

1st Samuel Ch 30

Jesus said, *“What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them goes astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine and go to the mountains to seek the one that is straying? And if he should find it, assuredly, I say to you, he rejoices more over that sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”* Matt 18:12-14

We left off a few weeks ago sort of standing on the sidelines of David’s life watching him spiral downward (seemingly) out of control. Finding him in that position that if you’d have asked him 10 yrs before this or 5 yrs previous to where he was at he’d have said, “No way”, “It isn’t going to happen”, “Not in a million lifetimes.” He was in that place of compromise, prepared to fight against the armies of the living God, in order to defend the cause of the ungodly.

And we continue to trace it back to ch 27 vs 1 concerning the resolve that David made in his heart in a moment of weakness and frailty, and because of that resolve, it led David to a series of bad decisions that would impact the rest of his life. Thinking he was strong, now he’s fallen, but he’s not quite hit the bottom yet.

Often times when we consider David’s life we think of a valiant man of God, the greatest king that Israel would ever know apart from the Son of David, the Greater than David, Jesus Christ Himself, we think of the man given that incredibly honorable title in the scriptures by God Himself, “A man after My own heart.” We think of David as having one incredible rocket launch to heaven from the beginning to the end just going from glory to glory. But rarely is the humanity of David reflected on, he was human just like you, and just like me, he had his own set of problems and issues to overcome in life, and most of us are familiar with the Bathsheba incident. But this particular season in David’s life seems to be rarely remembered.

Yet it’s a time that David backslid to the point where he left the place where God had appointed him to be, and for over a year he established his residency in the world, became worldly in his reasoning. Deceived the king of the land he was in; lived his life as a marauder, raiding Canaanite villages, killing everyone in the city and taking the loot for himself and his people. Came to the point where he all but swore his allegiance to the king of the very Philistine land from which his arch rival Goliath came and Ch 29 finds him poised for battle alongside this king against none other than the armies of Israel themselves.

But God in His grace placed suspicion in the hearts of the armies of the Philistines, they were able to see what David couldn’t. That he didn’t belong there, that light and darkness doesn’t mix, what fellowship has the temple of God with idols, what place has the believer with the non-believer. And so, after seeking to reason with them and failing Achish came to David, having his *Achish breakish* heart broken because they rejected David, and he sent David away.

And so here's David, Saul is after him, he's no longer comfortable around the people of God because he's become so worldly, but he's got too much of the Lord in him for the people of the world to accept him. He's a *seasoned* war vet, yet still young and strong, but he gets fired from the battle before it even begins, his world is falling apart. And this is where chapter 30 finds us, with David getting up early in the morning to head for home having been rejected by the world (now you and I know that this is all the providential hand of God, not only would David resolve into being a man after God's own heart, but God is after David's heart as well.) And he's not going to let David get away that easily, "What do you think?" Jesus would say, and neither will He let you go and me go so easily. Now often times we're stubborn like David was, and we refuse to see the chastening hand of God for what it is, but soon enough David's going to come to the end of himself and when he does the Lord will be there for Him.

How often the Lord has to bring us to the end of ourselves before we'll cry out to Him. But He loves us enough to bring us to that point. Because He's way more concerned for our eternal well being, than our temporal comfort and security. (Notice vs 1 of Ch 30).

Vs1-2

Now you recall that Ziklag was the city that David had established for himself and his men along with all their families. And they were marching from Aphek which is about 75 miles or so from Ziklag and we read that it was the 3rd day that they came to the city so they were covering about 25 miles a day. Translation, it was a forced march, and with all the gear and supplies they were carrying, they were tired.

Now follow me here, here's David and his men, they were just all but slapped in the face up at Aphek, you've been trekking about 25 miles a day with all your gear. You're about 65 miles or so into the trip, you're tired, you're hungry, you've been rejected so you're discouraged and even upset. But hey, "At least I'm coming home. I'm going to get to see the wife and kids, get a home cooked meal as opposed to these rations, I'll be sleeping in my own bed tonight, I mean hey at least I've got one thing to look forward to, I'll be at home tonight." and I can relate with that because I've been away from home for various periods of time, nothing too extreme but nonetheless it feels good to finally pull in the drive way, open the door, and reunite with your family, and embrace your loved ones and lay your head on your own pillow.

And so here they are a few miles from home and their spirits begin to lift, maybe the march steps us just a bit, they're almost with in eye shot of the village, but it's sort of strange because as they're approaching the vicinity no one's coming out to greet them. I mean they've been gone for quite awhile and most generally there's a welcome home type happening that takes place when you've been gone for an extended period of time. None of the kids are outside playing and as they look over toward the city they can see smoke billowing up, and it's not cooking fires, it's way to black for that. And they're hearts start pumping, "There's something wrong here." And they begin to double time it towards the city, and as they get through the walls of the city everything is in ashes, panic begins to set in.

You're looking in every nook and cranny perhaps you'll find you're child that was overlooked or who managed to hide, perhaps your wife will come running out from behind one of the trees or a wall still standing. But the more you search the more desperate your heart becomes, everything you've worked for, everyone you love, everything you've ever had, it's all gone, there's nothing that remains.

Now I in no way want to belittle the sincerity of what's going on here but there's a bit of poetic justice in this. Over the last year David had more or less made his living by raiding villages killing everyone and taking the spoils for himself, and what's gone around has come around. Now his village is destroyed, everything he's built for himself is gone, the only difference is as to where he killed everyone, the Amalekites spared their families. He's (in a very real way) been the recipient of mercy as to where he's shown none.

And by the way, don't miss the detail of the scriptures informing us of who it was who destroyed everything he had, and took everything of value from him. It was the Amalekites, who were they? They were that group of people that the Lord had instructed Saul to completely annihilate and eradicate, but he didn't do it. The Amalekites are those whom the Lord told Moses that He would have war with from generation to generation. In the scriptures they serve as a type of the flesh. It was *the flesh* that took everything from David, destroyed his safe haven, his security, his sanctuary, his refuge.

But even in this we can see the fingerprints of the Lord, why? How many times we look to the things of this world for our security, to become our hiding place, or our refuge, we regress into seeking to make a place for ourselves in the efforts of the flesh only to find the flesh destroying our lives. Not helping us but hindering us, taking everything of value to us as we spiral downward out of control. But God can use those times in our lives even as He's going to use this time in David's life to get him to the end of himself. To quit looking to the peripheral things of this world to be his refuge, because God wants to be his refuge, his security, his safe haven, his sanctuary.

And He wants to be yours and mine as well, if it seems like your life is suffering one hard knock after the next, and every security is being burned to the ground, instead of looking around at your situation, try looking up. It could be that you've been seeking refuge in the things of this world, but God loves you too much to allow you to place your trust in those things. And He may be seeking to rattle your cage, allowing your strongholds to be "burned to the ground" you see you're being "refined in the fire", recalibrated if you will, He's seeking to refocus you. How often we pray to be broken vessels, but none of us like the breaking process.

How did they respond? Just like any of the rest of us would, they cried, and cried, and cried, until their tears failed them, they had no more power to weep. 600 hardened men of war cried like babies, and with good reason. Having lived for so long in this place of spiritual decline, not really seeking the Lord, but doing what they wanted when they wanted it's finally all caught up with them. They ignored the warning signs that the Lord gave them along the way, and so there's no more yellow lights, here's a road block that you're not going around. You can't blow off your city that's burned down, you can't pretend that you're families are all still there and that really nothings wrong, it's time to face reality. We might say David's sin has found him out, and they cried, everything they had to lean on had just been knocked out from under them and it was their fault and they knew it. They should've never been there in the 1st place, they should've never left to fight with the Philistines, they don't know what they're going to do, they don't know how to respond, which direction the enemy as gone, if they'll ever see their loved ones again. It hit home with David personally, notice vs 5.

Vs5

What are you going to do now David? What do you do when everything you've ever leaned on, or sought some sort of solace or support from is gone? "I thought I had the Philistines but they've rejected me, I come home to my family only to find them gone, my kids are gone, I don't even have a home to lay my head in, it's all been destroyed while we were out doing that which we never should have done." Every security in his life has been pulled out from under him. "Now that's not all together true," you say, "He still had his 600 men." Because at times like this friends support each other right? They rally around one another and sort of buck each other up. Look at vs 6.

Vs6 (1st 1/2)

Gives new meaning to the term, "Hitting *rock* bottom" doesn't it? David's got nothing, his own friends have turned on him, this rag tag group of renegades that came to him in distress, in debt, and discontented, and now they're ready to do him in. When things are going good, he's their hero, but when it's not they're ready to turn on him. Isn't that the way we are with Jesus? When we feel as though we're being blessed and things are looking up, He's the best. But when my life is falling apart, and it seems like things couldn't get any worse, I'm ready to throw in the towel and blame Him for all my problems.

Not only is everything that David ever leaned in this life taken *from* him, but those around him are ready to turn *on* him. Welcome to the ministry, when things are going good, "God is really blessing" when things go bad, "Its the pastor's fault." It could never be that there's sin in the people's lives and *they* need to repent, there's got to be a problem with the leader.

But be that as it may God is using this because now David's got nothing left, he's at the end, he's hit rock bottom. And we do well to learn from David's example, whatever's going on in your life, wherever this finds you notice David's response when he finally hit the end. (Last 1/2 of vs 6)

Underline that in your bible, this is the turning point in David's life. "David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." There are a few key words in that vs, #1 who was it that strengthened himself, it was David. You may say, "Well yeah, he's David, the man after God's own heart, of course he strengthened himself in the Lord." Listen, that's not *this* David, at this point, this is the carnal David, the "Been living the last year and ½ in sin and rebellion against the Lord David." Who came to his senses and strengthened himself in the Lord, so can you, can I strengthen myself in the Lord right where I'm at? You bet I can, and you can to, well how do I go about that? Talk to yourself about it. What? Encourage yourself in the Lord, how often we seek to council others, but there are times we need to council ourselves. That's what David did, listen, Ps 42:11, "*Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.*" You know, "What are you doing? What's your problem? When has God truly let you down, quit being an idiot and establish your focus and your trust in the Lord. He'll never leave you nor forsake you, so why don't you praise Him for His faithfulness."

Praise, it's a big part of restoration, offering God the sacrifice of praise, because He's worthy of it. But God not only wants to restore you to where you once were with Him, He wants to take you beyond that, He not only wants you to recover what you had in that relationship with Him, but He wants to give you more. Not only will David recover all that he had, but he'll be entrusted with more, and it starts right here. Not waiting on someone else to rally around him and lift his head, not saying, "Well God, if you want me to be restored go ahead and do it." But he took the initiative, the strength of God was there for him the whole time, but it was up to him to exercise the faith to lay hold of it. "David strengthened himself in the Lord his God." Not in his buddies, not in some "Moral booster" type program, not in some temporal entertainment to lift his spirits and help him forget about life for a moment, but in the Lord His God. Spurgeon said, "May you see your self-righteousness burned like Ziklag, and all your carnal hopes carried away captive, and may you then encourage yourselves in Christ, for he will recover all for you, and give you spoil besides, and there shall be joy and rejoicing." In other words He'll give you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness.

Vs 7-8

So in our process of restoration, and recovery in our relationship with the Lord, 1st of all we see the need for *praise*, to lift my eyes off myself and place them on the Lord who's *worthy* of all honor and all praise. #2 We see here what? *Prayer*, "David inquired of the Lord", he prayed, this is the 1st time we see David inquiring of the Lord since he's left Israel, in over a year. But you know what blows my mind about this? God answered him, the Lord responded immediately, there was no probation period, he didn't need to do some type of penance for a few months to get right. He didn't say, "You made your bed, now you lie in it." As soon as he cried out to the Lord, the Lord was right there ready to meet him where he was and to restore his soul. As soon as he repented, the Lord honored it, we're seeing a prodigal situation here and David has returned to his senses only to be immediately received again by his loving Father.

“Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and with out fail recover all” God gives David a promise based upon his obedience. David didn’t have to go but notice vs 9.

Vs9-10

#1 Praise, #2 Prayer, and #3 Pursuit, David pursued God’s direction in faith, even when 200 men were so weary they couldn’t go on, they were dead tired. Still David trusted steadfast in the Lord’s direction for his life. He didn’t sit idly by and just wait for God to bring him everything on a silver platter; he made the promise a practical pursuit. He obeyed the word of God, and again God thinned out his ranks all the more just so that David would know that the victory would belong to the Lord.

Vs 11-16

Again you just can’t help but see the providential hand of God in this, they just happen to stumble across a nearly dead man who once he’s restored can take them right to the camp of the Amalekites. As if God didn’t cause him to fall sick so as to be left behind so as to be found by David and his men, he’s like the broken twig or that trail of candy that’s thrown out along the way so that you can find your way. A special delivery from God himself, and David takes the time to stop for the single individual, although it could jeopardize the whole mission and the Amalekites could be getting away, he stops to extend love and healing to this man. David’s definitely back in the groove isn’t he? This typifies the Lord, and we typify this man as good as dead who can do nothing for himself unless one greater than himself intervenes and brings healing to his life. Here we are all sick (in reality dead) but absolutely at the mercy of One Greater than us, able to do nothing for ourselves, and the Lord passes by and takes time to place the whole show on hold for the interest of the one. How many times Jesus would minister to the individual at the expense of the crowds, would stop the procession because of a single man or woman who was desperate and in need. David’s got his groove on (spiritually speaking) and as it always will, it pays off. Through this man, he’s led to the enemy camp.

Vs17

400 sounds like a lot, but not if there were thousands, this is a Gideon experience here, I don’t know if you’ve ever wrestled, or you’ve played a high intensity type sport, but you wear out quick. I never wrestled or anything but you look at those guys come off the mat after 3 minutes and they’re exhausted. David fought from 1st light until the night non-stop with people trying to kill him on every side, these guys were exhausted.

Vs18-19

His faith in God’s word brought into fruition the works to back it up, and God honored it, and gave him a great victory, and worked mightily in his life.

Vs20-22

Again remembering that they were a bunch of rag tag renegades, God's working with them, but they've got a long way to go, as do the rest of us. They said, "Hey, they didn't go out and fight, they don't get any of the stuff, they can have their wife, and their kids, and they can get lost."

Vs23-24

Couple of things to draw attention to here quickly, #1 in vs 23 David recognizes that what he has, "The Lord has given." "Well but I worked, and I endured, and I this and that" Who gave you the ability to work, who gave you the endurance to persevere? Who sustains you day to day and gives to you the breath of life, it's the Lord who gives, and the Lord who takes away, blessed be the name of the Lord. And finally here in verse 24, a very important principal again worth underlining in your bible, (read).

There are those who are on the front lines, and those who keep the supply lines safe, and prepared, and stocked so that the battle might continue on. There are those who are in the mission field, doing the work, and there are those who support the missionary not being able to be there personally in a physical way. God says, "They both share in the spoil alike."

There are those who preach the word of God in a public format, and those who guard the supply lines through prayer, and issue his supplies through prayer, God says, "They shall share alike." There are those whom God has spoiled tremendously monetarily, (that's neat for them). But they've purposed in their hearts to make sure the supply lines of the ministry don't fall in need, but that the troops are able to continue on, that the battle doesn't fall in jeopardy for lack of supply. God says, "As his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike."

I'm convinced the Heaven is going to be filled with pleasant surprises as it all unfolds, and those who stayed by the supplies, who kept the supply lines thriving through prayer or giving, or whatever. Just guarding the supplies by whatever means God placed on their hearts because maybe for whatever reason they couldn't take to the frontlines, God placed a different call on their lives, yet we'll see spoil be divided just the same.

Again here David serves as a type of Christ, who shares equally the rewards of service and the spoil with everyone who was on active duty, lightening the load of those who were doing the fighting so that they didn't have to worry about the supply. And we're typified by those who want to horde it all to ourselves, we're worthless and wicked, but He's righteous and true.

Vs25-31

David's more or less paving the road for his re-entrance into Israel, saying thanks to those communities that housed him while he was living like a refugee.

You know, What David *said in his heart* in 1 Samuel 27:1 got him into this whole mess; now, what he says to himself to strengthen himself in the LORD will help bring him out. Again Charles Spurgeon once said, “Some of the best talks in the world are those which a man has with himself. He who speaks to everybody except himself is a great fool.”

If everything is burning down around you that you’ve sought refuge in, and God is bringing you to the end, strengthen yourself in the Lord. Praise Him, pray to Him, Pursue in obedience the instruction of His Word and you’ll recover all, and God will take you beyond where you’ve been with Him before and increase your relationship with Him.