

STUDY NUMBER EIGHT - Samuel 29:1-30:31

TEXT:

- v. 1 The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek, and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel.
- v. 2 As the Philistine rulers marched with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were marching at the rear with Achish.
- v. 3 The commanders of the Philistines asked, "What about these Hebrews?" Achish replied, "Is this not David, who was an officer of Saul king of Israel? He has already been with me for over a year, and from the day he left Saul until now, I have found no fault in him."
- v. 4 But the Philistine commanders were angry with him and said, "Send the man back, that he may return to the place you assigned him. He must not go with us into battle, or he will turn against us during the fighting. How better could he regain his master's favor than by taking the heads of our own men?"
- v. 5 Isn't this the David they sang about in their dances: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?"
- v. 6 So Achish called David and said to him, "As surely as the Lord lives, you have been reliable, and I would be pleased to have you serve with me in the army. From the day you came to me until now, I have found no fault in you, but the rulers don't approve of you.
- v. 7 Turn back and go in peace; do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers."
- v. 8 "But what have I done?" asked David. "What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"
- v. 9 Achish answered, "I know that you have been as pleasing in my eyes as an angel of God; nevertheless, the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go up with us into battle.'
- v. 10 Now get up early, along with your master's servants who have come with you, and leave in the morning as soon as it is light."
- v. 11 So David and his men got up early in the morning to go back to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.
- 30:v.1 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,
- v. 2 And had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.

v. 3 When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.

v. 4 So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.

v. 5 David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel.

v. 6 David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

v. 7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him,

v. 8 and David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" "Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue."

v. 9 David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind,

v. 10 for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit.

v. 11 They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat—

v. 12 part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights.

v. 13 David asked him, "To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?" He said, "I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago.

v. 14 We raided the Negev of the Kerethites and the territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag."

v. 15 David asked him, "Can you lead me down to this raiding party?" He answered, "Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them."

v. 16 He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah.

v. 17 David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled.

v. 18 David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives.

v. 19 Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back.

v. 20 He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, "This is David's plunder."

v. 21 Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Ravine. They came out

to meet David and the people with him. As David and his men approached, he greeted them.

v. 22 But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, "Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go."

v. 23 David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the Lord has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us.

v. 24 Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.

v. 25 David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.

v. 26 When David arrived in Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the plunder of the Lord's enemies."

v. 27 He sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth, Negev and Jattie;

v. 28 to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa

v. 29 and Racal; to those in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites;

v. 30 to those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach

v. 31 and Hebron; and to those in all the other places where David and his men had roamed.

INTRODUCTION:

Psalm 5:1-3

“Give ear to my words, O Lord, consider my groaning. Heed the sound of my cry for help, my King and my God, for to thee do I pray in the morning, O Lord; thou wilt hear my voice; in the morning I will order my prayer to thee and eagerly watch.”

The story is told of a contemporary songwriter who was putting these particular words in Psalm 5 to music, and died in the process of production. The rest of the song had to be written and produced in memory of this individual.

Psalm 9:10

“And those who know thy name will put their trust in thee, for thou, O Lord, has not forsaken those who seek thee.”

Psalm 19:7-11

“The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgements of the Lord are true. They are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover by them thy servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.”

Grady Nutt in his book So Good; So Far says, “I am convinced that Christian witness testimony should always be a process report. It should be a state of the union; better still, a state of the communion. It should reflect what has gone on so far.”

Stan Cottrell in his book No Mountain Too High says, “A friend of mine, country-western singer and recording artist, Rose McFarland, has written a song to express the theme of my life. It goes like this:

‘Let me tell you, there’s no mountain too high for you to climb.
Just look up and say, I’ll capture it with God’s help and a little time.
Even if it looks as though it reaches to the sky,
Take it step by step. You’ll find it’s not really all that high.
Once you start down the other side,
You’ll look ahead and smile with pride,
‘Cause God gave us no mountain too high.’

I believe that. Succeeding doesn’t come easily. It never does. You’ll make mistakes and you’ll experience setbacks, but keep on. Shut out negative voices, cry out ‘No mountain too high’ when you encounter your next obstacle. From your inner being shout to the world, I can do it! and you will.”

Creath David in his book The Making of a Winner says, “Life is not predetermined, and human beings are not simply victims of external pressures or internal drives unless we choose to be. We will feel the pressure to conform, to do it like everyone else is doing it, but we each have within the power of choice, the capacity to swim upstream against any and all currents, should we choose to do so. No person or circumstance can force us to be anything we do not want to be, unless we allow ourselves to surrender to that pressure. We can choose to be our own person, pursuing whatever values are important to us, regardless of how expedient it may seem at the time to do otherwise. We are partial architects of our own life and destiny, and that is no small gift.”

We have followed David through seven episodes of his life up to this point:

EPISODE #1: We saw David anointed at 16 by Samuel, and then placed on call to play the harp in the palace as Saul needed him.

EPISODE #2: We saw him come to national prominence as he was the instrument God used in slaying the giant from Gath by the name of Goliath.

EPISODE #3: Saul's jealousy had brought him to the point of such hatred that on a number of occasions he tried to take David's life.

EPISODE #4: FAITH CHANGED TO FEAR as David began to look upon Saul and his circumstances, and that FEAR LED TO FAILURE. He lied to Ahimelech. He left the will of God and looked to the enemy for his support. He had to feign insanity in order to be delivered from the land of the Philistines.

EPISODE #5: We saw him as a result of his experience with the Lord at the cave of Adullam, be a completely different man. He inquired of the Lord. He had Abiathar bring the ephod so they could ascertain the Lord's direction in their lives. It was a beautiful high point of the early years to see this happening.

EPISODE #6: David lost his self-control in being so angry at Nabal. He was ready to wipe out his whole family. He was restrained, however, by Abigail, a beautiful woman with BRAINS AND BELIEF in God.

EPISODE #7: David has a second opportunity to take Saul's life but does not do so. He then flees back again to live among the Philistines, along with his 600 men and their families.

We left him living there at the end of our last study.

v. 1 The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek, and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel.

Here we have David in a big fat mess. He has befriended the enemy, and this compromise has really put him into a desperate position, and in a dilemma.

The Philistines decided to go against Israel, and David apparently could see no way out of going along and fighting against his own people. He had convinced Achish that he did this before. He lied, and now he is up a creek without a paddle.

David had a problem with lying. Remember his lie that brought about the death of all of the priests at Nob. He had a weakness for telling lies when doubts came into his heart. He had lied to Jonathan, and through Jonathan to Saul about going to his family at feast time.

He lied to Achish about the booty that he took from the Amalekites.

Psalm 119:29

“Remove the false way from me, and graciously grant me thy law.”

God had not brought David into all these difficulties, but his own self-interest and desires had gotten him into it.

James 1:14, 15

“But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own desires. Then when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.”

One wrong step leads to another. If you could ever convince your teenagers of this, it would save them a lot of trouble.

If a girl goes out with a fella who has a questionable character, and soon she either has to fight him off or she may end up succumbing and may end up in moral and spiritual disaster.

When a Christian turns to the world for help, he can expect the world to ask him to pay for it.

Here was David—between a rock and a hard place. If he fights against his own people, he can say good-bye to being king. If he refuses, he may have to say good-bye to his life, and definitely to his home.

There is good news, however, and God intervenes and saves him out of his mess, just in the nick of time.

Psalm 103:13, 14

“Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him, for he himself knows our frame. He is mindful that we are but dust.

This is not just an interesting Old Testament story. This is a 20th century experience. This story is a graphic illustration of thousands of Christians today—Christians who are running a path of self-will; Christians who refuse complete allegiance to Jesus Christ and deny the authority of the Scripture that says, ‘No man can serve two masters.’ They live as near as possible to the world and as close as they dare. You couldn’t identify them if you tried. They share in godless, fruitless conversation and never talk about Jesus. Why, that would embarrass everyone! They ignore the word that says, ‘Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers. Come out from among them and be ye separate.’

“The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek,” This is a town about 40 miles north of Gath.

“and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel.”
Jezreel is about 45 miles north of Gibeon.

It is also 30-35 miles northeast of Aphek, so the two armies are between 30-35 miles apart as the scene of our study opens today.

v. 2 As the Philistine rulers marched with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were marching at the rear with Achish.

David and his men have been caught in a situation where it looks like they are going to be forced to fight against their own people, unless God intervenes.

They make the 40-mile trip north from Gath in the company of Achish.

v. 3 The commanders of the Philistines asked, “What about these Hebrews?”

Now God is going to use the Philistine commanders to extricate David from these impossible circumstances that he’s gotten himself involved in.

The commanders are concerned about security measures in their feelings about association with David and having he and his men fight in their army.

A lot of times when we lower our standards and go along with the crowd we excuse ourselves by saying we don’t want people to think that we are weird or peculiar and that we need to imitate the world and its ways. Sometimes there comes a point when the unbeliever, who holds a higher standard for the Christian life than the Christian, suddenly turns to him and says, “What are these Christians doing here?”

Acts 5:38, 39

“And so in the present case, I say to you, stay away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or action should be of men, it will be overthrown. But if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God.”

In the days when the apostles were threatened by the Jewish leaders, one of them had the good common sense to urge his colleagues not to go too far in persecuting Christians, lest they themselves be found to fight against God. When we fight against God’s people, we fight against God. We are glad that David did not have to fight against his own people. We should be careful that we do not put ourselves in a position where we fight against God’s chosen men.

Epp points out, “God was watching over David in all his wanderings, even in the times when David had failed him. It was in David’s heart to do the will of God. And those desires were awakened through the experiences he passed through. Ignorant of being instruments in God’s hands, the Philistine lords worked out God’s sovereign plan in David’s restoration. God spared David from falling into greater disgrace and shame, but he did not overlook David’s behavior. There were still some things David had to learn out of this whole series of incidents, and God is the master teacher.”

Romans 8:38, 39

“For I am convinced that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor heights nor depth, nor any other created thing shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

“Achish replied, ‘Is this not David, who was an officer of Saul king of Israel? He has already been with me for over a year, and from the day he left Saul until now, I have found no fault in him.’ “

Achish speaks to the fact that David has been in the service of Saul for some period of time and been very successful. He has also been with Achish for over a year and from the day he had come until now, Achish says, he has found no fault in him.

v. 4 But the Philistine commanders were angry with him and said, “Send the man back, that he may return to the place you assigned him. He must not go with us into battle, or he will turn against us during the fighting. How better could he regain his master’s favor than by taking the heads of our own men?”

The other Philistine commanders become very angry and command Achish to send he and his men back to Ziklag. The reason they make this command is because they feel he would turn on them in the midst of battle and win favor from Saul by what he had done.

Gehrke points out, “The other generals, however, still consider him a bad security risk.”

Achish’s protestations to the contrary notwithstanding, these lords of the Philistines angrily demand that Achish send the famous Hebrew back to his border station. These hard-headed generals are not as gullible as Achish, and their judgment of David was truer than even they imagined.

“How better could he regain his master’s favor than by taking the heads of our own men?” They are remembering David carrying the head of Goliath after that earlier encounter.

v. 5 Isn't this the David they sang about in their dances:

'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands'?

The commanders are remembering the hit song that swept the land of Israel, as well as the land of the Philistines:

"Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands."

God is protecting David and skillfully getting him out of this mess. Also, we will find that God has not forgotten his promise to David and his purpose for David's life. He didn't quit working in David's behalf just because David had a lapse.

Winter points out, "No doubt David was very light of heart, praising God for having so graciously rescued him out of the disastrous situation into which he had been brought, and that altogether without some fault of his own."

Throughout this season of declension and relapse which we have been considering, the loving mercy of God has hovered tenderly over David's life. When we believe not, He remains faithful. He cannot deny himself. And when his servants are wandering far afield, sowing for themselves thistles and piercing themselves through with bitter sorrows, he is encompassing their path and their lying down, solicitous of heart and compassionate, exhibiting the tenderest traits of his mercy and pity, as though to win them back to himself.

v. 6 So Achish called David and said to him, "As surely as the Lord lives, you have been reliable, and I would be pleased to have you serve with me in the army. From the day you came to me until now, I have found no fault in you, but the rulers don't approve of you.

v. 7 Turn back and go in peace; do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers."

Achish actually speaks of the Lord living and commends David for being reliable, and that he would also be pleased to have David serve with him in the army.

He says the same thing to David that he said to the commanders, "I have found no fault in you."

Because the rulers don't approve of you, there are three things you need to do:

1. Turn back
2. Go in peace
3. Do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers.

This is a very dangerous and precarious situation. The most important thing is to be cooperative. Turn back, go in peace and do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers.

v. 8 "But what have I done?" asked David. "What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?"

The three commands in verse 7 are followed by three questions in verse 8. David is really acting out a part here with these questions. Underneath you know that he has got to be rejoicing that he is not going to be put in the position of having to fight against his own people.

"What have I done?"

"What have you found?"

"Why can't I go and fight?"

v. 9 Achish answered, "I know that you have been as pleasing in my eyes as an angel of God; nevertheless, the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go up with us into battle.'"

v. 10 Now get up early, along with your master's servants who have come with you, and leave in the morning as soon as it is light."

Vos points out, "The command in 29:10 to leave first thing the next morning, no doubt to avoid further contention is clear and forthright enough. But it is interesting that in the Septuagint there appears this addition to verse 10: "And entertain no evil thought in your heart." The intimation is that Achish feared David would feel insulted and be tempted to take revenge. The next morning David did exactly as he was told, no doubt relieved that an amiable solution had been found to a very thorny problem. He was excused from fighting the Israelites. Evidently, the providence of God had been following him again."

Although Satan may trip us up and put us on the sidelines, and even though we seem to be a member of the devil's army, God is silently working along the lines of his eternal purposes.

All of God's dealings with David and with you and me are designed with one supreme objective: to bring us to the end of our own resources.

God succeeded with David but at what a cost. Here is David, a man of God, despised by the Philistines. He has gotten into the wrong company, and even his enemies have no use for him.

v. 11 So David and his men got up early in the morning to go back to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

David and his men start heading south to Ziklag, which is 58 miles away. And the Philistines head northeast to Jezreel, about 30-35 miles away.

David probably spent the first night in Ekron, the second night in Gath, and arrived in Ziklag late afternoon of the third day.

Winter asks the question, "Why did Achish compare David to an angel of God? This idiom is used quite often by people who want to show their deep respect for others. The comparison of the king to an angel of God was made by the woman of Tekoah, who came up to see David at the invitation of Joab. In the case of the Israelites, they would look to their monarch as God's vice-regent. But in the case of Achish, the idiom is probably no more than a way for him to say that he had the strongest conviction that David had behaved himself well. He was as faultless as an angel in the sight of Achish."

30:v. 1 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,

It would be possible to title this chapter, "The Hand of Chastening," or "Return to Spiritual Sanity."

David must really feel down and out, miles away from God, his life in ashes before him. Can anyone be lower than that?

Hebrews 12:5-8

“And you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons. My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or faint when you are reprovved by him; for those whom the Lord loves, he disciplines, and he scourges every son whom he receives. It is for discipline that you endure. God deals with you as with sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline; but if you are without discipline, of which all have been partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.”

Hebrews 12:11

“All discipline for the moment seems not to be joyful, but sorrowful. Yet to those who have been trained by it, afterwards it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness.”

Ziklag is about 30-35 miles north of the Amalekite territory.

David and his men probably reached Ziklag late in the afternoon of the third day.

The Amalekites had raided the Negev, which is the south, northeast of the Amalekites and Ziklag.

They had attacked Ziklag and also burned it.

Winter points out, “It is ironical that the people who led this expedition against David were the people whom Saul had been sent to destroy. Evidently, Saul had not only spared the king but had allowed some of the men to escape. These people, then rose up to cause trouble for David.”

Theodore Epp points out, “This was a heart-breaking experience for David to pass through, but apparently it was needed to bring him to complete restoration to the will of God.”

He had been miraculously taken care of on many other occasions but now that protection had been removed for the time being. David had exchanged the king of Gath and a walled city for the Spirit of the Lord, and found no protection in man. It is the Spirit of the Lord who encamps around about his people and protects them. How often we forget this.

David was made to drink a cup here that he had never tasted before. It helped bring him completely to the end of himself. He was left alone. None of his men stood with him, but God. Sometimes being a leader can be a very lonely job. Someone sent me this: 'A leader is a lonely man. He follows visions that others cannot see. He moves ahead when others lag behind. He walks in solitude with God, driven on by a burning desire to achieve goals that to others seem visionary and impractical. Because leaders are nonconformists, they are looked upon with some suspicion by the run of the mill of the crowd. Men who lead are certain targets for the biting barbs of criticism. Their fearless, clear, compelling manner makes them a prey to those who do not understand them. But the church needs leaders today, men who will bear criticism and reproach for the cause of Christ, men who will stand up when others fail and fall, who will go on when others faint; who will be a leader today?'

Genesis 32:24ff

"Then Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. And when he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he touched the socket of his thigh so the socket of Jacob's thigh was dislocated while he wrestled with him. Then he said, 'Let me go, for the dawn is breaking,' but he said, 'I will not let you go unless you bless me.' So he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Jacob.' And he said, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob but Israel, for you have striven with God and with me and have prevailed.' Then Jacob asked him and said, 'Please tell me your name,' but he said, 'Why is it that you ask my name?' and he blessed him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, for he said, 'I have seen God face to face, yet my life had been preserved.' Now the sun rose upon him, just as he crossed over Penuel, and he was limping on his thigh."

"Nothing between my soul and the Savior,
Not of this world's delusive dream.
I have renounced all sinful pleasure,
Jesus is mine; let nothing between.

Nothing between like worldly pleasure,
Habits of life, though harmless they seem,
Must not my heart from Him ever sever.
He is my all; let nothing between.

Nothing between, e'en many hard trials,
Though the whole world against me convene,
Watch with prayer and much self denial,

I'll triumph at last with nothing between.

Nothing between my soul and the Savior,
So that his blessed face may be seen,
Nothing preventing the least of his favor,
Keep the way clear; let nothing between."

Paul Jordan points out, "When David and his men returned to Ziklag, they were met by a scene of desolation and assumed that their families had been killed. After all, when they raided, they didn't leave any survivors, so why should they expect anything different from their enemies?"

Barber points out, "It takes David and his men two full days and a part of a third to reach their homes. When they arrived, footsore and weary, no children run out to meet them, and none of their wives are there to set before them a warm meal. Instead, only the charred remains of their homes meet their gaze. And the only things that stir are the ashes swirled about by the wind. Few can imagine their bitter disappointment, and fewer still can sense the awful anguish each man felt as he wondered what happened to his wives and little ones. As the reality of what had happened pervades the conscious thinking of some of the men, acute anxiety and frustration wells up within them. They seek a scapegoat. Who caused them to leave their homes and go on an abortive march? And who left the city undefended? Some of the men who had apparently followed David with reluctance, now speak out against him, and institute a move to stone him."

Gehrke points out, "Taking advantage of David's absence from his border post, the Amalekites make so successful a surprise attack, that all persons can be carried off, perhaps for eventual sale on the Egyptian slave market. When David's men returned to find only smoking ruins, their utter hopelessness is expressed not only in such copious weeping as dries up the very fountains of their tears, but more seriously, in a bitter feeling that David is really responsible for this disaster by reason of an incompetence that left their city exposed to marauding barons while they were gone on a wild goose chase up north with allies who finally dismissed them."

Davis points out, “Three days after David left Achish, he and his men approached the small town of Ziklag, where they had resided. Rather than being received warmly by his friends and family, he discovered mass destruction and sorrow. The Amalekites, who wandered in the Negev district in great numbers, had taken advantage of David’s absence to avenge themselves on his previous invasions and plundering. It will be remembered that Saul defeated these people in a major battle earlier, but failed to destroy them completely as commanded by God. The Amalekites, in addition to destroying the city, had taken the women captive, probably to sell them into the Egyptian slave market. Those captured included David’s two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelite and Abigail. Adding to David’s sorrow over this tragedy was the wath of the people who evidently considered David’s absence the cause of the disaster. Such public indignation was not new in Israel’s history, for Moses experienced a similar reaction.”

Krummacher points out, “This also was a divine chastisement of David and his hypocrisy. David indeed with deep distress of soul, soon recognized it as such, for when he heard the evil tidings, he and the people that were with him lifted up the voice and wept until they had no more power to weep, says the history. These were the tears of sorrow and of anger, but with David’s tears there mingled also the more bitter tears of repentance on account of his conduct hitherto.”

Vos points out, “David and his men arrive on the third day after leaving Aphek. Since the distance was some 75 miles, they had advanced on forced marches about 25 miles a day. At the end of the long trek, they expected to see their families and to get some rest, but they were greeted by smoldering ruins and a deadly silence.

v. 2 and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.

The writer describes the raid of the Amalekites in a three-fold way:

1. They attacked the city,
2. They burned it,
3. And they took captive the women and all who were in it.

The miracle of this is “They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.”

Philippians 2:27

“For indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but also on me, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.”

v. 3 When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.

Who can describe the horrible wave of DEPRESSION, DISCOURAGEMENT and DEFEAT that must have fallen over this band of men as they came home with such eagerness to spend some time with their families.

v. 4 So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.

Pink points out, “Thus stricken of God, execrated by his friends, bereaved of all that he loved, David drank of a cup which he never tasted before. He had earned it for himself. It was the fruit of his self-chosen Ziklag.”

F. B. Meyer points out, “And that dread hour, with the charred embers smoking at his feet, with the cold hand of anxiety for the fate of his wives feeling at his heart, with a sense of duplicity and deceit which he had been practicing and which had alienated him from God on his conscience, with his threat of stoning in his ears, his heart suddenly sprang back into its old resting place in the bosom of God.”

v. 5 David’s two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel.

v. 6 David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the Lord his God.

Exodus 17:4

“So Moses cried out to the Lord, saying, ‘What shall I do to this people? A little more and they will stone me.’ “

Here now we are going to find David’s return to sanity. He is coming back from the madness and stupidity of compromise. He finally sees himself as God sees him. This is the beginning of restoration for David.

Winter points out, “There is strength in the Lord. When there is none other to give help, God is always close at hand. A weaker man than David might

have given up in despair when he returned to find that his own city had been pillaged and burned. We need to remember that often victory is just around the corner. Sometimes we give up just on the brink of ultimate victory, but thus we know only defeat.”

David and his men wept until they had no more tears and no more mental, physical or nervous energy to expend in their grief.

Psalm 55:12-14

“For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it, nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me; then I could hide myself from him. But it is you, a man my equal, my companion and my familiar friend. We who had sweet fellowship together, walked in the house of God in the throng.”

Alan Redpath points out, “It is indeed true that the darkest hour in a man’s experience is always just before the dawning of new light. Well might David say at this point, ‘The sorrows of death compassed me, and the floods of ungodly men made me afraid’ (Psalm 18:4, 5). We find David here in real extremity. But when a man is in such a place, God is there too. Man may not recognize it. He may feel himself helplessly adrift in the storm, ‘but always the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart’ (Psalm 34:18). So we shall find that David proves the truth of the saying, ‘Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity,’ “

Here is David standing among the ruins of his self-will. The outcome of his compromise is lying in ashes around him. He is despised by his enemies. They have no use for a man who compromises. He is blamed by his own people. They threaten to stone him. Apparently, he is feeling absolutely down and out, miles away from God.

J. Vernon McGee points out, “There are times in our lives when the circumstances will not produce any joy or happiness. There are times when we find ourselves in dark places like David. We look about, and the situation looks hopeless. What should we do? Be discouraged, give up, say we are through? Friend, if we are children of God, we will encourage ourselves in the Lord. We will turn to him at times like this. Sometimes the Lord puts us in such a spot so we will turn to him. He wants to make himself real to us. It was during times like these that David wrote some of his most helpful Psalms.”

Gullston points out, “Perhaps a little like the Prodigal Son, David had gone into a far country. For a while he has drifted to and fro on the misty flats.

Though he was faithless, God was not. The divine spark that was in David enabled him to respond and regain the path on which he was meant to walk.”

1 Samuel 23:16

“And Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose and went to David at Horesh, and strengthened his hand in God.”

Nehemiah 2:18

“And I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me, and also the king’s words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, ‘Let us arise and build,’ so they put their hands to the good work.”

Psalms 31:19-24

“How great is thy goodness which thou hast stored up for those who fear thee, which thou hast wrought for those who take refuge in thee before the sons of men. Thou dost hide them in the secret place of thy presence from the conspiracies of man. Thou dost keep them secretly in a shelter from the strife of tongues. Blessed be the Lord, for he had made marvelous his lovingkindness to me in a besieged city. As for me, I said in my alarm, I am cut off from before thine eyes. Nevertheless, thou didst hear the voice of my supplications, when I cried to thee. O love the Lord all you his godly ones. The Lord preserves the faithful and fully recompenses the proud doer. Be strong and let your heart take courage all you who hope in the Lord.”

Colossians 1:11

“Strengthened with all might according to his glorious unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness.”

Philippians 4:13

“I am ready for anything through the strength of the One who indwells me.”

Isaiah 40:31

“They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint.”

v. 7 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, “Bring me the ephod.” Abiathar brought it to him,

v. 8 and David inquired of the Lord, “Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them? “Pursue them,” he answered. “You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue.”

Here David has learned from the Nabal situation. He didn’t say, “Put on your swords!” He said what he had said back in Episode #5 at the Cave of Adullam, “Bring me the ephod.” And David inquired of the Lord.

Suddenly David snaps right back into the place of blessing, and for the first time in months, David inquires of the Lord.

David asks the Lord a question. Does the Lord say, “David, I can’t trust you now”? Does the Lord say, “David, I’m going to keep you on probation for at least the next six months”? Does he say, “David, you have to go back in training for a long time before I can trust you in my army”? Does God threaten punishment for David? No, God says “Pursue.”

Immediately when David touched rock bottom, he turned back to God. And at first tear, God answered with an immediate word of power and victory and sent him out to conquer.

This moment was the door to David’s victory and blessing, the beginning of the accomplishment of God’s purpose for his life.

Romans 7:18

“I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing..”

No one say that with a genuineness of heart until it is spoken with a broken heart and lots of tears.

The minute you stand among the ashes of your own self-will and acknowledge your need of God and your helplessness, that is the moment he lifts you up and brings you victory, and even sends you out to pursue your enemies.

It is never too late to turn back to God. We may have to reap what we have sown, but God's grace and forgiveness are always available. Don't let pride stand in our way. We need to acknowledge our mistakes. There's no sin too great for God to forgive.

David was brought to the end of himself. What would be our reaction if all our possessions were taken away, our loved ones, likewise; and then our friends turned against us. Could we stand it? The first thing David does after encouraging himself in the Lord his God is to ask Abiathar to bring the ephod, and he inquired as to the next steps.

David had followed his own reasoning for too long, and he had had enough of that. Now he wanted to let the Lord guide his steps again.

Proverbs 3:5, 6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not unto your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct your paths. Be not wise in your own eyes, but fear the Lord and depart from evil.”

Alan Redpath points out, “David had failed to seek God in the matter of Nabal, being overcome by passion and temper. At Ziklag, he was overcome by panic; and he said in his heart—with no reference at all to the Lord. Never act in a panic. Never act when your emotions are aroused and your blood is at the boiling point. Wait until your pulse begins to beat steadily again. If in any moment of tremendous pressure you feel that you must do something, that moment is the time when you will be apt to make the most tragic mistake in judgement. At that moment, and may I use the word ‘force’ yourself into the presence of God—and I mean force yourself. When you feel like flying off the handle, when you are a victim of depression, when you are in a mood of despair, when you are on the point of giving in, the last thing you want to do is to seek the Lord. You are too ashamed, and you feel that the only thing you can do is to act. Whatever you do, stand still. Wait until you have a word from the Lord. Cast yourself on your knees and cry out to Jesus for mercy and for help. Wait upon God until he makes his way plain. As long as that way is hidden, if he keeps it closed, quite clearly there is no need to do anything. If only you and I applied that principle always in our walk with God, think what damage might be avoided.”

At the very first uplifting of that tear-stained face, the very first moment the Lord looked down and saw his broken-hearted child weeping until he could weep no more, then heaven answered with an immediate word of power and victory and sent him out to conquer. That moment became for David the gateway into victory, the steppingstone into blessing, the beginning of the accomplishment of God's purpose for his life.

F. B. Meyer points out, "God had brought him up from the horrible pit and the miry clay and set his feet on a rock and established his goings and had put a new song of praise in his mouth."

David receives word from the Lord that he is to pursue them, and that he will overtake them and succeed in the rescue.

This is a similar situation to the raid on Entebbe to free the hostages.

David and his men are on the way, pursuing the Amalekites to rescue some pretty precious prisoners.

v. 9 David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Ravine, where some stayed behind,

The Besor Ravine is about 12 miles south of Ziklag.

v. 10 for two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the ravine. But David and four hundred men continued the pursuit.

You can understand why some of these men are so exhausted because they have put in 70 miles in the last three days. And now they are trying to suck up enough courage and strength to endure the stress of doing battle with the Amalekites.

Probably the next morning, David and the four hundred men continue the pursuit.

v. 11 They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat—

v. 12 part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights.

The finding of this Egyptian was one of the first circumstances that showed the hand of God in this effort.

v. 13 David asked him, “To whom do you belong, and where do you come from?” He said, “I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. My master abandoned me when I became ill three days ago.

David wants to know to whom this man belongs and where he came from. His response to that is he’s an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite, and he had been abandoned three days earlier when he became ill.

v. 14 We raided the Negev of the Kerethites and the territory belonging to Judah and the Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziklag.”

v. 15 David asked him, “Can you lead me down to this raiding party?” He answered, “Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and I will take you down to them.”

David wants to have a favor from this man so he asks him if he can lead him to the raiding party. The response from the man is, “Swear to me before God that you will not kill me or hand me over to my master, and then I’ll take you down to them.”

David and his men are still 20+ miles north of Amalekite territory.

v. 16 He led David down, and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah.

The first circumstance that indicates that God is in this is the finding of this Egyptian. The second circumstance was that the Amalekites had become careless and were spread out and had begun to celebrate their victories. They were scattered in small groups over a large area, eating, drinking and dancing, and hardly in a condition to put up a strong fight.

v. 17 David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled.

David had gotten to the area around evening, and a 24 hour battle ensued. The only ones that got away were 400 young men who rode off on camels and fled.

Laney points out, “David’s warriors came upon the Amalekites as they were celebrating their successes. They quickly turned the PICNIC INTO A PANIC. Only 400 camel riders escaped the slaughter. As God had promised, David recovered his wives and all that had been taken.”

v. 18 David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives.

v. 19 Nothing was missing; young and old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back.

In addition to rescuing his own people and their possessions, David also captured the goods the Amalekites had stolen from the Philistines and the tribe of Judah.

Alan Redpath points out, “In three words David recovered all. There is a very lovely Old Testament picture of what the Lord Jesus Christ accomplished for us by his death and resurrection. The recovery of everything that had been lost in the rebellion of the human race against God.”

David had lost more than his family and possessions. He had lost his vision, his passion and his action. He was discouraged and forgot that God was with him. He forgot to pray and he forgot which side he was on.

Vision is the upward look toward heaven.

Passion is the inward hunger and compassion of soul.

Action is the outward liberation of both vision and passion and Holy Spirit power.

We have lost all three. We have little vision, scarcely any passion, and hardly any heaven-directed action. David lost his vision because he had forgotten God’s promises and ceased to believe in God’s power. He doubted God’s ability to protect him against the enemy.

Proverbs 29:18

“Where there is no vision, the people perish.”

It is also true that where there is no passion, the church perishes. David went over to the enemy when he became depressed. His victory over Goliath was only a faded memory. And he lived alongside the people of Goliath. His loss of vision and his loss of passion paralyzed all his heaven-inspired activity. David recovered all: his spiritual vision, passion and action. He inquires of the Lord again. He is so passionately concerned for victory that he sets out after the enemy at such a pace that 200 men have to be left behind because they can't keep up with him.

David REPENTED, and therefore he RECOVERED all. Real repentance is not just a few tears at the end of a touching sermon. Not just emotion or reformation. It is a change of mind about God and sin. It is an inevitable factor for revival.

v. 20 He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying "This is David's plunder."

Some of the livestock was separated, and the men kept them separate and earmarked them as "David's plunder."

v. 21 Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Ravine. They came out to meet David and the people with him. As David and his men approached, he greeted them.

v. 22 But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, "Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go."

Some of the men were feeling very selfish about the plunder that they had acquired on this campaign, and they did not feel that the 200 men who stayed behind and did not have a part in it should receive any of it except for their wives and children.

v. 23 David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the Lord has given us. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us.

v. 24 Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."

As the share of the one who goes down into battle, so is the share of the one who stays with the baggage.

1 Cor. 12:12ff

“For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free; and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot should say, because I am not a hand, I am not a part of the body; it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the ear should say, because I am not an eye, I am not a part of the body; it is not for this reason any the less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But now God has placed the members, each one of them in the body, just as he desired.”

v. 25 David made this a statute and ordinance for Israel from that day to this.

David gives a tremendous testimony here that it is the Lord who has given us these things. He has protected and handed over to us the forces that came against us.

The statute and ordinance for Israel then is stated. “The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike.”

v. 26 When David arrived in Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, who were his friends, saying, “Here is a present for you from the plunder of the Lord’s enemies.

David still had 12 miles to go to get to Ziklag, and when he does, he then expresses a generous heart. He has a present of much of the plunder from the Lord’s enemies to be given to the elders of Judah.

v. 27 He sent it to those who were in Bethel, Ramoth Negev and Jattir;

v. 28 to those in Aroer, Siphmoth, Eshtemoa

v. 29 and Racal; to those in the towns of the Jerahmeelites and the Kenites;

v. 30 to those in Hormah, Bor Ashan, Athach

v. 31 and Hebron; and to those in all the other places where David and his men had roamed.

There is a listing of 13+ locations here. We need to think of all the other places where David and his men roamed, like, Keilah, Ziph, Carmel, and Maon.

David's ship has come in, and so he's paying off all his notes.

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: There are serious consequences when we compromise.

LESSON #2: God provides a way of escape for David and his men.

LESSON #3: Compromise puts us under the chastening hand of God.

LESSON #4: David turned to the Lord and found strength in a time of crisis.

LESSON #5: The Lord gave the promised victory when David prayed.

LESSON #6: David recovered everything as a result of following the Lord.

LESSON #7: The reward is equal for those with the baggage and those in the battle.

LESSON #8: David demonstrates generosity and kindness in the distribution of the plunder from the battle.

Robert Brewer gives his testimony in Creath Davis's book The Making of a Winner: "But something happened that changed my life later that fall. Things had gone from bad to worse. When football fell apart, the school work went down the tube, my girlfriend and I broke up. All my security blankets were going down the drain. I loaned my car to a friend and it got totaled. All these things started happening, and I came to a point where I couldn't handle it anymore. William Graham, one of my teammates who has since been drafted by the Detroit Lions, was teaching a Bible study that I started attending. Right before Thanksgiving, William was talking about Jesus telling Nicodemus how he could experience life differently. I was moved by that study. Afterwards, I went to my room, locked the door, got down on my knees beside my bed, and as best I could, I committed my life to Jesus Christ. I couldn't believe it. I felt like I went back to being a little boy again. I remember being so happy as a child. It was like that."

Lives of great men all remind us
 We can make our lives sublime,
 And departing leave behind us
 Footprints on the sands of time.

Footprints that perhaps another,
 Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
 A forlorn and shipwrecked brother
 Seeing shall take heart again.

Let us then leave clear signs after
 We have passed each mountain steep.
 Daring glacier, crevass and desert
 Crossing rivers, wild and deep.

Jesus said he'll go before us,
 Leading us across the land,
 Fearlessly we'll follow onward
 Leaving footprints on the sand.

There are three psalms that I would like for us to meditate on in conclusion:

Psalm 19:14

“Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”

Psalm 25:4, 5

“Make me know thy ways, O Lord. Teach me thy paths. Lead me in thy truth, and teach me, for thou art the God of my salvation. For thee I wait all the day.”

Psalm 27:11

“Teach me thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a level path because of my foes.”