

1st Samuel 30:1-31
David Strengthens Himself in the LORD

Introduction

A. David reaches the breaking point (30:1-6a)

1. We've seen David exhibit an incredible amount of courage and confidence (when he attacked Goliath and went out to fight Saul's battles)
2. We've seen David express dismay and frustration at Saul's unrelenting pursuit to kill him:
 - a. When he asked Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity? And what is my sin before your father, that he is seeking my life?" (1 Samuel 20:1)
 - b. When he fled to the Philistines: **"Then David said to himself, 'How I will perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me that to escape into the land of the Philistines. Saul then will despair of searching for me anymore in all the territory of Israel, and I will escape from his hand.'**" (1 Samuel 27:1)
3. We've even seen David grow weary, take matters into his own hands, and seemingly forget to seek God's help and guidance (when he hid among the Philistines; 1 Samuel 27 & 29)
4. We can only imagine what David must have been feeling:
 - a. He had spent years on the run from Saul, always fearing for his life
 - b. He was forced out of his homeland and driven away so that (as he put it) he would have **"no attachment with the inheritance of the LORD"** (1 Samuel 26:19)
 - c. He was separated from his best and most loyal friend, Jonathan
5. However, things are starting to look up:
 - a. He was safe from Saul because Saul wouldn't dare venture into Philistine territory to pursue David
 - b. He had gained the trust of the Philistine king so there was no threat there
 - c. He was also having tremendous success raiding Israel's Canaanite enemies in the Negev
6. But, then things take an unexpected turn:
 - a. The Philistine lords mistrust David and convince king Achish to send him home to Ziklag
 - b. And, when he arrives home he discovers the city has been destroyed (**READ 30:1-6a**):
 - 1) The Amalekites had raided the city and burned it to the ground
 - 2) They took all the women and children captive, including David's two wives and his children
 - 3) For the first time, we see David at the breaking point (4): **"Then David and the people who were with him lifted their voices and wept until there was no strength in them to weep."**
 - 4) And if losing his family wasn't enough, he once again found himself in danger as the people wanted to stone him (6a): **"Moreover David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him, for all the people were embittered, each one because of his sons and his daughters..."**
7. Practical Application:

- a. Have you ever found yourself under pressure from trials and tribulations, and they just keep coming and coming, and just about the time you think you can't take another, you get hit again?
- b. Or, maybe you finally get a little rest and think, Things are looking up, and then BAMBI, something else hits you in the face?
- c. I suspect David was there, at the breaking point, at the end of his rope—after all, it says that he wept until he couldn't physically weep any more.
- d. So, what do we do when we find ourselves in a similar place? – We can do what David did.

B. David draws strength from the LORD (6b)
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1. It's a bit of a cliché' to say that we need to turn to the LORD in times like this
2. However, that doesn't make it any less true and David knew this (6b): **“But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.”**—there are three things I want to highlight in this nine word sentence:
 - a. The first is the phrase **“strengthened himself”**:
 - 1) The word strengthened here in it's root form means to make something strong, harden it
 - 2) It's used here in the Hithpael form which is reflexive (meaning it's something David did to himself) and when used this way generally refers to strengthening or encouraging oneself
 - 3) So we first learn that David was an active party here, he wasn't sitting idly by waiting for things to simply get better
 - b. The second is the phrase **“in the LORD”**:
 - 1) We can't overlook this
 - 2) David didn't pull himself up by his bootstraps or take matters into his own hands like he apparently did when he fled to the Philistines
 - 3) At this moment he didn't even search out strength among his friends (after all, it sounds like most had turned against him and wanted him stoned)
 - 4) Instead, he found his strength in one place: the LORD (we'll look at this in a minute)
 - c. The third is the phrase **“his God”**:
 - 1) We also can't overlook this
 - 2) Many try to find help or strength in their religion
 - 3) But, David found his strength in a personal God, One with Whom he had a relationship
 - d. I think all three of these are critical when we need strength and encouragement:
 - 1) We can't just expect them to come; we need to seek them out just like David did
 - 2) We can search for them in many places, but ultimately they must be found in the same place David found them, in the Lord
 - 3) Finally, it's not enough to simply seek strength and encouragement through things like prayer and the Bible (e.g. religious practices), because true strength and encouragement only comes through a personal relationship with Jesus
3. So, what does it mean to strengthen ourselves in the LORD?
 - a. The author doesn't really tell us how David did that, only that he did
 - b. However, we have someplace we can turn for a pretty good idea of what David did

- c. The book of Psalms is filled with examples from David written at times just like this one, and one example is Psalm 86:
- 1) He called out to the Lord in prayer and expected Him to answer:
 - a) **"Incline Your ear, O LORD, and answer me for I am afflicted and needy."** (1a)
 - b) **"For to You I cry all day long."** (3b)
 - c) **"Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; and give heed to the voice of my supplications!"** (6)
 - d) **"In the day of my trouble I shall call upon You, for You will answer me"** (7)
 - 2) He expressed his need(s) to the Lord:
 - a) **"For I am afflicted and needy."** (1b)
 - b) **"O God, arrogant men have risen up against me, and a band of violent men have sought my life"** (14)
 - 3) He asked for the Lord's help and strength:
 - a) **"Preserve my soul, for I am a godly man; O You my God, save Your servant who trusts in You."** (2)
 - b) **"Make glad the soul of Your servant"** (4)
 - c) **"Oh grant Your strength to Your servant, and save the son of Your handmaid"** (16b)
 - 4) He asked for the Lord's grace and mercy:
 - a) **"Be gracious to me, O Lord"** (3)
 - b) **"But you, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious..."** (15a)
 - c) **"Turn to me, and be gracious to me"** (16a)
 - 5) He reminded himself of the Lord's loyalty:
 - a) **"[you are]...abundant in lovingkindness to all who call upon You."** (5b)
 - b) **"For your lovingkindness toward me is great"** (13a)
 - c) **"For [you are]...slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness and truth"** (15)
 - 6) He remembered the Lord's goodness and what He had done for him:
 - a) **"For You, O Lord, are good..."** (5a)
 - b) **"There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours"** (8)
 - c) **"For You are great and do wondrous deeds; You alone are God."** (10)
 - d) **"Because You, O LORD, have helped me and comforted me (past tense)"** (17b)
 - 7) He was thankful: **"I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart and will glorify Your name forever."** (12)
 - 8) He asked the Lord to teach him and was committed to obey: **"Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name."** (11)
4. One of my favorite verses is Isaiah 41:10 and it was a promise from God to Israel: **"Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."**

C. David reflects his renewed strength and encouragement in the LORD in the next two events (7-31)

1. He attacks the Amalekites and rescues all that was taken (READ 7-20):
 - a) A short time ago we saw David seemingly take matters into his own hands and not inquire of the Lord before escaping to the Philistines
 - b) However, here we see him return to his practice of seeking guidance from the Lord
 - c) And as we would expect, the Lord not only instructs David to attack the Amalekites, but delivers them into David's hands and allows David to recover everything that was taken (including his family)

2. He shares the spoils as a reflection of God's goodness to them (READ 21-31):
 - a) He insisted that all of his 600 men share in the spoils:
 - 1) When David and his men set out to pursue the Amalekites, 400 went with David to fight while the other 200 stayed back to because they were too exhausted to continue (we learn later than they stayed and protected the **baggage**--David had learned his lesson not to leave Ziklag unprotected again)
 - 2) When the David and the 400 returned to Ziklag, the men were unwilling to give a portion of the spoils to those who stayed behind—apparently because they felt they didn't do their part
 - 3) However, David insisted that they all share equally in the spoils since it was God who had granted them the victory

 - b) He even shared the spoils with the elders throughout Judah (26-31)

Conclusion