



THE STORY OF DAVID DAVID SPARES PAUL

1 SAMUEL 23-24

GOAL

- ▶ To help children understand that God delivers the justice we seek when someone wrongs us.

WORDS TO KNOW

- ▶ **Covenant:** an agreement or a contract

MEMORY VERSES

- ▶ **1 Samuel 24:12:** "May the Lord judge between you and me. And may the Lord avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you."

Romans 12:19: "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.'"

OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read 1 Samuel 23-24:** David went to fight off the Philistines who were fighting the people of Keilah and stealing their food. Saul heard that David was in this city, which is surrounded by gates and bars, and thought that the Lord had delivered David into his hands. David knew that Saul was plotting against him, so he prayed for wisdom, and the Lord told him that Saul was coming and that the people of the city would surrender David and his men to Saul. David and his men left the city and began to wander in the desert wilderness. People from the area where David and his men were hiding out approached Saul and told him that they would help him capture David. They were nearly caught when a messenger came to let Saul know that the Philistines were invading while the king was away, so Saul and his men returned home. After Saul had dealt with the invaders, he resumed his search for David in another desert area. Saul went into a cave to relieve himself not knowing that David and his men were hiding far in the back of the same cave. David's men encouraged him to kill Saul while he had the chance, but instead, David cut off a corner of Saul's robe. David commanded his men to not kill Saul, and so the king walked out of the cave unharmed. David came out of the cave and told Saul that he could have killed him but didn't. He told him that he had done nothing to him and did not deserve to be hunted down. Saul agreed and said that he knew he would be king one day and asked David not to kill his family once he took the throne. David agreed and they went their separate ways.



SUGGESTIONS

- **How do we respond to hurt?** David was hurt by Saul's decision to kill him. It caused him a great deal of stress and suffering. But he never acted on his feelings and sought to harm Saul.
- **Getting revenge hurts us the most:** David had done nothing to deserve the treatment he received from Saul. Any feelings of wanting justice against Saul would have been totally justified, but he knew that getting that justice by his own means would have been a sin, which would have led him away from what the Lord wanted for his life.
- **Vengeance belongs to the Lord:** David knew that the Lord is just and that Saul's behavior would not go unpunished. David left Saul's judgment and punishment up to the Lord.

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

Ages 5-7 **Pieces of Peace** | **Supplies:** Colored cardstock, pieces of fabric, glue, and decorating supplies such as markers, crayons, and glitter

Give each student a piece of cardstock and let them choose a piece of fabric. Have the students glue the piece of fabric to the cardstock. Instruct them to write, or write it for them: I will do no harm. Vengeance is the Lord's!



MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING

▶ **1 Samuel 24:12:** While we may have an opinion on situations, the Lord has all the facts and is a much better judge than we will ever be. Because of that, we should not act on feelings of anger and a need for revenge.

Romans 12:19: Repaying a wrong by doing wrong is a sin. We should leave justice to the Lord.

POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY

▶ **Ages 5-10 Kings and Cave Dwellers**

Play hide and seek. The student chosen to be It is the king, and the students who will hide are the cave dwellers.

TAKE
HOME

- ▶
- **How do we respond to hurt?** In life, people will hurt us with their words and actions. Sometimes the people who hurt us are those we love the most. The question is what do we do when we get hurt? Do we get even, or is there another way?
 - **Getting revenge hurts us the most:** It is normal to want to get revenge when we are mistreated. No matter how good revenge may feel in the moment, in the long term it only hurts us. It makes us no better than the people who hurt us, and carrying out our revenge leads us away from the heart of God.
 - **Vengeance belongs to the Lord:** Ultimately, following God means that we must trust Him. If we have received His forgiveness and grace, we understand that we too should be merciful. But He is also righteous and just and will fairly judge and punish all wrongdoing.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: What did David do before he took his men to Keilah?

A1: David prayed for wisdom before he took his men to Keilah.

Q1b: Would you go on a TV game show if you knew for sure that you would win?

Teacher's Note: Absolutely! We have nothing to lose and only prizes to gain! This is what it should have felt like for David's men going to save the people of Keilah. They knew that the Lord told David to go, so they should have known that they would be victorious over the Philistines. Instead, they let their fear rule their hearts instead of their faith in God.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: Why did Saul think that the Lord had delivered David into his hands?

A2: Saul thought that the Lord had delivered David into his hands because David was in a city surrounded by gates and bars.

Q2b: If you help your friend with his homework, would you expect him to help you with your homework?

TN: That seems to be a fair expectation, but sometimes people do not act the way we expect or the way that they should. David and his men saved the people of Keilah from the Philistines. Instead of protecting them the way that they should have, God told David that the people would turn them over to Saul once he arrived. Because of this bad decision, David and his men had to flee the city and hide out in the desert wilderness.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: Who met with David in Horesh?

A3: Jonathan, Saul's son, met with David in Horesh.

Q3b: Have you ever gone camping?

TN: Let the students answer. Well, that's pretty much what David and his men were doing the whole time they were trying to escape Saul. When we go camping, we bring tents, sleeping bags, and fresh clothing. Even though we're spending time outdoors, we're pretty comfortable. It's possible that David and his men didn't have these things. They likely had only thing things they fled the city of Keilah with to make themselves comfortable. Now that's really roughing it!

SLIDE 4



Q4a: Who offered to help Saul capture David?

A4: The Ziphites offered to help Saul capture David.

Q4b: When playing hide and seek, are you better at hiding or seeking?

TN: Let the students answer. David knew the area where he and his men were hiding from Saul. David knew the best places to avoid being seen by people who might tell Saul where he was. But even with this knowledge, it would be difficult to keep about 600 men hidden! The Ziphites spotted them, and they went to Saul.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: Why did Saul leave before capturing David?

A5: Saul left before capturing David because a messenger told him that the Philistines were attacking.

Q5b: Have you ever played capture the flag?

TN: Let the students answer. Capture the flag has two objectives: capture the other team's flag, and protect our own team's flag. If the other team gets our flag and returns to their base, they win, so it's important to protect our flag; however, we can't win if we don't leave the base to try to get the other team's flag. Saul wanted to kill David, and he was hot on his trail. Just as he was about to catch him, he received word that his home base was under attack. Capturing one foe only to lose his own home to another was not worth the risk, so he hurried back to fight off the Philistines.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: David cut off a piece of fabric from what?

A6: David cut off a piece of fabric from Saul's robe.

Q6b: Have your friends ever encouraged you to do something you knew was wrong?

TN: Even if our friends are good people, this can sometimes happen. It doesn't necessarily mean that we shouldn't hang out with them anymore, just that we need to stay focused on the Lord so that we don't do anything we shouldn't. David's men were encouraging him to kill Saul. It did seem like the perfect opportunity, and Saul was threatening to kill him, but still David knew in his heart that it was wrong. Even though it would have made his life easier in the short term, there would have been consequences for his actions later on, and they could have been much worse than having someone trying to hunt him down and kill him.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



Q7a: Who did David say should judge them?

A7: David said that the Lord should judge them.

Q7b: Is it easy to admit when we are wrong or have acted badly?

TN: Apologizing or admitting to doing something wrong is as easy as saying, "I'm sorry," or saying what we have done, but doing so may be one of the hardest things to do. Confessing and apologizing are important not only for the person who was harmed by our actions but also for ourselves. We can be confident going into such situations knowing that we are forgiven and that God still loves us, no matter what!



QUESTION & ANSWER

MEMORY VERSES

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BIG IDEA

- ▶ Vengeance belongs to the Lord.
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CLOSING PRAYER

- ▶ Father God, thank You for Your mercy and justice. Help us to turn to You to judge and punish those who hurt us and not seek revenge on our own. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



After hearing that the Philistines were fighting against Keilah and stealing food from the people, David prayed for God's guidance about whether he should go into battle against the Philistines. The Lord told David, "Go, attack the Philistines and save Keilah." But David's men were afraid of the Philistines, so, again, David asked the Lord what to do. The Lord answered him, "Go down to Keilah, for I am going to give the Philistines into your hand." 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. One of David's men was a priest named Abiathar who had escaped from Saul who had tried to kill him. When Abiathar left, he brought with him a special item of clothing priests wore, called an ephod.

SLIDE 2



When Saul heard that David had gone to Keilah, a city surrounded by gates and bars, he thought that he had gained the upper hand. "God has delivered him into my hands!" Saul said. Saul called up all his forces to battle David and his men. David knew that Saul was plotting against him, he said to Abiathar the priest, "Bring the ephod." David prayed for wisdom, asking, "Lord, will Saul come down, as your servant has heard? Will the people of Keilah surrender me and my men to Saul?" The Lord told David that Saul was coming and that the people would surrender them over to Saul. So, David and his men, about 600 in number, left Keilah. When Saul was told that David had escaped from the city, he did not go there.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 3



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. While David was at Horesh in the desert of Ziph, he learned that Saul had come to kill him. Saul's son, Jonathan, went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. "Don't be afraid," he said. "My father 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 before Jonathan returned home, leaving David out in the wilderness with his men.

SLIDE 4



The Ziphites came to Saul and said, "David is hiding in the strongholds at Horesh. Come down whenever it pleases you, and we will give him into your hands." Saul blessed them for their offer and said, "Go and get more information. They tell me David is very crafty. 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." So, the Ziphites set out ahead of Saul to gather information on David. Saul and his men then began their 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.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 5



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, a messenger came to Saul, saying, "Come quickly! The Philistines are raiding the land." Then Saul broke off his pursuit of David and went to fight off the invading the Philistines.

SLIDE 6



Once Saul had taken care of the Philistine threat, he was told that David was now in the desert of Engedi. Saul called up three thousand of his best men from all Israel and set out to look for David and his men near the Wildgoats' Rocks. Along the way, Saul came to the sheep pens where there was a cave nearby. Saul went into the cave to relieve himself not knowing that David and his men were far back in the cave. The men said, "This is the day the Lord spoke of when he said to you, 'I will give your enemy into your hands for you to deal with as you wish.'" Then David crept up unnoticed and cut off a corner of Saul's robe. Afterward, feeling guilty for having cut off a corner of Saul's robe, David forbid his men to attack Saul. Saul left the cave and went on his way unharmed.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 7



Then David went out of the cave and called out to Saul, "My lord the king!" When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down and put his face to the ground. He said to Saul, "Why do you listen when men say, 'David is bent on harming you'? Even though the Lord delivered you to my hands and some of my men told me to kill you, I spared your life." As proof of his story, David held up the piece of Saul's robe he had cut off and said, "I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life." David explained that he had done nothing to deserve being hunted down. "May the Lord be our judge and decide between us. May he consider my cause and uphold it; may he vindicate me by delivering me from your hand," David said. When David finished saying this, Saul asked, "Is that your voice, David my son?" And he wept aloud. "You are more righteous than I," Saul said. "May the Lord reward you well for the way you treated me today. I know that you will be king and that the kingdom of Israel will be established in your hands." Saul asked David to swear not to kill off his family when he took the throne, and David agreed.