

Ziklag: David’s Revelation of God’s Delight

I. BEING ESTABLISHED IN GOD’S LOVE

- A. Paul prayed that God’s people would develop a “root system” in the love of God (Eph. 3:16-19). Paul knew the importance of being strengthened by understanding and experiencing God’s love.
- ¹⁶...He would grant you...to be strengthened...¹⁷that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸may be able to comprehend...¹⁹to know [experience] the love of Christ... (Eph. 3:17-19)***
- B. We must each develop our personal “history with God” in understanding and experiencing His love. This is especially vital in times of spiritual failure and when difficult situations occur in our life.
- C. How will we respond to the Lord when we stumble in sin or are disappointed by our circumstances? Will we run to God or from God? Will we trust that His love and mercy is greater than our sin? Will we trust His love or be offended at His leadership in our life?
- D. The Lord called David “a man after God’s heart—he was committed to *obey the commands* of God’s heart, to *study the emotions* of God’s heart, and to *contend for the purposes* of God’s heart.
- ¹⁴The LORD has sought for Himself a man after His own heart... (1 Sam. 13:14)***
- E. It is not enough to be committed to obey God. Our hearts must be empowered to love and obey God. By studying God’s emotions, our hearts are empowered by confidence in love (1 Jn. 4:19).
- F. The importance of David’s story is that it can be our story simply by making the choices that he started in his youth. It is the story of how God sees our heart and how we move His heart. It is the story of how God uses and even enjoys weak and broken people who set their heart on Him. The story of David’s life is presented in the Bible from 1 Samuel 16 to 2 Samuel 24 (also 1 Chr. 11-29).
- G. The Spirit is raising up leaders (shepherds) with the same heart and grace as David (Jer. 3:15).
- ¹⁵I will give you shepherds according to My heart who will feed you with knowledge... (Jer. 3:15)***
- H. King David is one of the premier examples of one who trusted God’s mercy in times of failure and trusted in God’s loving leadership to intervene in his life in times of difficulty.
- ²How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long will my enemy be exalted over me? ³Consider and hear me, O LORD my God; enlighten my eyes... ⁵But I have trusted in Your mercy; My heart shall rejoice in Your salvation [leadership]. (Ps. 13:2-5)***
- I. To “commit our spirit” into God’s hands (v. 5), is to commit to Him everything that deeply touches our spirit—our reputation, relationships, money, possessions, position, etc. David entrusted the outcome of the most important issues in his life to the Lord’s leadership. When we commit ourselves into God’s hands, we trust Him to intervene to establish *His will* in our lives, in *His way*, and in *His timing* (v. 15). By doing this, David “brought God” into the conflicts in his life.
- ⁵Into Your hand I commit my spirit... ¹⁵My times are in Your hand; deliver me from...my enemies ... ¹⁹Oh, how great is Your goodness...which You have prepared for those who trust in You... (Ps. 31:5, 15-19)***

II. DAVID'S GREAT CRISIS AT ZIKLAG (1 SAM. 27-31)

- A. David's experiences in Ziklag give us insight into what David understood about God's heart. He spent 16 months at Ziklag (1 Sam. 27-31). During this season of his life, David *stumbled in compromise* and was tested with the betrayal of his closest friends. However, David did not draw back from God. Rather, he set his heart to pursue the Lord and to trust His mercy and love.
- B. Jesus warned Peter that he would deny Him, but that his faith would not fail (Lk. 22:31-34). There is a difference between stumbling in sin (Mt. 26:31) and failing in our faith. Stumbling refers to a short-term compromise. Failing in faith is to quit or to give up in our wholehearted pursuit of God.

³¹Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. ³²But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren... ³⁴Peter, the rooster shall not crow...before you will deny...that you know Me. (Lk. 22:31-34)

³¹All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night... (Mt. 26:31)

- C. The Lord wants us to have confidence in His love. This has two expressions—to be confident that *He loves us in our weakness* and to be confident that *He esteems our weak love for Him as genuine*.
- D. David had revelation of how God felt about him that gave him confidence to run **to** God in his weakness. Many are filled with condemnation and run **from** God when they stumble in sin.

III. OVERVIEW OF DAVID'S LIFE BEFORE LIVING IN ZIKLAG

- A. David was anointed by the Spirit in his youth (1 Sam. 16) and afterwards defeated Goliath, becoming a national hero (1 Sam. 17). Next, David married King Saul's daughter and served in his court (1 Sam. 18) where he received much favor and fame. David was attacked by the jealous king (1 Sam. 19-20), so he fled from the king's palace in fear for his life (1 Sam. 21).
- B. David's first compromise was to *lie to the high priest Ahimelech* in the city of Nob (1 Sam. 21:1-9). This led to the death of eighty priests of Israel (1 Sam. 22:6-23).

***¹David came to Nob...and Ahimelech was afraid when he met David, and said to him, "Why are you alone...?" ²David said..., "The king has ordered me on business...³Give me five loaves of bread...⁸I have brought neither my sword nor my weapons...because the king's business required haste."⁹The priest said, "The sword of Goliath the Philistine...there it is, take it."
(1 Sam. 21:1-9)***

- C. David fled to the land of the Philistines to join Achish, the king over the Philistine city of Gath. David knew Achish was Saul's enemy and assumed that Saul would not leave Israel to chase him.

¹⁰David...fled that day from before Saul, and went to Achish the king of Gath. (1 Sam. 21:10)

- D. David's next compromise was to *lie to Achish* by pretending to be insane because of fear of Achish.

***¹¹The servants of Achish said, "Is this not David the king of the land? Did they not sing of him..., saying: 'Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands?'" ¹²David took these words to heart, and was very much afraid of Achish...¹³So he changed his behavior before them, feigned madness...scratched on the doors of the gate, and let his saliva fall down on his beard.
¹⁴Achish said to his servants, "Look, you see the man is insane." (1 Sam. 21:10-14)***

IV. THE PROPHET GAD PROPHESED THAT DAVID MUST RETURN TO ISRAEL

- A. David left Gath and escaped to Adullam, on the edge of Judah's territory. David was 28 years old. About 400 distressed men joined David. Many of them became his mighty men (2 Sam. 23).

¹David therefore departed from there [Gath] and escaped to the cave of Adullam...²Everyone who was in distress, everyone who was in debt, and...who was discontented gathered to him. So he became captain over them. There were about four hundred men with him. (1 Sam. 22:1-4)

- B. The prophet Gad gave the Lord's command to David *to return home to Judah* (1 Sam. 22:5). David was to stop running in fear from Saul and leave the stronghold or fortress in Moab (east of Israel).

³Then David went from there [Adullam] to Mizpah of Moab...⁵Now the prophet Gad said to David, "Do not stay in the stronghold; depart, and go to the land of Judah." (1 Sam. 22:3-5)

- C. David seemingly began to question the prophecies about being the future king of Israel (1 Sam. 16).

- D. David's third compromise was to *disobey God's command through the prophet Gad* to stay in Judah. David left Judah to flee from King Saul in fear. David returned to the Philistine King Achish. David's fear led to despair, concluding that Saul would one day prevail and kill him (1 Sam. 27:1).

¹David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand." (1 Sam. 27:1)

- E. David again assumed that his enemy King Saul would not leave the land of Israel to chase him in the land of the Philistines. In other words, David lacked faith that God would protect him from Saul.

- F. David reconnected with Achish, the Philistine king. David's plan appeared to work.

²David...went over with the six hundred men...³David dwelt with Achish at Gath...⁴It was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more. (1 Sam. 27:2-4)

- G. Achish gave David the city of Ziklag. David's team of 600 men and their families moved there.

⁶Achish gave him Ziklag...⁷The time that David dwelt in the country of the Philistines was one full year and four months. (1 Sam. 27:5-7)

- H. David's fourth compromise was *to lie to King Achish* (1 Sam. 27:8-12).

¹⁰Achish would say, "Where have you made a raid today?" David would say, "Against the southern area of Judah..."¹¹David would save neither man nor woman alive, to bring news to Gath, saying, "Lest they should inform on us..." Thus was his behavior all the time he dwelt in the country of the Philistines. ¹²So Achish believed David, saying, "He has made his people Israel utterly abhor him; therefore he will be my servant forever." (1 Sam. 27:10-12)

- I. Achish trusted David and ask him to join him in fighting against Israel (1 Sam. 28:1-2). The Philistine leaders did not trust David, so they refused to allow him to participate (1 Sam. 29:1-11).

¹In those days that the Philistines gathered their armies together for war, to fight with Israel. Achish said to David, "You assuredly know that you will go out with me to battle, you and your men."²David said..., "Surely you know what your servant can do." (1 Sam. 28:1-2)

V. DAVID AT ZIKLAG (1 SAM. 30)

- A. The Amalekites burned and plundered Ziklag (1 Sam. 30:1-3). This was one of the worst days in David's life. It led to his deliverance and became one of the most powerful times in his life.

¹David and his men came to Ziklag...the Amalekites had...attacked Ziklag...³David and his men came to the city, and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. ⁴David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep...⁶David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved... (1 Sam. 30:1-6)

- B. David strengthened himself in God and inquired or asked the Lord what to do (1 Sam. 30:6-8). David did not let his stumbling in sin result in the failing of his faith by giving up his vision in God.

⁶David was greatly distressed...but David strengthened himself in the Lord...⁸David inquired of the LORD, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all." (1 Sam. 30:6-8)

- C. David pursued and defeated the Amalekites (1 Sam. 30:9-31). At this very same time, King Saul and his three sons died in a battle against the Philistines (1 Sam. 31:1-6).

¹⁷David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day...¹⁸David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away...¹⁹Nothing of theirs was lacking... (1 Sam. 30:17-19)

- D. **Understanding Ziklag:** This city represents the place of David's compromise and the time when his men betrayed him, seeking to kill him in their bitterness (1 Sam. 30:6). David was at a crossroads of crisis in his life. God loved him so much that He allowed the place of his compromise to be burned. Are you hiding in Ziklag? God allows our Ziklag to be burned to remove what we falsely trust in.

VI. WHAT DAVID UNDERSTOOD ABOUT GOD'S HEART (PS. 18 & PS. 56)

- A. The inscription or title for Psalm 56 says, "A Michtam of David when the Philistines took him in Gath." By this, we know that this psalm was written when he was with Achish in the Ziklag years. He repented with tears over his compromise, asking God to deliver him from his enemies (Ps. 56:8).

⁸You number my wanderings; put my tears into Your bottle; are they not in Your book? ⁹When I cry out to You, then my enemies will turn back; this I know, because God is for me. (Ps. 56:8-9)

- B. Psalms 18 reveals what David was thinking in this hour of despair. The title of this psalm tells us that David wrote it *on the day God delivered him from Saul*. David declared his love for God (v. 1). God saw David's love for Him as genuine. Our weak love for God is not false love. David knew that God delighted in him (v. 19) and treated him with gentleness (v. 35). The Lord wants to establish our confidence in His love and to make us "great in our love" for Him (v. 1).

¹I will love You, O LORD, my strength...¹⁹He brought me out into a broad place; He delivered me because He delighted in me...³⁵Your gentleness has made me great. (Ps. 18:1, 19, 35)

VII. QUESTIONS FOR SMALL-GROUP DISCUSSION

1. Identify one point that inspired or challenged you. Why? What will you do differently to apply it?
2. Identify one point that you want to impart to a younger believer. Why? How will you approach this?
3. Identify one point that you would like to gain more understanding of. How will you seek to gain it?