

Encourage yourself in the Lord - 1 Samuel 30:6

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Date: 10 January 2010

[0:00] So David and his men came to the city and behold it was burned 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 was greatly distressed for the people spake of 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. 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 recover all. An hour of crisis, trial, disaster. Everything was gone.

A scene of devastation, destruction. His own army turning against him. Their homes had been burnt down to the ground. While they'd been out battling, the invader had come and looted and pillaged.

[1:18] Burnt their homes to the ground, taken their families away. David was greatly distressed. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

Verse 6. David's darkest hour. Maybe you've been there too. In that darkest hour. A time of distress, of despair, of disappointment. While they'd been out to battle, the Amalekites had snuck in, raided, looted, captured the women.

Their mothers, their sisters, their wives, their sons and daughters. Everything of value was taken. What a picture to come home to that. What do you do when your life falls apart?

Many follow this advice. When in trouble, when in doubt, run in circles, scream and shout. David's men were devastated. There was tragedy.

There was destruction. Absolute mayhem. Great distress. Verse 4. Then David and his people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept. They wept until they had no more power to weep.

[2:21] Others complained and blamed David. It's been said, hurt people, hurt people. But what did David do? He met disaster with faith.

He turned to the Lord for the strength to face it. David's only worldly possessions were the clothes he was standing in. His home, a mass of smouldering embers.

But there was one thing the Amalekites could not take from David. They could not take away his relationship with the Lord, his God. Amidst this grim and desperate hour, even while his own army plotted to stone him to death, to kill him, he could still turn his face to the Lord, his God.

David encouraged himself in the Lord. And encouraging yourself in the Lord means you remind yourself of the goodness of God. You remind yourself of his faithfulness, of his promises, of his truth.

And apply that truth to your situation, whatever it be. Verse 8. Not only did he encourage himself in the Lord, he inquired of the Lord.

[3:30] And the sense of the verb here is of a persistent and a continuous effort. He went to prayer. He inquired of the Lord. He went to the priest, Abiathar.

He asked for the effort, the instrument of seeking God's direction at that time. We could reflect that that is the word of God to us. To inquire of God is to inquire of his word, is to inquire in prayer.

We all have those times when we feel like we're at the end of our own strength. When we face pain or discouragement. And in that desperate hour, where can we turn?

What do we need? We need to take David's example. The giant killer. He stood there, weeping in distress, amidst the ruins of his life.

But he had faith still. He had faith still in the great difficulty. He'd been hiding in a cave, running here and there. Everybody was against him. But, but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God.

[4:37] He didn't look for encouragement for the government of his day. He didn't look for encouragement from his friends at the time. He didn't look for encouragement from a psychologist or some specialist.

He went straight to the top. He went straight to the Lord his God. David had one person, a friend that sticketh closer than a brother, that he could lean upon heartily.

He turned to the Lord his God. That's what you can do. Turn to him. Even while some folk were there looking at which rock they were going to throw at David.

Even though David was himself grieving. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. David got the victory there by faith. He got the victory there while his home was in ruins and smoking. There while they were about to throw rocks at him to kill him. David got the victory there. He was encouraging himself in the Lord his God. He was rejoicing in God's faithfulness.

[5:43] That he came to see that all that really mattered in the face of death and despair was his relationship with the Lord his God. I waited patiently for the Lord.

I wondered where those words were on his lips as he encouraged himself in the Lord.

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear. He speaks to us.

Be still and know that I am God. I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge and my fortress, my God in him. Will I trust?

Turn to your strongest friend. That friend who sticks closer than a brother. David was almost ready to give up. He had been anointed to be the next king of Israel but now he was discouraged.

[6:50] He encouraged himself in the Lord. And what happened 72 hours later? He was crowned king. Can you praise the Lord this morning? Can you encourage yourself in the Lord?

Whatever faces you. Maybe you ain't seen nothing yet. Maybe it's going to get worse. But praise the Lord. He is with you. He is your refuge. He is your strength.

He is your strong tower. He is your fortress. He is the one. Your righteous can run into the name of the Lord. And you can praise him in the midst of your discouragement.

You can praise him while the embers are smoking about you. Whilst they are picking up stones to kill you. You can praise him. You can encourage yourself in the Lord. You can seek after the Lord like David did.

He looked to the Lord, his God, for his strength. Not about him. Not to the circumstance. Not to his mates. But to the saviour. God's word for David was, Pursue for thou shalt surely overtake them and without fail recover all.

[7:54] God's word says, Without fail you shall overcome. And pursue means to follow after. It means determination. He pursued after them. And then on the way, A third of his army sat down and had a tea break.

They had a smokeo. You know, they put their feet up. And they weren't about to go into the enemy camp. They got too tired. He got back his fight. He got back into action.

Immediately acted in faith. He encouraged himself. And the Lord heard David. He will hear you too. Encourage yourself. Sister, encourage yourself.

In the Lord. Your God. Enquire of the Lord. Search the scriptures. In prayer. Seek his face. His will. Even when you cry from a horrible pit.

He will take you out of that miry clay. He'll put your feet on the rock. You may be in the furnace. But you'll come out without the smell of smoke. You may be in the lion's den.

[8:52] But God will send an angel to lock their jaws. Be strong. And of good courage. Fear not. Nor be afraid of them. For the Lord thy God.

He it is that doth go before thee. He will not fail thee. Nor forsake thee. Take heart. Take heart.

Take courage. Be encouraged. Take courage. Now it's sometimes easy for us to say take courage. I know I can look back at the birth of our firstborn. I said to my wife take courage. And then I got really faint and went outside of the operating chair while they finished the operations to get the baby.

And it's easy for me to say take courage. But I want to encourage you to give you courage and to say take courage. But really and truly it's got to come from within you.

Encourage yourself in the Lord. Encourage yourself as you take the scriptures and make them personal. As you take that faith. As you apply that courage. To face criticism. To face sorrow. [9:50] To face whatever life throws against you. And whilst trouble may come. God will give you the victory by faith.