

33. Turning Point

6/15/2003

Since we started our first Sunday morning service on Oct. 20th last year, the Lord had been keep on adding people to this fellowship consistently in spite of my short-coming. I firmly realize that it is not by my power, nor by my strength, but by the Holy Spirit as we learn from His Word.

We are at the juncture we need to make some important decisions:

1. Are we going to have two service to accommodate the growing congregation?
2. Are we going to look into moving into a different location with lease?
3. Are we going to purchase a piece of land to build our own church?

There are many things get tangled with each question. However, we are at the point we can not do a whole lot with any of the options we are facing. But that is a great place to be in. Because if anything good happens, we would know that it is from God.

I am so glad that we had our first prayer time together last Tuesday night before the Bible study.

I am sure that other people also noticed, while we were praying I felt the undeniable presence of God at the Bible study. And when we finished our prayer, I knew beyond the shadow of doubt that God heard our prayers. Does it mean we are going to have our 40,000 sq. ft. church building where we want right away? No, we asked for His will be done in our fellowship so that His name may be glorified. So, He will glorify Himself in our fellowship. How is it going to happen? I guess we just have to wait and watch what the Lord does.

Seeking God's will for our lives over our own will has been a controversial subject among Christians. Some say that we should tell God what we want and He is obligated to do what we want. They use several Bible verses to back up their doctrines. But they are using those verses in out of context which is very dangerous way to do.

In our fellowship, we seek God's will in our lives, we don't demand God what to do. I believe that it is a biblical way and God will honor it.

In chapter 27, David said in his heart instead of seeking God's guidance and wisdom. Because of his shortsighted decision, over 2000 people's lives were in a major mess for over sixteen long months. To make the matter worse, David was told that he and his soldiers have to get into the battle against the Israelites. By the providence of God's will, David and his men were told to go back home. That is where we left in chapter 29.

A. GOD IS OUR STRENGTH

1 Sam 30:1-6 Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. So David 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. Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the

Carmelite, had been taken captive. Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.

The situation doesn't look very good for David. His group was just humiliated by the Philistine leaders whom they were going to join a battle against the Israelites and they were sent back home.

After three days journey, they found their city burned down to the ground. Their families and belongings were all taken away by the Amalekites.

There is a touch of the God's poetic justice in all this. David had brought this exact calamity on other cities. 1 Samuel 27:8-11 says during his time among the Philistines, David made his living as a bandit, robbing cities. Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive. Actually, the Amalekites were being more merciful than David had been.

After a long pouting, David's men were thinking about stoning him. It seems like that it just cannot go any worse than this. That is where David realized his mistake.

The latter portion of v6 is the key verse of this chapter. The Lord has been waiting for this for so long. Our God is always ready listen to our prayers day or night. All we have to do is call out to Him.

The important point of this verse that David made an initiation to strengthen himself in the Lord. God is more than willing to give us His strength, but we have to come to Him with humble hearts.

James 4:8 Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.

Deut 4:29 But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul.

Unlike Saul, David knew where to turn in time of crisis.

Philippians 4:13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

He had learned to wait on God, confidence of God's deliverance.

Ps 40:1-3 I waited patiently for the Lord; And He inclined to me, And heard my cry. He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps. He has put a new song in my mouth-- Praise to our God; Many will see it and fear, And will trust in the Lord.

How did David strengthen himself in the Lord? He strengthened himself by remembering God's love, God's promise and calling and God's faithfulness. We, too, can do that.

Some say, "God doesn't answer my prayer." Oh yes, He does. We just don't hear it, because we wait for the answer we want to hear, not necessarily His.

B. SEEK GOD, HE WILL BE FOUND

1 Sam 30:7-8 Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall

I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all."

After David realized that he need God and find his strength from God, the first thing he did is seeking God's way. Not his own way anymore. What a change from chapter 27! It took sixteen long months for David to wonder around the spiritual desert without seeking God. Now that he hits the bottom, there is no place to look except up.

Sometimes God puts us in such situation where we cannot do anything except completely relying on Him.

1 Sam 30:9-13 So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor. Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. We made an invasion of the southern area of the Cherethites, in the territory which belongs to Judah, and of the southern area of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire."

See how God provides them a way to find the captors who took their families. If we rely on our God, He takes care of the rest.

1 Sam 30:15-20 And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop?" So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop." And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil."

Everything that the enemy had taken, David took back and even more. God gave him a complete victory, because David strengthened himself in the Lord his God, he inquired of the Lord, he did what God told him to do, and to top it off, he showed care and kindness to the Egyptian man.

C. SHARING GOD'S BLESSINGS TOGETHER

1 Sam 30:21-25 Now David came to the two hundred men who had been so weary that they could not follow David, whom they also had made to stay at the Brook Besor. So they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near the people, he greeted them.

Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead them away and depart." But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the Lord has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

David declares an important spiritual principle:

The supply lines are just as vital as the soldiers are and God will reward both "soldiers" and "supporters" properly.

Many people serve the Lord in invisible, behind-the-scenes ways, often supporting a much more visible aspect of the Lord's work. God will support the hidden servant with the same reward as prominent servant.

If you are supporting this church, so that we can proclaim the truth of God in Sahuarita and Green Valley areas and people get saved and have deeper walk with Christ, that will be a part of your rewards in heaven, not just mine.

If you are supporting a missionary in Africa or South America, they win many souls to Christ, they will share their heavenly rewards with you in heaven. They are the soldiers and you are the supporters. In God's battle plan, there is no front line or rear line. We are all in this together for the glory of God.

D. MENDING THE STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS

1 Sam 30:26-31 Now when David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the spoil to the elders of Judah, to his friends, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord"-- to those who were in Bethel, those who were in Ramoth of the South, those who were in Jattir, those who were in Aroer, those who were in Siphmoth, those who were in Eshtemoa, those who were in Rachal, those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, those who were in the cities of the Kenites, those who were in Hormah, those who were in Chorashan, those who were in Athach, those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were accustomed to rove.

This action probably had some political meaning as well. This goodwill gesture helped David reestablish his relationship among the leaders of Judah after his stay in Philistine territory and a stepping stone for the future.

E. APPLICATIONS

1) We need to seek our God's strength, not our own.

If we rely on our own strength, we will fail every time and will be empty. But if we rely on God's strength, He pours out His strength onto us, so that we may go on doing His work.

2Co 12:9 And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

One thing we must notice is that the contrast between chapters 28 and 30 is striking: Saul had departed from the Lord and therefore had no divine guidance (28:6), while David looked to the Lord for courage and direction (30:6-9). "Seek the Lord while He may be found" was a warning Saul did not heed.

Isaiah 55:6 Seek the Lord while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near.

God's help is never far away, as long as we keep looking up.

If you are down and out, if you are at the wit's end, take a heart. God is with you and He will sustain you. If you ask Him, He will give you peace in your heart, so that you may be protected from all doubts. That is where the true strength comes from.

2) When we depend on God for His guidance and wisdom, we get more than we can possibly expect.

When we came to Christ, we not only received the eternal salvation in Christ Jesus, but also will receive our heavenly rewards according to our work on the earth. God is so gracious to us and always willing to give us more abundantly. All we have to do is seek Him and depend on Him.

3) We all work together as a team for the King of kings.

Just because somebody is in the eyes of the public as a pastor or a missionary or whatever, that doesn't mean that he or she is more important than the ones behind the scene. God sees the hearts of men, not the way the public sees. In the sight of God, no one is better or no one is less.