eighty-five priests. He's trying to kill David. He's not doing the right thing. Yet he has this imagination that he's moving in a direction and we must be careful.

So let me throw a principle up there that I think will be helpful for you. One – the principle is we must always recognize that when we believe that we have something to share with someone else that we believe is from God, we might be wrong. That leads us to this second circle that we must consider if we're going to be in this sweet spot we must have a humble confidence.

If you're going to use words like "I have a word from the Lord for you" (which I think there is some biblical merit to saying those words), I wish that we could say something like, "I think I have a word from the Lord for you." Emphasizing some humility in the process. Or "God gave me this verse this week and I think it might be helpful for you." So what we're doing is we're presenting, we're being this pass-through for the Lord's word to get to other people, but we're doing it in a humble way. A humble confidence. I think we can be confident in God's word, but to be able to come into and share with someone else we have to do it very carefully. So we have to recognize ourselves that we may be wrong. That's the principle that we're looking at in the passage.

Let's continue the verse back to the idea of hearing from God. Watch what David does. I like his approach to understanding God and how God speaks. *When David learned that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod."* For him that was a way of determining God's will. I don't exactly know how the ephod was used to do that, but it would be giving him an answer to the request that he's making.

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

So here's David going to the Lord and asking the Lord through this ephod experience about what would happen. Now I would suggest if we're going to be able to share messages or make decisions about what God's going to do in our lives, then we must first hear from God ourselves. We've got to go into God's word. We've got to be reading it. So if you have a plan for reading God's word then you're going to come across these truths and you're going to say, "That would be great if I could share that with this person." That's exactly what you can do. When you have heard from God, God will speak to you and you will have a message that you can pass on to someone else.

Let's go on in this passage to this idea of hearing from God. *So David and his men, about six hundred in number, left Keilah and kept moving from place to place.* They took action based on the message that they had heard from the Lord. This was a very practical message that God gave to them, so they're moving around. They're not staying in one place.

When Saul was told that David had escaped from Keilah, he did not go there. David stayed in the wilderness strongholds and in the hills of the Desert of Ziph. Day after day Saul searched for him (but notice verse 14 here), but God did not give David into his hands.

In fact I'll just throw both of them up there just to illustrate this idea of the humble confidence we must have. Saul is saying, "God has given David into my hands." But the truth in verse 14 says *God did not give David into his hands*. A humble confidence is required if we're going to be effective in this sweet spot of passing this message onto the Lord.

I write. I like to write. So I've written books and write articles. Calvarychapel.com is the website that supports many of us in the Calvary Chapel movement and they've asked me to write regular article for them like once a month. A couple months ago I wrote the article from our teaching series on David and Goliath and the lessons that we learned there. I felt like this is so helpful. So I wrote that article and it got published. Last week's message on compassion and exercising our heart, I'm thinking that would be a great article. I'd like to write something about this lesson about the sweet spot (that's what I'd call it), but it wouldn't be an article. It would be an e-book. I've already got it in my mind. If the Lord allows me some time, I'd love to just write this. Sixty or fifty pages about hearing from the Lord and being in this place. A sweet spot where God can pass the message through.

But here's the challenge. Whenever you write something, people can take your words out of context. They can misuse them. And then what happens is you feel like you're being misunderstood or misrepresented and that's the danger in a much greater perspective when it comes to God. God does not want to be taken out of context. He doesn't want to be misquoted. So it's very important for us to have a humble confidence when we're coming to these words that God has given to us that we have now the privilege of sharing with other people. So keep that humble confidence in mind and it will help you as you're trying to navigate through this challenging situation.

Let's go on because now we're going to come to the third principle that's going to tie this together. It's in the life of Jonathan. *While David was at Horesh in the Desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come out to take his life. And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. We'll come back to that verse in a moment. "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." The two of them made a covenant before the Lord. Then Jonathan went home, but David remained at Horesh.*

Now first of all you've got to find this fascinating that Saul can't find David, but Jonathan finds David. It's like he has his GPS that no one else has and somehow Jonathan is able to get right to David and he's able to go to him.

Now what Jonathan does in this particular situation is a very important part of our circle. So let me throw this third part of the circle up here. We need to initiate sensitively. When we initiate sensitively that means we're concerned about the other person, not just about ourselves thinking, "Oh I have something everyone else needs to hear." We're considering that other person and we're initiating sensitively. If you look at Jonathan, he had to leave his post, he had to take

initiative to go find David. He goes to David and he takes energy and time and so on to do that, like I think God wants us to do when we're going to share messages with other people.

Notice it says in verse 16 it says he *helped him find strength in God*. There's this paradox going on I think in our lives where I say, "I need you, I need all of you in my life. I need you because you are an encouragement to me." But when you come and encourage me, what you need to do is say, "It's not me; it's God you need." So here's this paradox that Jonathan is doing. He's helping him find strength in God. That is just so meaningful for us. When we come to someone it's not about the latest food that we ate or the latest doctor that we visited or the latest idea that we had that we read out of some self-help book somewhere. It's that we're strengthening people in God. In fact I would suggest that the difference between a self-help group that we find in the world and Christian groups that we have is that Christian groups do this. They encourage people or strengthen them in God.

Our goal is to tie people to Jesus Christ. That's our goal. And when we do that then that's when the power takes place inside of a person's life. That's what Jonathan is doing here. He's initiating sensitively and God's going to use him to bring strength into David's life.

Now those three ideas as I'm pondering those in my own thinking this week, it just reminds me that when we put all those three things together we end up with this sweet spot in the middle where I think a lot of power flows. I think that when you're hearing from God and you're humbly presenting it, but you're initiating with this sensitivity, that things flow through us to reach other people and amazing things happen in other people's lives.

I've been encouraged greatly when people come and they share a message from the Lord for me. I listen when someone comes to correct me or someone comes to offer me an idea about Calvary Chapel Living Hope. But I always want to be careful that I don't be consumed by that message as opposed to God's word itself. God's word is the final standard for any message that comes about.

Right as we were starting the last Calvary Chapel in Mercer County at the beginning, a man came to me and he said, "I have the word from the Lord for you." And here was his word. His word was something like this: "There is someone in your fellowship right now that is going to create lots of problems and will turn on you." And I said, "Okay, thank you very much."

But then I realized over the next few days I was starting to get paranoid. Because now I'm looking. Is it you? Is it you? Is it you? Who is it that's going to turn on me! And I realized. So I said to Joe Focht, "What do you do with a word from the Lord like that?" Joe Focht is the pastor at Calvary Chapel Philly. He says, "That does not sound like a word from the Lord to me. A word from the Lord is designed to move us forward and encourage us, not to make us fearful and to paralyze us." I was there for fifteen years and there was never something like that that happened in the life of the church.

So again, I want to be careful as I'm listening to a word from the Lord that you might share with me that I'm measuring it against God's word itself. God's word is the authority, but God uses us to bless other people. God has in fact given us this job to do to speak on His behalf. In 2

Corinthians 5 it says – *We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*

We are ambassadors. That's what we are. When an ambassador goes from one country to another his job is not to share his ideas. His job is to speak on behalf of the country he's coming from. That's his job. I would suggest that God wants us to come and share boldly.

I want to inspire you and encourage you to share messages that you're learning from the Lord with other people who are in need of them. I want to show you another verse that I think will help you to do that. In 1 Peter we have another verse that just talks about the power that we have in our words. He says this: *If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. That's a lot of confidence, I think in that passage. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*

In fact do you know there are several speaking gifts. But there are a couple...one I'm thinking of is a word of wisdom and word of knowledge. They are spiritually endowed abilities to speak into a situation, either with knowledge about that situation or wisdom or skill about how to handle that situation. Those are spiritual gifts.

There are some people that are just endowed with that ability and Peter is speaking to that here. Not just for them, I don't think, but for all of us to be able to speak as the very words of God. There's some boldness that we can have, some confidence if we're going to do this. I would encourage you start doing it. You're going to fail sometimes. That's why you need to say, "I think." Because people will give you feedback and say, "I think you missed it." That's okay. Start moving in in this and allow God to speak to you in your own quiet time and then share with other people. If you have this sense that this person needs something, share it with them. Because God often uses the power that He's doing in you and He transfers that through you to someone else.

God uses people. God speaks. If you're going to do it, I would encourage you to do it with promises. Often that's a good way, so I'm going to share with you some promise that I think may be helpful for you that are balanced. The balance in the promises I think is helpful so that we don't find ourselves in error. God doesn't stop the bad things from happening. That's never been part of the promise. The promise is I am with you. I am with you from now until the end of time.

I think it's unwise to come to someone who's sick and say, "God wants you well. God wants you to be healed." Now we do pray for the sick. We believe God can heal anybody. So we pray and we ask for God's power to heal someone and we'll do that today in our service. Or we'll pray for the healing of people, but we'll recognize that we don't control God. God may bring about that healing instantaneously, or He may bring it over a period of time, or He may be doing something deeper in the person's heart and life. So we don't want to put someone in a position where we're saying, "If you had more faith you'd be healed," or something like that. That is not taught in God's words and it's damaging to other people when those kinds of words come out. Faith is important for healing. Let's be careful of the balance in there.

Here's another one. God doesn't promise tomorrow for any of us, but He does promise eternity. Scripture doesn't promise that God will remove temptation from us, only that you'll be given strength to withstand the temptation. If you give yourself to God, He doesn't promise you happiness, but He does promise you peace and joy even during tough times. When we bring those kinds of messages and God allows us to speak those messages to a person, amazing things can happen and the power of God is tremendous.

I just believe that the sweet spot is a strategic place where God can work in our lives and through us to touch other people. I encourage you to take that to heart.

You see, we're Christians. We don't keep our faith private. You know that? There are some people who say you don't talk about religion and politics. Well people are talking about a lot more politics nowadays in the workplace and other places. Politics is becoming a very common thing that people talk about. But I would suggest that we talk about faith. That's because of who we are. That's because of who God has made us. And that's what we've chosen to do. If you went and saw a good movie, you'd probably talk about that movie at work. If you went and heard a good sermon, you want to talk about it. I want to give you freedom to talk about that because that's who you are and what God is doing in your life and people need to be able to adjust to that. In fact God often touches people's lives through the messages that we have and that God is doing in our lives.

There's a sweet spot, but it requires, I think, that we have all three of these principles going at the same time. We're hearing from God, that we have a humble confidence, and that we initiate sensitively. When that takes place, God's power can be revealed through us in some significant ways. Amen?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I ask that you would speak to us first. Use your word and the power of your Holy Spirit to teach us, grow us. We want to be led by you, we want to be guided by you. We want you to speak to us first. And then, Lord, give us a boldness to be able to pass that message on that you've given to us to others who are waiting. We live in this broken world where people are hurting and many are just waiting for someone to speak. Let it be us we ask. In Jesus' name, amen.