

Message #70

I Samuel 30:1-10

There is absolutely no question that when it comes to living life on this earth we face one hassle after another. Hassles in life never seem to end or go away and it doesn't matter how faithful you are to God.

There are times when you are doing exactly what God wants you to do and you are specifically led to do what you are doing and yet you find yourself surrounded by trouble and turmoil, almost as if you are in a dark tunnel. **What God wants His people to know and learn is that in those moments you can rest in the Sovereignty of God because He is working out all things for His glory and our good.**

We may not understand the hassle and we may not understand why God has permitted it to be in our world, but what we can know is that God knows exactly what He is doing.

When we first read this story from the life of David, it appears to be a total disaster. David is relieved of his responsibilities to go with the Philistines. We may recall that he and his men were lined up ready to go with Achish into battle. The Philistine military commanders spotted David and said, "what is he doing here." They wanted him sent back to Ziklag.

David was not looking for this to happen and he was not expecting this to happen. In fact, he didn't even want it to happen. But it did. This was all orchestrated by God.

When he finally got back to where he had been living for the past 16 months, Ziklag, he discovered that while he and his men were gone, his city of Ziklag had been destroyed and his family and all other families of his men had been taken captive.

How bizarre is this? David is asked by Achish to travel with him to a battle and while David and his men are gone, the Amalekites take Ziklag and loot the city and take the families of David and his men. You must admit this does not appear to be a scenario in which God is working. But He most definitely is in this.

There is a profound lesson to see and learn here:

WHEN NEGATIVE THINGS HAPPEN TO A FAITHFUL SERVANT OF GOD, THAT SERVANT MAY BE ENCOURAGED TO KNOW THAT GOD IS STILL SOVEREIGN AND HE IS WORKING OUT HIS SOVEREIGN PLAN THAT INCLUDES ALL THE NEGATIVES WHICH HE WILL TURN INTO POSITIVES.

What David would discover is that in the end, God would use all the negative things to work out for good. In fact, as terrible as these events appear to be, in the end, David would be honored. This is an amazing text and a very important text and an encouraging text.

There are eight historical facts we want to see here:

HISTORICAL FACT #1 – David and his men return home to Ziklag. **30:1-3**

Three days after David left Achish, he arrived back home to Ziklag (v. 1). It was a trip of about 60 miles so he and his men averaged about 20 miles per day.

When David got home he discovered that the city had been overthrown and burned and the wives and children had been taken captive by the Amalekites. Of course the reason why the Amalekites were still in existence is because Saul did not obey God and completely destroy them (I Sam. 15:2-3, 9-19).

Samuel actually brought this point up to Saul as part of the reason God was going to execute him (I Sam. 28:18-19). So actually the reason why this even can potentially happen is because Saul did not obey God and now David and his men and their families are experiencing the residual effects.

When a believer blatantly disobeys God and never makes it right, it will come back to haunt them. It will end up affecting many people. Even though Saul was not even here, his rebellion led to disaster for these people.

When a political leader makes a decision that dishonors God and His word, it will be the people who will eventually suffer for it as a judgment of God. The people who will suffer had nothing to do with the decision, but they will suffer the effects. This is why it is so important to have a political leader who reverences God and His word.

According to **verses 1-2**, the Amalekites had overthrown Ziklag and burned it with fire and took captive the women and all in the city both small and great.

What is important to see here in **verse 2** is that God sovereignly saw to it that none of them were killed. This is clearly an amazing display of God's sovereign protection.

So according to **verse 3**, when David and his men got to the city, after traveling 3 days and 60 miles, he came home to a city that had been burned and looted and their wives and children had been taken captive.

What a hassle for David and his men. What a mess. What a setback. In fact, at this point, David did not even know if his family or any of the other families were even alive. What a horrible thing to discover when you come home.

When you are faithful to God and you lose a family member, it can be tough to cope with it. At these moments it is good to remember God is still sovereign.

I know of a Christian man who went to work and when he came home, his wife was gone.

I know of a case in which a Christian man went on vacation and while on vacation his job was terminated.

I know of a case where a Christian couple came home from vacation and found out someone had broken into their home.

I know of a case in which a Christian man went to war and while he was gone his fiancé married someone else.

These are real stories of real loss and when these kinds of things happen, it is good to remember God is still sovereign and He has a sovereign plan.

HISTORICAL FACT #2 – David and his men wept. 30:4

There is no question that this was a very emotional moment. You do what you are supposed to do and you go where you are supposed to go and then you come home to this mess. It was very emotional. This is a major loss to David and his men.

This is about as horrible a set of circumstances that one could ever face. The men wept. By the way, these are some of the toughest men in the world. These guys are not girly men having a good cry. They were physically exhausted by just the trip home and now they were emotionally exhausted and they wept until they could not weep any more.

HISTORICAL FACT #3 – David’s wives had been taken captive. 30:5

David had suffered a great personal loss. Michal had been taken away by Saul (I Sam. 25:44). Now when he comes home he has personally lost his two wives who had been faithful and loyal to him. He had lost Ahinoam the Jezreelitess and Abigail, who was the widow of Nabal.

Certainly you could not help but wonder where is God in all of this? It would be hard to see the hand of God in any of this. This certainly is not a nice worshipful setting. This is real life and real crime. But God’s sovereignty was right here working out His will according to His timing.

When we suffer some major loss and we are emotionally shot, it is good to remember God is still sovereign and He is still working out His will in our lives.

HISTORICAL FACT #4 – David is greatly distressed. 30:6a

David has not done one thing wrong to bring any of this on. He has not sinned and he is right with God. But he found himself “greatly distressed” and for good reason.

Every man who had joined David has lost his wife or son or daughter and they blamed David. It wasn’t David’s fault, but they blamed him. It is kind of like blaming President Trump for the Corona Virus, it is not his fault.

There was actual talk of stoning David and removing him from office permanently. There was somewhat of a mutiny brewing within his own men.

What a distressful life David has lived to this point. His brothers at one point had been against him; Saul was against him and now men who were his friends and allies were turning against him. If you have ever had people turn against you, you know the pain and the hurt that David is experiencing.

Now you must admit things here are so dark you would never suspect that God was sovereignly working out His will for David's good. But that is exactly what God was doing.

HISTORICAL FACT #5 – David was strengthened by God. **30:6b**

The end of **verse 6** is critical. We begin to see what God was sovereignly doing. David was learning that his ability to cope and his strength came in the "LORD his God." This is where you can strengthen yourself when everything and everyone seems to be against you.

When you find yourself totally emotionally shot and you have nowhere else to turn, you have four options:

- 1) You can sink into total emotional despair.
- 2) You can try to figure out your own solution to get out of your despair.
- 3) You can go to some other person to see if they can get you out of your despair.
- 4) You can turn to the Lord and be strengthened in Him and by Him.

David opted for number 4. This is an important lesson to learn.

There have been times when I have advised people to do this and they look at me as if I am some nut. God is a God who can comfort and console. God is an all sufficient God. The problem is getting people to turn to God. David did. He went right to God and discovered God gave him strength.

You do not need counselors, you do not need therapy, you do not need medication. What you need to do is to turn to the LORD your God. You will discover He will be there for you and He will strengthen you.

HISTORICAL FACT #6 – David prays to God about what he should do. **30:7-8a**

David is learning lessons and is dialed into the will of God. What David does is he prays. He knew he needed help and guidance so he prayed. He is learning exactly what God wanted him to learn, specifically come to Me and call to Me in times of trouble. Difficulties drove David to God. **Notice the contrast between Saul and David - unlike Saul, who consults a witch, David consults God.**

He asked the priest Abiathar to bring him the ephod, which contained the Urim and Thummim. What David was going to specifically ask God was whether or not he should pursue the Amalekites who had burned the city and taken the wives and children.

David didn't know what to do except to pray, which is exactly what God wanted him to do.

HISTORICAL FACT #7 – God tells David to pursue the Amalekites. **38:8b**

This is one time when God directly answered David's prayer. God not only tells David to go after them, He reveals that he would overtake them and he would rescue everyone.

This story was beginning to turn according to the Sovereign plan of the sovereign God. There was some light beginning to shine in a very dark situation. God was at work and God revealed that there would be victory.

Now getting victory did require that David obey God. It did require human effort. David did not pray and ask God to send angels to strike down the Amalekites and bring the families home. David was willing to do what he needed to do and he asked God whether he should act.

When we pray, we cannot just sit idly by doing nothing, hoping we will see God work. We must do our part.

HISTORICAL FACT #8 – David and his men pursued the Amalekites. **38:9-10**

David and his 600 men took off immediately chasing the Amalekites. When they came to the brook Besor, which was about 16 miles away, 200 men were so exhausted they could not go on.

These are not weak men, they were totally exhausted. Remember they had just traveled 60 miles in three days and they were completely worn down.

So David took 400 men who still had some strength and kept after them.

PRACTICAL LESSONS:

- 1) When you think your world has totally fallen apart and you don't understand it, remember God is still sovereign and He is working out His will in your life.**
- 2) The best thing to do when you are emotionally shot is talk to God. It is the best therapy in this world.**
- 3) When we have problems we need to remember God will give victory, but we need to also realize we have responsibilities to do what we can to go after that victory.**