

David Found Strength In The Lord

1 Samuel 30:1-31 (Key verse 6b)

“...But David found strength in the Lord his God.”

Where do we turn to when we have lost all strength or courage? Have you ever been in a situation where you lose all strength? Strength to study, strength to love and be compassionate to others, even the strength to have faith in God. We will see in this passage the difference between human strength and the strength that can be found in the Lord our God. In today's passage we shall see firstly, the limits of human strength and secondly, that it is possible to find strength or encouragement in the Lord. We will then also explore what it means practically to find strength in the Lord? I pray that we too through this passage may be encouraged or may find strength in the Lord our God, Amen.

Last week we saw how David and his men were not allowed by the Philistines leaders to join in to fight against Israel. They were told to go back in peace to their home town, Ziklag. David and his men left early to go back to Ziklag which took them three days. Look at verse 1-2, “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, 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.” Before David and his men reached Ziklag they could see that something was wrong, they could see smoke billowing in the skies from a far distance. The Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag, things were burning all over, the women and everyone, both young and old were nowhere to be found. Ziklag was destroyed and since they could not find anyone it was clear that their wives, sons and daughters had been taken captive [3, 4]. However still, were they alive wherever they were, how were they being treated wherever they are? The worse part is that when David and his men think about how they had killed many of the Amalekites people, both children and women, young and old. Why would the Amalekites have mercy on their wives, daughters and sons.

What did David and his men do in this situation, look at verse 4, “So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep”. David and his men became heart broken, they wept aloud until they had no strength to even weep anymore. Have you ever wept so much that you have no strength left to weep? In fact if you do come across someone weeping like this, I can assure you, you will also start to cry even though you do not know what they are crying for, but just because of their sight of weeping. This is that kind of weeping, which expresses deep pain and brokenness, perhaps you have seen it in movies, a documentary on something painful or at a funeral. David and his men were in pain, their hearts were crushed, their wives, daughters and sons were taken from them. These were men who were ready to fight Israel with the Philistines but now had become powerless, broken and weak. At the end they even lost all strength to even weep. They literally became tired of weeping, that is how much they cried. We usually hear about being tired of work, however these mighty men of Israel had become tired of weeping. What could be next from this, let us look at verse 6a, “David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters...” the men became bitter in spirit because their sons and daughters were taken captive. The only thing they could think of was to stone David. This is because had it not been because of David's tactics, they would not have come to the Philistines territory and left their daughters and sons along to go support philistine armies. They blamed David for what happened to Ziklag and wanted some form of justice, which in this case was actually revenge. David was already distressed over the loss of his two wives, Ahinoam and Abigail [5], as if that was not enough the men added to his distress when he heard they wanted to stone him.

David and his men had become like close brothers who would follow and obey David's instructions and leading. They were in a way his support structure and even his strength. However, they were now talking about stoning him. Humanly speaking, at this point in time David had no one, his two wives had been taken, his men were not talking about leaving him but worse than that, they wanted to stone him. They became bitter in their spirit, this means they wanted nothing to do with David. According to them the world was better without David. This could only discourage and break David further because his own men who he trusted, were against him. What was David's reaction to all this? Or whom could David turn to when he had lost everything, even the strength to weep? Let us look at verse 6b, “...But David found strength in the Lord his God.” In the King James version of the bible, it says, but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God or he strengthened himself in the LORD his God. This was an intentional activity from the part of David to find encouragement or strength from the Lord. He did not allow the distress of his situation to overtake him, but rather he strengthened himself in the Lord. He refused to remain in the state of distress but decided to find strength in the one person who will never forsake him, the Lord his God. However, how could David strengthen himself in the Lord? And what does it mean that David found strength in the Lord his God and lastly what is this strength that he found in the Lord his God.

Let us **firstly look at, how could David find strength in the Lord or how he could strengthen himself in the Lord?** David could find strength because he was looking for strength. The only place he could find strength was from the Lord his God. There was no strength in himself, there was no strength to find from his men nor from his wives. He was stripped of everything except the Lord his God. So because the Lord his God is always there, David could find strength in the Lord his God, David could strengthen himself in the Lord his God and be encouraged. Instead of spending hours and hours focusing on his circumstance as though it will change, David decided to focus on the Lord his God, he decided to strengthen himself in the Lord and find strength. This was possible because the Lord his God was ever present irrespective of the wrong path he had taken. Also David had a life experience with God. That is why it says, he found strength in the **Lord his God**. When David looked in to God, David could remember how the Lord delivered him from many trials in his life, from the lion while he was only a young shepherd boy, how he overcame Goliath through the Lord's strength. David could remember the enduring everlasting unconditional love of God over him. David had a lived experience with the Lord, and the Lord was his God. All that David to do was to look towards the Lord for strength and encouragement. The lord was always there to give him strength.

Secondly, what does it mean David found strength in the Lord his God? It means that the Lord's strength or encouragement was always there for David. It was David who chose to follow his human instincts and trust in his human strength that led to his devastating situation. To find strength in the Lord meant that, David could now have the ability to turn to God for direction or resolution, David could find meaning and purpose of his life through the Lord his God. He could cry out to the Lord for help instead of crying all day over his circumstance.

Thirdly, what is the strength he found in the Lord his God? David found the strength or encouragement to seek the Lord, the strength to hope and believe that there is something better than what he and his men were facing. This was the strength to be courageous and see beyond his circumstance, above all this was the encouragement to pray and inquire of the Lord. It was the strength to surrender his will, ego and pride to the Lord. It was the strength to repent from unbelief into believing in the Lord his God.

The rest of the passage will reveal practically how the lord encouraged David and that when we do find strength in the Lord it can never leave us idle or lazy. Let us now see what did David do next? Look at verse 7-8a, Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him, and David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" ... David made a bold request to the Lord, shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them? This shows that David no longer placed trust in himself but rather in the Lord. He no longer depended on his human strength but in the leading of the Lord. This illustrates the effect of finding strength in the Lord. The person can no longer say, I can do this or that, the "I" dies we rather say through the Lord this or that can or will be done. That is why David asks the Lord, shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them? He has completely given God the driver's seat in his life because he found encouragement or strength in the Lord. Finding strength in the Lord changed David from being paralysed by his circumstance into an able man who could look to God for direction and obey the Lord's leading.

We can also say, to inquire from the Lord was also David's way to look for encouragement in the Lord. Let us look at how the Lord encouraged David in verse 8b, "...Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue." The Lord's response gave David strength and encouragement, not only did the lord say you can go and pursue, but the lord also provided David with a promise, you will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue. This is very encouraging or strengthening to hear from the Lord. So by enquiring of the Lord David could find strength or strengthen himself. The Lord was always ready and ever present to strengthen David, all that David had to do was to repent and turn to the Lord for strength and direction.

Upon the Lord's response we read in verse 9-10, that "David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Valley, where some stayed behind. Two hundred of them were too exhausted to cross the valley, but David and the other four hundred continued the pursuit." Because David found strength in the Lord he could obey the Lord's leading and direction. Many times we may pray to the Lord for direction, however it does not mean we will obey the Lord's leading. We need strength from the Lord, in order to obey his leading or direction. Upon receiving the Lord's answer David obeyed and went in pursuit. Worse part, at the Besor valley, 200 men could not join in because they were exhausted. At this point David could have been discouraged to continue, firstly because he was now 200 men less, secondly if the 200 men were exhausted it surely means even the 400 men including David were somewhat tired. How then could they fight the raiders? David and his men did not

depend on their human strength but on the strength they found in the Lord. God's encouragement is not like human encouragement or human strength, David could still pursue the raiders because of the strength he found in the Lord his God.

Through the help of an Egyptian boy David and his men were able to locate the Amalikites raiders, they fought them from dusk till evening of the next day [11-17]. We read in verse 18-19, that "David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back". The Lord is faithful to his promises, everything and everyone was recovered as the Lord promised. However some of the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers did not want to share the plunder with the 200 men who stayed behind. How did David help the trouble makers and the 200 men, look at verse 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." David reminded them that, they won the battle because their strength was from the Lord. This means that without the Lord's encouragement they could not have gained victory. That it was the Lord who delivered into their hands the raiding party. Because David received strength and encouragement from the Lord, even when he had gained victory, he still remembered his main source of strength. David's rule was that all will share alike.

David's newly found strength in the Lord his God, also made him generous and considerate of others. When he reached Ziklag he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, to some who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and many others in the surrounding Israel regions and where they had roamed [26-31].

When David found strength in the Lord, he found faith or his faith was renewed. He could then seek the council of the lord by faith. Through this passage I have come to realize that, for me to really fulfil God's work in my life, in ministry, family and friends, to teach the bible, prepare Sunday messages, write weekly testimonies, and lead family by faith and so on. I can never do it by my human strength. I think many times I easily trust in my human abilities and strength because I think I am able. However I have realized that the end of it, is discouragement and fatalistic thoughts. When difficult circumstances arise I become paralyzed instead of becoming bold seeing beyond them. In fact in those hard times I become like a victim and just dwell in there until something changes. However, I am learning from David that it is possible to strengthen oneself in the Lord. And it is possible not because I can, but because the Lord is ever present to strengthen anyone anywhere anytime. These paralyzing circumstances have a gravitation pull to only make me focus on them wishing for something to miraculously change. However nothing changes if I do not change. Lately, I have been feeling like I am chasing after time, my wife, Becca likes to be joyful when Friday comes whereas for me I always have a load of work on my head. So whether it is weekdays or weeks I see not much difference. I think this covid situation is also playing a toll on me. For the past weeks I have not being able to even write my testimonies, and prepare well my bible study notes even when it is my turn to lead in our fellowship leaders meetings. Many times I felt I was dragging myself to even do morning devotions, many of my prayer not spirit filled or with heart. I feel am victim of life or just surviving. As though am waiting for something to fall from heaven and change my life. However, I am learning from today's word, that I can strengthen myself from the Lord, that I can find strength and encouragement in the Lord. All this is possible because God is willing and ready to strength me anywhere and anytime. So I was encouraged while preparing this message, that God is actually ever present for me to find strength In him. Through finding strength in the Lord, the Lord changes me to seek after him and obey his leading. Lord please help me focus on you more rather than my abilities or my worthless human strength, I thank you that you are ever present and ever willing to encourage me so I may obey your word and grow as a genuine disciple of Jesus in the midst of this world.

In conclusion, one way or another we all face situations that crush our spirit, whether we are Christians or not. In those times we come to realize that our human strength is really nothing. Students have been crushed by some of their exam results or a particular course, fear, loss of a loved one, sickness or physical disability and so on. All these can happen to anyone, however today David has shown us that it is possible to be strengthened through the Lord. We may not change the circumstance, however the Lord will change us through his strength instead of being victims of our circumstance to being victors over our circumstance. Also I believe that to grow as disciples of Jesus it is only possible through finding strength in the Lord our God. We need that strength to live by prayer, prepare testimony, bible study material, marriage life, work and study by faith and live life of faith. We need the Lord's strength to love and serve others believing in Jesus as our lord and saviour. Then when we are strengthen in the Lord, we can repent and obey what the Lord commands us to do. Amen.