

Selah: Stop, Look, Listen – May 16, 2020

The Lord be with you.

I find myself in difficult times coming back again and again to stories about David and two psalms of David, we know more about David and the inner life, the inner workings of David, than any other person in scripture and that's why David makes for such wonderful case studies, for just about any life situation.

David is a man who can rise to great heights and he can sink to great lows. I like to study David, because Scripture twice says of David that he is a man after God's own heart. Now, we've looked at David before in trouble, but it's gonna take a man David size to get himself into the mess we find Him in today.

I am looking at First Samuel, Chapter 30, the first few verses and for us to really understand what is happening here, we need to keep in mind, an ancient proverb that says The enemy of my enemy is my friend because that's what's playing out here. As David has been running from his enemy King Saul and his armies and in trying to escape King Saul, David has made himself into the friend of Saul's enemies, the Philistines.

Now, you remember, the Philistines. David as a teen killed Goliath, who was a Philistine, and put to flight to their armies, but now David has been in such a desperate situation, as he has made himself a friend to the Philistine. David and his 600 mighty men. They have gone on a raid alongside the Philistines, but David has made a huge tactical error in leaving his headquarters, the city of Ziklag, in leaving his headquarters without defense. In verse one, David is returning with his 600 mighty men from the raid, and we read, now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amelikites had made a raid on the negave and on Ziklag, they had attacked and burned it down and taking captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great, they killed none of them but carried them off and went on their way. When David and his men came to the city, they found it burnt down and their wives and sons, and daughters, taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him, raise their voices, and wept until they had no more strength to weep.

So David, his men returned from the raid and they find their homes and smoking ash and their wives and their children are carried off to be sold into slavery, and David's mighty men turned into a lynch mob against David as verse 60 says, David was in great danger for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in spirit for their sons and daughters.

Now, we've seen David in trouble before, but this is perhaps the most troubled David has ever gotten himself into.

Now I have the rest of verse 6, underline in my Bible, as I come back to it again and again as it starts to turn things around for David as it says, "But David strengthen himself in the Lord is God, this little word, but is one of my favorite words in the Bible as the little word, but has a way of just turning everything around, as it does here. But David, but David

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strengthen himself in the Lord his God I love that the Lord his God. David has made it personal for him, the Lord his God. Now, the word translated here, a strengthen is a big word in the Hebrew scriptures, the basic meaning is to be strong, to become strong three times, God uses this very word commanding Joshua, "Be strong and courageous, do not be frightened, or dismayed "for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

And David himself who oftentimes use this word in the Psalms, for instance, in Psalm 27:14, David says, "Be strong and let your heart take courage, wait for the Lord, this word, yes, is usually translated as be strong, here it is used in the reflexive form of the verb, it's not in the passive that David was strengthened by the Lord, it's in the reflexive that is David strengthen himself in the Lord his God, that means that David does something David takes hold, to strengthen himself. The Hebrew word here. It conveys effort.

No, so later when this Hebrew verse was translated into Aramaic, keep in mind that when the Jews returned from Babylon, they no longer spoke Hebrew, they spoke Aramaic. So years later, when this was translated into Aramaic, they translated it as David strengthen himself in the word of the Lord, his God.

How did David go about strength and himself in the Lord his God he did it in the word of the Lord his God. I believe that when David was watching sheep or when he was holed up in a wilderness cave, I believe that David meditated on the word of the Lord, that he had, which were the five books Moses and as David meditated on the word his eyes were open to see that God was not simply the Shepherd of Israel, but David could say The Lord is my shepherd.

And so that again and again, we see David appropriating the promises of God made in His word, and making them personal for him.

So we see David saying things like The Lord is my light and my salvation, the Lord is a strong hold of my life, the "Lord is my rock, my fortress, my deliverer, my shield.

So that for David, God is not just a God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but he is my God. I hope you read Scripture like that. And when you do you start to say and to believe with David. Yes, I get myself into messes, but surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life.

On what is one of the darkest days in David's life, He begins to turn things around, but David strengthen himself in the Lord his God.

Sometimes we say it's darkest before the dawn. Well, here it is true for David, as you turn over one chapter to 1 Samuel 31, and it says three days later, I think of the significance of three days here. Three days later, a fugitive from battle comes into camp and tells David that King Saul is dead and finally, David will be king. In this difficult time of pandemic why not take the step David does and strengthen yourself in the Lord your God.

I'm Tim Smith a fellow traveler on the pilgrim way.

Thanks for listening, until next time.

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