

Session 14 Ziklag: Compromise & Recovery (1 Sam. 27-30; Ps. 18)

I. INTRODUCTION

- A. After the miracle in 1 Samuel 26, David was overcome with despair and left the territory of Israel (27:1). He lost hold of the clear, prophetic insight that he had about the Lord removing Saul (26:10). In this season of his life, David embraced compromise based in fear, though he had been delivered 12 times before this (18:11, 27; 19:6, 18; 20:1; 22:1; 23:12-14; 23:28; 24:11; 25:33; 26:12).

*¹And David said in his heart, “Now **I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines [Gath and Ziklag].**” (1 Sam. 27:1)*

*⁹David said to Abishai, “...for who can stretch out his hand against the LORD’s anointed, and be guiltless? ¹⁰...the **LORD shall strike him...he shall go out to battle and perish.**” (1 Sam. 26:9-10)*

- B. There were times when his circumstances contradicted God’s promises over his life that everything seemed lost to David. The Lord was testing his faith and calling him to realign his thinking and refine his character. He learned lessons in these times that he would not have learned otherwise.
- C. Our battle is a fight for faith or for believing God’s Word in the face of our fears. To trust God in times of blessing and victory is one thing, but to trust Him when things look negative is another.
- D. The Lord wanted David to learn to trust Him in a more consistent way in negative times. The Lord was training him to be a king who would lead with obedience and faith so Israel would be blessed under his leadership. The Lord asks us, “Will you trust Me in the challenging times?” God wants us to be reliable or stable in faith through all the different seasons of our life, not just the easier ones.
- E. Earlier the Lord had commanded David to return to the land of Judah (22:5). David was to trust the Lord to protect and train him in the land of Israel. However, David fled again to Gath to be safe from Saul. Achish the king of Gath gave David the city of Ziklag. David trusted the walls of Gath and Ziklag instead of the hand of the Lord. He concluded it was safer in the land of the Philistines with a heathen king protecting him than to remain in the land of Judah with the Lord protecting him. I imagine Gad said, “David, you cannot go back to Gath. You have to stay in Judah” (22:5).

*⁵Now the **prophet Gad** said to David, “**Do not stay in the stronghold...go to the land of Judah.**” (1 Sam. 22:5)*

- F. At 28 years old, David was 16 months from the Lord removing Saul by death. David did not know that he was only 16 months from a significant shift in his life, which happened when he was 30.
- G. Obeying the prophetic word to stay in Judah during the years described in 1 Samuel 22-26 resulted in many added pressures for David instead of more peace with added blessings in his circumstances. David escaped *from* Gath in 22:1 but now escaped *to* Gath. Both times that he went to Gath (21:10), his plan “seemed” to work in that Saul ceased to pursue him, but other new pressures soon emerged.
- H. David went to Gath for a second time. Achish received him, giving him the city of Ziklag. This began a season where he embraced compromise and telling lies to Achish.

II. DAVID RETURNED TO GATH AND SETTLED IN ZIKLAG (1 SAM. 27:1-12)

- A. David fled to the Philistine city of Gath out of fear that Saul would eventually catch him (27:1-4). It was very difficult for David to move from place to place in the wilderness of Judah with the responsibility to feed and care for so many families (27:3).

¹David said in his heart, “Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul...I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel...”²Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish... king of Gath. ³So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household...⁴And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more. (1 Sam. 27:1-4)

- B. **Leadership Lesson:** Be careful not to make decisions out of despair to gain only short-term relief.

- C. David asked to live outside the royal city of Gath. He could act freely, without accountability. Ziklag was far enough from Saul’s territory to be safe and from Gath not to be under their scrutiny. Being isolated made it more vulnerable to raids by the Amalekites and other roaming bands, but David covered his tracks (27:11). Things seemed to work until it backfired in tragedy (30:1)

⁵David said to Achish, “If I have now found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in some town in the country...Why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?”⁶So Achish gave him Ziklag...⁷The time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months.⁸And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites...⁹Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys...¹⁰Then Achish would say, “Where have you made a raid today?” And David would say, “Against the southern area of Judah, or against the southern area of the Jerahmeelites...”¹¹David would save neither man nor woman alive, to bring news to Gath, saying, “Lest they should inform on us...” And thus was his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines.¹²So Achish believed David, saying, “He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever.” (1 Sam. 27:5-12)

III. THE PHILISTINES PREPARED TO GO TO WAR WITH ISRAEL (1 SAM. 28:1-2)

- A. Achish ordered David to march with him into the camp where Philistine gathered at Aphek (29:1).

¹Now it happened in those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. And Achish said to David, “You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men.”²So David said to Achish, “Surely you know what your servant can do.” And Achish said to David, “Therefore I will make you one of my chief guardians forever.” (1 Sam. 28:1-2)

- B. Achish spoke to David about being his lifelong bodyguard (28:2). This was a trusted position of prestige in the inner circle of the royal court.

- C. 1 Samuel 29 resumes the story of David and Achish that was suspended after 28:2. In other words, chronologically, the events in this passage are followed by the events in 28:3-25.

IV. THE PHILISTINE RULERS AND DAVID (1 SAM. 29:1-11)

- A. The Philistine army gathered at Aphek about 30 miles north of Gath, as it was a strategic place to gather before advancing toward the north.

¹Then the Philistines gathered together all their armies at Aphek, and the Israelites encamped by a fountain which is in Jezreel. ²And the lords of the Philistines passed in review by hundreds and by thousands, but David and his men passed in review at the rear with Achish. (1 Sam. 29:1-2)

- B. Philistine rulers were angry at Achish for asking David and his men to join the battle (29:3-5).

³Then the princes of the Philistines said, “What are these Hebrews doing here?” And Achish said to the princes of the Philistines, “Is this not David...who has been with me...these years? And to this day I have found no fault in him...”⁴But the princes of the Philistines were angry with him; so the princes of the Philistines said to him, “Make this fellow return...” (1 Sam. 29:3-4)

- C. The conversation between Achish and David (29:6-11)

⁶Then Achish called David and said to him, “...I have not found evil in you since the day of your coming to me...”¹⁰As soon as you are up early in the morning and have light, depart.”¹¹So David and his men rose early...to return to the land of the Philistines. (1 Sam. 29:6-11)

V. DAVID’S TERRIBLE TRAGEDY AND GREAT VICTORY IN ZIKLAG (1 SAM. 30:1-31)

- A. Blessing, tragedy, and consequences for David’s compromise and lies converged in 1 Samuel 30-31. The battle between the Philistines and Israel resulted in removing Saul from his life (1 Sam. 31), yet at the same time the city of Ziklag where he lived was burned and his men turned on him.

- B. David’s experiences in Ziklag give us insight into what he understood about God’s heart. He spent sixteen months at Ziklag (1 Sam. 27-31). During this season, David *stumbled in compromise* and was tested by the *loss of his family*, the *burning of his city*, and the *betrayal of his friends*, yet he did not draw back from God. Rather, he set his heart to pursue the Lord and trust His mercy and love.

- C. David marched for 3 days from Aphek to Ziklag to find the Amalekites had burned Ziklag (30:1-2).

¹Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites ...attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, ²and had taken captive the women and those who were there...they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. (1 Sam. 30:1-2)

- D. David’s great sorrow in Ziklag (30:3-6): David strengthened himself in God and inquired of, or asked, the Lord what to do (30:6-8). He did not let his stumbling in sin result in the failing of his faith by giving up his vision to fully seek the Lord and to recover all (1 Sam. 30:9-31).

³So David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. ⁴Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep...⁶Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him...But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God...⁸David inquired of the LORD, saying, “Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?” And He answered him, “Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all.” (1 Sam. 30:3-8)

- E. David and his 600 men stopped at the Brook Besor; 200 stayed there, being so weary (30:9-10).
¹⁰David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor. (1 Sam. 30:9-10)
- F. An Egyptian slave helped David locate the Amalekites (30:11-15).
¹¹Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David...¹³He said, “I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. ¹⁴We made an invasion of...the territory which belongs to Judah...we burned Ziklag with fire.” ¹⁵And David said to him, “Can you take me down to this troop?” (1 Sam. 30:11-15)
- G. David attacked the Amalekites (30:16-20). They recovered all of their families and property.
¹⁶...they were spread out over all the land eating and drinking...¹⁷David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day...¹⁸David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. ¹⁹And nothing of theirs was lacking...” (1 Sam. 30:16-20)
- H. David returned to the Brook Besor (30:21-25).
²¹Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor...he greeted them. ²²Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David answered and said, “Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered...” ²³David said, “My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. ²⁴For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike.” ²⁵So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute... (1 Sam. 30:21-25)

The Lord has given us: David saw God’s ownership of the increase and fruits of their victory (Ps. 18:25). David saw God as his source of victory at Ziklag and as source of his promotion.

⁷For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it? (1 Cor. 4:7)

They shall share alike: Those who fight and those who watch the bags all share equally in the spoils of war. The share of one who goes down to the battle is equal to the share of one watching the baggage (30:24). This is a foundational principle in the kingdom (1 Cor. 12).

VI. PS. 18 AND PS. 56

- A. The title of Psalm 18 tells us that David wrote it *on the day God delivered him from Saul*.
¹I will love You, O LORD, my strength...¹⁹He also brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me...³⁵...Your gentleness has made me great. (Ps. 18:1, 19, 35)
- B. The title of Psalm 56 informs us that David wrote this psalm while with Achish in the Ziklag years.
⁸You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book? ⁹When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me. (Ps. 56:8-9)