

Encourage Yourself

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[0:00] 1 Samuel chapter 30 it says, And it came to pass when David and his men came down 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. 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 captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

And David's two wives were taken captives, Anahom the Jezreel Tos and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite.

And David was greatly distressed, for the people spake a stoning him, because the soul of all the people were grieved. Every man for his sons and for his daughters, But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

[1:26] And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee bring me hither the Ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the Ephod to David. And 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 shall recover all.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, we thank you for your word that is life to us. We pray feed us and nourish us, nurture us, help us to grow, Lord, as we hear it and heed it and act upon it.

For your sake and glory, Lord Jesus, we pray. Amen. Encourage yourself. 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. David and his men had just returned home to Ziklag.

[2:40] They had been anxious to return home to be with their families. They had been away for three days and had left their homes undefended. But while they had been away, the Amalekites had made a raid and looted their town.

And David's army found their town lay in ruins. Their homes had been destroyed. Their wives and children were all gone. Ziklag became a place of great loss and distress.

Maybe you have faced your Ziklags. Times of trial, times of testing, of trouble. What will you do? What will you do?

It was David's darkest hour. An hour of great loss and failure. And crisis, trial, disaster. Everything was gone.

All that was left was just a pile of smouldering ashes. Imagine it. What it would have felt like. What it would have looked like. While they had been out battling, the invader had come and burnt down their homes and taken away their families.

[3:50] Away from them. All around David, it was a scene of devastation and destruction. David was troubled on every side.

And it was going to get worse. Worse. To make matters worse, his own army was turning against him now.

And the men were blaming David now for the disaster that had befallen them. David's own wife and children had been taken prisoner. He was all alone.

He felt alone. And we read that David was greatly distressed. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

David's darkest hour. Maybe you've been there too. At such a time as this. In those darkest of times. When you're feeling overwhelmed. Disheartened.

[4:46] Distressed. Despairing. Disappointed. When it seems like everything is going wrong. And it feels like everyone is against you. Picture what it would have felt like.

Whilst they'd been venturing out to battle. Their enemies, the Amalekites, had raided and looted. Captured the women, the mothers. Their sisters. Their daughters. Their children. And had taken them away. As slaves. What a fate. Awaited them. And as David and his men came home from battle.

All that was left to greet them. Was a pile of smoking rubble. Everything of value had been taken away. What a picture it was. Everything gone.

We can't imagine it really. What it would have been like. Their wives. Their children. Their cattle. All their possessions. All hope was gone. And they were swallowed up in grief.

[5:45] And despair. What do you do. When life falls apart. What do you do.

Many follow this advice. When in trouble. When in doubt. Run in circles. Scream and shout. That's what you could do, isn't it?

Whoa. I give up. David's men. Were devastated by this great tragedy. It was absolute mayhem. There was great distress.

In verse 4. Then David and the people. That were with him. Lifted up their voice and wept. Until they had no more power to weep. Some.

That day sat down. And wept. Till they had no more tears. To shed. It was devastating. It was devastating. Others complained and blamed David.

[6:41] It's all his fault. He's the one who's got us into this mess. And it's been said that hurt people hurt people. They lash out. But what did David do?

What did David do? David met the disaster with faith. With faith. He turned to the Lord for his strength. The strength to face it. At this time David's only worldly possessions were the clothes he was standing in.

Everything else had been taken away from him. His property had been carried off by the raiders. His home was now a mass of smouldering embers. But there was one thing.

One thing. That the Amalekites had not taken. One thing. That they could not take away from him. And that was his personal relationship with God.

His personal relationship with God. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. Although he could no longer say my house, my city, my possessions.

[7:48] He could say my God. My God. Amidst terrible grief and this horrific loss.

In this desperate hour. David turned to his God. In that desperate hour that faces us.

Where can we turn? To him. To him. Just like David did. What do we need?

We need to follow David's example here. The giant killer David. He stood there weeping and distressed. The ruins of his life all around him.

In great difficulty. David had been hiding in a cave some of the time. Everybody was against him. And he was on his lonesome.

[8:48] He could have had a pity party all of his own. That day. But. But David. He had faith still.

Faith still. No matter what. The circumstances. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. He didn't look for encouragement from men.

Or from his friends at the time. He seemed scarce. He didn't come looking for some psychologist. Or some therapist. Or ringing the helpline.

To get help. No. His help came. From God. Psalm 121. He could truly cry out. My help cometh from the Lord.

Which made heaven. And earth. The people blamed David. For the loss of their sons and daughters. All the people were against him. He had no one.

[9:47] To turn to. But. David. Had one person he could go to for counsel. Who he could counsel on. David had one person. He could go. To one who.

Is closer than a brother. Closer than a brother. That he knew that he could lead upon. And so David turned to. The Lord. His God.

And this is exactly what we can do. Exactly what we can do. When you face. Your next zigzag situation. Who knows when it will be.

Could be. Could be tonight. It could be tomorrow. It could be next week. When you face your next zigzag situation.

I urge you to do the same. As David did. Even while folk were looking around. Where's the biggest rock I can throw at this man. Where's this stone that I can throw.

[10:42] And hurl at him to kill him. David. Himself was grieving. He'd lost much too. His wife's captured. And even though David was distressed.

It says. But David encouraged himself in the Lord. His God. David got the victory there. There at zigzag. By faith. There while his home was in ruins.

There while his own trusted men were about to finish him off. Right there. Even though it seemed like. There was none standing by him. There where.

There seemed to be no hope. No support. No help. No way out. David got the victory there. At zigzag. By faith.

In. That time. Of distress. He was encouraging himself. In. The presence of the Lord. He was rejoicing in God's faithfulness.

[11:43] As he came to see that all that really matters. In the face of death and despair. There is that. Personal relationship. With the Lord.

His. God. And as David sang in Psalm 40. He says. I waited patiently for. The Lord.

And he inclined unto me. And heard my cry. He brought me up also. Out of a horrible pit. Out of the miry clay. And set my feet upon a rock. And established my goings.

And he hath put a new song in my mouth. Even praise unto our God. Many shall see it. And fear.

And shall trust in the Lord. I waited patiently for the Lord.

And he inclined unto me. He heard my cry. Friends. Whatever your situation. He is there. To hear you. And there are going to be times when.

[12:41] It seems like you can't search out someone. You can't phone a friend. You can't take it to another person. But you can encourage yourself. In the Lord.

Your God. If you know him. Encourage yourself. That he is a personal God. That God hears you. In the time of need. And even while his own army plotted.

To stone him to death. At that grim and desperate hour. What did David do? He encouraged himself. Encouraged. In other words. He took courage.

He took courage. Fresh courage. Take heart. Take courage today.

I know that that was something I said. As my wife was lying. In the hospital. Operating theatre. As we were about to have our first born son.

[13:42] And she was lying there. Awaiting the caesarean operation. And I said. I went in. So I wanted to watch the birth. And I said to her.

Take heart honey. I've got to go now. I'm going to faint. That's what I said. They were my words. And so. I started.

The colour drained from my face. As I realised what was going to happen to her. And I didn't want to watch it. But you know. This is what happens. Isn't it? It's easy to say. Take heart to you.

Maybe you're in a sick leg. Maybe. You're feeling faint. I can understand that. I can empathise with that. Sometimes. I can't empathise with the childbirth.

Not having been there. But I can imagine the pain. And that's enough for me. So. We can take heart. Today. Can't we? We can take heart. In the troubled times.

[14:38] That face us. We can take heart. Because of the presence of our God. The presence of God. In this time of trouble. He's very present. In time of trouble.

It says. So he's even more present. In that time. So. In a way. We should almost look for those times. Shouldn't we? And that would be a bit. Masochistic. Masochistic.

Yeah. I guess so. But. God's word says. That God is present. And. His word is packed. With promises. Of his goodness to us.

And of his great faithfulness. So. We can apply these truths. To. Our situation. Whatever it be. David could still turn his face. Unto the Lord. His God. It says. Not only did David. Encourage himself. In the Lord. In verse 8. It says. He also. Enquired. Of the Lord. He inquired. Of the Lord.

[15:33] In that time. It was the effort. Which represents. For us. God's direction. Or his word. If you like. That he asked. Of the Lord. He sought. God's counsel. He went to seek.

God's word. For him. And. He asked God. For direction. And the sense. Of this verb. Here. Of asking. Of inquiring. Of the Lord. Is of a persistent. And. Continuous effort. David was actively. Seeking the Lord. He inquired. As he sought. After God's word.

Represented by the effort. And as he went to prayer. And at this dark hour. After years of a hard life. After running from Saul. Like a hunted animal.

And battling the enemies. Of Israel. He went to the Lord. In prayer. And he found his strength there. We have all. Those times.

[16:29] When we feel. At the end. Of our own strength. We feel. Overwhelmed. Whether it be. Pain. Or discouragement.

Uncertainty. I know there's people. Here today. That have been through. Some. Trying times. In their health. And in those.

Desperate times. Where do we turn? What do we need? We need. David's example. We can encourage ourselves.

In the Lord. Encourage yourself. In the Lord. Your God. Encourage yourself. With his word.

Encourage yourself. With his promises. Encourage yourself. With his love. Encourage yourself.

Thinking of his power. Of his faithfulness. Encourage yourself. As you think of the precious saviour.

[17:29] Of his precious blood. Shed for you. That you will have. Eternal life. Even if it seems like. You don't have anyone else. To encourage you. From some. Time to time.

Just. Encourage. Yourself. Turn to your closest friend. The one who sticks closer than a brother. David did. He was almost ready to give up.

As far as the circumstances. Yet he had been anointed. To be the next king. Over Israel. But now he was discouraged. He had already been anointed. By the prophet.

In 1 Samuel 16. To be the next king. Of Israel. David had been anointed. To be king. Some 13 years before. He had been fleeing.

From Saul. Who wanted to kill him. For numbers of years. Some 6 or 7 years. He had been trying to. Hide from Saul. Hiding in the desert. Hiding in caves. Fleeing from the jealous Saul.

[18:26] He encouraged himself. In the Lord. And what happened. 72 hours later. He was crowned king. In 2 Samuel 2 verse 4.

72 hours. From Ziklag. But at Ziklag. It was his darkest hour. He was greatly distressed. He could have given up. He could have just.

Quit. He could have said. That prophet Samuel. Made a mistake. He didn't know. What he was talking about. I'm not fit to be a king. He got it wrong.

But he didn't say that. He encouraged himself. It was the most. Discouraging moment. Of his life. Up to that point. But just 72 hours later.

He would be sitting. On the throne. Can you praise. The Lord tonight. Can you praise. The Lord tonight. Whatever your circumstance. Can you praise him.

[19:21] Whatever faces you. If you're discouraged. Can you praise him. In the midst of. That time. Of discouragement. You can. Praise him. Still.

You can. Praise him. Still. Like David did. No matter what. The circumstances. Even while the embers. Of your home. Are still smoking. At your feet. Even when your own side.

Is picking up stones. To kill you. You can. Praise him. Still. You can. Seek after the Lord. Your God. Like David did. He sought the Lord. He looked. To God.

For strength. He looked. To God. For instruction. For direction. He sought. After the Lord. His God.

He inquired. Of the Lord. He went to the scriptures. He went to prayer.

And God answered. David knew. To pray. As he put it. In Psalm 34. Verse 4.

[20:15] I sought the Lord. And he heard me. And delivered me. From all my fears. And God's word for him. Was to take action. He sought after God.

And God's word. And he got. His answer. In verse 8. The word of the Lord. To David. God said. Pursue. For thou shalt surely. Overtake them. And without fail. Recover all. Without fail. Pursue. Means to follow after. To follow after. With determination. He could have given up hope. Right then. He could have fled for fear. Of the people. He could have looked to himself.

Or something other than. God for the answers. How tempted David. Might have felt. To quit. To get up and go. Backwards. But no. David got up.

[21:09] And went. Forward. By God's power. He got up to go forward. By faith. Instead of dwelling in discouragement. He encouraged himself. In the Lord.

He waited on God. And God renewed his strength. As he can for you. For me. At such times. And give us the strength. To go forward. The Lord says to David.

Pursue the Amalekites. Press the fight. War a good warfare. Fight the good fight. Go up against those. Who would destroy you. And those dear to you.

And take captive your loved ones. Go and fight. And so David rallied the troops. And went out after the enemy. David marched forward. With his 600 men. Time came along the way.

To battle. That a third of his fighting force. Grew tired. His fighting men. Became worn and weary. And they had to rest up.

[22:06] And put their feet up. They needed to take a tea break. Yet David marched on. It didn't. It didn't stop him. That a third of his men.

Wanted to. Take a break. And in the darkest moment. Of his life. He was just hours away. From the fulfilment. Of God's promise. Maybe you.

Are at a sick land. In your life. No matter how bad. Things look today. Don't despair.

You could be on the edge. Of your breakthrough. Fight the good fight. Of the faith. Pursue. Go forward. Advance. As God's people. We can be. Encouraged today.

And remember. That when we are weak. Then we are strong. God is strong in us. David got back his fight. And immediately. He acted in faith. You know.

[23:05] You might say to me tonight. Preacher. It's alright for you. It's a bit like me. Standing at the foot of my wife's bed. Saying take heart. Take heart honey.

I've got to go now. I've got to faint. And we all have those moments of weakness. Well the reality is. It's pretty tough. Tough going at the moment. But we can take heart today.

In the scriptures. We can take heart. In our God today. The Lord heard David. And he'll hear you.

As well. Inquire of the Lord. Search the scriptures. Find your strength there.

Inquire of the Lord. In prayer. Seek his face. His will. Take heart. Even when you're feeling faint. I waited patiently for the Lord.

And he inclined unto me. And heard my cry. He brought me up also. Out of a horrible pit. And set my feet. Upon a rock. Even when you cry out.

[24:07] From a horrible pit. He hears. You may be in the furnace. But you'll come out. Without the smell of smoke. You may be in the lion's den. Like Daniel.

But God. Has sent an angel. To lock. Their jaws. And you can take courage. From God's word. Just as Moses gave. Encouragement to Joshua.

And the children of Israel. As they're about to. Head to the promised land. He said. Be strong. And of good courage. Fear not. Nor be afraid.

Of them. For the Lord. Thy God. He it is that doth go with thee. He will not fail thee. Nor forsake thee. Take heart. Take courage today. Encourage yourself.

In the Lord. Just to. Pull it all together now. And some practical pointers. To. Hopefully.

[25:01] Suggest to you. Ways that you can. Encourage yourself. In the Lord. Here's a few. Points. As I could. Propose. Suggest to you tonight. How can I.

Encourage myself. In the Lord. Learn to pray. Learn to pray. Now fully rely on God. Depend upon him. Rely upon God.

Pray. Learn to praise. To praise. Learn to practice. The presence of God. There's a. There's a book by that title. Which I don't know.

That I'd recommend. But there is that. That truth. Of practicing. The presence of God. That. That sense of God's presence. Is with you. He is with you. Wherever you go.

And to have that. Consciousness. Of God's presence. Even in the ziglugs. To learn the promises of God. His promises.

[25:57] They are. Yea and Amen. Exceeding. Great. And precious. Promises from God. His word. So just to say those again. Learn to pray. Learn to praise.

Learn to practice his presence. He is with you. And learn the promises of God. Put it in your hearts. Hide it. In your hearts. That those promises can come to mind.

When you need them. He is with you. In the midst of the storm. Like someone has said. Peace is not the absence of trouble. It is. The presence.

The presence. Of Christ. It is not the absence of trouble. It is the presence. Of Christ. He is with you. With you. Learn to pray.

And praise. To pray through. And God can give you the courage. Courage. Is the opposite of discouragement. He wants to encourage us. Give us courage. Which will counteract.

[26:53] The discouragement. And it comes within. By faith. By faith. By God's grace. He gives us. His strength.

And you can. Encourage yourself. In the Lord. Each one of you. Each one of us. Each one. As we take the scriptures. And make them real.

Apply his promises. We can face whatever. Life. Throws our way. And when David's. Troop. Found the Amalekites. When they reached them.

It was a long. Hard. Battle. Some. 36 hours. Of fighting. It was a great battle. And verse 18.

We pick up. What happened. And David. Recovered all. Recovered. All. That the Amalekites. Had carried away. And David. Rescued his two wives.

[27:51] 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. David. Recovered. All. Nothing. Was lost. Nothing. Plus they had much plunder. As well. Spoil. As well. Not only did David.

Get his family back. But everything. That the enemy. Had taken from him. And whilst trouble. May come. Friends. Tonight. God will give you the victory.

By faith. God will give you the victory. By faith. What about you tonight? Maybe. It feels like.

You're in a. A strike. You're in a. Ziklag. Situation. Where. You're not sure. What to do. Where to turn.

[28:48] The Bible speaks of. These pages. As bringing comfort. The comfort. Of the scriptures. Or the encouragement. The comfort. Of the scriptures.

There's comfort here. And David. In the. Dread time. Inquired of the Lord. Through his tears. He looked. Unto God.

And he saw him. More clearly. Perhaps. Than he had before. And. He sought. After God. And we can too. I urge you tonight.

To take heart. And trust in God. Take heart. And encourage yourself. In the Lord. Your God. I pray. If you. Know him.

That will be. The stand. That you take. When situations come. And if you're. Yet to trust him. Simply trust him now. Simply trust him now.

[29:47] Call upon him. And trust him now. Let us pray. Heavenly Father. We thank you. That you are great.

And gracious. Lord you. Love. With an unfailing love. And. Your promises are. Yay.

And amen. They're steadfast. And sure. We know. As David did. So can we. Because David's God. Is our God.

And we know you Lord. As he did. Help us Lord. When. We face. We face troubling times. Yet to find. Faith and grace. To find. Strength and help.

And to know your presence. In that time of need. In that time of trouble. That you are very present. Lord we love you. We pray. If there's any disheartened. Here today. That they'll have taken heart. [30:40] Tonight. And for the days ahead. For whatever. Faces us. As we might. All have such. Times. Yet to. To go through. That in those times. We will take heart. And we'll take the comfort. Of the scriptures. We'll inquire of you. And we'll encourage ourselves. In you Lord. Our God. Bless each. Life each. Person here today. That each one. Might receive. That encouragement. From you. In Jesus name. Amen.