

**Contrast: The Difference of a Life In Christ
Team
1 Samuel 30**

Introduction: Last week, we saw God kill the seed of David's faithlessness. Weary of walking by faith and trusting God to protect him and his people from Saul, David left the land of Judah and formed an alliance with the Philistines, who rewarded him with a city called Ziklag. David had no such opportunity anywhere in Israel, but it came at the cost of no longer trusting God; it was at the cost of sowing seeds of faithlessness instead of faithfulness.

To make matters worse, David had been lying to the King of the Philistines to make him think he had become a stench to the Jewish people. Instead of telling Achish the truth that he had been raiding the ancient enemies of Israel, he instead told Achish he was raiding the Israelites! This eventually led Achish to commission David and his men as his personal bodyguards and march them into Israel to go to war with the Jewish people. This left Ziklag defenseless.

Thankfully, God killed the seed of David's faithlessness and deceit by using the commanders of the army to force Achish to remove David from the battlefield before the fight began. Achish then sent David and his men on a three-day march back to Ziklag, which, unbeknown to them, had been conquered by the Amalekites!

Now, all of this led to three key moments in David's life and leadership.

Proposition: 1 Samuel 30 contains three key moments in David's life and leadership.

The first moment was when,

(1) David learned from the lessons of his past and strengthened himself in the Lord. (30:1-8)

- A. 1 Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid against the Negeb and against Ziklag. They had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire 2 and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great. They killed no one, but carried them off and went their way.**

Note: With David and all of his warriors gone, Ziklag was completely defenseless, so it appears they wisely didn't even put up a fight. The Amalekites easily took everything of value, including the women and children, presumably to either sell as slaves or keep for themselves, and then burned the city down!

- B. 3 And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. 4 Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they**

had no more strength to weep. 5 David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel.

1. Unlike the many people who returned to their homes and towns after Hurricane Helene and discovered that everything was destroyed, David and his men have the added grief of knowing it happened because they were away. There's nothing anybody can do in the face of a natural disaster; it literally is what it is, and it reminds you just how small and powerless we are in this world. The pain of the loss in those situations is enormous, but imagine if you also knew you could have prevented it! That's the situation David and his men are in; therefore, they wept until they literally couldn't weep anymore!
2. David and his men knew this would have likely never happened if they had not been forced to march into Israel with Achish and the Philistine Army. Furthermore, they are fully aware that they ended up in that entire situation because they followed David out of the land of Judah and into the land of the Philistines! They knew this ultimately happened because they followed David's leadership, so the next verse isn't that surprising.

C. 6 And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters.

1. They trusted David to lead them in the ways of the Lord, yet this is where his leadership brought them! They have not only lost everything they risked their lives to acquire in the covert raids against the enemies of Israel David led them on, but far worse than that, they have no idea if they will ever see their women and children again. Now, understand I'm not entirely letting them off the hook. It doesn't appear any of them ever suggested to David that they should stay in Judah! However, whether they did or didn't, David clearly led them into this situation, and now they want to kill him for it.
2. Adding insult to injury, David not only has to deal with the reality of his men wanting to kill him but that his wives have been taken as well! So what's David going to do? Well, you may recall the story earlier in 1 Samuel when David finally realized just how dire his situation was with Saul, and he ran for his life from Gibeah (1 Samuel 21). He didn't take off running by faith, but rather in total faithless fear and panic and, without retelling the story, it led him to within moments of being killed by the Philistines.
3. When God got him out of that situation, David changed course and ran to the cave at Adullam (1 Samuel 22) to work it out with God! David realized what created the problem was his faithless fear and panic, so he went to be alone with the solution to that problem—God Himself! Sadly, that lesson didn't stick deep enough for David to never again walk in faithlessness, or we likely wouldn't be reading this story, but it did stick deep enough for David to

know what he needed to do if he ever found himself down that path again! So it's really cool that in a moment when you would understand if a person ended up in total faithless fear and panic, David did the opposite. David went back to what he experienced in the Cave, and therefore the Bible says,

D. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

1. Before David even started trying to figure out what to do about this situation, he realized the first thing that needed to happen was to get his heart right. The only situation more dire than their families was that of David's heart, which caused this colossal mess in the first place! David had been walking in total self-reliance. He had been ignoring God, and thus, he had disconnected from all God is and does in us! David wasn't living like a man after God's own heart, but rather a man after his own heart. David knew he had to get his heart right before he could do anything else. So David got with God and dealt with that first!
2. But here's the key to understanding this pivotal moment in David's life. David didn't need to find strength in himself but rather in the Lord! He needed courage, confidence and hope that were not based on his perception of his abilities but rather in the person of God. More specifically, David needed to strengthen himself not WITH the Lord but IN the Lord.
3. God isn't a pill we can take to get strength, but rather, strength is of itself being IN the Lord, something David hadn't really been doing. David had been in himself! David had been trusting in his abilities and wisdom and relying on his own emotional intelligence and endurance. He was "in" himself, abiding "in" himself!
4. God is not there to add to our life; God is there to BE OUR LIFE!!! Strength is not something we get "from" God; it's something we get "IN" God. It happens because our life is surrendered to know and follow Him; it's a fruit of planting our life in Him so that our life and all we are about are inseparably defined in knowing and following Him!
5. In the Psalms, one of the testimonies to this truth was written not by David but by the sons of those assigned the job of guarding the temple doors that David charged Solomon to build when he became king! In 1 Chronicles 26, we find out the sons of Korah weren't charged with what would be considered the deeply spiritual matters of preaching God's Word, ministering to the hearts of the people through the power of music, or performing the sacrifices and other temple practices that were so needed and cherished by the people. Instead, they were charged with being the greeter team and security team! It was these men who sang the song of Psalm 84 entitled, ***"My Soul Longs for the Courts of the Lord: To The Choirmaster: According To The Gittith. A Psalm Of the Sons of Korah."***

6. Listen to what they sang, **"1 How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! 2 My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. ... 5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. ... 7 They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion. ... 10 For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. 12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!" (Psalm 84)**

7. The men tasked with what many would say was an insignificant task clearly didn't find joy and strength in their task but rather in knowing God! Strength and joy weren't gifts they got from God as something delivered to them to use, but rather they were of themselves the reality of life when they were living "in" Him (Psalm 84:5). True joy and strength is the life of living in Christ!

8. The sons of Korah sang a song of a lesson David modeled for his men in Ziklag! In this massive crisis moment where David was faced with the full force of the reality of his failure as a leader, where his men wanted to kill him, he ran to God not to fix the circumstance but to be restored in his relationship with God! In that restoration, he found the strength to face the guilt and shame of the mess he created with objectivity and wisdom rather than panic and fear. Watch what David does,

E. 7 And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 And David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue."

1. After getting his heart and mind right with the Lord by repenting and renewing his relationship with God as his identity and life, David then had the clarity of mind to do what he didn't do when he decided to ally with the Philistines—ask God what he should do! God made it very clear to David that they needed to go after the Amalekites and that they would rescue their families from them.

2. Now, understand how big of a deal it is that David asked God what to do! David was not a man who needed God to tell him to fight. David was a man of war. He needed no additional courage, strength, or encouragement to get in a fight. However, that's precisely why David needed to ask God what to do here. David had been attacking the historic enemies of Israel from his base

in Ziklag without the Lord's direction to do so, and that's partly why they ended up in this mess in the first place! So, before David assumed he should pursue the Amalekites, he needed to know this was what God wanted him to do in the first place. He didn't want to set off in his own power and reasoning again because, this time, the cost was too high if he was wrong. The lives of their women and children were at stake, so David wanted to know what God wanted him to do, and God made it clear—go get 'em!

The second key moment occurred when,

(2) God gave David and his men the opportunity to easily defeat the Amalekites and recover all that the seed of David's faithlessness had cost them. (30:9-21)

- A. Now, this begins with it sounding like things are getting worse for David, that is, God is making it more difficult rather than easier!
- B. **9 So David set out, and the six hundred men who were with him, and they came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed. 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men. Two hundred stayed behind, who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor.**
 - 1. Two hundred of David's men ran out of gas! Now, before you judge the 200 people who were too exhausted to continue, remember that they are on foot marching at essentially a speed walk/slow jog, trying to catch up to the Amalekite raiders before they can sell their women and children into slavery, get to a fortified city, or connect back up with other Amalekite forces or allied forces and be much more challenging to defeat. But, they had also just arrived in Ziklag from a three-day journey and a march with Achish into Israel prior to that.
 - 2. Therefore, my point is that it's not surprising that some of them have completely run out of gas and can't continue. They aren't scared. Their bodies are totally tapped out, but this is nonetheless another test of David's faith. His army is getting smaller, not bigger!
 - 3. But it doesn't phase David at all and right when you think things are getting worse for him, God shows them He meant what He said when he told David to get them! David's men ironically found another man who was too exhausted to carry on, but he just so happened to be an Egyptian slave of the Amalekites who had just invaded Ziklag! The Bible says,
- C. **11 They found an Egyptian in the open country and brought him to David. And they gave him bread and he ate. They gave him water to drink, 12 and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit revived, for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. 13 And David said to him, "To whom do**

you belong? And where are you from?" He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago. 14 We had made a raid against the Negeb of the Cherethites and against that which belongs to Judah and against the Negeb of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire." 15 And David said to him, "Will you take 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 take you down to this band."

1. He has no allegiance to the Amalekites, for sure. He's their slave. So, there is no shock that he was more than willing to sell them out.
2. What is interesting is that this Egyptian knew who the Hebrew God was. It does not suggest that he believed in Yahweh, but that he knew the Israelites did, and therefore, he wanted to hear David swear by the God he worshiped. He was convinced David feared God enough that if David used God as a guarantor of his commitment, then David would certainly not kill him or surrender him to the Amalekite master, who would undoubtedly execute the Egyptian for leading David and his men right to them!
3. So God gives David the human intelligence needed to find the Amalekites without being detected, and then God offers David an opportune moment to attack them! The Bible says,
 - D. 16 And when he had taken him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 17 And David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day, and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men, who mounted camels and fled. 18 David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. 19 Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken. David brought back all.

The third key moment occurred when,

- (3) God gave David the opportunity to teach his men the value of each person on the team! (30:20-31)
 - A. 20 David also captured all the flocks and herds, and the people drove the livestock before him, and said, "This is David's spoil." 21 Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow David, and who had been left at the brook Besor. And they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near to the people he greeted them. 22 Then all the wicked and worthless fellows among the men who had gone with David said, "Because they did not go

with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except that each man may lead away his wife and children, and depart."

1. First, it's important to note that not all the men who went and fought the Amalekites with David said this, but rather the "wicked and worthless fellows among the men who had gone ..."
2. Second, these "wicked and worthless" men had just been proclaiming that all the spoils belonged to David. They suddenly proved themselves as "wicked and worthless" because they started speaking as if they had the authority to tell people they couldn't have any of it! If this was David's stuff, then only David could say who could or couldn't have any of it!
3. Now, some of you might be agreeing with these men. Even if these 200 men honestly couldn't go on, it doesn't take away from the fact that they didn't contribute anything to the battle, right? But the truth is that they did! How? Well, read the next verse!

B. 23 But David said, "You shall not do so, my brothers, with what the LORD has given us. He has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came against us. 24 Who would listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down into the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage. They shall share alike."

1. These men didn't just sit down beside the creek and enjoy the freshwater; they were guarding "the baggage." Because the Egyptian told them exactly where the Amalekites were headed, they could leave everything but the bare bone minimum stuff they needed to fight and thus could now travel even quicker and quieter! This was huge! The men who stayed behind played a vital role. They enabled the speed and mobility of the fighting force and gave some reasonable assurance that when they came back from battle, all their stuff would still be their stuff—unlike what just happened in Ziklag!
2. And understand that what they were guarding was ALL David and his men had left. The Amalekites had taken everything else! So, if another raiding party had come along, those 200 exhausted men would be all that stood between the only remaining resources to their names and having nothing!
3. More importantly, David clarified that everything about their victory was credited to the Lord. The fact that they even caught up with and found the Amalekites was a miracle of God because clearly, he was the one who put the Egyptian slave into their hands! Furthermore, there's the fact that when they caught up to them, they found them totally unorganized to fight and likely drunk from partying! David and his army were essentially able to just walk right in and kill them!! Therefore, the idea that any of them could claim authority over the spoils of battle was absurd, much less that they should

discount the value of the men who were totally physically exhausted but who nonetheless still put their lives on the line in their willingness to stand guard everybody's stuff!

4. The story then ends this way,

- C. **25 And he made it a statute and a rule for Israel from that day forward to this day. 26 When David came to Ziklag, he sent part of the spoil to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the LORD." 27 It was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, 28 in Aroer, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, 29 in Racal, in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenites, 30 in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach, 31 in Hebron, for all the places where David and his men had roamed.**

Note: Giving credit to the Lord, David also made sure to share some of the spoils of war with some of the elders of the tribe of Judah who had supported him through the years (30:26).

Now, in praying through what to leave us with from this story, I couldn't pass up the opportunity given to me in the final part of the story.

Many people just don't see how they are needed in the body of Christ. They don't feel like they have enough time or ability to do anything meaningful in Christ's cause through the local church. In other words, they view themselves like the wicked and worthless fellows viewed the men who stayed behind with the baggage! So many think that if they can't preach, sing, play an instrument, or lead teams of people, they don't have anything of value to offer the body. And hear me, if you view yourself that way, then you are viewing yourself the same way men described as "wicked and worthless" viewed people, which can't be a good thing!

Challenge: How are you using your time and abilities to give life to other people in Venture and to labor with them to engage those far from God with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to know and follow Him?

11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:11-16)

So, the key point in that passage is that my job, as well as the other pastors, is not to do all the work but to lead and equip the body in such a way that every part of the body can do the work well that they were made to do in and through the local church! However, we can't do our job if you're unwilling to truly be a part of the body! Suppose you're an eyeball that only wants to sit in a worship gathering and run out the door as fast as possible. In that case, you are never going to help the body see anything other than rapidly descending taillights as you leave the parking lot! We can only equip the body with the parts of the body willing to be a part of the body, but that doesn't change the fact that every part of the body is still needed for the body to function as a fully healthy and mature body!! Paul explains all this deeper in a letter to the church in Corinth. He wrote,

14 For the body does not consist of one member but of many. 15 If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell? 18 But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. 19 If all were a single member, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. 21 The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." 22 On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, 24 which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it, 25 that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. 26 If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. 27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. (1 Corinthians 12:14-27)

So, are some parts of the body less vital for the body to live than others? Certainly. Does the absence or injury to certain body parts cause more problems than others? Absolutely. Can the body fully function as it's built to function without every part of the body being attached, healthy, and participating in what it was designed to do? Certainly, and absolutely NOT!

Therefore, stop viewing yourself as the wicked and worthless men do and start viewing yourself the way God does! The sons of Korah didn't get upset at being chosen as the greeter team and security team; rather, they praised God that they got to be on the team laboring with Him! They considered being with God more extraordinary than any assignment God could give them on the team! But they also understood the value that God had made them to participate in the work of the Temple! God had made them to do something on the team, and it didn't matter what value others put on what they had been made to do because their value was in knowing Him and laboring with Him! Nothing else mattered!

If your time and talent only allow you to be a pinky toe, then stop thinking you're in any way less important to the body! Stop thinking the body (the local church) is somehow better off without a pinky toe! I don't know about you, but I want all my body parts to be healthy and fully doing what they were meant to do!

So stop excusing yourself from the body of Christ because you may have way less time than others. If all your situation in life provides you with is an hour a month to labor together in the cause of Christ with others in your local church, then give everything you have in that one hour!

If you make \$10,000 a year and therefore your tithe (10%) is \$1,000 a year, or if you make \$100,000 a year and therefore your tithe is \$10,000 a year, or if you make \$1,000,000 a year so that your tithe is \$100,000 a year, the fact that you are tithing out of what the Lord gave you is the point! Furthermore, that person who only had \$9,000 a year left to live off of is living with a lot more faith than the rest of the people in that illustration! If that's you, let me encourage you that your investment of \$1,000 says a lot more than the person whose tithe is \$100,000 or even \$10,000. It is why the person whose tithe is \$10,000 or \$100,000 is no more faithfully laboring with Christ than the person who only makes \$10 a year but faithfully gives ten percent of that \$10 to the local church they are partnered with to labor and live in Christ! Our value is not in what we have to give from our time, talents, or even money; our value is that we are in Christ, and our contribution to the health of the church is that we faithfully give it!

So listen, if you can't preach, teach, sing, or play an instrument, that's no big deal! Stop belittling your talent and abilities!! Stop belittling what God made you to do. If you are a child of God, you are so because you know the basics of the Gospel and have the Holy Spirit of God in you, meaning you have love thriving in you. Love is the greatest gift anybody can have, and if you are a child of God, you have more of it than anybody else in this world! So what if you can't preach, teach, or sing; you can love, and that's more powerful than anything in this world! But if you don't share that love with others in the body of Christ then you are rendering that love useless! If you can't labor with others in the body of Christ to bring the knowledge of the Gospel and the love of God you experience because of it to others, then what good is it to you and others to have it?

So listen, take whatever time, talent, and money you have, and look for ways to encourage the faith and life of others in and through Venture with it. If you don't feel led to be a part of Venture, then find another Christ-honoring Gospel-centered church that does and put them to use there. God made you, your time, talent, and money, to be used for His glory, and you can't do that if you aren't using them in the way He made you to use them in the Body of Christ! That's why you don't need to ask God if you should get plugged into a local church; just ask Him which one! Here in this local body of believers we believe God has called us to turn this region upside down with the Gospel of Christ and to take names off the long list of people groups who have no access to the Gospel in other parts of the world. As pastors, we LOVE giving our time, money, and abilities to the Lord to labor together with a local church that has the vision Venture has! Keri and I are crazy pumped to get to do this with you!

So, my challenge is for all of you who are just spectating to get in on the action! Join the team! You may be the nose, the eye, or the pinky toe that God made to help this body unleash the glory of God on this region and around the world, but until you get plugged in, we are never going to be what God designed us to be because He designed us to be with you as we do it!

You say, "How do you get plugged in?" Well, the tithing part is easy. Visit our website or scan the QR code on your bulletin. It's that easy!

Connecting with others is also easy! Just stop by Next Steps or email Jonathan Pugh, and he will help you get plugged into a group.

Finally, the serving part is easy as well. Let Jonathan know how you would like to help Venture accomplish the vision he has given us in the mission of Christ, and Jonathan will get to work helping you get plugged in. And don't worry if all you have is an hour a month or hours a day; whatever God has given you is what you were meant to give at this point in your life! Furthermore, you are not making a lifetime commitment. If your passion, abilities, or time availability changes, change what you do and when! It's that simple. Just get plugged in and be a part of the life and effort of your local family in Christ! We want you because we love you, and we love you because, in Christ, we are truly and forever family!