

David's Wives Captured

1 Samuel 30:1–15 ESV

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. 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. 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. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

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." ⁹ So David set out, and the six hundred men who were with him, and they came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed. ¹⁰ But David pursued, he and four hundred men. Two hundred stayed behind, who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor.

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."

This is the Word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Let us pray,

Our Father in heaven,

We thank you this morning for the gift of your word.

You are a loving and generous Father.

You bestow upon each of us not only our life and our being, but your love and your grace.

And you have shown this grace to us richly in the salvation revealed so fully in your word.

Help us this morning to not only hear your word, but to also do your word.

I ask now that the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts would be pleasing in your sight, O Lord our rock and our redeemer.

I pray this all in the name of Christ our King.

AMEN!

Introduction

Beginning back in ch. 27, 1 Samuel has followed the pattern of the Exodus.

When David went to Philistia for protection it followed the pattern of Genesis, when Israel went down to Egypt.

And as Pharaoh did for Joseph and Jacob, Achish provided shelter for David.

But it then became time for David to leave Philistia.

And leaving Egypt means an Exodus, and an Exodus means a Passover.

But sometimes the Exodus pattern is inverted.

Instead of a true Passover, there was a false Passover.

King Saul partakes in a false Passover when he shares table fellowship with the medium at En-dor.

Her table had no Passover Lamb and Saul, the firstborn of Israel, was doomed to die.

After this midnight "Passover", Achish, like Pharaoh, "lets David go".

This morning's passage continues this Exodus pattern.

In [Exodus 17](#), after Moses had led the people out of Egypt, they met adversity in the wilderness.

There was no water in the wilderness on the way to Sinai and the people wanted to stone Moses before they were attacked by the Amalekites.

In this morning's passage, David's men speak of stoning him before they fight the Amalekites.

Here at the end of 1 Samuel, God is leading his people through a new Exodus.

The first Exodus brought Israel into a new covenant with God, lead by Moses, at Mt. Sinai.

In this Exodus, God again brings Israel into a new covenant.

And David, not Moses, is the head of this covenant.

But covenants are always preceded by death before they are ratified.

Pharaoh and the firstborn of Egypt die before God covenants with Israel at Sinai.

Here, Saul dies to clear the path for David's rise and God's new covenant.

While this Exodus pattern has been in view, it has served to show the ongoing contrast between David and Saul.

And Chapter 30 is no different.

[1 Sam 30](#) is all about **David**, especially David's greatness compared to Saul's failure.

If you remember the timeline I presented last week, these events that *follow David* in [1 Sam. 30](#) take place *at the same time* that Saul is *defeated* by the Philistines in [1 Sam 31](#).

Being about David, I have divided this morning's sermon into three parts:

1. David Turned to God (vv. 1-6)
2. David Trusted God's Word (vv. 7-10)
3. David Ruled Righteously (vv. 11-15)

David Turned to God (vv. 1-6)

Verses 1-6 present the first way David contrasts with Saul.

After David left Achish and the Philistine army at Aphek he and his men returned to Ziklag.

Remember, Ziklag was the city that Achish had given David to live in.

But, while David and his men were away, the Amalekites attacked the defenseless city.

As I mentioned already, Conflict with the Amalekites is a part of the Exodus pattern.

When you leave Egypt you have to fight Amalekites.

But there are more details that connect the conflict with Amalekites *here* with what happened when Israel came out of Egypt.

In [Deuteronomy 25](#) Moses reminds Israel what the Amalekites did to them when they left of Egypt.

According to Deuteronomy, the Amalekites attacked Israel when they were "faint and weary" and specifically attacked those who were "lagging behind".

The Amalekites were a wicked people.

Like vultures, they preferred to prey on the weak and vulnerable.

When David and his men come to Ziklag they found it ablaze and their wives and children taken.

In *their* distress, David's men were ready to make David a scapegoat and stone him to death.

But in *his* distress David responded in a way that contrasts with Saul.

David turned to the Lord.

The end of verse 6 states that "**David strengthen himself in the Lord his God.**"

When things got bad for Saul, he *turned away* from the Lord.

But David was a man after God's own heart.

When things got bad for David he *turned to* God, not away from him.

Again, we should remember the Psalms as we consider David's life in 1 Samuel.

Many of the psalms reflect this point.

When the chips were down for David, his instinct was to turn to God!

This is instructive for you.

Turning to God in times of distress is the proper instinct of the Christian.

As David wrote in [Psalm 9](#),

Psalm 9:9 ESV

⁹ The Lord is a stronghold for the oppressed, a stronghold in times of trouble.

When life takes a bad turn, remember David's words in [Psalm 31](#),

Psalm 31:5 ESV

⁵ Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O Lord, faithful God.

In this David points us to Christ.

For this is what Jesus did when he yielded up his spirit on the cross.

He trusted God even in death, the greatest threat and enemy of us all.

And he was right to do so, for David also wrote [Psalm 16:10](#) which speaks of Christ.

Psalm 16:10 ESV

¹⁰ For you will not abandon my soul to Sheol, or let your holy one see corruption.

David turned to God when Saul turned away; and this points us to Christ.

But David was also prepared to obey God's word when God spoke to him.

And this brings us to our next section.

David Trusted God's Word (vv. 7-10)

Verses 7-10 set up the second contrast between David and King Saul.

As David strengthened himself in the Lord, he took practical action by turning to Abiathar the priest so that he could consult the Ephod.

The "Ephod" has come up a few times in 1 Samuel.

It was the breastplate worn by the high priest that contained the Urim and the Thummim.

The Urim and Thummim were stones that Israel could consult to determine God's will.

In verse 8, David inquired of the Lord by the ephod to see if it was God's will to pursue those who had attacked Ziklag.

There are two major contrasts between David and Saul here.

God Didn't Speak to Saul

First, there is a clear contrast here with what happened in ch. 28.

There, when Saul was afraid of the Philistines army, he tried to inquire of the Lord.

But at that point it was too late for Saul.

Saul had refused to listen to God earlier in his reign and now God would not speak to him.

[1 Samuel 28:6](#) states, “And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.”

The contrast here is obvious: God won’t answer Saul, but he will answer David.

David, a Hearer and a Doer

The second contrast is broader.

The Bible makes it clear that God isn’t simply interested in his people hearing his word, he wants his people to be doers of the word.

This is what Paul teaches in [Romans 2](#) when he wrote,

Romans 2:13 ESV

¹³ For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified.

The problem of Saul’s kingship wasn’t that he didn’t hear God’s word.

On several occasions he received God’s word directly from Samuel the prophet.

The problem was that Saul was not a doer of God’s word.

He didn’t receive God’s word with faith!

Instead, he was like the man James describes in [James 1](#),

James 1:23–24 ESV

²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

David on the other hand was both a hearer and a doer of God’s word.

And here, when God answers David, David responds in faith to pursue the band.

With David we are given a demonstration of the relationship between faith and obedience.

Those who respond to God’s word with faith not only believe what God says, they also obey what God says.

Again, this is instructive for you.

The Bible teaches that you should hear and obey God’s word as a Christian.

In [John 14](#) Jesus taught his disciples,

John 14:15 ESV

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

The Apostle John reiterated this in [1 John 5](#) stating,

1 John 5:3 ESV

³ For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome.

You are called to obedience.

Obedience is not what saves you.

Rather, you obey, because you are saved.

David's faith in God's word led to obedience, even though he only had 600 tired men.

Faith in God often leads you to risk and inconvenience.

And that brings us to our last section.

David Ruled Righteously (vv. 11-15)

This final section presents the last contrast between David and Saul.

But it does so by contrasting David with the Amalekites.

This requires us to remember one of the broader themes of Saul's kingship.

When Israel asked for a king they asked for a king who would be like the kings of "all the nations".

What we find in 1 Samuel is that God gave the people exactly what they wanted.

They asked for a king like the nations and they got one.

What they soon realized is that pagan kings are oppressive and cruel.

For that is what Saul became like.

In this final section, David leads in a way that is opposite of the Amalekites.

David doesn't rule like the pagan nations.

David is not like Saul who is like the Amalekites and other pagan kings.

This contrast between David and the Amalekites (and therefore Saul) is shown in how David cares for the Egyptian servant in this last section.

Remember, the Amalekites are known for preying on the weak and vulnerable.

But in caring for this Egyptian, David proves to be the opposite of the Amalekites.

David is a merciful and generous man, pointing to what God is truly like, unlike the kings of the nations.

Both here and elsewhere, David begins to paint a portrait of what divine rule is like.

Divine rule doesn't take but it gives.

Divine rule doesn't leave the weak behind but cares for them and lifts them up.

[1 Samuel 30](#) is all about David's greatness because it is setting him up as the coming king who will rule as a king after God's own heart.

He will be a king who turns to God in time of great distress.

He will be a king who not only hears God's word, but will walk by faith, obeying God's word even when things look grim.

And, he will be a generous and merciful king.

David will be a king who cares for the weak and needy and does not prey on those who cannot defend themselves.

It is for all these reasons and more that David points us to Christ, the true king of God's people.

Like David, Jesus hears and obeys the word of his heavenly Father.

But more than this, Jesus is the Word of the Father made flesh.

And, he is the Word made flesh for us.

And Jesus' word from the Father is a gospel word, a word of good news and peace.

We like the Egyptian servant are dying in the wilderness of our sin.

But like David, Jesus stoops to us to feed us and revive us.

And like the Egyptian we are revived in the power of the third day, the day of Christ's resurrection.

Where our sins are forgiven and we are also united with Christ in his Ascension, seated with him in heavenly places!

This is who David points us to!

And this Jesus is who speaks to you this morning and who invites you to his table!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. AMEN!

Let us pray,

Heavenly Father,

We give you thanks that you have shown us your mercy, even as David showed mercy to the Egyptian servant.

Would you revive us this morning at your table.

Would you give us confidence in Christ.

That not only have you forgiven us of our sins, but you have also raised us with Christ in heavenly places.

Helps us, by the power of your holy Spirit, to not only hear your word, but also to obey it.

I pray this all in the name of Christ. AMEN!