

# Empowering Yourself With Faith: David Finds Strength In The Lord At Ziklag #encouragement #Ziklag

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[0:00] 1 Samuel 30 verse 6, And David was greatly distressed.! For the people spake of stoning him,! Because the soul of all the people was grieved,! Every man for his sons and for his daughters.

But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. We can all get times of duress, of stress, of distress, of hardship, heartache, of pressure.

The question is, what are we going to do about it? What will we do in such times? David was in such a time, a time of discouragement, and the soul of all the people was grieved.

But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Now, the occasion here was when David and his men, they'd come back to Ziklag.

They'd been out in a battle. They'd joined up with the Philistines. And while they'd been away on this campaign, the Amalekites had come in. They'd invaded and captured the city where they had been living, which was called Ziklag.

[1:22] The raiders had come in and burnt the city to the ground and taken captive all the women, the children and the animals, everything.

The Amalekites had taken all the people captive, including David's two wives. Ziklag. Ziklag. That was the place.

Burnt to the ground. And when David and his men returned there, they discovered all of this. And they lifted up their voice and they wept.

Ziklag. Interesting, Ziklag could be understood to mean pressed down. David was pressed.

There was pressure. He was pressed down and shaped for God. Ziklag was where it happened.

The people wept.

[2:24] They wept their hearts out. Weeping such that they had no more power to weep again. They had no more tears to shed. No more tears left. It was heartbreaking.

And others complained about all of this and they blamed David. Some even talked of stoning him. David himself was torn up with grief, overcome with this grief.

He'd lost his possessions, his loved ones. People were against him. And his own life was threatened now. He was overwhelmed with this distress, just this pressure, this despair.

He was literally all alone. Are you ever discouraged? Of course we all are, aren't we, at times?

Isn't that life? At times we all have those moments where you face problems of stress, stress of pressure, concerns about jobs, of income, of financial security, of times of distress.

[3:29] You're let down, you're disappointed, you're hurt. Uncertain times. Unexpected crisis or calamity just comes out of nowhere and knocks you for six.

What will we do? How are we to encourage ourselves? To find encouragement in a time of discouragement? We see what David did.

David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. And it reads of the context there of chapter 30, verse 1 through 6, what led to this moment.

And it came to pass when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day that the Amalekites had invaded the south and Ziklag.

And smitten Ziklag and burnt it with fire and had taken the women captives that were therein. They slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away and went on their way.

[4:38] So David and his men came to the city. And behold, it was burnt with fire. And their wives and their sons and their daughters were taken captive.

Ahinoam, the Jezreelites, and Abigail, the wife of Nabal, the Carmelite. Everything was taken. It was desperate, a desperate situation.

The Amalekites had attacked and burnt Ziklag. It was a great loss, a crisis, heartbreaking. It seemed like all hope was gone.

The people were swallowed up in this grief, this heart-rending grief and despair. They were upset. They were angry. And when David and his men arrived back home, this is what faced them. It was this smoking pile of rubble. And David's home was in ruins, a mass of smouldering embers. It was hopeless. I can remember some friends of our church who ministered in our church, lived at Grenneth, up the hill there.

[5:46] And they had a lovely slate front at home. It was a beautiful home. And just immaculate. And one day I visited that home.

And it was a burnt-out shell. We walked in the front door. And you're crunching on the ash. The smouldering... Well, it wasn't smouldering then, but those embers that were left of everything was just charcoal.

The smoke covered the ceiling, the walls. And our friends were there. And yet they gave glory to God. They had the heart to be strong in their faith, even in such a time when the whole home was just ashes.

And this was ziklag. It was a complete disaster. Everything was gone. Everything precious was taken. The raiders had taken everything, everything.

Everything was gone. Their wives, their children, their property, their cattle. All of it. No wonder David was greatly distressed. Now, David had been no stranger to such times of trouble in his life.

[7:00] We know David, he was chased after by King Saul. He faced several assassination attempts. He had to spend much time hiding. A refugee, he was hiding in the wilderness.

His entire family was kidnapped. His friends turned against him at times and were ready to kill him. He suffered the shame of having committed adultery and murder.

His son Absalom murdered Amnon, who'd raped his daughter Tamar. Absalom led a revolt against his father. Absalom himself was killed, much to David's grief.

Such heartache and loss, tragedy. Think of what must have been going through David's mind when he came to ziklag. As he walked into that home, the ruins of it, the charred embers, not knowing whether his family was dead or alive.

And he must have asked some questions. Why? If God is with me, why is this happening? Why is Saul trying to kill me? Why is he so hateful?

[8:04] Why, if I'm anointed, do I have to hide myself in the wilderness? Is that what I get for being a man after God's own heart? And we can think of such things, can't we?

Of times of discouragement. It can sometimes be hard to find encouragement when such things happen. We may get little encouragement from others, such that David had to encourage himself. There wasn't a Barnabas there, a son of encouragement to come and encourage him. He had to encourage himself. We might get such times where we feel so alone that we've only got ourself to come to God and find God's strength in our hardship.

David was caught a man after God's own heart. What a powerful example is David. For us, when we might face such ziklag, as it were, when we might face such storms of life, when it seems like things are hopeless, circumstances are despairing, we can find encouragement in the Lord our God.

What did David do? He teaches us what we are to do when we are in times of trouble. David encouraged himself. What does this mean? How did he do it? The verb implies persistent and continuous effort.

[9:23] There's nothing passive here. He sought God. He sought God from the depths of his heart in that time of despair. And we will all face deep waters at times.

Deep waters. This happened literally when one time Julie and I were coming back home from church and one time we walked into our home after a church service and we'd been burgled. And we saw the broken fly screen. We saw scattered possessions. Draws opened and things flung around. We saw our little doggy actually.

He was our guard dog, our little chihuahua. And we used to keep our little chihuahua in our walk-in robe. And he was having a sleep there, no doubt.

And we could see where those things scattered over the floor and we thought maybe our chihuahua might have scared off that burglar with his yapping and biting his ankles as he was there rummaging through and pillaging our property.

[10:36] Deep waters. Our home had been ransacked. Our home had been ransacked. You might identify with that. An invasion. Another time we'd been at church again.

We were putting up these curtains actually. We put these curtains up and we felt really happy about what we achieved, Julie and I. And we walked into our home again after being at church.

Deep waters. Our home had been flooded. The pipe under the kitchen sink had burst and we were treading in water so deep in some parts of our house and we've got floating floors in our home and they were literally floating.

Deep waters, people. Deep waters. We don't know what's going to face us, do we? And those things can be really traumatic, can't they? Something like that happens out of the blue and you think, oh man, what a crisis.

I'm sure some of you might have been through far, far worse. I know some of my closest ones have been through much, much worse things.

[11:48] Deep waters. In times of trouble, what will you do? Can I encourage you, dear saint, to look to the Lord.

Look to the Lord for your strength. David encouraged himself in the Lord, his God. David wrote 75 of the Psalms, which is half of the Psalms, half of the book of Psalms.

You wonder if some of these words of David might have come to his mind at Ziklag as he stood there in the burnt ruins of his home, as he encouraged himself in the Lord, his God.

David wrote and sang these words, David encouraged himself in the Lord.

Maybe he thought of words like these. Seems like there was no one, even amongst his own followers, who would encourage him. But David encouraged himself in the Lord. Sometimes you've got to do that, brother, sister.

[12:49] You might feel all of a lonesome, but yet you can encourage yourself in the Lord. The crisis had hurt him deeply, yet he began to stir up courage again. He encouraged himself.

He rebuilt his strength, his courage, his trust. It was in times of trouble that David often composed Psalms. So these Psalms could show us maybe some of the spirit of David, how he encouraged himself.

For example, while he was pursued by Saul, he wrote Psalm 59. Psalm 59, David determined to keep on praising God.

As he was chased after, as he was like this refugee from Saul, as he was trying to hide from the attacks of Saul, David kept on praising God.

He says, Psalm 59, verse 17, unto thee, O my strength, while I sing, for God is my defence and the God of my mercy.

[13:51] And when in prison in Gath, he wrote Psalm 56. He declares his trust in God. Psalm 56, 3 to 4. Verse 11.

Verse 11. In God, have I put my trust. I will not be afraid. What man can do unto me? When David was fleeing from Absalom, he wrote Psalm 3.

Verses 2 to 3 say, Many that be which saith my soul, there is no help for him in God, Selah. But thou, O Lord, art a shield for me, my glory and the lifter up of mine head.

While David was hiding in the wilderness of Judah, he wrote Psalm 63. And this tells of his seeking of the Lord, of his praising and praying, of his meditating.

And David, in this time of discouragement, he was able to utter praise. Psalm 63. Because thy loving kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

[15:09] Verse 7. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice. Here he was in this wilderness time.

Yet he was able to rejoice. Brother, sister, whatever you're at, wherever you are, even in the ziklag, even in the wilderness, you can have the heart of David and say, I will rejoice.

I will rejoice. David was able to rejoice. David shows us how in times of trouble that we are to put our trust in the Lord. Stay close to him.

Keep praising him. Keep praying. Keep on believing. David had gotten discouraged. But God gave him his courage back. Amen. He got his praise back. David found God's dream.

Where does David find encouragement? David encouraged himself in the Lord. The Lord was his source of encouragement. David didn't resort to some self-help guru.

[16:09] He didn't go to the bottle or take some antidepressant. David didn't go to some worldly counselor or a motivational speaker. David went to the Lord.

He went to the Lord. David chose to trust God's faithfulness. The same God who'd helped him before. In all of his battles before.

The same God who delivered him in his fights against a lion, against a bear, against Goliath. And he went to the Lord who'd protected him from Saul. And friends, today we can take heart in the example of David.

Instead of meditating on our worries, let's meditate on God's promises. Amen. Meditate on God's promises. People today, this is real for you. I know there's some going through heartache.

Friends, there's a comfort for you in what David did. Because we can do what David did. Even the loss of Ziklag was actually God's grace at work.

[17:11] It worked out that the destruction of Ziklag cut David's ties with the Philistines. And it opened up the way for David to move to Hebron, where he'd begin his rule over Israel.

It was all part of God's plan. Ziklag had to be burnt down. So David could move on in God's plan. Not only did David encourage himself in the Lord, he took steps to seek God.

To get his spiritual priorities right. To find God's direction. David took steps to get guidance from God.

We read that in verse 7. 1 Samuel 30 verse 7 through 8. David inquired of the Lord. He asked God, what shall I do? We see that there in 1 Samuel 30 verse 7.

And David said to Abiathar the priest, our Himelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought hither the ephod to David.

[18:15] And David inquired, David inquired, David inquired at the Lord, saying, shall I pursue after this troop?

Shall I overtake them? And he answered him, pursue. For thou shalt surely overtake them. And without fail, recover all.

It says that he sought the priest and said, bring the ephod. The ephod is the garment. The garment of praise. It says bring the garment of praise. Bring that priestly garment.

The ephod. The ephod. It speaks of worship. It speaks of God. Of God's direction. Of the priest.

He sought after God. He inquired at the Lord. And David turned to God in his distress. And what's more, he went to the Lord for direction. You could reflect that David had not sought the Lord in his decision to ally himself with Achish, king of Gath.

[19:24] He'd gone really against God's word. He lined up with the Philistines. The pagan Philistines. Perhaps he'd failed to seek God's direction in taking that step.

But this time, before making a move, he inquired of the Lord. Amen. He went first to God. To find God's will. To determine God's will.

And this time David deliberately asked of the Lord. He inquired, Lord, what must I do? Should I pursue these raiders? Pursue this band of raiders?

And try to recover what they've taken. And in verse 8, it says, Pursue. For you shall surely overtake them.

And without fail, recover all. God told David that he would recover everything that he had lost. David took God at his word and he took action. Amen.

[20:23] Encouragement. It's a deliberate choice. He sought encouragement from the Lord. And he inquired of the Lord. David encouraged himself in the Lord. And so can you.

Brother, sister, in your sick leg. As you're standing in the smoking ruins. The rubble of your home. Everything gone. You can trust in the Lord. Amen. You can encourage yourself in the Lord. You can find your praise even there. Even then. Where was his encouragement from? In the Lord. He would have reflected on God's faithfulness.

God's provision. To trust in God's care. David's reaction to distress. He teaches us what to do. He teaches us what to do. Exactly what the Lord shows us.

What the word does. It's comfort. Isn't it? There's comfort there. Romans 15.4. It says, These things are written.

[21:31] The word of God. It's written. It says for our learning. It's written for our learning. These words are for us to learn. And there's comfort. There's patience.

There's lessons of endurance. Of encouragement here. And there's hope here. It's in the scriptures. It's all here for us. In the cover of our Bibles.

And we can have hope and comfort. From the word of God. Encouragement. Comfort.

Encouragement. Same thing. Our encouragement is in the word. That's where we're going to get encouragement.

We can draw strength from God. From his promises. And we can meditate on them. And take them personally. For ourselves. We can claim them. The promises of God.

Many of the words of David. Can bring us encouragement. These words are over 3,000 years old. It doesn't matter how old they are. They're relevant. Aren't they?

[22:28] It's relevant. The word of God is relevant. One of the buzzwords now, isn't it? God's word still speaks to us today. In this time. This day. Today. And tomorrow.

His word speaks to us. 3,000 years old. The words of God. These timeless truths. They apply to our situation. To our lives. To our tests.

David encouraged himself. In the Lord. David knew the power of prayer. Hear some more words of David in Psalm 34. 4. I will bless the Lord.

When? At all times. His praise shall continually. Continually be. In my mouth. My soul shall make a boast in the Lord. The humble shall hear thereof and be glad.

Oh magnify the Lord with me. And let us exalt his name together. I sought the Lord and he heard me. And delivered me from all my fears. I will bless the Lord.

[23:24] Some of the time. No. I will bless the Lord at the good times. No. I will bless the Lord when I feel like it. No. I will bless the Lord at all times. Amen. At all times.

Let's say it. At all times. At all times. Like David, let's pour out our heart. Before the Lord, our God. We can find his peace. His presence.

Through prayer. Let's trust in our Lord. He's the anchor. Our hope is in his word. What do you do when life falls apart? Encourage yourself in the Lord, your God.

David was able to strengthen himself in the Lord because he had a personal relationship with the Lord. He could say, Why art thou cast down, O my soul? You know, come on soul, start behaving yourself.

Why are you so miserable? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? Get it together, man. Why art thou disguised within me? Hope thou in God. For I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance and my God.

[24:28] Sometimes you've got to tell your soul off, don't you? Amen. Stop being so doubtful. Stop being so disbelieving. Stop your negativity. Stop all this trash and trust.

Trust. Amen. Trust. David hoped in God. He trusted in God. He waited on God. I shall yet praise him. David says, It's better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

Amen. David knew God's word. He says, I'm going to trust the Lord. It doesn't matter what others might say. I'm going to trust in the Lord. That's where my confidence is. And he chose to meditate on the word of God.

Lord, let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. We can claim God's promises, can't we?

Yes, we can. These promises are for you. They are yea and amen. These are promises for you. If you can, but claim them by faith.

[25:32] And we can search out verses that give us hope. We can write them down. Memorize them so you can bring them to mind. When the burden comes.

And whether God delivers us from the calamity or enables us to endure the loss, learn to trust.

Learn to trust. Learn to grow through the experience and glorify God.

You might say, Preacher, you don't know what's going on for me right now. And I know some of you are going through some tough things. You've told me. Testing times. How am I going to make the payment?

How am I going to get through? What's going on? I don't know what decisions to make. You can encourage yourself in the Lord. You can encourage yourself in the Lord.

You can learn to grow. You can learn to trust. Trust Him more. Glorify Him more. He encouraged Himself in the Lord. Not in Himself. He didn't encourage Himself in Himself. It wasn't some positive thinking that did it.

[26:33] Not some self-talk. Not some manifesting. No, it was God. God is His anchor. He encouraged Himself in the Lord.

We could reflect, He might have thought, of God's faithfulness, of His promises. How He'd saved him in the past. The hand of the Lord. His protection. Against the bear, the lion, Goliath, the Philistines, Saul.

Saul's man. And now Samuel had anointed David to be the God-given king of Israel. What was David going to do? Was he going to doubt all of that? Or was he going to trust?

When trouble came, David's strength got stirred up. He got built up. His hope sprang up from within him. And, friends, it's easy to lose sight that actually God's doing something and I can trust Him.

Yeah. But He says, I will never leave you. Nor forsake you. He's with you. To the end of everything. He's with you from beginning to end. He is the beginning and the end.

[27:37] Trust Him. He's right there with you in the zig-lag. In those times of discouragement. Of distress. Remember His promises. Can I urge you to think of the Word of God.

Go to David's book, the Psalms, and write down some of these verses that we've talked of. Other verses that talk of God being your strength. Of your refuge. Of your fortress.

Of your stronghold. And trust these words are true for you. Write them down. Put them on your fridge. Put them on a piece of paper and a card in your pocket. And bring them to mind.

Such that you won't even need to look at the card. After a while it will be in your heart. Amen. Put your hope in God. Put your hope in God. Think of the truths that God says to you in His Word.

Truths like He loves you. Jeremiah 31. Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love. Wow. That's... You can't beat that, can you?

[28:35] Everlasting love. That's how much He loves you. Therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee. He loves you. He died to save you from your sin. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Trust Him. He cares for you. Casting all your care upon Him. For He careth for you.

He won't leave you. I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. And He will help you.

And He will help you. Fear thou not. For I am with thee. Be not dismayed. For I am thy God. I will strengthen thee. Yea, I will help thee. Yea, I will uphold thee.

With the right hand of my righteousness. So many promises we can take heart in. When hopeless times come, your hope is in God. It's not in the circumstance.

[29:31] Hope in God. Trust in God. Isaiah 40, 29. He giveth power to the faint and to them that have no might. He increaseth strength. He gives you strength.

He says promise to you. Believe it. When trouble comes, how will you react? How will you react? How will you respond? I would urge you, choose to find your joy in God.

Choose to find joy in Him. Make a choice to rejoice. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again I say rejoice. Rejoice, but don't leave it there.

Again I say rejoice. Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice, rejoice. Keep on. Amen. Samuel had already anointed David king. He declared him to be a man after God's own heart.

He was chosen, set apart to lead God's people. Ziklag was not the end. There was more. God had said you're going to be king. Ziklag was not the end.

[30:31] It seemed like it, but it was not the end. As he faced that disaster, his home in ruins all lost. Others blaming him now.

In total rejection, on the verge of being stoned as a failure, David stands alone, stripped, confused. Believe it or not, God was in this apparent tragedy.

If David is to become the man God uses, he must be stripped of everything, including his reputation, his self-will. He must cry out from the depths of his being the last tears of self-pity. He must bear the full fury of loneliness and overcome it. He must not look to others for guidance, for comfort, for strength. It was all God's intention for David. The purpose behind the hard times, the loneliness.

David must learn to stand alone, depending on God only, and encourage himself in the Lord his God. It was his purpose, God's purpose behind all of it, that he find his strength in God.

[31:37] And what a victorious sight as you see David standing there in the ruins of Ziklag, yet rejoicing, yet rejoicing, encouraging himself, finding praise in the presence of his Saviour.

David came to see that all that really counts in the face of death and despair is a personal knowledge of God. It's to know him, whom to know is life eternal.

And it ended up that David recovered all, all that the Amalekites had taken. And David rescued his wives. Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken.

David brought back all. We see that there in verse 18 through 19. And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away.

And David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil nor anything that they had taken to them. David recovered all.

[32:46] His great distress was turned into a great victory. God had assured David, without fail, you will recover all. There was nothing lacking.

David recovered all. Times of Ziklag. Maybe you're there today. Maybe it'll be tomorrow. Ziklag. Everything gone. But God's still with you. Yeah. God is with you. He doesn't go. He's with you. You're with him and he is with you. Where do you turn for encouragement? To him. Are you willing to learn from David's experience?

David could have allowed himself to be crushed, overwhelmed, to get bitter, to throw in the towel, to get angry at God.

[33:44] Deep waters. Deep waters. David knew some fiery furnaces, didn't he? But he did recover. And he recovered everything.

We can draw strength from our Lord. Amen. Friends, today, you can rest in God's great and precious promises. Maybe it feels like a Ziklag for you.

Ziklag, as some have reckoned, could speak of a press, press, pressing, pressing, shaping. Pressure, really, isn't it? Life's pressure. The people were greatly distressed. David was.

He was human. He had despairing feelings. But he learnt to lay that aside and yet rejoice. The distress was momentary.

[34:46] He encouraged himself in the Lord, his God. You don't have to stay in discouragement.

You can find encouragement. And Ziklag, it was a fearful place. What's your Ziklag? What's your Ziklag? Maybe your Ziklag is some of your disappointments. Some of your heartaches. Some of your failures. Some of your mistakes. Some of your sin. The Ziklag is where you've failed. You've fallen.

Or life's pressures are so intense that you're despairing.

It doesn't end there at Ziklag. Amen. How does David's story end? He recovered all. There was victory. There was great victory. God's benefit. God's blessing.

[35:43] Are you in a Ziklag situation? You can put aside your despairing feelings. You can look up and rejoice.

You can know God is with you. You can know his promises. You can have those verses that we've read and more. The whole book of Psalms. It's full of encouragement, isn't it? Of praise. Of worship. Of uplift. Of faith. Of trust. You can claim the promises of God. God's presence. Of his grace. Of his faithfulness. You can accept his love.

And know your loving Lord carries you through. You are going to recover everything. David recovered all. Friends, you might be hearing this and say, I'm not a believer.

It only takes an eye blink of faith, really, to say, I'm going to go from unbelief to faith. I'm going to repent.

[36:44] I'm going to turn from disbelieving to being believing. I'm going to have a heart change such that my heart is changed from that hard heart of stone to become a heart of flesh.

A heart that's tender. A heart that God fills. You can have faith. Simply trust. Simply trust him. Know that he saves those who will call upon his name.

And know his saving. And believers walk in that truth. We pray that you'll be encouraged. Lord, we thank you that when sick lags come, situations of despair, distress, Lord, the heartache of real life. Help us, Lord, to find our trust in you. To turn from our despair to find, instead of discouragement, encouragement. And to find that in you.

In the comfort, the encouragement of your very scriptures, Lord, to praise you, to worship, to trust the promises that you give to us. Pray for each one that they might know the reality of being born again by faith.

[37:51] To know your saving power. That you can take us from the kingdom of darkness into your glorious light. And translate us there such that we are shifted from unbelief to faith.

Lord, that our very sin, we see the vileness of it, the weight of it, the horrendous sinfulness, the exceeding sinfulness of our sin.

Such that we are unworthy of any grace. Yet, Lord, you can lavish it upon us as we simply trust you.

And know that receipt of eternal forgiveness, of eternal payment made for our sin.

And know, assuredly, your promises that you'll never leave us nor forsake us. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.