

Encourage Yourself In The Lord

Text : I Sam. 30: 1-19 (esp 6)

INTRODUCTION :

A. How do you deal with it when you are down and out ?

1. Do you have a reliable support group ?
2. Do you have a “beloved one” who sticks closer than a brother. (**Prov. 18: 34**)

B. There are times in each of our lives when we have to deal with emotional stress.

1. By nature people try to build and to maintain an emotional support group.
2. In our culture we tend to lean on our spouse as our primary pillar of support, but such is not the case in all societies.
 - a. What do we do when our spouse is gone ?
 - b. Death is certain and divorce is an ever-growing problem.

C. Imagine being in David’s circumstances as read in our text.

1. Isolated from your extended family.
2. Having your spouse and children suddenly taken away, fearing they are dead.
3. What if all of your friends are in the same circumstances and blaming you for it.

D. Remember how David got to this point in his life.

1. King Saul was rejected by God because he didn’t totally submit and obey Him. (**15**)
2. The prophet came and David is called out of the field to be anointed as the next king.
3. He returns to his shepherding duties until he is sent to take supplies to King Saul.
4. David was given a position as a servant of the king and played music for him.
5. After that he alternated between tending the flocks and serving the king.
6. When Goliath, the giant, challenged Israel David slew him with a single stone.
7. Saul developed a close friendship with King Saul’s son, Jonathan.
8. King Saul gave one of his daughters (Michal) to David as his wife.
9. David joined Saul in fighting Israel’s enemies and became a war hero.
10. Saul became very jealous of David’s popularity. (**Saul 1000s -vs- David’s 10,000s**)
11. Saul tried to kill David, but Jonathan and Michal help David escape.
12. Saul pursues David for years trying to kill him.

13. About 600 warriors joined themselves with David and fled from Saul.
14. David had repeated opportunities to kill Saul, but refuses to do so. (**24 & 26**)
 - a. Saul came into a cave where David is hiding and David cuts fringe off of his robe.
 - b. David sneaks into Saul's camp while he sleeps and takes his spear and water jug.
15. Each time Saul said he was sorry, but David feared for his life so he left Saul's land
16. He served Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, for a year and 4 months.
17. While among the Philistines, David made raids on enemies killing everyone, but lied to Achish about who he had attacked. (**To win his confidence**)
18. Achish wanted David to fight with him against Israel, but the other leaders said no.
19. David and his men returned home to Ziklag. (**3 days journey .. approx. 48 miles**)
20. One of David's raids had been against the Amalekites (**27:5**) so when he got home it appeared they had retaliated, but they had not killed everyone.

**David's response was a testimony to his character and an example for us.
From him we can learn how to respond when our world crashes down.**

I. David grieved over the loss of his family.

A. Bad things do happen to good people.

1. Some people have the misconception that bad things only happen to bad people.
 - a. Satan is an equal opportunity oppressor.
 - b. He delights in testing those who follow God.
2. Remember Job was possibly the most righteous follower of God.
 - a. Satan initiated the evil against him.
 - b. Job never knew why the evil had befallen him.
3. The story of Job proved that the theory of retribution is not valid theology.
(**Theory of retribution : All good is reward and all evil is punishment.**)
 - a. There are judgments that occur in the course of time.
 - b. Every bad thing that happens is not a judgment against evil.

B. David did not seek to place blame.

1. David's men blamed him for the loss they had incurred.
 - a. He had brought them to that place. (**Could've returned if David had killed Saul**)
 - b. He had lead the earlier raid on the Amalekites.

2. David could have blamed Saul for their losses, but did not.
 - a. Saul had been told to totally exterminate the Amalekites. (**I Sam. 15: 1ff**)
 - b. David was in Ziklag to escape the persecution of Saul.
3. He could have blamed God.
 - a. “After years of doing right I’m still a fugitive and Saul is still king.”
 - b. “You promised that I’d be king, but I’ve lost everything hiding among heathens.”

C. David did not go into a state of reaction.

1. Any time one goes into a state of reaction he has surrendered control.
2. To go into a state of reaction is to step outside the sphere of faith.

D. Grief is normal and healthy, but what comes next ?

II. David encouraged himself.

- A. There are times when everyone needs encouragement. (*Live in world that is dominated by Satan*)
 1. Husbands, wives, children, leaders, followers, everyone
 2. Even faithful Christians need encouragement .. song leaders, bible class teachers ...
 3. Often when one needs it the most, he’s the least apt to get it.
 - a. When a marriage breaks up others sometimes respond ... *It’s your own fault* ...
 - b. Brethren can be insensitive to family problems ... *You have to discipline kids or* ...
- B. We can’t always be dependent upon other people to pick us up.
 1. Every Christian has the responsibility to be a source of encourage to the brethren.
 - a. **Gal. 6: 2** – **Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ.**
 - b. **Heb. 3: 13** – **But encourage one another day after day, ...**
 2. Others are not always available or willing to encourage us.
 - a. David’s friends blamed him for their problems. (*wanted to stone him .. Vs - 6*)
 - b. You have an accident while in a strange place on vacation. *Who do you turn to ?*
 3. The ability to encourage and strengthen oneself is a mark of maturity.
 - a. This is true both in the physical and in the spiritual realms.
 - b. **Gal. 6: 5** – **For each one will bear his own load.**
 - c. David had sufficient faith that he was able to encourage himself.

* **Remember** : To “encourage” is ... to inspire with courage, spirit, or hope : to hearten

III. David found his encouragement in the Lord.

A. David was able to face adversity because of his past relationship with God.

1. He could remember facing the bear and the lion while tending the sheep.
2. He could remember that his victory over the giant took only one stone.
3. He knew the history of God's deliverance of Israel from Egypt and all since.

B. You and I serve that same God that David served.

1. We have the account of God's dealings with man recorded for us in the bible.
 - a. We know of many more of God's mighty works than David did.
 - b. The mystery of salvation by grace through faith has been revealed to us.
 - c. **If** we are willing to study we can know much more about God than did David.
2. Every Christian has a personal history with God.
 - a. Our tendency is to apathetically drift through life w/o observing the works of God.
 - b. God has demonstrated His love toward us in the sacrifice of Jesus.
 - c. His providential oversight and answer to prayers are clearly evident in our lives.

3. GOD NEVER CHANGES and HIS PROMISES ARE SURE.

- a. **Heb. 13: 5-8** *Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," ⁶ so that we confidently say, "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?" ⁷ Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith. ⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*
- b. Remember : **Matt. 28: 20b** – I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

C. God has promised that He will never let us be tempted beyond what we can bear.

1. **I Cor. 10: 13** – No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

2. That way of escape may be physical death.

- a. First Steven and since then thousands of others have been martyred. **Acts 7**
- b. At times faithfulness will require physical death. (**Christians at Ephesus**)

Rev. 2: 10 – Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life. (*Faithfulness doesn't always appear to pay.*) (*Surrender gives*)

only temporary relief.)

D. No one (except God) will ever care for you as much as you do.

1. **Neh. 5: 6-7** Then I was very angry when I had heard their outcry and these words.
⁷ I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, "You are exacting usury, each from his brother!"
 Therefore, I held a great assembly against them.
2. When you are down, give yourself a good talking to ... *a personal pep-talk.*
3. Only YOU can make you happy.
4. Only your personal faith can make you feel secure.

IV. David called for a priest. (Ephod was apron the priest wore when approaching God)

A. He realized the Lord is in control.

1. It's within our nature to desire vengeance, but vengeance belong to God. **Rom 12:19**
2. God gives victory or can bring defeat.
 - a. **Prov. 16: 3** – **Commit your works to the LORD And your plans will be established.**
 - b. The first step to victory begins on one's knees. *God lifts the humble ... James 4:10*

B. When one needs prayer the most, he is often the least apt to pray.

1. When one is down and out, he very often forgets to pray.
2. Discouraged people are more apt to doubt and thus, nullify their prayers. **Jas 1:6-8**
3. Some pray as a last result ... They try everything first and when all else fails, pray.
4. We sometimes excuse knowing for doing. (*It's not those who know they should pray who receive help, but those who do pray.)*

C. David enquired what the will of God was and then acted.

1. We have the complete will of God in written form.
 - a. We must approach it with discernment.
 - b. It was written for our learning so there are principles that cover all situations.
2. When one reads the scriptures he is doing himself a service ... NOT God.
 - a. The objective in reading the scriptures is not to please God or as worship to God.
 - b. We read the word to learn how to live, to prepare for the challenges of life.

Note also : David was considerate of those who were not as strong as he was.

1. 200 of his men were too weak to make it all the way. (*Not all Christians are equal.)*
2. Some didn't want to share, but David insisted that they receive an equal share.

CONCLUSION :**A. In our text, we have learned several lessons from David.**

1. Bad things happen to good people. (*Not always a judgment from God.*)
2. When bad things happen it is okay to be distraught, but not to panic or lose control.
3. A godly person cannot follow a crowd to do evil, even if it appears just.
4. God has the ability to take care of those who trust Him.
5. We can encourage ourselves in the Lord.

B. Those who are mature in faith will not panic, even when things seem really bad.

1. God's provision never fails.
2. God's has the power to use all things to our ultimate good and to His glory.
Rom. 8: 28 – **And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.**

C. The solution to our dilemmas aren't always in this present life. (*Not in externals*)

1. Life on earth is the beginning, not the culmination of God's plan for us.
2. Fear of death or deprivation demonstrates one's lack of faith.

D. The most basic tool for overcoming discouragement is one's individual faith.

1. We must discipline ourselves to never let Satan distract us from our faith.
Jude 20-21 **But you, beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, ²¹ keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting anxiously for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life**
2. Though we must all encourage one another, each of us must encourage ourselves in the Lord.
3. The ability for self-encouragement is developed over time with much effort and pain. (*Spiritual drifters do not prosper spiritually.*)

INVITATION :

A. What will your response be when you reach your Ziklag ?

B. Will you have the faith to stand strong and strengthen yourself in the Lord ?

Lesson Text :**I Samuel 30: 1-19 (esp. Vs. 6)**

- 1** Then it happened when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had made a raid on the Negev and on Ziklag, and had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire; **2** and they took captive the women *and all* who were in it, both small and great, without killing anyone, and carried *them* off and went their way. **3** When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and their daughters had been taken captive. **4** Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep. **5** Now David's two wives had been taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite. **6** Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. **7** Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. **8** David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this band? Shall I overtake them?" And He said to him, "Pursue, for you will surely overtake them, and you will surely rescue *all*." **9** So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the brook Besor, *where* those left behind remained. **10** But David pursued, he and four hundred men, for two hundred who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor remained *behind*.
- 11** Now they found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David, and gave him bread and he ate, and they provided him water to drink. **12** They gave him a piece of fig cake and two clusters of raisins, and he ate; then his spirit revived. For he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. **13** David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man of Egypt, a servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind when I fell sick three days ago. **14** "We made a raid on the Negev of the Cherethites, and on that which belongs to Judah, and on the Negev of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire." **15** Then David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this band?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this band."
- 16** When he had brought him down, behold, they were spread over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing because of all the great spoil that they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. **17** David slaughtered them from the twilight until the evening of the next day; and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. **18** So David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and rescued his two wives. **19** But nothing of theirs was missing,

whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that they had taken for themselves; David brought *it* all back.