

But David Found Strength in the Lord His God

1 Samuel 30:1-31

¹ David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it,² and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.

³ When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.⁴ So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.⁵ David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel.⁶ David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

⁷ Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him,⁸ and David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?”

“Pursue them,” he answered. “You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.”

⁹ David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Valley, where some stayed behind.¹⁰ Two hundred of them were too exhausted to cross the valley, but David and the other four hundred continued the pursuit.

¹¹ They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat—¹² part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights.

¹³ David asked him, “Who do you belong to? Where do you come from?”

He said, “I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago.¹⁴ We raided the Negev of the Kerethites, some territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag.”

¹⁵ David asked him, “Can you lead me down to this raiding party?”

He answered, “Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them.”

¹⁶ He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah.¹⁷ David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled.

¹⁸ David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives.¹⁹ Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back.²⁰ He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, “This is David's plunder.”

²¹ Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Valley. They came out to meet David and the men with him. As David and his men approached, he asked them how they were.²² But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, “Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go.”

²³ David replied, “No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the Lord has given us. He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiding party that came against us.²⁴ Who

will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”²⁵ David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.

²⁶ When David reached Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, “Here is a gift for you from the plunder of the Lord’s enemies.”

²⁷ David sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and Jattir; ²⁸ to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa²⁹ and Rakal; to those in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites; ³⁰ to those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athak³¹ and Hebron; and to those in all the other places where he and his men had roamed.

Finding Strength in the Lord

³ When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. ⁴ So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. ⁵ David’s two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. ⁶ David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

1. In the previous chapter, we see the Lord rescuing David from a very difficult situation. David and his men were spared the task of marching with the Philistines against the Israelites. Now David and his men returned to Ziklag. This was a 60-to-70-mile journey which they covered in three days. The men were weary and longed to be reunited with their families. The joy of coming home turned to great distress when they found the city destroyed by fire and their wives and children taken away as captives. Moving into Philistine territory may have kept Saul away, but it still did not provide the safety David and his men sought after.
 - Is there a safe place apart from God?
 - Is suffering something that can and must be avoided?
2. When David’s men saw what had happened, they were angry and bitter, and they turned their anger against David and held him responsible for their loss. There was unrest and the men began to speak of stoning David. David once again was in a difficult place. David was in grief because his family had been taken away as captives and now his own men are blaming him for all that has happened and wanted him dead.
3. David’s life took a turn for the worse since his victory over Goliath. He faced much difficulty and suffering because of Saul’s jealousy. David is also a person with many weaknesses; he is cunning in a deceitful way, violent and vulnerable to the corruption that comes with power. In all his troubles, suffering and shortcomings, the Lord was with David. David experienced God’s grace, mercy, providence, and protection. The Lord kept David from the clutches of Saul, and He sent people to encourage and strengthen David when he was down. God also rescued David from his bad decisions and kept him from doing the wrong thing. God did not forget His promise to David.
 - What does this teach you about God’s presence in the midst of suffering?
 - Does God make us more Christ like through the suffering we face?

4. *But David found strength in the Lord his God.* (v. 6). The narrator shows us the depth of relationship between God and David by using the possessive pronoun “*his God*”. Yahweh was ‘*his*’ God, the Lord who has called him, the one who had delivered him again and again. He is the Lord whose presence David longs to be before in worship.

Reflection:

1. Think about the way the men reacted to the situation and compare it to how David responded.
 - They were all distressed, and wept until they had no strength to weep, but the men’s distress turned to bitterness and then anger. They looked for someone to blame for their situation.
 - David turned to God and found strength in Him.
2. The call of a Christian includes suffering and troubles. Trials and tribulations have the potential of making us angry and bitter. Only with the strength of God we can embrace the cross and endure suffering graciously.
3. Is Jesus Christ ‘YOUR’ Lord? Reflect on the following verses.

Philippians 3:7-11

⁷ *But whatever were gains to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ.* ⁸ *What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them garbage, that I may gain Christ* ⁹ *and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.* ¹⁰ *I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death,* ¹¹ *and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead.*

How do we find strength in the Lord?

1. Remember His Promises and His Providence

1 Samuel 23:16-17

And Saul's son Jonathan went to David at Horesh and helped him find strength in God. ¹⁷ *“Don't be afraid,” he said. “My father Saul 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.”*

Here, Jonathan reminded David of the promises and providence of God.

Meditating on the steadfast love of the Lord leads us to encounter His love and strength.

Providence is normally defined in Christian theology as the unceasing activity of the Creator whereby, in overflowing bounty and goodwill (Ps. 145:9 cf. Mt. 5:45–48), he upholds his creatures in ordered existence (Acts 17:28; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3), guides and governs all events, circumstances and free acts of angels and men (cf. Ps. 107; Jb. 1:12; 2:6; Gn. 45:5–8), and directs everything to its appointed goal, for his own glory (cf. Eph. 1:9–12). (J.I Packer)

Psalms 34:1-7

- ¹ I will extol the Lord at all times; his praise will always be on my lips.
- ² I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice.
- ³ Glorify the Lord with me; let us exalt his name together.
- ⁴ I sought the Lord, and he answered me; he delivered me from all my fears.
- ⁵ Those who look to him are radiant; their faces are never covered with shame.
- ⁶ This poor man called, and the Lord heard him; he saved him out of all his troubles.
- ⁷ The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them.

Psalms 40:1-3

- ¹ I waited patiently for the Lord; he turned to me and heard my cry.
- ² He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand.
- ³ He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear the Lord and put their trust in him.

2. Seek Direction

⁷ Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him,⁸ and David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?” “Pursue them,” he answered. “You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.”

David had the priest, Abiathar with him. David used to seek the Lord’s guidance through the priest, but he did not when he decided to take refuge with the Philistines and throughout his stay there until now. David remembers that Lord had sent him a priest to guide him and sought the guidance of the Lord through the Lord’s appointed priest. We may not have Abiathar, but we have a greater High Priest, our Lord Jesus Christ to guide us. His power and strength is greater than any circumstance we may face.

Hebrews 4:14-16

¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach God’s throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

What happens when we are strengthened and led by the Lord?

A. Encountering God’s Providence

¹¹ They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat—¹² part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights.

¹⁵ David asked him, “Can you lead me down to this raiding party?” He answered, “Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them.”

1. David knew it was the Amalekites that raided their city, but he did not know which tribe or group or where they were from. God provided a way for David to find out. The Amalekite's grave mistake that led to their defeat was to abandon their ill servant to die.
2. The book of Samuel is full of the stories of God's providence. God will make a way. The larger story of providence is God delivering the people of Israel from the Amalekites. They have been raiding the people of Israel for a long time causing much death and loss. Saul was given the task to destroy the Amalekites, but he made a parade out of it. Now through extraordinary circumstances God makes a way for Israel to be delivered.
3. Meditate on the lyrics of this song by Don Moen and think about God's providence in your life.

*God will make a way
 Where there seems to be no way
 He works in ways we cannot see
 He will make a way for me
 He will be my guide
 Hold me closely to his side
 With love & strength for each new day
 He will make a way
 He will make a way*

B. A Better Way: Justice, Mercy and Humility

²³ David replied, “No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the Lord has given us. He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiding party that came against us.²⁴ Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”²⁵ David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.

There were evil men and troublemakers among David's men. They wanted a bigger portion of the plunder, so they came up with a scheme to penalize the men who were too exhausted to continue the pursuit.

Humility	“What the Lord has given us”. David acknowledged that it was the Lord who gave them the victory. He humbled himself before the Lord by giving all glory and honour to Him. (Unlike Saul)
Mercy	David would not penalise those who stayed behind.
Justice	“All will share alike”. David was fair to all parties, and made this a statute and ordinance for Israel.

Prayer Items

1. May we truly come to Jesus and know Him in a personal way.

Galatians 2:20

I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

2. May we find strength in God during times of suffering. May we believe that God knows our suffering and He will lead us in His love, wisdom, and grace.
3. We will be firm in our belief that God is in control over all things. May God open our eyes to His providence in our times of distress.
4. May the Holy Spirit guide and empower us to walk according to God's way. May we believe that we will find strength, joy, and courage as we walk in the Spirit.

Micah 6:8

⁸ He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Covid 19

1. Deliverance from the Pandemic
2. Wisdom to navigate through the pandemic.
3. Vaccine plan will be effective and equitable, so that all people may have access to the vaccine.
4. Recovery of economy and unemployment.
5. God's protection upon everyone as more sectors, schools and places of worship are opened. God protect us from experiencing a 4th wave.

Healing

1. Adrian's family: bad cold and cough

Nation

1. Leadership & good governance – political situation in Malaysia
2. Racial reconciliation
3. Churches in Malaysia to grow spiritually