

I and II Samuel

“David Rescues His People”

I Samuel 29

Well, tonight I do want to speak about the life of David one more time. Well, not for the last time, mind you, but one more time. And is in God's providence. There is a fit between Psalm 57, which we read, David reflecting on the challenges of his life in the passage we're going to study today, which is David's remarkable journey to rescue hundreds of people who had been captured by a group, a vicious group of marauders named the Amalekites.

The courage that he shows, speaks to us as we are one by one, trying to be courageous people and seek God's leading. But I do think it also fits the occasion, because David is a leader and as a leader, he points us to Christ. That's of course, our hope for Pastor Redd. We expect him to lead us to Christ in constantly faithful and yet nuanced and different ways, according to whatever he's preaching on week by week.

We ask that all the people who lead in this church would constantly take us in Bible studies and Sunday school classes to Christ, and this passage takes us to Christ because David is showing such extraordinary virtue that it makes us think of the Son of David, who is like what David does in this passage. And yet greater. That's one.

But of course, he's also a man. And he got into this situation because of his courage and his call. But also the some degrees, some mistakes that he made. And so we might say, David leads us up to Christ and also great as he is showing us how to be a godly man in a crisis. He also leads down to us in our ordinary affairs.

We are not kings or kings to be, but we're often in situations that are at least somewhat like the situation that David faced long ago. Now we're going to read first Samuel 29, verses 1 to 15, and just a moment. But I want to make sure we know where we are in the life of David, because, you know, we've had a variety of events on Sunday night.

And so just quickly it goes like this walk through first Samuel with me. If you have a Bible, you can just leaf through your Bible with me. In first Samuel chapter 15, God resolved that Saul's reign as king was at an end. He had proven himself unfaithful. In chapter 16, and God led Samuel to anoint David unexpectedly to become the next king.

In first Samuel 17, God announced David to the world. Specifically, the Philistines invaded Israel, and David came to the spot where the armies were at an impasse. And they were they were cursing God, and Goliath was cursing God. And David said, who is this uncircumcised? God was Philistine to heap shame on the living God. And he fought him and killed him, and a great

victory. And for a little while Saul was pleased to have such a brave and virtuous and musically talented man in his entourage at his domicile. And then he became apprehensive. Who is this David? Aren't people praising him too much? And the wickedness that it showed itself earlier showed itself more, and he began to fear David and hate David and try to kill David until finally Saul's own son Jonathan said, you've got to leave. My father's bound and determined to kill you. And then David was on the run, and chapters 21 and chapter 22, and chapter 23, and there's a summary statement at 23:14 which says Saul pursued David day after day, but the Lord would not give him into his hand. That's the summary.

And David was really good and really faithful about that most of the time. Chapter 24. In chapter 26, as David runs from Saul two times, David have had a chance to kill Saul, who was aiming to kill him. And twice he said, I will not take my hand and lift it up against the Lord's anointed. When it's time for the Lord to remove Saul from this world, then I will accept that.

But I am not going to kill him with my own hands trimmed to faith, trusting God to preserve him, he faltered a little bit. In chapter 25, God sent a godly woman, Abigail, to rebuke and correct him, and he listened. And then in chapter 27, David made a mistake, which is what good people do. God had given him assurances that he would take care of him staying in Israel.

But he despaired, and he left Israel and went down to Gath and pretended to be an ally of the Philistines. He lived far in the south, running his own affairs, we might say, but he promised loyalty to Achish, one of the listing king lists, or many kings. And when war broke out and looked like the climactic war between the Israelites and the Philistines, Achish, who believed that David really had gone over to his side, said, come and fight with me.

We're going to fight the Israelites. Saul, in a final act that shows how despairing he'd become, did not turn to the Lord in this great conflict. Chapter 28 says, he turned to a witch seeking guidance through a necromancer, calling up Samuel from the dead Samuel, whom he wouldn't listen to when Samuel was alive. Meanwhile, the Philistines are marching north, and David is in their train, and the Philistine generals say, we know you trust David, but we don't.

Who knows what he'll do in the moment of truth when the battle is joined, there's no better way for him to get back in the good graces of his own people than for him to turn on us in the middle of battle. And so David is relieved of the challenge sent home. And then chapter 29, verse one, and following, I'll read to you, it's on the screen.

Now. The Philistines had gathered all their forces at effect, and the Israelites were encamped by the spring, that is, in Jezreel. And the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands. And David and his men were passing on in the rear with XIX the commanders of the Philistines said, what are these Hebrews doing here?

And they said to the commanders of the Philistines, is this not David the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years since he has deserted to me, I have found no fault in him to this day. But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him, and the commanders of the Philistines said to him, send the man back, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him.

And so he goes back. Now I'm going to turn to chapter 30 of First Samuel.

Now when David and his men came to zigzag, that was his town. That was where he'd been living on the third day. So he walked for three days for the Philistine army back to his hometown to seek. Like in the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid against the Negev and against Zik like, and they had overcome Isaac like, and burned it with fire, 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 on their way. And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire, and their wives and their sons and daughters taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep. David's two wives. I'm not going to explain that tonight. David's two wives also have been taken captive. I know him of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal, of Carmel. And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter, and sold each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. I'm going to read it again. David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of him, look, bring me the effort. And Abbe Arthur brought the effort to David. And David inquired of the Lord shall I pursue after this man? Shall I overtake them? And he answered, pursue for you shall surely overtake, and surely you shall rescue. So David set out, and the 600 men who were with him. And they came to the brook base, saw where those who were left behind stayed. But David pursued. He and 400 men, 200 men stayed behind, who were too exhausted to cross the brook before 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. They gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when it eaten his spirit revived, for he had not eaten or drunk water for three days and three nights. And David said to him, to whom do you belong, and where are you from? And he said, I am a young man of Egypt, servant or slave to an amulet key to my master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago we had made arrayed against the Negev of the Cherith lights, and against that which belongs to Judah, and against Negev of Caleb. And we burned Ziglag with fire. And David said to him, Will you take me down to this band? And he said, first, 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.

Thus for the reading of God's Word. Heavenly father, I pray that you would give us ears to hear what you're saying to us about godliness and leadership and courage. We pray in Jesus name, Amen.

So I've given you the background. The background is straightforward. David. It was in a terrible spot with the Philistines. He had lied to the Philistines and said, I'm on your side. And so they said, behave like it. Come fight a battle with us. And then in God's good providence, some of the Philistines said, go home now.

It's kind of quick in the passage it read to you, but the men had traveled for two days, which means they had walked for two days with the army, and then they walked back for two days with the army. And if you check out the distances, these were not strolls. These were 60 miles per day over rugged terrain, 30 miles each day.

If you're a hiker, that's a lot 30 miles, two days in a row, then we don't want you with the Philistines. Go back home. 30 more miles. They go 120 miles. And they get back to their city, and they find that their city, which has been unprotected these last few days, has been preyed upon by the Amalekites and the city taken by these brutal, unbending, calculating people, took advantage of David's absence and took the whole city to fire.

But when they got there, they said there are no dead bodies, there are no charred ruins. There are no animals or no people left here dead. They took everyone and everything alive and then burned the city. We can imagine the terror of the women and of the children, as the savage band swept down upon their town and carried everyone off and burned their city.

What are they going to do there? What are they there to plunder? Are they going to be slaves? Who will ever know where they are? How will they ever rescue what is it going to be like to be ripped away from your husbands, and to have yourself as the mother and the children unprotected from these marauders? And Scripture says in verses one and two, when David, his men came, they found the city destroyed with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.

Now there's two things that happen here. They get back to the city. They smell the smoke from a distance. They come running to the city. They see nobody's dead. So at least their families alive. On the other hand, their family is entirely slaves of Hemlock Heights. What do they smoke? Lights like? What are the kind of people who went on a raid and a slave of theirs gets sick?

They simply say, excuse me, but we're going to leave you to die. That's how the Egyptian came into their hands. This is the kind of people the Amalekites are. The Amalekites are not found very often in the pages of the Bible. But every time they're found, they're violent, they're

heedless, they're godless. So the men began to weep. The text says they wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.

Can I just say real men can cry? There's nothing wrong with weeping. When true tragedy comes your way. Tell the Lord how. How much it hurts, how desperate the pain is. The men cried until they couldn't cry anymore. And then they did what people often do after they cry, they started to look for somebody to be mad at.

And they decided the person they were mad at. There's only one option. Their leader, David, who's led them faithfully for ten years, has delivered Israel from the Philistines and various other woes, according to every ability has. Suddenly David's the one. He's that you're the one that took us into this position, which is to some extent true. And they actually thought of stoning him to death, fingers pointing at David.

How fickle. One day he's their mighty captain. The next day they're thinking about stoning him. Do I need to spell it out? Do I need to spell it out? People are fickle. They love you one day and they hate you the next. You're the great leader one day and you're a monster the next. You're the same person you ever were.

Please don't do that to each other. Don't do that to your next pastor when he makes a mistake. Don't do that to your current leaders. If you've done it in the past, repent of turning against people who yeah, maybe. Maybe they did make a mistake. Don't turn against your leaders. Godly people put no confidence in princes. Psalm 146 says, we trust our leaders.

We follow our leaders. We don't believe in our leaders. So these men were angry at David, angry enough to kill him. Even though the Amalekites did the damage. And we admit David made a mistake, he should not have been living with the Philistines. But to turn on him and think of killing him is another thing entirely. So what does David do now that he's made a mistake?

His family's gone. His men are thinking of killing him. Verses five and six say simply, David found strength in the Lord his God. I wish the book said more. How do you find strength in the Lord your God? When people are thinking of killing you? Well, certainly your prayer. Certainly you pull back. You think about everything the Bible says.

Everything, though the life of a godly man has a has, has discovered over the years. And you, you review the scriptures. You remind yourself that people are fickle, that the opinions of man don't matter that much. You remind yourself that God is great. You remind yourself that your family, your children are in God's care. I don't know what he did.

It simply says he found strength in the Lord his God and in his meditations in his prayers. We do know a little bit about what he knew. We know that he writes psalms about these things. Psalm

27 says, the Lord is my strength and my shield, my heart. Trust in him. The Lord is the strength of his people, a fortress of salvation for his anointed One.

David's the Anointed One, and he points to Christ. Jesus also prayed and sang the Psalms. He knew the God was his shield. Psalm 118 the Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation. So David knew. So David prayed. He asked the Lord to show him mercy. Now, God, I covered this maybe 6 or 7 weeks ago, had done a variety of things to make life a little bit better for David, as he does for all of us.

He gives us support if we know where to look for it. And priests who are faithful to God, who have been attacked by Saul came to him, and they brought something called an effort, and an effort was a way of asking God questions that the Lord used in those days before people had the whole Bible. And you could ask, apparently, yes and no questions.

And so David puts questions to the Lord through the priest who brings this device, and nobody knows what it was. Exactly. And the question number one was, shall I pursue the raiders? Because he drawn the conclusion, nobody's dead and nobody's here. So there have been raiders. Shall I pursue the Raiders? The answer is yes. Will I overtake them?

Yes, you will find them. Will the rescue efforts succeed? Yes, it will. And so we see David doing what a godly person does at a time of crisis. I don't know what your crisis is. I'm sure a number of you have difficulties in front of you. You take your questions to the Lord. You wait for him to speak.

It's simple, but it's not what Saul did remember what he did, but he was in dire distress. He went to a witch. I go on the internet sometimes just to see what's happening. I don't even know how I got there, but I was looking for something innocent and positive. And somehow I came upon an Etsy thing in which you can pay \$15 to get a blessing.

I thought, well, I'm going to see what that is. I'm just curious what you know, what are people you know? What do you do? How do you sell a blessing for \$15? I was just curious and so I, I clicked. I realize that was my mistake. So anybody would vote for me clicking on this kind of thing. Nobody wants to vote for me.

And I found instantaneously, right beside the blessings you can get for \$15, the curses you can drop on people, they're more expensive. But they're more effective.

Well, people turn everywhere. And I got to tell you, probably some Christians despair, finding guidance in God's word and turn to things like that. The Lord gives us his word. We pray. We seek guidance from him. We remember His word. And then when he speaks, we act. The word was very clear shall I pursue you? Shall will I find them?

You will. Will I succeed? You will. And so he goes. He gathers his many acts like a leader. They're trying to kill him one minute. The next minute he says, boys, get. Get ready. We're going now. They just walked 120 miles. They just thought of killing him. But he said, we're going. We're going to go pursue our family.

I don't know how he did it. I don't know how he did it, but he said, we're going. God has spoken. Let's move. And so they begin to go over this rugged terrain. The men are emotionally exhausted and physically exhausted. As I said, 60 miles one way, 60 miles back. And then it tells us that about 20 miles in they came to this brook, Bissau, and there's a ravine there.

It's very rugged. And 200 of the 600 men said, we're done. We can't take another step. We stop right here now, David said. We're going to continue to go. You stay, keep the bags, keep our supplies. The other 400 of us are going to continue to go. And as they go, they find this, this Egyptian who's been abandoned in a field again.

He's he tells the story. I was sick and so my master simply left me behind to die. And by way, a beautiful contrast. In a biblical contrast, David does what we're supposed to do when we meet somebody in need. He's got his needs, no doubt about it. He's got his purpose, no doubt about it. But you notice what they did?

They gave him an interesting list of food, and people didn't have a ton of food, and they didn't have a ton of food. They gave him bread and he ate. They gave him water to drink. They gave him a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And he woke up. He came back to his senses. And why does David do this?

Well, the most basic point we could say is God made this man a neighbor to him. When you're going through the wilderness, through the desert, and you see somebody lying by the side, it's kind of like when you're driving through eastern Montana, if you see a car broken down, you stop. Period. Because it's a long ways. This person's my neighbor and I'm going to love my neighbor, which the Bible tells us to do.

The Bible also tells us that we should have pity on the stranger. On the alien, we return good for evil. David doesn't know who this man is. He doesn't say he's lying. You're half dead. Finish him off. He remembers that the Bible says that we should treat aliens well because God says, remember, you were aliens in Egypt, and I loved and cared for you, and therefore you ought to care for each other.

That's in Exodus 22, verse 21. It's in Exodus 23, verse 21. It's in Deuteronomy 23, verse seven. Three times God says the same thing. You were strangers to aliens, and I cared for you. Therefore you care for strangers and aliens, and David lives by God's Word. And so he gives them food and takes care of him, and is compassionate, as God is compassionate.

And so we see the path of a godly man. In desperate straits, when his own men are about to kill him, he prays and find strength in the Lord his God. God's been faithful in the past. He'll care for me. He finds strength in God. He seeks guidance, and when he gets it, he follows it. He does not drive his men.

When they're exhausted, he lets them go, but he keeps going and takes his mighty men with him. He has a heart for God. And this Amalekite slave, this Egyptian, was a slave of the Amalekites, says, I'll help you under two conditions. Condition number one. Don't kill me. Fair enough. Condition number two. Don't give me back to my master.

David says it's a deal. And the way they go to punish the Amalekites, who in the pages of Scripture ticked off Israelites who straggled as they walked from Egypt to the Promised Land, who kidnap, who leave their slaves to die. We have a portrait of a leader, a man who knows how to seek God, a man who is willing to interrupt a vital task to take care of somebody who's right beside him.

This poor man, a man who meets a foe and does not strike him down, but enlists his aid. And then off they go. And I'm going to covered the rest of the story very quickly. David pursues. He finds the Amalekites. They're strewn over the countryside, reveling, drinking, celebrating. And David comes and falls upon them. Having walked 120 miles, having faced the emotional loss of his wives and children, the emotional loss of his own men turning against him and then marching until half a third of the men can't go any further.

And he goes further and he finds them. And the Bible says he and his men fought the militants all day long, and none of them escaped except for 100 who ran off on camels. Now, what does that tell you? That tells you there are a whole bunch of smoke fights, and Dave was fighting in the strength of the Lord his God once again, because God had said, I will deliver you.

He believed that it was so. And there's one more thing that happened. Everyone was safe. The wives, the children, all are well. All the flocks, all the herds and all the plunder is now David's to do as he will. The markets were plundering others, and some of his men said, you know those 200 that didn't cross the brook, didn't keep going, didn't fight the battle against the Amalekites, they don't get their stuff back. That's ours. Oh, they can have their wives and their children, but not the plunder. And David said in verses 23 and 24, no, my brothers, you must not do this with God's gift. He has protected us and handed over to us the forces that came against us all must share and share alike.

Why? Because the battle is the Lord's. Because God directed them. Because God gave them supernatural strength. Because God dropped this Egyptian into their path, in his sovereignty, God took care of us. And so David acts like a king, trusting in God, repenting of his mistakes. To

be sure, pointing the way to Jesus, who was a truly courageous, truly tireless king, but also inspiring all of us, teaching us how to live a life of faithfulness when trouble comes our way.

And so I'm delighted to commend him to you, and delighted to commend the way his life was a beautiful example to his own man, but also an example to us when we were in times of hardship.

Let's pray together.

Thank you, Lord, for this night, this time in which we can pray for future leaders and present leaders. Pray for the needs of our church for the future of our church, even as all and let us. We're thankful for the opportunity. Remember that you've been faithful to us even in the last couple of years. Hard as they were in so many ways. And Lord, may, may you continue to lead care for us as we walk in obedience, as we search your word and find strength in you, care for us one by one and care for us as your church, your people. We thank you that you love us in and through Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.