

THE Rock COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 30

“His Mercy is More”

10_27_2024

Speaker: Pastor Dave Briggs

Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

18:32

Good morning. So, how about if we begin with a question. Have you ever hit rock bottom. Rock bottom is a term we use to describe what we think is the lowest possible level of a bad situation. This is where we're going to find David in our passage today when him, he and his men are going to suffer a terrible tragedy.

19:03

So what does a man after God's own heart do when he hits rock bottom? We'll see after we pray together. Let's pray. Father, thank you. Thank you for this beautiful day. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity to open your word and listen to your voice speak to our hearts.

19:23

Father, we ask for your Holy Spirit to lead us through this passage where your mercy, your beautiful, wonderful mercy just bathes every moment, every verse of this passage. Father, please give us ears to hear and hearts to receive your truth into our lives.

19:41

We pray in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen. Our passage today is 1 Samuel chapter 30. It'll be on page 306 if you want to use the Bible under your chair. Last week in chapter 29, if you remember, David and his men were actually living in the enemy territory in the land of the Philistines serving King Achish of Gath.

20:08

And when the Philistines gathered their forces to get ready to attack Israel, David and his men joined as if they were going to go fight with the Philistines. But the Philistine lords and commanders weren't having any of that.

20:22

They forbid them to come along because they were wisely not sure really whose side David was on. So at the end of chapter 29, King Achish told David and his men to return to Ziklag. That was the home that they had in the Philistine land.

20:41

And at first light, very next morning that's exactly what David and his men did. They returned to Ziklag as Achish commanded them. So now we're gonna turn to chapter 30 and pick up the story and do yourself a favor.

20:57

Who deserves one more than you? Try to visualize what we're reading. These aren't just words. This is a true event, but try to picture it. This is a very visual story. All right, 1 Samuel chapter 30.

21:09

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'd overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire and taken captive the women and all who were in it both small and great.

21:24

They killed no one but carried them off and went their way. When David and his men came to the city they found it burned with fire and their wives and sons and daughters were taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep.

21:43

David's too wise that also been taken captive. Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal, of Carmel. 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.

21:59

But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. And David said to Abiathar, the priest, the son of Ahimelech, bring me the ephod. So Abiathar brought the ephod to David and David inquired of the Lord, shall I pursue after this band?

22:15

Shall I overtake them? He, the Lord answered him, pursue for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue. So David set out and the 600 men who were with him and they came to the brook Besor where those who were left behind stayed.

22:31

But David pursued, he and 400 men, 200 men stayed behind who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor. 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 and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins.

22:51

And when he had eaten, his spirit revived for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. 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 Amalekite and my master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago.

23:11

We had made a raid against the Negeb, the Cherethites and against that which belongs to Judah and against the Negeb and Caleb and we burned Ziklag with fire. And David said to him, will you take me down to this band?

23:24

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. And when he had taken him down, behold, they were spread abroad all over the land, eating and drinking and dancing because of all the great spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah.

23:43

David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day, and not a man of them escaped except four hundred men who mounted camels and fled. David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives.

23:59

Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken. David brought back all. David also captured all the flocks and herds, and the people drove the livestock before him and said, this is David's spoil.

24:15

Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow David, and who had been left at the brook Besor. And they went out to meet David, and to meet the people who were with him.

24:26

And when David came near to the people, he greeted them. Then all the wicked and worthless fellows among the men who had gone with David said, because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except that each man may lead away his wife and children and apart.

24:43

But David said, you shall not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us. He has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came against us. Who would listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down into the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage.

25:00

They shall share alike. And he made it a statute and a rule for Israel from that day forward to this day. When David came to Ziklag, he sent part of the spoil to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord.

25:18

It was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, in Aroer, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, in Racal, in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenites, in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach, in Hebron, for all the places where David and his men had roamed.

25:40

This passage takes us through an incredibly painful time in David's life. And we can see, I hope we can see, how God's mercy and grace just bathed every moment and every situation. Let's go back to verse 1 and 2.

26:00

We'll go through a little deeper, a lot here to see. So remember, Philistine lords and commanders sent David away. So 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.

26:19

They had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire 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. The Negeb, that we're reading about, means the dry land in Hebrew.

26:33

An alternate spelling, depending on the translation you're using, is Negeb with a B or Negev with a V. The Amalekites had made a raid on a number of against the enemies in this area, a number of hit and run raids in this desert region of the land that you can see crosses the Philistine area and the land that belongs to Israel.

26:54

If you remember back into chapter 15, way back in chapter 15, the Lord had told Saul to destroy all the wicked Amalekites and Saul disobeyed God. Well, now those Amalekites had come back and they had attacked and burned Ziklag and carried away all the women and children.

27:13

Ziklag, which is at the bottom of the yellow area, is the area that belongs to the Philistines. Ziklag there at the bottom was the town that King Achish gave to David and his men as a reward for their faithful service.

27:26

And you can see that Ziklag was very close to the border of Amalek and to the Kingdom of Israel. That region that's marked Israel on the map is the southern area, which was actually technically the Kingdom of Judah.

27:39

But at this time in history, Judah and Israel were united. David ruled over Ziklag for 16 months and he used this town as his base of operation for all his raids against the Amalekites and other enemies but never against Israel.

27:55

Let's take a moment and remind ourselves who was with David in Ziklag, 1 Samuel chapter 22 verse 2. And everyone who was in distress and everyone who was in debt and everyone who was bitter in soul gathered to him to David and he became commander over them and there were with him about 400 men.

28:18

When David began his exile from Israel he was joined by about 400 distressed, in debt, bitter men that also needed to hide from King Saul. So they formed this sort of ragtag army of social misfits and there were 400 men but then by the next chapter in chapter 23 they grew to 600.

28:41

And these men apparently brought their families with them so this means altogether David probably had about 2,000 people under his authority in Ziklag with all the men, women, and children. I want to share a couple of very interesting notes about Ziklag from the book of 1 Chronicles.

28:59

There's a note about some special warriors that came to join David at this time. Let's look at 1 Chronicles 12 verses 1 and 2. This is really cool. Now these are the men who came to David at Ziklag while he could not move about freely because of Saul, the son of Kish.

29:17

They were among the mighty men who helped him in war. They were bowmen and could shoot arrows and sling stones with either the right or left hand. They were Benjamites, Saul's kinsmen. So some of Saul's own blood relatives from his tribe of Benjamin defected from Saul's army and they came to join David who was in exile and they happened to be expert archers and slingers.

29:43

Remember again, David had an army of misfits, so getting these guys was great. And one more note, look at verse 8 of 1 Chronicles. From the Gadites, they went over to David at the stronghold in the wilderness, mighty and experienced warriors, expert with shield and spear, whose faces were like the faces of lions and who were swift as gazelles upon the mountain.

30:07

So David also got some fierce athletic warriors. Wow, this is good news, right? Well, that is good news. David's army got stronger and better in Ziklag because he was adding some real top-tier, trained professional warriors, fighters.

30:28

Bad news? David and this wonderful new army of his were a three full days journey away from Ziklag when the Amalekites came on their raid. David left no one behind to protect his wives and the family of his men.

30:46

The Amalekites just swooped in, burned the city and carried away over 1,000 women and children, including David's two wives. Let's look at verse 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.

31:06

What a nightmare scenario for David and the men, right? Imagine you came home from military deployment to find your house and neighborhood destroyed, and all of your loved ones carried away by your enemies.

31:28

For David, this was an unthinkable disaster that he should have thought about and prepared for. But he had been so focused on his conquests that he didn't leave behind men to safeguard his town, his wives, and the family of all his men.

31:49

But can we see the merciful hand of God? When the Amalekites came, they could have slaughtered the women and children. That's what David had been doing to his enemies when he raided towns. But as the Lord would have it, the Amalekites just captured everyone, took them away without harming anyone.

32:13

If you remember back to chapter 25, there was that nasty guy named Nabal, remember him? And when he insulted David, remember David reacted by saying, OK, men, put on your swords. We're going to go fight.

32:27

And they marched on it to go attack Nabal. OK, so what did David do here? The Amalekites did much more than insult him. They came in. They burnt down his town. They took away his wives and all their possessions and their families.

32:43

What did David do about that? Let's look at verse 4 and 5. Doesn't sound like David exactly, but then David and the people who are with him raise their voices and wept bitterly until there's no more strength to weep.

32:57

David's two wives had also been taken captive, the Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. David, the great, great military leader, the slayer of giants, gave no commands. He just collapsed into weeping and wailing, as did all his men, who can blame him.

33:25

His city was burned, his wives were gone. So were all the wives and children of the men he had promised to protect. They were his responsibility. David may have felt like he had hit rock bottom several times before this during his years on the run from Saul but here in Ziklag David discovered the terrible reality that rock bottom has a basement.

33:53

Rock bottom has a basement. You might have been there once or twice. Let's try to imagine the scene. First, first David came home to the shocking sight and the ghostly silence of a ransacked town where absolutely everyone and everything was gone.

34:17

Then, try to imagine, then came this the the anguish howls of 600 men raising their voices like a tortured chorus weeping at the top of their lungs until they had no more strength left. Have you ever cried your eyes out?

34:40

It's exhausting, isn't it? Remember when Job suffered the loss of everything he loved? Job's wife, who failed her course in biblical counseling, told him to curse God and die. That was her loving advice.

35:01

Well, Job did not curse God then and David did not curse God now. Let's look at 1 Samuel 30 verse 6. And David was greatly distressed for the people spoke of stoning him because all the people were bitter and sold each for his sons and daughters but David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

35:26

As David wept over his losses, the situation actually got worse for him. He actually heard his men talking about wanting to stone him for failing to protect their families as he had promised. David's men believed he deserved to die for his failure, and knowing David the way we do, David probably agreed with him.

35:52

David had made a series of bad decisions because he had stopped coming to the Lord for guidance, and David's mistakes had led to this devastating consequence where now David found himself hated by all his men, and he was all out of strength and all out of ideas.

36:11

He got nothing left. There's a saying you might have heard, it goes like this, you'll never know Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you've got. This describes David's situation. But as David's men reached for stones to kill him, what did David do?

36:38

He reached for the hand of God to rescue him. That hand of the Lord is there for you and me too, even when we've made a real mess out of our lives. The hand of God is right there. David repented of his sins.

36:58

How do we know he repented? The passage tells us that David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. Strength never comes to us when we try to ignore our sin or try to excuse it or pretend it didn't happen.

37:11

Strength comes when we confess our sins to the Lord, our God, and receive his miraculous mercy. Stronger than darkness, new every morn, our sins they are many, his mercy is more. We probably all know David's most famous Psalm, Psalm 23, right?

37:36

How does that begin? The Lord is my shepherd, I have everything I need. David discovered the truth of those words at Ziklag, I have the Lord, I have everything I need. Let's look at verse 7. And David said to Abiathar, the priest, the son of Ahimelech, bring me the ephod.

37:57

So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. I like this part because David, our hero, is back, back doing what he should do, back doing what we should do. It's the best thing to do in any situation. He sought the Lord's direction instead of just doing whatever looked right in his own eyes.

38:17

David asked for that ephod. We've talked about the ephod before. Remember it was that the ephod is the high priest's special garment and it included a breastplate and the breastplate can contain the Urim and Thummim.

38:31

The Urim and Thummim are those mysterious ancient items that they use to sometimes determine God's will. We don't need those today because we have God's Word to reveal God's will to us, and in Christ we have the gift of the Holy Spirit who lives in us, who also direct us.

38:48

David was still, remember, David was still under tremendous stress. Nothing had been resolved. He was under tremendous stress of the situation, but he did the best thing he could do, and he did the best thing we can do when we're under stress.

39:00

And when aren't we under stress of some kind or another? David prayed to the Lord his God. We see here a principle throughout Scripture. Stress does not bring out the best in us, but turning to God does.

39:19

Do you want to be at your best in a stressful situation? Turn to the Lord your God. Verse 8, and David inquired of the Lord, shall I pursue after this man, shall I overtake them? He the Lord answered him, pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue.

39:40

If this was a movie, if the camera would be coming in real close so we could see the light and fire of the Lord come back into David's eyes as he wiped away his tears and finally strapped on his sword.

39:58

Let's look at verses 9 and 10. So David set out and the 600 men who were with him and they came to the brook Besor where those who were left behind stayed, but David

pursued. He and 400 men, 200 stayed behind who were too tired or too exhausted to cross the brook Besor.

40:16

Does this passage sound a little strange to you? It did to me. I mean, how could 200 men be too tired to cross a stream, a little a little brook? I mean, oh gee, there's a little water, I'm a little too tired to go get my family. It doesn't, it didn't make a lot of sense to me. Now our text doesn't tell us any more than this, so I don't have the answer to why they didn't cross.

40:40

A couple things I found. One commentary suggested that maybe, just maybe, the brook could have become swollen into a raging river. That happened in certain seasons of the year, so maybe it was a big wide river.

40:52

They didn't have the strength to cross. I don't know, could be. The other explanation may just be a common one that the brook Besor was the natural place in that wilderness area to stop for water, and when they stopped, 200 men realized they were just too tired.

41:07

They didn't have anything left. They couldn't go on without rest. We have to remember, these guys had just finished a three-day march to Ziklag where they came home and found their city ransacked and all their family and loved ones gone.

41:21

They had wept themselves into exhaustion, and now they've been hurrying through the desert to try to catch up to the Amalekites wherever they were. So yeah, 200 of them realized they could not go any further, but David didn't have time to rest, so he left them there, and he and 400 men continued that pursuit.

41:41

So let's read on. Here we see fascinating way that God answers prayer. 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 and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins.

41:59

And when he had eaten his spirit revived for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. 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.

42:18

Look how the Lord worked out those circumstances. It's amazing, isn't it? When we pray for God's guidance like David did, we never know. We never know how the Lord just might bring a person, a random person or event into our lives to help stir us, steer us where we need to go.

42:35

Here the Lord provided this weak, thirsty, hungry man that had a really crummy master to just leave him behind with, because he got sick leaving behind with no food or water. He's not boss of the year, but this poor man could tell David everything David needed to know.

42:56

And here was the man's report. Let's look at verse 14 to 15. He said, we had made a raid against the Negeb of the Cherethites and against that which belonged to Judah and against the Negeb of Caleb and we burned Ziklag with fire.

43:08

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 lousy master, I added lousy, and I will take you down to this band.

43:23

I don't know, again, this is speculation. I can't imagine that slave was too upset about sending David to go down and deal with his master at that point. So the slave made a deal with David to lead him to the Amalekites in exchange for his safety.

43:39

And so now let's look at verse 16. And when the servant had taken David down, behold they, the Amalekites, what were they doing? They were spread about all over the land eating and drinking and dancing because of all the great spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah.

43:58

Amalekites made a big mistake, didn't they? They thought they were home safe. Yeah, they just thought they have time to stop and just have themselves a big old party to celebrate all the cool stuff they had stolen.

44:12

This scene reminds me of a song, the lyrics to a song you probably know called The Gambler, where the chorus goes, you never count your money. When you're sitting at the table, there'll be time enough for counting when the dealing's done.

44:25

You know that song? Well, Amalekites stopped to count their money and David came along to make them pay for it. Let's look at verse 17 to 20. And David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day,

44:39

and not a man of them escaped except 400 young men who mounted camels and fled. David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoils or anything that had been taken.

44:55

David brought back all. David also captured all the flocks and herds, and the people drove the livestock before him and said, this is David's spoil. I love how detailed the Lord got here. Just help us understand how complete David's victory was here.

45:13

David attacked with 400 men, but they had to be greatly, greatly outnumbered by the Amalekites. Because this battle lasted more than 24 hours. That's a long fight. It makes you think again about those 200 men that were too tired to cross that stream.

45:30

It's probably good they didn't come to then walk into this all day long 24-hour battle. The text also tells us that 400 Amalekites escaped on camels. They ran away, but the wording here suggests that the 400 was actually a very small number compared to all the Amalekites that died.

45:49

David got everything back from the Lord, everything he wept about. God restored everything from Ziklag to this battleground out in the middle of somewhere. David took quite an elevator ride, didn't he?

46:05

The Lord took him from rock bottom's basement to the penthouse of God's mercy and grace. Let's listen to some words from David that he wrote, Psalm 145 verse 8 and 9, which sort of summarizes what David was probably feeling.

46:24

The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. The Lord is good to all, and his mercy is over all that he has made. My brothers and sisters, this is our Father in heaven.

46:42

This is the Lord we love. This is the God we serve. By the grace and mercy of God, David rescued his wives and all the children and all the women came back unharmed. He got back everything the Amalekites had taken, plus he captured all the Amalekite livestock and treasure.

47:02

So let's read on now to 21 and 22. Then David came to the 200 men who had been too exhausted to follow David and who had been left behind at the brook Besor, and they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him.

47:16

And when David came near to the people, he greeted them. Then all the wicked and worthless fellows among the men who had gone with David said, because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered except that each man may lead away his wife and children and depart.

47:33

We see here that David was delighted to be restored to his men. He was happy to see the men that stayed behind and they were delighted to see him. This was a really great

reunion, except for some little wicked and worthless guys that just were not any kind of sharing mood.

47:56

From a human perspective, we might see their point. Why should 400 men that risked their lives in a 24-hour fight, share the prize money with 200 men that stayed behind? Well, David, more than any of them, knew that God had showed mercy and grace to him when he sure didn't deserve it.

48:24

So David wanted to follow the right way of God instead of the wicked way of these men. We too, you and I, Oh, my goodness, we have received so much grace and mercy from our Lord, haven't we? How can we not be gracious and merciful with others?

48:49

Let's look at verses 23 to 25. But David said, You shall not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us. He has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came against us. Who would listen to you in this matter?

49:02

For as His share is who goes down into the battle, so shall His share be who stays by the baggage. They shall share alike. And He made it a statute and a rule for Israel from that day forward to this day.

49:15

David, you see here, this is so sweet. David spoke to his men, not as their commander, but as their brother. He wanted them to see the Lord had given them the victory. The Lord had given them their families back.

49:29

The Lord had given them all the spoils of war. Everything they had was from the Lord. Do we understand, do we understand what we're reading? That this was not a message just for those men 3,000 years ago. This is a message to you and me, too.

49:49

Everything we have, everything you have, everything I have, everything we have, all our possessions, our wealth, our health, our time, our talents. Our achievements, all these things are things the Lord has given us.

50:08

They're from His hand, not to hoard for ourselves, but to share with others, even to even share with people we don't think deserve it. Let me share this wonderful statement from Corey Ten Boom. She said, hold loosely to the things of this life so that if God requires them of you, it will be easy to let them go.

50:35

What a wise, precious woman of God. Hold things loosely. Kindness, grace, and generosity became the rule of Israel when David took the throne. Kindness, grace, and generosity should be our rule too, when Jesus sits on the throne of our life.

50:57

Let's finish the passage, 26 to 31. When David came to Ziklag, he sent part of the spoil to his friends, the eldest of Judah saying, here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord.

51:11

It was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, in Aroer, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, in Racal, in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenites, in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach, in Hebron, for all the places where David and his men had roamed.

51:30

We have to understand this was not David paying off debts that he owed. And he wasn't being a politician that was just trying to buy support. This was so much richer than that. David was grateful to God.

51:44

He was a grateful man and he wanted to bless. He was delighted to bless those who had been a blessing to him on his journey, on his exile from Saul. So that's how our passage ends. It ends on a high note.

52:01

We haven't had a lot of passages end on a high note. That's kind of refreshing. Let's look at two key takeaways from this wonderful passage for us today. Takeaway number one. If you are at rock bottom today or feeling like you're heading that direction because you've been seeking, you have not been seeking the Lord's guidance.

52:23

You've just been going your own way and things seem to be going from bad to worse. Stop where you are. Repent and reach for the hand of God that is reaching out to you. Find the strength you're missing and the help you need in God's mercy and grace.

52:43

Second takeaway. If you are blessed and grateful today for what the Lord has given you, look for ways to bless others. Look for opportunities to bless others. Our prayer team will be down here to pray with you.

53:01

We also have a prayer wall out the door to the right. You've seen that prayer wall. Take advantage of it. We'll be praying for you on Monday night. Let's close in prayer. Father, oh my goodness, thank you for your mercy.

53:15

Thank you is too small of a word compared to the grandeur of your mercy and grace. Thank you for your mercy that covers us all the time and even when we sin. Thank you for your hand that reaches down from heaven, Father, to forgive us and restore us when we come to you with a repentant heart.

53:33

Thank you for your strength that you give us when ours is all gone. Thank you for all the gifts and blessing in our life, help us see father that everything we have, every moment we have comes from you. Help us be grateful and ready to share even with those we don't think deserve it. Father we love you, we need you, we thank you in the name of Jesus our Lord, amen.