

The Life of David: Finding Hope when EVERYTHING Has Been Lost I Samuel 29-30

Open with me to I Samuel 18 as walk through a few chapters to get to our passage for this evening. These chapters tonight remind us that:

Our Struggles Frame God's Faithfulness

The context of these dark and lonely days in David's life, makes an incredibly beautiful frame around some of the most precious of all of David's Psalms¹. His prayers, cries for help, and affirmations of God's faithfulness: seem even clearer, dearer, and more memorable from those dark and lonely hours in David's life. David repeats in as many ways as possible that:

**All the Time (God is good)
God is good (All the time).**

What a meteoric rise, and equally meteoric fall, David experiences in First Samuel 18-20. David suffers painful loneliness as he faces family conflict, big life changes, and great danger. Think of everything happening here. David moves away from home (18:2), joins the army and becomes an officer leading troops (18:5), becomes a national celebrity (18:7), draws the jealous rage of King Saul (18:8-9), faces life threatening situations (18:11), meets and marries the King's daughter (18:17-28); then sees Saul send soldiers to kill David as he slept in his bed at home (I Samuel 19:11). During these days of danger and turmoil David writes **Psalm 59, 11, and 64**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger.

First Samuel 21:1-9: as David flees for his life again, he suffers intense loneliness as he loses his job, and is separated from his family. David writes **Psalm 52**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are away from our work, home, and family.

1 Sam. 21:10-15: David goes from fear, to terror, to nearly a complete breakdown in

¹ Period 2: From his lonely, struggling, years as a fugitive David writes twenty-three different Psalms (4, 7, 11, 13, 16-17, 31, 34-36, 39-40, 52-54, 56-57, 59, 63-64, 70, and 141-142).

the time surrounding his capture by the Philistine army at Gath. He writes about this in **Psalms 34 and 56**. After he gets away from the Philistines, David is so alone that he feels abandoned and wrote **Psalms 13, 40, and 70** about life in the pits of despair.

1 Samuel 22:1-4: After a period of life alone in the cave, David was joined by an incredibly difficult group of criminals and societal rejects. This was a turning point in David's life because God refined his character through his cave troubles more than at any other time. David suffers intense loneliness as he lives and works with this tough crowd. David wrote more Psalms in this period than at any other time in his life. These **cave Psalms are 4, 57, 141-142**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are far from home and feel exiled.

1 Samuel 22:5-24:16: David suffers the intense loneliness of unemployment, unsettled home life, and betrayal by friends. David takes time to look back at those events and write **Psalms: 17, 63** (after 1 Samuel 22:5-23); **31, 54** (after 1 Sam 23:10-25); **35-36** (after 1 Sam 23:29 from En Gedi); and **7** (after 1 Sam 24:1-16 when he spares Saul's life). In each of these Psalms God inspires David to record his lessons on how to overcome the feelings of despair and bitterness when we are betrayed by those we trusted as friends.

1 Samuel 25: **David suffers the intense loneliness when wronged in a business deal**. David writes **Psalms 53**—how to overcome the feelings of loneliness when we are in danger of bitterness over being hurt in a business deal.

David has Survived

As we open to 1 Samuel 29, David has survived all that, and even one last commando raid by Saul on David's hideaway in 1 Samuel 27.

David survived: like a cancer victim that has finally finished the surgery, chemo, and radiation; and finally is declared cancer free. David was weak, but David had made it out of the woods, and life has returned to what it was like before all these months and years of fear, turmoil and struggle. What a pathway those days had been. Do you remember what David had gone through?

After being captured and held by the Philistines, betrayed and nearly hunted to death by traitors from his own tribe, surviving month after month of murderous commando raids led against him by his own father-in-law, and enduring all the emotional damage that job loss, anxiety and frustration could exact from him: the Lord allows David's life to even out.

With his new wife Abigail, plus his family from his other wives, David has gotten established and on his feet. David had become accepted, admired and even trusted by the Lord of the Philistine city of Gath. As a way of showing appreciation, Achish gave David a place to settle down.

He has a small town, a band of raiders, and houses, wives, children, and livestock. Work is going well, he has made peace with his former enemies the Philistines, and things seem better than they have ever been. Saul is no longer on his trail, the Philistines are no longer a danger, and the time has come to make a living and focus on family life and financial stability. But only the Lord knew that this was just:

The Calm before The Storm

So one day, when life seemed to have returned to regularity, David gets a one-two punch that must have totally set him off course. Like getting the news that the cancer was back stronger than ever, David gets hit with a one-two, knockout pair of punches.

In rapid succession: David is rejected by the Philistines, and then everything is taken away by the Amalekites.

First, watch the events of I Samuel 29:

1 Samuel 29:1-11 Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel. 2 And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish. 3 Then the princes of the Philistines said, "What are these Hebrews doing here?" And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, "Is this not David, the servant of Saul king of Israel, who has been with me these days, or these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him since he defected to me.

- V. 1-3 David had won the confidence and friendship of his former enemies. Just think what a public relations coup that was; and think how amazing that must have felt to David

4 But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, "Make this fellow return, that he may go back to the place which you have appointed for him, and do not let him go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become our adversary. For with what could he reconcile himself to his master, if not with the heads of these men? 5 Is this not David, of whom they sang to one another in dances, saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, And David his ten thousands?'" 6 Then Achish called David and said to him, "Surely, as the LORD lives, you have been upright, and your going out and your coming in with me in the army is good in my sight. For to this day I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me. Nevertheless the lords do not favor you. 7 Therefore return now, and go in peace, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines." 8 So David said to Achish, "But what have I done? And to this day what have you found in your servant as long as I have been with you, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" 9

Then Achish answered and said to David, "I know that you are as good in my sight as an angel of God; nevertheless the princes of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' 10 Now therefore, rise early in the morning with your master's servants who have come with you. And as soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart." 11 So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

- V. 4-11 How quickly things change. David is once again rejected, but this time he has a place to go, a family to comfort and cheer him, and something to live for.

This is the moment of truth. God allows David to face a totally unexpected disaster. And in the moment of deepest pain, fear, and hopeless: David has learned his lesson. He does not go back to the pits of Psalm 40, he does not go back to the feelings that God has abandoned him of Psalm 13. Instead, he clings to the Lord!

David's Acid Test

After all that David has gone through, now this. Total Loss is what David faces next. As we read these inspired words note the insight that only God could give us as we read verse 6. It was God who could see David's heart, his motivation

1 Samuel 30:1-31 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, 2 and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. 3 So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. 4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. 6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. 7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all." 9 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor. 11 Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. 12 And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins.

So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. 13 Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. 14 We made an invasion of the southern area of the Cherethites, in the territory which belongs to Judah, and of the southern area of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire." 15 And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop? So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop." 16 And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 17 Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. 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 carried away, and David rescued his two wives. 19 And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. 20 Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil." 21 Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them. 22 Then all the wicked and worthless men[c] of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart." 23 But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. 24 For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." 25 So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day. 26 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD"— 27 to those who were in Bethel, those who were in Ramoth of the South, those who were in Jattir, 28 those who were in Aroer, those who were in Siphmoth, those who were in Eshtemoa, 29 those who were in Rachal, those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, those who were in the cities of the Kenites, 30 those who were in Hormah, those who were in Chorashan, those who were in Athach, 31 those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to rove.

Pray

Total Loss

David experienced total loss.

David sets out with all his men to go and hunt the enemies of the Philistines, and gather the spoils of war to support the 600 families now living at Ziklag, a town the Philistine leader Achish of Gath had given to David.

While they were away from Ziklag, the Amalekites (whom Saul had previously refused to utterly destroy) attacked the city, burned it with fire, and took all their families captive! Listen to this amazing description of the events that surround David losing everything that he had ever held as dear. In one swift blow it was all taken away: wife, family, wealth, children, and security. Everything was gone.

When they returned and saw Ziklag's total destruction and that their wives and were children gone, ... **David and the people** who were with him lifted up their voices and **wept, until they had no more power to weep** (1 Samuel 30:4).

Trusting God When Everything Else Fails

If you had been in David's shoes, wouldn't you have felt like this was the final straw? How did a refined by the fires of affliction, David, cope with this tragedy? Look closely at v. 6-8:

v. 6a David was absolutely crushed like everyone else: Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters.

v. 6b But David had learned that the Lord was ABLE to help him anytime, anywhere, no matter how bad it seemed: But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

v. 7 David showed them all that the first thing you do in a disaster is pray to the Lord who alone is in control: Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David.

v. 8 David asked the Lord to show him what to do: So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all."

And just as the Lord promised, David recovered all the families plus so much spoil from the enemies of the Lord that he sent some of it to the elders throughout Judah!

I Samuel 30.6b is the key that points us to the other Michtam Psalm, which is Psalm 16 when David 'strengthened himself in **the Lord his God**'. That was the One he had entrusted with his life.

While he was so grieved and feeling endangered over the raid on his family and the city of Ziklag, David appears to have penned Psalm 16²—how to overcome feelings of despair at a time of total loss.

Psalm 16: A Michtam of David.

There are actually six Michtams (Psalms 16, 56-60) all the others come from the furnace of affliction surrounding Saul's hunting down David to destroy him.

- 1 Preserve me, O God, **for in You I put my trust.**
- 2 O my soul, you have said to the LORD,
"You are my Lord,
My goodness is nothing apart from You."
- 3 As for the saints who are on the earth,
"They are the excellent ones, in whom is all my delight."
- 4 Their sorrows shall be multiplied who hasten after another god;
Their drink offerings of blood I will not offer,
Nor take up their names on my lips.
- 5 **O LORD, You are the portion of my inheritance and my cup;
You maintain my lot.**
- 6 The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places;
Yes, I have a good inheritance.
- 7 **I will bless the LORD** who has given me counsel;
My heart also instructs me in the night seasons.
- 8 **I have set the LORD always before me;**
Because He is at my right hand I shall not be moved.
- 9 Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoices;
My flesh also will rest in hope.
- 10 For You will not leave my soul in Sheol,
Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption.
- 11 **You will show me the path of life;
In Your presence is fullness of joy;
At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.**

The Life God Offers...

David declares that God offers a life so amazing, that he wanted to never forget it. That

² Psalm 16 is written after the final event with Saul in I Samuel 26-27:1 where David decides to just get out of Israel, and the Ziklag disaster that followed.

is what a Michtam is all about. Psalm 16 is a Michtam or an engraved Psalm. Michtam speaks of ***something so special it can't merely be written on the surface like a pen on paper, it must be engraved like a chisel into stone to preserve it.***

So these truths were engraved into David's heart and life—he knew that God would show him, lead him, and give him the promises of His Word.

...Is The Best Life Possible

At the end of Psalm 16, David beautifully expressed his absolute confidence in the Lord: *You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures forevermore* (v. 11). For David had discovered three very precious things about the Lord:

- GUIDED BY GOD: God wanted to arrange his life for him daily.
- THRILLED BY GOD: In God's presence David could enjoy intimate companionship with Him for the rest of his days.
- ASSURED BY GOD: God's "right hand" (which speaks of power and authority) would enable him to joyfully accomplish all His purposes for his life here on earth!

Was David perfect by now? No. Although his heart was fixed on God, he would always struggle with sin just like we do.

But because he was such a God-hearted servant, sin grieved his heart deeply. He just couldn't bear being out of fellowship with the Lord he loved so much!