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"What to Do when Nobody will Encourage You"

(I Samuel 30:1 - 8)

The scene of our text finds David in one of the most discouraging situations that he ever faced in life. David and his men were excluded from the war between the Philistines and the Israelites, but they were not exempted from all wars, for they were soon fighting the Amalekites again. The cause of this war was the Amalekites' destructive attack upon Ziklag. When David and his men arrived back at their home in Ziklag, they found the city burned to the ground and their loved ones nowhere in sight. Hence, they were soon to battle with the Amalekites to avenge this atrocity.

1. Ziklag was a Place of Tragedy.

(I Samuel 30:1 - 3)

"Ziklag was the town which Achish, the Philistine king, had given to David and his men to dwell in with their families and belongings."

(John Butler)

The culprits behind the attack on Ziklag were the Amalekites. They had been a thorn in the flesh of Israel for a long time. The Amalekites' attack reflected their cowardly and cruel character.

"We have ample proof that this race was utterly hostile to all order and quietness; it lived by the plunder of others, and, sheltering itself in the recesses of the wilderness, broke out thence on every opportunity to carry ravage and ruin into all the neighboring districts. The Amalekite was thus every man's enemy and the object

of universal dislike." (R. P. Smith)

David learned a lesson from the Amalekites' attack on Ziklag that all of us need to learn. The sobering truth is that when you attack evil, evil will certainly not take it lightly. The forces of evil will not hesitate to burn down a Ziklag in retaliation for being attacked. The Lord, however, has no time for the Amalekites. Whether they be Israel's enemies or church dissidents, He will deal with them in judgment!

2. Ziklag was a Place of Tears.

(I Samuel 30:4)

-Tears of Sorrow

When David and his men returned to Ziklag, they had no way of knowing that their wives and children had been spared. They were not only grieving over the loss of material possessions, but preeminently, they were sorrowful over the apparent loss of their loved ones.

3. Ziklag was a Place of Treachery.

(I Samuel 30:6)

-Terror of Stoning

"And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him..."

(I Samuel 30:6)

"This stoning threat culminated his many problems over the last few years. It started with Saul rejecting him. This was followed by many other Israelites siding with the king against David. Then came the rejection of the Philistines in throwing him out of their army which was followed by the Amalekites burning down his city. Now his followers want to stone him. This stoning threat was indeed a painful problem." (John Butler)

When it seemed that it could get no worse for David, it did. His own people turned their backs upon him and threatened his life. Where would

David now turn for encouragement? Was there anyone left who could give him a comforting word?

"I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

(Psalm 142:4)

I. The Reality of Discouragement

A. Experienced by all Saints

"There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

(I Corinthians 10:13)

B. Exemplified in the Scriptures

"And they journeyed from mount Hor by the way of the Red Sea, to compass the land of Edom: and the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way."

(Numbers 21:4)

"For when they went up unto the valley of Eshcol, and saw the land, they discouraged the heart of the children of Israel, that they should not go into the land which the LORD had given them."

(Numbers 32:9)

C. Evoked by Satan

"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

(John 10:10)

II. The Reaction of David

"but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God"

(I Samuel 30:6)

David's reaction to discouragement is the best possible reaction for any child of God. Each of us must learn how to encourage ourselves in the Lord alone! It is a privilege and a blessing to be able to look to Him for the encouragement that we need.

"I WILL lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the LORD, which made heaven and earth."

(Psalm 121:1 - 2)

A. Encouragement in a Position

"in the LORD his God"

God's people can be greatly encouraged with the reminder of the fact that we are IN the Lord Jesus Christ!

"But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"

(I Corinthians 1:30)

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ."

(Ephesians 2:12 - 13)

B. Encouragement in a Person

"in the LORD his God"

1. A Caring Person

(I Peter 5:7)

2. A Compassionate Person

(Hebrews 4:14 - 16)

3. A Comforting Person

(II Corinthians 1:3)

C. Encouragement in a Possession

"in the LORD his God"

"Fear thou not for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness."

(Isaiah 41:10)

"To encourage yourself in the Lord involves such things as (1) recalling your past *provisions* (blessings) from God; (2) contemplating the great *power* of God which is able to deliver you from your present problems; and (3) meditating on the wonderful *promises* of God." (John Butler)

III. The Recovery of the Departed

A. The Pursuing Request

"Shall I pursue after this troop?"

*God said, **"Pursue."**

(I Samuel 30:8)

B. The Promise Received

"thou shalt surely overtake them"

(I Samuel 30:8)

C. The Prosperous Recovery

(I Samuel 30:18 - 19)

"David recovered all."

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

(Romans 8:28)

*May God help His people to learn the lesson that David learned at Ziklag. When there is nobody to encourage you, encourage yourself in the Lord!

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