

COMMISSION INTERNS Bodhan Rector, Zach France, Logan Brown

INTRODUCE

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to 1 Samuel chapter 30.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to 1 Samuel 30,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
 - under every single chair.
 - You'll find 1 Samuel 30 on page **251**.

INTRODUCTION

So, let me ask you a question:

What would you do if you found yourself in a grave situation?

- And sometimes the most terrible situations...
- are not when something happens to you...
- but when it happens to someone you love.

I mean, think about it, in the moment that something happens to someone you love deeply... **SLIDE WHAT WOULD YOU DO?**

- What would you do if your mom or dad got diagnosed with something scary?
- Or what if something was going on with your child?
- Of if your spouse was in a place of pain and suffering?

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Man, you'd do whatever it takes!

ILLUSTRATION: MARYSE'S HEALTH

One of the things that's marked my marriage has been my wife's health issues.

- A year into our marriage Maryse started losing weight.
- And I mean, significantly...
 - and if you know her, she can't afford to lose too much.
- But she had lost nearly twenty pounds...
- and it was getting unhealthy.
 - Her color was bad,
 - like her face looked gray.
 - She was tired and lethargic.

And so we went to a lot of different doctors trying to figure this out.

- We went to generalists,
- and specialists,
- and neurologists,
- and gastroenterologists...
- And they couldn't figure out what was wrong!

But she kept getting worse!

You ever been there?

- I mean at this point Maryse had to quit her job.
 - She was just barely existing,
 - spending 5 days a week laying on the couch...
 - just wasting away.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Whatever it takes!

So a friend told us about a naturopathic doctor...

- who had really helped her...
- with some unknown health issues.

And we were like, "*What have we got to lose?*"

So, we set an appointment.

- Now, I'm not a big believer
 - in Eastern medicine...
 - and alternative medicine...
 - and acupuncture...
 - and essential oils...
 - And to you essential oil folks...
 - Don't email me.
 - Don't hate me.
 - We have some at the house.
 - Stuff smells great.
 - Oh, it's not supported by anyone in the medical community?
 - And it's a pyramid scheme?
 - Yeah, I'll take a couple vials.
 - Let me get some for my dog, too!

Ok. I just don't believe in it!

But...whatever it takes!

So, we'll give it a shot.

So, this naturopath had Maryse lay down on a massage table,

- and puts a drop of oil on her forehead
- to *“open up her senses.”*
 - And I’m already out with this quack! Ok?
- But in this room there’re candles
- and like, whale sounds playing in the background.

And then on a shelf there are gemstones and crystals and stuff.

- And my mind immediately goes to Napoleon Dynamite...
 - “don’t forget the crystals.”

But she takes one crystal and puts it under Maryse’s head,

- and then takes the second crystal...
- and starts moving it around a box of vials...

And she says, *“you are full of parasites.”*

And I’m thinking...“you’re full of something, too...”

TRANSITION

But listen...WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Today, David finds himself in a terrible situation.

So, last we left David,

- He was living with the Philistines.
 - He’s been there, in hiding from Saul.
- But now the Philistines are going to war against King Saul
 - but David has been left behind
 - in fear that he might turn on the Philistines,
 - and fight with his own people.

And that's where we pick up in chapter 30, verse 1.

BLANK SLIDE

1 SAMUEL 30:1-2

[1] Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid against the Negeb and against Ziklag. They had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire [2] and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great. They killed no one, but carried them off and went their way.

EXPLAIN

So, this is an unbelievably awful situation David is in.

- While he and his 600 men were away,
- the Amalekites raided their home camp at Ziklag.

And now they march home and see the smoke raising from camp.

- And they come into their camp to find it in ashes,
- with all of their women and children gone.
 - There are no bodies.
 - So, that means they were taken,
- most likely for the slave trade...this is human trafficking!

Now, we are told that the Amalekites did this...

- but David and his guys don't know who made the raid.
- It's not like the raiding party would leave a calling card...
 - or leave the sink running...
 - like the wet bandits in Home Alone.

But we are told. It was the Amalekites.

Now, who was supposed to have wiped them all out?

- Yeah, back in chapter 15,
- King Saul was supposed to have put them all to death.
 - But apparently he didn't.
 - Cause there's a whole raiding band.

But now they've taken the women and children.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Well, let's look at what David does. Verse 3:

1 SAMUEL 30:3-4

[3] And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. [4] Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep.

EXPLAIN: WEPT

The first thing that David and his men do is they wept.

Listen, I know in desperate situations we want to do something!

- *"Let's do something about it!"*
 - Get the oils!
 - Grab the crystals!"

● And sometimes there are things to be done...

● but sometimes there aren't.

But let's not miss the fact that David and his men wept.

They wept until they had no more strength to weep.

- You ever been there where you've cried and cried and cried
- until there are just no more tears left?

That's where these hardened warriors are at.

And hear me, it only reinforces just how distraught they are.

- They wept until they couldn't.

Verse 5:

1 SAMUEL 30:5-6a

[5] David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. [6] And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters.

EXPLAIN: BLAME

So, let's stop there for a second...

- Listen, in moments of great distress,
- we can be tempted to find someone to blame.
 - Man, we can start pointing fingers.

Just watch every time there is a school shooting.

And listen, we can all agree that those are terrible situations!

- But just watch the news,
- and depending on which way those networks lean,
- you'll see the blame and finger pointing start.

Who's to blame?

- It's the mental health system.
- No, it's racists and nationalists.
- No, it's loose gun laws.
- No, it's violent video games.
- No, it's an absence of good parenting.
- No, it's a culture of bullying in our schools.

And on and on we could go.

And hear me,

- that's because in awful situations,
- those questions come right to the surface.
 - *"Why is this happening?"*
- And we try to find someone to blame.

And sometimes, we even start to blame ourselves.

"What did I do to deserve this suffering?"

- *Is it because I had an abortion?*
- *Is it because I cheated on her?*
- *Is it because I lied, or stole, or abused?*
- *Is it because I'm just a bad person?*
- *God, why are you punishing me?"*

So, is this Saul's fault?

Is it their fault for leaving their families unprotected?

Well, in this case, David's men point the finger at David.

- *“David, we were following you!*
- *We never would have been here if it hadn't been for you!*
- *You had the beef with Saul!*
 - *You could've killed him!*
 - *You were given two chances!*
- *You've put us all at risk!*
- *And now look at what's happened!*
 - *Our wives are taken!*
 - *Our daughters are taken!*
 - *Our sons are taken!*
- *This is on you!”*

But look what David does...

1 SAMUEL 30:6

[6] And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

MAIN POINT: STRENGTHEN OURSELVES

Ok, this one little phrase is so very important.

David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

He doesn't point the finger and try to find someone to blame.

- David is under severe pressure.
- He's in his own state of shock over the loss of his family,
 - but now he also has 600 men
 - wanting to kill him for their loss, as well!
- David is in the pit.
- This might be the lowest he's been in his life.

But his turning point is in the pit...

he strengthened himself in the LORD his God!

And this is the main point.

In desperate situations, we **SLIDE** **STRENGTHEN OURSELVES**

WHAT IT'S NOT

Now, what does it mean to strengthen oneself?

- Well, what is it NOT?

It's NOT some sort of religious self-help.

- That was actually how Saul tried to use God last week!
 - Remember when he **inquired of the Lord?**
- But our God isn't just a
 - make-you-feel-better...
 - Get-you-out-of-a-jam...God!
 - Jesus is not your own personal pain reliever...
 - to get you on top of life's aches.

No, this isn't some magic religious antidote.

This is also NOT simply venting, that is, letting go emotionally.

- David already did this back in verse 4.
 - He cried out and mourned.
- And there is a difference between pouring out sorrow,
 - which is good and right,
- but there's a difference between that
- and strengthening yourself in God.
 - One can cry tears and vent emotions
 - and yet not be strengthened in God.
- Again, think of the great distress Saul was in last week,
- and yet he never strengthened himself in the Lord.

WHAT IT IS

So, what does it mean to **STRENGTHEN YOURSELF** in the Lord?

Three things:

First, it's **SLIDE PERSONAL**

He strengthened himself in the LORD **HIS** God.

I don't think we can overstate how important this is.

David had a vital personal faith in HIS personal God.

- Not the man upstairs...
- Not simply a higher power...

It was **the LORD his God!**

- Not *"the Lord is OUR shepherd..."*
- No, *"the Lord is MY shepherd."*

It's what Paul would say in Galatians 2:20

SLIDE GALATIANS 2:20

[20] I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

POINT 2: PROMISES

David strengthens himself in his **SLIDE PERSONAL** God.

How then does he do this?

Well, this same word for *strengthened* was used back in chapter 23.

- Right in the thick of Saul chasing trying to kill David,
- he meets up with his best friend, Jonathan,
- and the text says that **Jonathan strengthened David.**

And he does so by reminding David of the PROMISES of God for him.

And it's the second part of STRENGTHENING OURSELVES.

We remember God's **SLIDE PROMISES**

- David must have recalled his God's promises for him.
 - He would be king.
 - He would reign over Israel.
 - He would be a man after God's own heart.

David must have recalled God's PROMISES...

- and how God had faithfully kept his word thus far...
- and how God would faithfully keep his word in the future.
 - You were faithful then...you'll be faithful now.

And we see this throughout the Psalms of David.

Here's a favorite of many:

SLIDE PSALM 42:1-3

[1] As a deer pants for flowing streams,

so pants my soul for you, O God.

[2] My soul thirsts for God,

for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

[3] My tears have been my food

day and night,

while they say to me all the day long,

“Where is your God?”

So, David is in deep distress here!

But look at what he does in verse 5:

SLIDE PSALM 42:5

[5] Why are you cast down, O my soul,

and why are you in turmoil within me?

Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,

my salvation

You see, David talks to himself.

- He preaches to his soul.
- And that's what I think he does here as well.

He strengthened himself in the LORD his God...

by remembering God's PROMISES.

But there's one more part to STRENGTHENING OURSELVES.

Look at verse 7

BLANK SLIDE

1 SAMUEL 30:7-8

[7] And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. [8] And David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue."

POINT 3: PRESENCE

The last thing David does,

- as he strengthens himself,
- as he takes advantage of his access
- to God's **SLIDE PRESENCE**

He does so through Abiathar, the priest, and the ephod.

- You remember what the ephod contained...
- that allowed David to access God's presence?
 - Yeah...Urim and the Thummim.
 - Last week one guy told me he calls them
 - the Uma Thurman.
 - Hey, whatever helps you remember this stuff...

But this, once again, is a stark contrast to Saul last week.

- When Saul inquired of the Lord,
 - the Lord did not answer him.
- But now, when David inquired of the Lord.
 - He gets an answer.
 - He has access to God's PRESENCE!

And while we don't have the ephod or priests.

Hebrews 4 says we do have a great high priest, and therefore:

SLIDE HEBREWS 4:16

[16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

So, we STRENGTHEN OURSELVES...

- in our PERSONAL God...
- reminding ourselves of the PROMISES of God...
- and by getting ourselves into the PRESENCE of God.

TRANSITION BLANK SLIDE

So, David, in his desperate situation, has been strengthened.

Now, let's see what God does.

Look down to verse 11:

1 SAMUEL 30:11-15

[11] They found an Egyptian in the open country and brought him to David. And they gave him bread and he ate. They gave him water

to drink, [12] and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit revived, for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. [13] And David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago. [14] We had made a raid against the Negeb of the Cherethites and against that which belongs to Judah and against the Negeb of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire." [15] And David said to him, "Will you take me down to this band?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this band."

EXPLAIN: EGYPTIAN SLAVE

So remember, they don't know who raided them. But they just happen upon an Egyptian slave in a field.

- He says he's a slave of the Amalekites.
 - But David interrogates him,
 - and promises him amnesty,
 - if he leads them to the raiding party.

And we are meant to really take note of God's providence.

- Without God's hand,
- leading them to the random slave in a field,
- they would never find their families.

Verse 16:

1 SAMUEL 30:16-20

[16] And when he had taken him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. [17] And David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day, and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men, who mounted camels and fled. [18] David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. [19] Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken. David brought back all. [20] David also captured all the flocks and herds, and the people drove the livestock before him, and said, "This is David's spoil."

EXPLAIN

So, the Amalekites weren't hard to surprise...

- because they were eating and drinking and dancing...
- they are partying with all the massive plunder that they had.

So David and his men strike them for a full day!

- And David recovered,
 - not only his wives,
- but nothing was missing.
- Plus, there was a great deal of plunder!

Now, some of David's men...

- want to take the credit for themselves for the victory,
- by not sharing the spoils
- with the men who stayed back in the camp.

But look what David says in verse 23:

1 SAMUEL 30:23

[23] But David said, "You shall not do so, my brothers, with what the LORD has given us. He has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came against us."

EXPLAIN

David's quality and character shine in this passage!

He really is ready to become the king!

He says,

- *"Let's not forget that Yahweh gave us this victory.*
- *It was he who preserved us.*
- *It was he who gave the band into our hand.*
 - *All hope was gone!*
 - *Until the Lord stepped in!*
 - *Don't forget that!"*

ILLUSTRATION: MARYSE

Now, why do I spend all this time on this today?

- Because if you believe the myth...
 - that much of popularized evangelicalism is feeding you,
- that Jesus is all about your health, and wealth, and happiness
- it WILL NOT be enough to sustain your faith
- when the sufferings, that Jesus promises are coming, come.

Because when Maryse got sick...

- Things didn't get better...
- The crystals didn't work...
- The oils didn't work.

And after all the "easy" things were ruled out...

- they began the tests for the scary stuff.
 - Tumors,
 - auto-immune disorders,
 - Cancer,
 - life-long sufferings.

And I can vividly remember...

- being 24 years old...
- sitting in the waiting room at the hospital
- while Maryse was having a brain MRI looking for brain tumors,
- and praying to God,
 - *"God this isn't what is supposed to happen to us!*
 - *I know we said, 'In sickness or in health.'*
 - *But that sickness stuff...*
 - *wasn't supposed to apply in our 20s.*
 - *That wasn't supposed to come until much later!"*

And then my mom got a terminal cancer diagnosis.

And then Maryse miscarried with our first child.

And then I planted this church, the great joy of my ministry!

- Only to find it to be one of the most
- spiritually challenging things I've ever done.

Cause I've had people, who I've been deeply committed to,

- turn on me,
- and hate me,
- and curse me,
- and walk away.

And now I'm the one who meets people at the Children's Hospital NICU.

And they've called me in, THEIR PASTOR, to pray.

- And I've prayed over little ones
 - who have no medical hope
 - other than a miracle of God.
- And I'll pray for God to heal,
- trusting that he can,
- and wondering why...
- sometimes he doesn't.

CONCLUSION

SLIDE W/PADS WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

So, let's close with this: are you in a tough situation?

- Are you willing to do whatever it takes?

- Listen, can I commend to you,
 - from my experience,
- that you should do what David did...
- and **ADD SLIDE STRENGTHEN YOURSELF**

First I've gotta ask, is he your PERSONAL God?

- Do you have a personal relationship with Jesus?

If not y'all, that's step one.

- It's the most important part of this whole thing!
- He's gotta become the LORD **YOUR** God!
 - And if you want to do that today,
 - listen, will you come to the back of the room
 - right after I'm done preaching
 - and we'll pray with you to receive Christ.

But if he is the LORD your God...

- then today, remind yourself of his PROMISES to you.
 - He will never leave you or forsake you.
 - He will bring the work he started in you to completion.
 - He has overcome the world.
 - He will give you rest for your soul.
 - His power is made perfect in weakness.
 - He works all things together for good.

Preach those things to your soul!

And finally, you draw near to his PRESENCE in prayer and worship.

That's what we're doing together this morning.

That's what we're about to keep doing after I'm done.

- Listen, this isn't a TED talk with some Christian Karaoke!

We're drawing near the PRESENCE of the Lord!

- You've got a good father...and he bids you come!
- Draw near to him...and find grace to help.

And if you're there today, if you're in a place of desperation...

man, I would encourage you with this:

- God finds desperate hearts irresistible.

God finds desperate hearts irresistible!

It's where he does his best work!

- All our natural intuitions tell us that...
 - Jesus is with us...
 - is on our side...
 - when life is going well.

But this text presents the opposite.

So, let's close with this Psalm of David.

SLIDE PSALM 34:17–18 says

[17] When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears
and delivers them out of all their troubles.

[18] The LORD is near to the brokenhearted
and saves the crushed in spirit.

God finds desperate hearts irresistible.

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

- Davis, Dale Ralph. Focus on the Bible. 1 Samuel: Looking on the Heart.
- Davis, Dale Ralph. *When the Bottom Drops Out*.
- Heitzig, Skip. *1 Samuel 30-31*.
- Tsumura, David Toshio. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. The First Book of Samuel.