

Becoming an Honorable Man

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Text: I Samuel 30:1-31

Today we're going to read a story from the Old Testament and highlight several characteristics of King David that led him to become a man people wanted to be around and follow.

You may recall that David is referenced as being "a man after God's own heart."

Our text is a lengthy portion from I Samuel 30.

Scripture: "David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day." **1 Samuel 30:1**

Sometimes we read a sentence and there doesn't appear to be much action and we miss what is being said. We miss a valuable truth that is worth noting for later in the story.

This is a three day journey that David and his men have just made. That's an important detail.

Scripture: Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, 2 and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. 3 So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. 4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. **1 Samuel 30:1-4**

In 1 Samuel 29, David and his men have just been rejected by the Philistines, not being allowed to join them in battle. They made their way back home to Ziklag (a 3 day journey), only to find the city in ruins.

The city had been destroyed, and there is no sign of any wives or children. The men are emotionally spent to the point of such grief that they weep until they can no longer.

I'd like to point out - "Real men do cry!"

- These are warriors! Soldiers! Fighting men!
- They've been labeled as rebellious, deserters, thieves,
- These are HARD CORE men.

Don't let anyone tell you or give you the impression that real men don't cry. Regardless of the age...

- when something touches us deep enough,
- wounds us severely enough, or
- challenges us beyond our limits,

The tears flow and it's NOT BAD!!

Scripture: And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive. ⁶Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. So David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them? And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake *them* and without fail recover *all*." **1 Samuel 30:5-8**

Of course someone has to be blamed, and in this case it's David!

Point #1 - Noteworthy Men/Women – Find Strength in the Lord, & Inquire of the Lord.

This is a terrible experience! ALL is lost!

- Property, possessions and people.
- Who knows if their families are still living?
- If so, are the Amalekites mistreating them?
- Could that possibly be worse than death?

This is a **major wilderness experience!**

Hopefully – you and I will never have to go through anything like this, but, all of us have our own “wilderness experiences.”

- Where news comes that's unexpected and bad.
- Where friends and family are not there to lean on.

- When life suddenly falls apart.

In this case, David's so-called friends, his traveling buddies, his "doing life together family" want to stone him.

Wilderness experiences can cause us to crawl up in a cave and want to die, or draw near to Christ and say, "Please help!"

For David, he "found strength in the Lord His God." I like that – "found strength in the Lord **HIS GOD.**"

David didn't raid the fridge, hit the bar, run a marathon, sit in front of the TV, or whine on Facebook. None of that.

David wrote in Psalm 59:16,

"But I will sing of your strength,
in the morning I will sing of your love;
for you are my fortress,
my refuge in times of trouble."

Psalm 46:1 says,

"God is my refuge! God is my strength! An ever present help in time of trouble."

It's far easier to find strength in the Lord in the bad times, when we know Him well in the good times.

Practically, how do we do that?

- Remember who God is – **His Character.**
- Remember how God has provided in the past – **His Faithfulness.**
- Remember the sacrifice of Christ – **His Love**

When we find strength in the Lord it's not hard to inquire of the Lord as well.

During the same time David is inquiring of the Lord, we find in I Samuel 28, King Saul is consulting a medium – the witch at Endor. He's trying to talk with Samuel – who's dead. It doesn't go well for him. Saul is basically told – he's going to be dead within 24 hours.

David goes to God the Living God asking, "What shall I do?" God responds, sending David out to fight with their families: "Go, & you'll be successful." **David expected an answer.**

He practiced Proverbs 3:5-6...

Trust in the Lord, with all your heart. **Lean** not on your own understanding. In all your ways

Acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.

Trust – Lean – Acknowledge!

David did not take an opinion poll, he did not “phone a friend.” He called on “a friend that sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). “God, I need you! I’m stuck! And I may even die. My friends, want to kill me.”

Scripture: So David went, he and the six hundred men who *were* with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed *behind*, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor. Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. Then David said to him, “To whom do you *belong*, and where *are* you from?” And he said, “I *am* a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. ¹⁴We made an invasion of the southern *area* of the Cherethites, in the *territory* which *belongs* to Judah, and of the southern *area* of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire.” And David said to him, “Can you take me down to this troop?” So he said, “Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop.” **1 Samuel 30:9-15**

Point #2 – Noteworthy Men/Women – Know How to Show Compassion

The army finds an Amalekite Egyptian slave. This is their enemy! He admits that he was even a part of the raiding party. In verse 14, he says “we” raided the Negev, “we” burned Ziklag.

It’s amazing to read that David feeds him, gives him water and lets him LIVE! Now are there alternative motives here? Perhaps, but even then, this man is an enemy of David’s.

For David, practicing mercy was nothing new. He had practiced mercy before in the case of Nabal and his family. Twice it’s recorded that King Saul was within reach, in the hands of David for him to be able to kill him, and both times he spared his life.

The question of compassion comes to us. How are we known: stern and legalistic or kind and compassionate?

God has shown us mercy: “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” We were enemies of God, yet compassion flowed from God.

Jesus shared the Parable of the Good Samaritan to help us realize compassion is SHOWING LOVE. Not just speaking of it.

In the late 1700s on a bitterly cold evening in Northern Virginia, an old man's beard was glazed by winter's frost as he waited for a ride across the river. He heard a brigade of men on horses

coming around the bend. He let the first one pass him without any effort to get his attention.

Then another passed by, and another. Finally, the last rider neared and the old man caught the rider's eye and said, "Sir, would you mind giving an old man a ride to the other side?" The rider said, "Sure, thing. Hop aboard." Seeing the old man unable to lift his half frozen body onto the horse, the horseman dismounted and helped the old man onto the horse.

The horseman not only took the old man across the river but to his destination which was a few miles away. As they neared the man's home the horseman was curious and asked, "Sir, I noticed that you let several other riders pass by without making an effort to get a ride. Yet, when I came up, you immediately asked for a ride. I'm curious why on such a bitterly cold night that you would wait and ask the last rider. What if I had refused and left you there?"

The old man replied, "I've been around these parts for some time. I reckon I know people pretty good. I looked into the eyes of the other riders and immediately saw there was no concern for my situation. It would have been useless even to ask them for a ride. But when I looked into your eyes, kindness and compassion were there. I knew that your gentle spirit would welcome the opportunity to help me in my time of need."

"Thank you for sharing," he told the old man. "May I never get too busy in my own affairs that I fail to respond to the needs of others with kindness and compassion." With that, Thomas Jefferson turned his horse around and made his way back to the White House.

What's in your eyes?

There is a soft spot in every man/woman of God, though that does not make them soft, as we'll see in a moment.

Scripture: And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. ¹⁷ Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. ¹⁸ So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. ¹⁹ And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. **1 Samuel 30:16-19**

Point #3 - Noteworthy Men/Women – Will Fight for Their Family

For every Godly man, the fight for the family is necessary. In the midst of his work of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, we find Nehemiah calling the leaders of his time together with this challenge...

“Don’t be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and go fight for your friends, your families (sons and daughters, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, even your in-laws) and your homes!” **Nehemiah 4:14**

The fight for the family is done **Privately – in PRAYER**

- Pray that the culture doesn’t sweep our family away,
- Pray that Satan doesn’t deceive our kids, dragging them into sin, and
- Pray that right choices are made; that there’s no swerving to the right or to the left.

The fight for the family is also done **Publically – PROTECTIVE manner**

- It may mean saying NO! to your kids, even to yourself.
- It may be protecting what comes in your home, or where your kids go – after school or on the weekends.
- It’s training boys to become men, and helping train girls to be young women of God
- It’s picking up a second job, when the finances are tight. Selling the big boy toys that may be dear to one’s heart to make ends meet.
- It’s confronting slander, gossip, malice and even family strife.

The fight for the family never ends! no matter your age. And yet the fight is worth it! We’re talking about eternity!

As we close, where do you find yourself? Are you strong in all three areas? Is there a particular area where there is weakness in your life?

When the wilderness hits, are you prone to run to God as a last resort or as a first response?

Are you known as compassionate?

And how about the fight, is it in you? Do you fight for your family regularly, both privately and publicly?