**Week Five – February 14-15 – I Samuel 30**

**Introduction**

David’s roller coaster ride continues - difficulty and deliverance, difficulty and deliverance. Though the pattern continues, the biggest difference in these recent chapters is that a rising number of David’s difficulties are self-inflicted. **Which is harder for you to deal with - a difficulty that seems to “randomly” come upon you or one that is self-inflicted by your own choices?**

**Read I Samuel 30:1-10**

(v.1-6) After a roughly 60 mile journey from Aphek to Ziklag, David and his men find their city burned to the ground and their wives and children taken. The men cry until all their strength is gone, then as their grief turns to bitterness they talk of stoning David. In the midst of so many reasons for despair and giving up, the account hinges on these words in the end of verse 6, “**But** David found strength in the Lord his God.” **Have you ever had a time in your life when the multiplying of difficulties made it hard for you to want to turn to God? Have you ever had a time in life where you sensed God using difficult circumstances around you to drive you back to Him? If you have ever had a time when you “found strength in the Lord your God”, how would you describe/explain that experience to someone else?**

(v.7-10) Just like in chapter 23, Abiathar gives David the ephod so that he might have direct access to discernment from God. David seeks the Lord before taking any action on his own, and the Lord reveals to him that he and his men will defeat the Amalekites and will rescue their own people. David pursues the Amalekites with four hundred men, and the other two hundred stay behind because they are too exhausted. **What is revealed about God in his response to David in verse 8, even after the last couple of chapters of rash actions by David?**

**Read I Samuel 30:11-20**

When David and his men had found the Egyptian, the first thing they did was nurse him back to health by giving him food and water. This act of hospitality allowed for them to get valuable information that led to the retrieval of their wives, children, and treasures. This could have been a random individual that had no knowledge of the Amalekites, or even one that would refuse to help them, and yet they cared for him anyway. **How is God’s character revealed in the hospitality of David and his men? How do they get rewarded for their hospitality? Read Matthew 25:40-46. When it comes to helping other people, do you have an attitude of doing good without reward? What is revealed about our hearts when we do not do this?**

**How is God’s providence revealed in this section?** David and his men would’ve had a much more difficult time finding the Amalekites without the help of a lone Egyptian slave who had been left to die. God’s providence is God’s plan coming to fruition through caring for his people. We can often only think of it in relation to us, but this is missing the point that God’s perfect will is often carried out through his providential care of us. **How should this understanding of God’s providence and care shape your daily life? What does it say about God’s character that he delights in accomplishing his plan through kindness towards us?**

In this providential road map that led David and his men to the Amalekites, we see two very different themes played out. The Amalekites had indulged in their wickedness and were unprepared for the coming vengeance that was about to be enacted on them, and David and his men were administering justice upon the wicked raiders that had taken everything from them. **Read 1 Thessalonians 5:2-6** Like the Amalekites, many today are unprepared for the coming judgment. **As children of the light, how should we practically be living our lives knowing that Christ is coming in judgment for unbelievers?**

**Read I Samuel 30:21-31 (Darrell)**(v. 21-25) In verse 21, the plunder and victory celebration train arrives back at the Besor Valley, where the exhausted men were left behind in verse 10. **What do some of David’s other men declare about how these men who stayed behind should now be treated? How does David respond to and deal with their plan? What are some of the aspects of David’s response to these men that makes you admire his wisdom and leadership? How did David’s naming of the plunder differ from that of his men?** (*The men called it “David’s plunder” in v.20 and “the plunder we recovered” in v.22, David called it “what the Lord has given us” in v.23*.)

The mercy and the generosity shown by David is similar to the parable of the laborers in the vineyard - **Read Matthew 20:1-16. What similarities do you see between the two accounts?** *Here are a few possibilities:*

- The workers who did the most expect to get more than the workers who did the least.

- The master is very direct with the grumblers that their expectations are not what will be.

- The master is patient with the grumblers, calling them “brothers” (30:23) and “friends” (20:13).

- Both reveal the ugliness of jealousy, which can leave us bitter when something good happens for someone else, even when something good has also happened for us. (“Are you envious because I am generous?” Matthew 20:15b)

**How can comparison and demanding our own definition of fairness rob us of seeing that it is all God’s? How can comparison and demanding our own definition of fairness rob us of understanding that it is not about what we earn, but all about grace?**

(v. 26-31) It is easy to think what David does here is people pleasing, garnering support, or even bribery. But again, what some called “David’s plunder” David sees as “what the Lord has given us.” He gives some to the outer reaches of the Kingdom and those who were most likely regularly susceptible to the raiding bands of the Amalekites. **How do David’s actions as the coming king stand in stark contrast to the king who is on the verge of departing?**

**Conclusion**

Remember David’s turning point in verse 6? “**But** David found strength in the Lord his God.”

As you prepare to pray together to close out the night, take a moment for all who would like to do so share either:

* Praise to God for a “found strength in the Lord God” moment in your past.
* Requests for group to pray for you in a difficult area in which you need to turn to Him and find strength in Him.

**Extra Notes and Thoughts**

1 Samuel 28:19 fulfilled in this Chapter. 1 Samuel 26:10 also fulfilled.

1 Samuel 29, David should not have found himself amongst the Philistines and desiring to go to battle with them. As the Philistines send him away, it’s an act of God’s mercy not allowing David to partake in the battle that happens in this chapter.

This is a tragic defeat.

Though the valiant, faithful Jonathan died, he does so with the rest of Saul’s sons to make all the more clear David’s path to the throne.

What a miserable death Saul has. As he finds himself already wounded, with destruction coming gradually upon him in such a way he desires to die by his own hand and end his suffering. Potentially not only concerned with the pain he’s enduring but more so the pride of not being defeated by his enemy (Rather take it into his own hands than bear shame of defeat). As he lived, so also he died - proud, jealous, self-focused…Jonathan at least died an honorable death, Saul’s was cowardly. \*Whose death is more tragic - Saul or Jonathan. Both tragic in their own ways.\*

Saul’s sin and rebellion has affected far more people than just himself (the fall of a leader has greater consequences and can endanger others). Brought defeat upon the entirety of Israel but more than that has brought shame upon God.

Cutting off Saul’s head has a sense of revenge for Goliath’s head being cut off? Saul is no longer a head taller than everyone else but rather a head shorter - or would that now make him the same height as everyone else?

1 Chronicles 10:10 gives the account that they fastened Saul’s head in the temple of Dagon (bring back passage from Dagon). Ascribing their victory to a false god who has already been mocked by the one true God of Israel. Ashtaroth, the idol that Israel had many times gone whoring after now triumphs over them.

The respectable men of Jabesh-Gilead seem to make quite the trek to give the dead bodies a decent burial.

This is a story in need of redemption.