

*Father, we just come to You Lord, we just want to thank You Father. Eleven months of the most difficult year and You were faithful, You were good, You've brought us through. We are at the end of the year Lord, the last 25 days, we know You will take us through. We know that the God who brought us thus far will take us the rest of the way. So we just want to thank You for Your hand over our lives, our families, our children, the little ones, everyone Lord. We just want to thank You, thank You, thank You Father. We commit this time into Your hands, the ministry of the Word, the little children who are going to Sunday school, the teachers who mentor them and all of us, Lord, who sit at Your feet. We just surrender ourselves Lord, everyone; those who are strong in faith, those who struggle in faith, those who doubt whether they are saved, all are there and we all come to You because You are the Author of life, You alone have the words of Life, You are the One who can change and turn our lives around. Therefore, we come to You. Above all we come to You because You love us. Thank You Father. This morning I pray, speak to us, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen*

Let us turn to 1 Samuel 30:1-8

## **1 Samuel 30:1-8**

***<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; <sup>2</sup> And had taken the women captives, that were therein: they slew not any, either great or small, but carried them away, and went on their way. <sup>3</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. <sup>5</sup> And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. <sup>6</sup> And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.***

***<sup>7</sup> And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. <sup>8</sup> And David enquired 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.***

Let us go to John 10:10 which is the New Covenant parallel,

## **John 10:10**

***<sup>10</sup> The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.***

We have been through 11 months and 6 days and we are 10 hours into the 6<sup>th</sup> day and let us be honest that it has not been a good year for anybody in the world, except for the billionaires who control Amazon, FaceBook, Twitter etc. They made money, everyone else lost money. Millions upon millions lost their livelihood, businesses were lost and it is still continuing, so it has not been a good year. But what is our response, we are in this 12<sup>th</sup> month and one thing I want to encourage you is that it does not matter how you began or whether you faltered in the middle, you can always finish well. In 25 days God can do if we surrender individually, personally, family wise what we did not allow him to do in 11 months. He can still do it in the remaining 25 days of this year. Don't shorten the hand of God by your unbelief. Say, "Lord, like Jabez, I believe, let Your hand be upon me."

I believe that of all the crises David faced this is one of the worst, if not the worst. I would put three of his crises on top. The first is this, the second is with Bathsheba but that is a personal thing and it did not affect the nation and the most painful one was when Absalom usurped the throne. He knew that his son would

have to die and so he pleaded, "Don't kill the boy," but the boy died anyway and you can know his sorrow. David was a man of sorrows. He went through grief in every way you can think of.

The first point is - when you go through a crisis how will you respond? Cause your response to crisis will define who you are. You cannot escape crisis whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, it will come your way, especially if you are a believer because the crisis is the test of your faith. If you look through the Bible or through history is during a crisis it will drive many away from God and a few towards God. So before the crisis hits you, you need to make this decision that when the day of evil comes you will run towards God and not away from Him. This is the first decision that you make that during crisis I will run towards God and not away from Him because many in the day of crisis if you look into the Word because their faith was weak or because they failed in faith because faith never fails, for it is the faith of God, you will see them falling away or falling apart. And the Word of God says that in the last days many will fall away.

One of the reasons people will fall away is because iniquity will increase. When there is an increase of sin there is an increase of darkness and there will be an increase of crisis in people's lives. If the actual statistics were to come out, I don't think in any year, in recent history have there been so many recorded suicides as this year. The pandemic was just a test but people could not handle it, even Christians could not handle it. Drug abuse, alcoholism, divorce have shot through the roof unlike any other year. At every level; personal level, family level or national level; nations have just fallen apart in this crisis. The governments simply do not know what to do. It is a crisis.

Joseph went through crisis but through his 13 years of crisis he clung to God. Jacob in his darkest hour at river Jabok clung to God saying, "Unless You bless me I will not let You go." In crisis and dark hours in a pagan land, Daniel and his three friends clung to God. The first thing is that if you look at the victorious people in the Bible that is those who finished well you will see how they responded to crisis. The first lesson that you learn is that they clung to God. It could be your job, it could be your marriage, it could be family, it could be a church, you can go through crisis anywhere and God says, "Learn from David."

David's first response

#### **1 Samuel 30:4**

***<sup>4</sup> Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep.***

The response was total, absolute despair. If you are in ministry you will meet people like that; they have no more strength to weep and you will see them standing looking into space as if they are stoned because they have no more power in their senses on how to react to this crisis. When you meet people who have lost a dear one, whose marriages have broken or the child or spouse is dead, they just sit there frozen, they have no more strength left. First response is despair for all of them. They cried because if you look at the situation they are coming with depression. The background is that first Saul was after them, then they had been living in the gentile land for sixteen months and now in the last stages the gentile kings said, "Go, we don't trust you," and so they left. They have marched three days and they must be very tired. They must have been thinking, "At least, now I am going home I will have a hot shower and some good food and go to sleep." But when they come close they see smoke rising and there is nothing left. Everything has been burned down. It is putting salt on the wounds. They have no strength and they wept till they had no power to weep. It is good to weep, even Jesus wept but it should not be weeping of despair and of no hope. It is good to weep, let go, cry and howl if you want. Let your tears flow, all that is fine because even Jesus wept but don't cry in despair otherwise unbelief gets in. Even the best of men in the Bible have given up.

In *1 Kings 19:4* and *Matthew 11:2-3* you will see two of the best, God had on planet Earth, giving up,

#### **1 Kings 19:4**

***<sup>4</sup> But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.***

That is the danger when you come to a point where you give up but thank God that He does not give up on us. He did not give up on Elijah. I think about people (who tie that rope around their neck and jump, jump off the bridge, burn themselves, jump before a running train) and wonder what led them there, what was going through their mind. They just give up and a lot of people just give up.

**Matthew 11:2-3**

***<sup>2</sup> Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,<sup>3</sup> And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?***

This was the greatest prophet who heralded the coming of God's only begotten Son. Despair because everything has changed. He is in prison and life and circumstances have changed and he has forgotten everything. This is the prophet of all prophets, the greatest (Jesus said it). We talk about all the prophets and this is the greatest but he is in despair. Jesus sent him an answer, we don't know if he took the answer and encouraged himself. All we know is that a little later his head will be on a plate. We don't know if he died in despair.

There are so many like him and in English we say – 'They throw in the towel,' 'I give up.'

Second Response

**1 Samuel 30:6**

***<sup>6</sup> And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.***

The second response, when we are in a situation of darkness, is that we try to find someone else to blame. We want to shift the blame, "Because of you." It could be partially true, not necessarily fully true. But the question we should ask is – what difference does it make to your situation? How does it change your situation? You pick up stones and kill David and then what happens; do your wives and children come back and does your situation change? Always looking for somebody to blame.

Question: Do you want to get well?

Answer: "Well! This is the problem; everybody gets in before me."

Question: How long have you been working at the same Job?

Answer: 9 years

Question: Did you get a promotion?

Answer: No. Somebody always gets before me although I am better qualified.

Is that true? We need to stone somebody else so that we can feel good. We do not want to take personal responsibility for our lives.

Do you remember all the people who are picking stones? Remember, like Jesus said, "Let those who are without sin cast the first stone." In the same token these people would have thought in *1 Samuel 22:3* (it is written how this all began),

### **1 Samuel 22:2**

***<sup>2</sup> And every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, gathered themselves unto him; and he became a captain over them: and there were with him about four hundred men.***

They can't say, "Before we came to you, we had a gala time, and you are the reason." That is not true. 'You know before I got married to you I had a great life.' Really? 'Before I got this job...' Really? Let me tell you, before you got this job you were jobless. That is the truth.

Your response is wrong. Always look at your response because you will go through crisis. Your response will determine your destiny.

When crisis comes, learn to respond like Job in *Job 1:21*. He lost everything. It was the darkest hour in his life. He said,

### **Job 1:21**

***<sup>21</sup> And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD. <sup>22</sup> In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.***

In his case everything is gone. His children are dead and his wealth is gone. He says, "I take responsibility. He gave, He took and He has the right to do it." All the mothers sitting here, when your baby was born, did the nurse come after you with a 2000 rupee note and say, "The baby was born with a two thousand rupee note in its hand"? Everybody came empty handed. I am yet to hear of a child born with a dress or tux on.

It means that everything I have, God gave me. It is an appropriate response because if you do not have an appropriate response you will not turn to God. "He gave and He took," which means that He can also restore. That is why it is important to know these facts and respond in crisis in the right way.

He gave, He took, He can restore.

Let us go back to *1 Samuel 30:6<sup>b</sup>*

### **1 Samuel 30:6<sup>b</sup>**

***<sup>6</sup> ...the soul of all the people was grieved,***

The actual Hebrew term for grieved is bitter; the bitterness of the soul. When crisis come don't become bitter. People become bitter to life and what happens is that you don't enjoy your days though God has never changed and His mercies are new every morning. Every morning the sun rises the same way and everything around is still beautiful. The birds are still singing but because you are bitter you see nothing.

### **Ruth 1:20**

***<sup>20</sup> And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.***

God has not dealt bitterly with Naomi, she is bitter. God has actually started the entire process of not only redeeming you and your family but joining you to the family of His Son, the Messiah. But you are not able to see anything because you are bitter. Just think for a minute what God is doing in Naomi's life. He is joining her to His own family. Think of any Jew who can trace his ancestry back to one of Mary's other sons. Jesus had brothers and sisters who were born of Joseph. Think of one of them who can trace their family history back and you know what I actually come from Jesus' own family. This is what is happening to Naomi and she cannot see it because she is bitter.

The first thing is don't give in to despair.

The second thing is stop blaming someone else if you want to get out of your rut.

The third thing is don't become bitter.

Supposing they gave into their bitterness and blame and stoned David, does it change their situation? But people do that in their anger, bitterness and blame others and walk out of their marriages. They just walk away leaving spouses, children and then years later they look back and say, "Why am I like this?" It is because in that crisis your response was wrong. You did not fight for what was right, you just walked away.

I personally know people who did that in their marriages and also do that in their jobs. There is a person whom I know who is paralyzed and has not had a job for years and years. He was working in the Middle East for a big company with a high salary. His boss said something to him which he did not like. He threw in his resignation and walked away. He never got a job and if he got one he never held it after that and today he is paralyzed in his bed. He just walked away and a lot of people do that.

These things are important because we are asking, "Lord, fill me, fill me, fill me," but God is saying, "Let Me shape you first so that when I fill you can hold it when these crises comes." We say in English, - 'Talent can take you to the top but only character can keep you there.' The world is full of talented people and the one who died last week (Diego Maradona) was very talented. He was one of the most talented footballers in the world but one thing he did not have was strength. When he was playing for Napoli he got addicted to Cocaine and it took his life. He was only 60 years and he died, his heart gave away.

This is what God is talking about, don't give in to impulses. Don't be angry because if you are angry you will not be able to handle your crisis.

That is what happened right in the beginning with Cain. There was a crisis and what happened, "I want to offer a sacrifice and God did not accept it." God said, "*Why are you angry and why has your countenance fallen? If you do right will you also not be accepted?*" So the right response would be to immediately calm down and ask, "Show me what is right because I understand I will also be accepted just like him because You are not a respecter of persons. If I listen to You carefully I can come out of this situation."

Don't be angry. That is why *Ephesians 4:26<sup>a</sup>* says,

**Ephesians 4:26<sup>a</sup>**

***<sup>26</sup> Be ye angry, and sin not:***

Be angry but do not sin. Anger can be your response but what is your anger against. The thief has come to steal, to kill and destroy. That is an anger and you have to respond to that with indignation. We call it righteous indignation. You need to have that but don't sin in the process. They are angry and bitter that their wives and children are gone but now in their anger they are picking up stones to stone the wrong person, who, actually, is the instrument that God will use to restore their families and their fortunes.

Be careful, anger is okay but be careful.

**2 Samuel 6:8-9**

***<sup>8</sup> And David was displeased, because the LORD had made a breach upon Uzzah: and he called the name of the place Perezuzzah to this day. <sup>9</sup> And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and said, How shall the ark of the LORD come to me?***

When Uzziah died, David's first response was anger. David became angry. He thought, "I made all this arrangement and look at the result of all this!" and his first response was anger. But his next response saved him. His next response was that he was afraid. Because he was angry he could have sinned against the Lord

but because he was afraid he did not sin against the Lord. And three months later he realizes, "I have found a way to get the ark back." Because the guy in whose house the ark is, everything in his house is blessed, his cows are giving more milk, his hens are laying more eggs, his children and everything is blessed. So he understands, "My God is God who blesses and not a God who curses. My God is a God who blesses and all I have to do is hear, know and understand His ways," and the ark is back in the city. So be angry for a cause but do not sin in your anger. That is what God is saying.

Let us go to back to 2 Samuel 30:6,

### **2 Samuel 30:6**

***<sup>6</sup>And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.***

Every man is reacting like this *but* (that is character) you are different. Don't say everyone is doing it so what is the problem. That is how people normally respond. Why do you have a girlfriend at this age? Because everyone has one at this age. How old are you I am 14. What does that have to do with it. Are you everybody or are you somebody? That is the difference, everyone is eating from the king's table *but* Daniel ...

Everyone in Potiphar's household must be hard workers when the master's eyes are upon them *but* Joseph... This is where the difference comes *but*.

The Bible says, "...*but David encouraged or strengthened himself.*" You need to understand that if you are a leader you need to encourage yourself first, don't jump and start encouraging others when you yourself are desperate. First to be a leader you have to first encourage yourself. David encouraged himself. The question is do we encourage ourselves? There is a problem there. There are a lot of people in the world who encourage themselves who do not know God. They keep saying, "I can... I can... I can..." "Yes we can!" and it is good. Temporarily it works. I am not saying that motivation does not work. All football games and other games that is how they pump themselves – "I can! I can! I can!" That is not what David did.

The difference between David and the rest of the world is that David encouraged himself *in the Lord*. That is the whole thing, it is not encouraging yourself. That many of the great ones, in the world or in the battlefield, do to encourage themselves. That is not what David did; *he encouraged himself in the Lord*.

There is a whole lot of difference; as far as heaven is from the earth that is the difference between 'I can' and 'God can'. The difference is this - I can do some things, I can do many things but *I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me*. That is the difference – *all things*. Nothing is impossible to God and nothing is impossible to the person who believes in that God. Please note carefully what he is saying. God can.

So how do you encourage yourselves? You encourage yourselves by turning your heart and mind back to God in a crisis.

### **Ephesians 6:10**

***<sup>10</sup>Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.***

Be strong in the Lord, not just be strong. I used to wonder when I was much younger, the men used to work in my grandfather's farm. They come in the morning and work through the evening and if you look at these people what they used to eat in the morning is that they keep the previous day's rice with water, and they eat that. Now you pay through your nose to buy Whey protein (all you body builders). Ultimately both the

workers and the bodybuilders were trying to be strong, but not in the Lord. They all died and are gone. Here Scripture says, 'Be strong in the Lord.'

How do I become strong in the Lord? How do I strengthen myself in times of crisis?

First thing, 'Go back to (what they say in engineering) the drawing board.' That is; go back to the beginning. *Ephesians 2:8-9*; that is where we all began.

### **Ephesians 2:8-9**

***<sup>8</sup> For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: <sup>9</sup> Not of works, lest any man should boast.***

If you were absolutely totally honest - the most difficult work that God did in each one of us is not our schooling, not our studies, not our marks, not our jobs, the most difficult thing that God did is saving us. To save a rogue like me is the most difficult work God did. How did He do it? Without your help; *by grace you have been saved*. You need to go back. It is very, very, important how you strengthen yourself in the Lord. You have to go back to the drawing board; He saved me when I thought I was unredeemable.

### **Romans 8:31**

***<sup>31</sup> What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?***

If He was for me then, when I was a reprobate, is He not for me now that I am His child? Simply how you put your facts in order. That is how you strengthen. Immediately the devil will come, he never misses anything like a meeting, he is with you all the time so he knows. So immediately he will come and tell you of all your sins and your failures, which is true. He has got plenty to tell David, "Do you know where you were for the last 16 months?" Did you offer a sacrifice, did you hear from God, weren't you serving Achish the king of the philistines? Were you not on the wrong side? Did you not stretch your hand out for evil? You were not fighting for Israel but you were fighting for the philistines." Every word he says is true. Nothing is false.

That is why the devil's voice has power because he does not always tell lies. When he speaks about us he speaks the truth and we know it is true. You see there was a story a long time ago, there was this huge internet giant and they had this huge customer base. Somebody hacked them and their entire data came out in the public. Your entire search history becomes public. If anyone knows your search history they know you. The devil does not need the internet he knows your search history. He knows exact who you are, what you are, what you think, what you read, what you watch, what you do. Not only does God know this but your personal demon knows this. So every word he will tell David is true. So how will you encourage yourself. Go back to the Word of God; to what God says. That is your response. Because the Word of God is the revelation to who God is. *Romans 5:8-10* is the most powerful verse when the devil comes and tells you everything about yourself, tell him what God says,

### **Romans 5:8-9**

***<sup>8</sup> But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.***

***<sup>9</sup> Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.***

If he is not satisfied with these two verses give him two more.

### **Romans 5:11**

***<sup>11</sup> For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.***

He will zip his mouth and go away. I did not know Him, I was a sinner and He died for me. I was His enemy and He saved me. What do you have to say to that? The devil says nothing.

Then if he is not satisfied with Scripture alone, give him a couple of testimonies. The devil also likes testimonies, not positive testimonies but negative testimonies. Pick the worst testimonies from the Bible.

### **1 Kings 1:27-29**

***27 And it came to pass, when Ahab heard those words, that he rent his clothes, and put sackcloth upon his flesh, and fasted, and lay in sackcloth, and went softly. 28 And the word of the LORD came to Elijah the Tishbite, saying, 29 Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before me? because he humbleth himself before me, I will not bring the evil in his days: but in his son's days will I bring the evil upon his house.***

Who is God showing mercy to? God is showing mercy to Ahab. Will you show mercy to Ahab? But God will. Give him another testimony,

### **2 Chronicles 33:12-13**

***12 And when he was in affliction, he besought the LORD his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, 13 And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD he was God.***

This is Manasseh and he was a wicked king. He even put his children through the fire for pagan gods. He filled the streets of Jerusalem with innocent blood.

So you have to tell the devil, “God will show mercy to Ahab and to Manasseh, He will most definitely show mercy to me. I have not killed anyone yet.” We may have killed with words but not with our hands.

You can go to the Word of God and look at the Character of God and that is where you get your strength from. This is who God is. Not what the devil says, not what the world says but what the Word of God says. This is how you strengthen yourself in the Lord.

Next thing to do when you are strengthening yourself is to focus on one facet of God. *Malachi 3:6* – this is very important because, unlike us,

### **Malachi 3:6**

***6 For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed.***

We all change like the weather or the climate but God does not change. He is forever the same and that is why we can have the strength to appeal to Him. He says do you know why you are not consumed, it is because I do not change. I was merciful then and I am merciful now. So we can always hold on to this and thank God that He does not change. What will happen if God changes? One day He is merciful and one day He is mad. Then we will have to check, we would have to make a database Sunday – God is happy; Monday – God is mad; Tuesday – God is not interested. That is how most believers are and that is why they pray only on Sundays because they think God is only happy on Sundays and sleeping on Monday. God is always the same. He is always absolutely, steadfast in Who He is.

The Bible says about Jesus in *Hebrews 11:38*,

### **Hebrews 11:38**

***8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever.***

### **Psalms 119:89**

***89 For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven.***



You read this Word and say that this was written over 2000 years ago and this is the New Testament. The last book in the OT was written over 2600 years ago and maybe God has changed since His Word was written. The answer is No, His Word is forever settled in the heavens. The Word also does not change. The Word reveals the character of God and is as steadfast as God Himself. It will never change. You can take the Bible to the Bank. It is valid for eternity and it will never change. This is where you come and that is why we read this, meditate on this and mark this and that is why we keep it in our heart because this (Bible) reveals Him and both are steadfast and do not change. That is how you encourage yourself. The nature of God. Even the angry prophet of God, Jonah knew this. Let us look at *Jonah 4:2*,

### **Jonah 4:2**

***<sup>2</sup> And he prayed unto the LORD, and said, I pray thee, O LORD, was not this my saying, when I was yet in my country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish: for I knew that thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest thee of the evil.***

“I know Your Character. You told me, “Go to Nineveh and preach this message, ‘40 days and then judgment; the end’. But I know that if somebody in that group turned a little, You will not do what You are telling me. I was very happy with the message, I wanted fire and brimstone to fall on them. Then I thought for a minute about Who was speaking. It was Yahweh who was speaking to me and He is very kind even to His enemies. He is very kind. By some chance if they repent, He will not do this and so I am not going.”

Did you see the nature of God? This is who God is. This is who God is. This is who God is.

And David knew this. You strengthen yourself in the character of your God and His Character is found in the Word of God. How do you strengthen yourself in God when you don’t know the character of God and how will you know the character of God if you don’t study your Bible? If you don’t know the Word who reveals who God is, you will not know the character of God and the result will be that you will not be able to strengthen yourself in the Lord. That is why we sing these songs which is Scripture hoping that if you don’t read your Bible at least you will remember the songs because the songs tell us who God is. He strengthened himself in the Lord.

So in the moment of crisis even if everybody gives up, don’t give up. Strengthen yourself in the Lord.

### **2 Samuel 30:7**

***<sup>7</sup> And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.***

What do you do? In modern language call your pastor. Don’t do it alone. If you are not able to hear from God call someone who is able to hear from God or someone who will give you godly counsel. Don’t just walk away. Don’t just walk away from God, your marriage, your job, your situation. Don’t do it, call somebody who will give you godly counsel. That one call has saved millions of lives. Because the other person will hear from God and that will change your life. But your heart (it is not that God does not speak) should be prepared to receive the counsel. That is the issue. If the people are willing to receive counsel when you know it is based on the Word of God, almost everything can be retrieved. You need to come with that heart. If you don’t come with that heart it is not possible. So he calls Abiathar because God still speaks. But if you don’t have anyone to speak to, go back to the Word of God and ask God to speak to you.

### **Psalm 138:2-3**

***<sup>2</sup> I will worship toward thy holy temple, and praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth: for thou hast magnified thy word above all thy name. <sup>3</sup> In the day when I cried thou answeredst me, and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.***

What is he talking about, “How did he answer me? He spoke to me through His Word. You answered me through Your Word. Because You have magnified Your Word above all Your name, I am putting my trust in Your Word.” Simple practical thing we have in our hearts and minds. So the Holy Spirit will bring into your remembrance when you ask, “Lord, what do I do?” I tell you the Holy Spirit will bring into your remembrance Scripture or a song based on Scripture. You will suddenly ask yourself - why am I singing this song? So stop and look at the lyrics and say, ‘God is speaking to me,’ you will find that you have received your answer. “I got my answer.” So He will bring into your remembrance. We have a personal Guide, a Person with us. He still speaks.

When they were all crying, including David, they could not hear. When they were bitter, they could not hear. But when he stopped crying and started encouraging himself in the Lord, he suddenly realized, “Hey! The priest is here, and the Ephod is here, let me enquire of the Lord.” The question is that would we enquire of the Lord if our previous record; let us say today you are in a crisis and all you can look back from January 1<sup>st</sup> to today (In this case December 6<sup>th</sup> 2020) is that you have not gone to church, you have not prayed and you have not read your Bible and on December 6<sup>th</sup> crisis hits you, will you open your Bible? You will if you realize that God will still speak to you if you turn back to Him. David has not done anything for sixteen months with God (1 year and 4 months he has done nothing with God) but in the moment of crisis he goes back, encourages himself and calls for the Word of God. And the Word of God comes. Now God will speak to him.

Please understand that the way back out of despair is always the same way. What is the same way? You have to go back to God. You have to go back to the ways of God, you have to go back to where God began with you.

Remember the most desperate man called Elijah and when God meets him on Mount Horeb in *1 Kings 19:13*,

### **1 Kings 19:13**

***<sup>13</sup> And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, there came a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah?***

The first thing God asks him, “What are you doing here Elijah? What are you doing here?” He must have asked David the same thing, “Why are you in Philistine territory? You shouldn’t be here, this is not your place. You are my anointed king and what are you doing living in gentile territory? What are you doing here?” He is not scolding you nor is He angry or mad with you. He is just telling you a fact. “You know why you are here in this situation? It is because you are in the wrong place. You left the protected place and came to the wrong place and that is why you have lost.”

Let us look at what he tells him in *1 Kings 19:15*,

### **1 Kings 19:15**

***<sup>15</sup> And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus: and when thou comest, anoint Hazael to be king over Syria:***

Go back the way you came. That is what we have to do in our mind. That is how we encourage ourselves. Go back. Do you know it all begins in our mind? Everything begins in our mind. The battle is in our mind. We

win or lose the battle in our mind. If you lose we first lost the battle in the mind. That is why you say in English the first thing to go is the mind.

Between *1 Samuel 27:1* and *1 Samuel 30:3* there is a period of 16 months. See how it began

**1 Samuel 27:1<sup>a</sup>**

***<sup>1</sup> And David said in his heart, I shall now perish***

This is how it all started. 'I am not going to do well in my job.' 'I am not going to do well in studies.' You join for music class and in one week, 'It is not for me.' Finished! You give up. Everybody is waiting for the gift of playing the piano and there is nothing like that. It is hard work to learn the piano. It all begins in the mind. People give up in the mind before they give up outside. That is what he said, 'I will perish in the hands of Saul.' The result of that one idea which got in David's mind is,

**1 Samuel 30:1-2<sup>a</sup>**

***<sup>1</sup> And it came to pass, when David and his men were come to Ziklag on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the south, and Ziklag, and smitten Ziklag, and burned it with fire; <sup>2</sup> And had taken the women captives, that were therein:***

This is the end result of one thought which started in David's mind that if he stays in Israel he will perish in Saul's hand.

This is the end result when you start following your thoughts which did not originate with God. So go back. Don't limit God in your imagination. Imagination is very powerful. It can be positive or negative. That is why God has given man the ability to imagine. But the devil also takes it and uses it to destroy us.

A classic example is,

**Numbers 13:33**

***<sup>33</sup> And there we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight.***

Who told you that you were grasshoppers? Did God tell you that you were a grasshopper. Grasshoppers in our sight and their sight. Did you hear one Canaanite say that you were a grasshopper. On the other hand we have the testimony forty years later from the mouth of Rahab that everybody's heart had failed them for fear. Then what do you mean by their sight? Grasshoppers.

Think about teams, before you play your rival you think, "Wow! What a great team! Who can fight them or beat them? Do you know how their forwards are? They break through any defence. And their attacks! Oh! My!" You have already lost the battle in your mind.

What are your thoughts about your capabilities – Do you look at yourself or do you look at what God says? What about your growth in a job. Do you think that you are capable? Remember you lose it first in your mind. Don't give up.

Go back the way you came. You have to first go back in your mind.

**1 Samuel 16:13**

***<sup>13</sup> Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the midst of his brethren: and the Spirit of the LORD came upon David from that day forward. So Samuel rose up, and went to Ramah.***

Go back where you met God first. Go back where you've encountered Him first; where He began a good work in you. Do you remember that day? That is what David has to do – "I am here but let me ask you why am I here? I made my mistakes, but why am I here? Because something happened to me a few years ago in my house. That is where my life suddenly took a turn." Go back there, that is where you met God.

That day would have been a very strange day. Jessie's whole house is ready, they would have been prepared. The prophet is in town and the whole town is shaking. Jessie is there and all his sons are there and the feast is ready.

His sons are paraded before the prophet from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> and the prophet asks,

Prophet: Isn't there anybody else?

Jessie: Yeah there is the youngest one.

Prophet: Where is he?

Jessie: Out in the wilderness looking after sheep

Prophet: Call him

David is far away in the wilderness and the whole town is in a standstill. The prophet is sitting. We don't know how long it took for David to come. Nothing is happening. God is not moving, all the angelic host is waiting, prophet is waiting. And the one who comes running is a shepherd boy and as soon as he comes, Samuel hears the voice of the Lord saying, "Arise, anoint him." And David is remembering that day to encourage himself. Do you remember that day? Go back to the day that you met the Lord. The day something happened inside you. He was anointed with oil and the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.

But for us the Spirit of the Lord came into us. Do you remember that day? Can you go back? Do you remember that day when the lion and the bear came? Do you remember the day that the soldiers came from the king's palace to see your father and tell him that we want your young boy who plays the harp? The king has summoned. Your mouth was opened, you were taken to the palace and then you were taken before the king. Do you remember when you played the harp how the face of the king changed? He was sitting there angry and possessed and when you played his face changed. And then Goliath, have you forgotten? Have you forgotten your victories, have you forgotten Jonathan the king's son who made a covenant with you, Michal the king's daughter who loved you and the king gave her to you? And every time you were chased you were always one step ahead, have you forgotten? Go back the way you came.

Everyone who is sitting here and is of God has a record of what God has done in your life, in the past; during the pandemic and the past. When you look at that, you are strengthened, and you know that God has not changed. I am going back to him. Tell me Lord, what to do?

Abiathar, bring the ephod. When you ask be sure that you ask clearly and listen carefully.

# Ask Clearly

# Listen Carefully

Ask very clearly. Ask clearly. "What kind of job do you need?" 'Anything.' What kind of an answer is that? David asks clearly in verse 8 – "Shall I pursue, shall I overtake?"

Let us look at *1 Samuel 30: 7-8*,

### **1 Samuel 30:7-8**

***<sup>7</sup> And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. <sup>8</sup> And David enquired 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.***

David did not ask, 'Shall I run behind them', he was very clear – 'Shall I overtake them?' Many are pursuing jobs because they never ask the Lord, "Should I overtake?"

Question: Did you apply?

Answer: Yes

Question: Did you get the job?

Answer: No

Question: Did you ask God? What did you ask God? Pursuing a job or overtaking a job?

He is just repeating God's words. I remember what You said through Moses – *"If you listen to My voice and obey My voice all these blessing shall follow you and overtake you."* What is the point of blessings following me? I want it to overtake me. If it is following me somebody behind me will enjoy it. Ask clearly. Ask very, very, clearly. When you ask God, be very clear.

I am telling you that you should be in ministry, every meeting that you go there will be 5 or 6 out of the hundreds who come for prayer, if you ask them, "What do you want me to pray for?" they will reply, "Anything." You are kind to them because they are strangers. Many times I want to pray, "Bring something or anything into their lives."

No clarity in their prayer life. There is a situation and in that situation they have taken your possessions, your family and gone and he is very clear in asking, "Should I pursue? And if I pursue, will I overtake? Because if it is impossible just tell me, I will accept defeat here. It is gone. Let me move on to the other side. Tell me if Your answer is no, I will accept it."

### **2 Samuel 12:19-23**

***<sup>19</sup> But when David saw that his servants whispered, David perceived that the child was dead: therefore David said unto his servants, Is the child dead? And they said, He is dead. <sup>20</sup> Then David arose from the earth, and washed, and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the LORD, and worshipped: then he came to his own house; and when he required, they set bread before him, and he did eat. <sup>21</sup> Then said his servants unto him, What thing is this that thou hast done? thou didst fast and weep for the child, while it was alive; but when the child was dead, thou didst rise and eat bread. <sup>22</sup> And he said, While the child was yet alive, I fasted and wept: for I said, Who can tell whether GOD will be gracious to me, that the child may live? <sup>23</sup> But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.***

Is the child dead? The child is dead. He got up took a shower, anointed himself, went and worshipped the Lord and came back and ate because that door was closed. It is over. Let me move to the next level. He will not come back to me, but I will go back to him. In the meantime I have work to do. I am not going to let that stop my progress. So here tell me, "Should I pursue, If I pursue will I overtake?"

We serve a God who answers very, very, clearly. If I will not overtake why waste the time and energy. You tell me, Lord. What is our God. Does He respond, 'Maybe'? No. He responds, "Pursue for you will surely overtake and without fail you shall recover all." That is my God. He reply's very clearly.

The question is - do you know that you can pursue your enemies?

**Luke 10:18-19**

**<sup>18</sup> And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Did you see satan fall like lightning from heaven? <sup>19</sup> Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.**

Do you know you can pursue your enemies? We don't have flesh and blood enemies now. We have spiritual enemies now and do you know you can pursue them?

**1 John 5:4**

**<sup>4</sup> For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.**

I can pursue and overcome this world because He said so. I don't have to be defeated by this world. I don't have to be defeated by this world, but I can overcome this world. Why? Because He said so. I don't have to go and ask God, 'Can I overcome this?', because it is already spoken and written. You don't have to ask because it is already said and written.

**James 4:7**

**<sup>7</sup> Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.**

Lord, if I resist, will he move away in Jesus name? No, he will flee. But Lord I am trying to push him for so long and he is not moving, Lord. God says, "It is because you are not listening to Me, I told you to first submit to Me. Listen to Me and I will tell you how to get him out of the way. You are not listening to Me and you are trying to push him in your strength. He is immovable in your strength but in My strength he will flee." Submit to God. Listen carefully.

David asked clearly and listened carefully. What is that which David did not say? Abiathar, bring the Ephod. Abiathar brings the ephod and David says, 'Enquire of the Lord.' Did he enquire of the Lord, 'Lord, why me?' That is what most people ask – 'Why me?' 'Why did that happen to me?' 'What did I do to deserve this?' When the ephod is in front of them this is the cry of the people, instead of asking God, 'How do I recover?'

You have to listen to what he said and what he did not say. The unspoken. He did not say that at all – 'Why me? Why my life? Why my family?' He did not say any of these things. He said, "The fact is, Lord, I have lost all. Now tell me, will I recover all? Shall I pursue? Shall I overtake?" God says, "I am with you."

**Philippians 4:6**

**<sup>6</sup> Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.**

Be anxious for nothing. He has come to that point.

**James 5:13**

**<sup>13</sup> Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.**

That is what he did, he prayed.

### **Psalm 50:15**

***<sup>15</sup> And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.***

The question is that do we call upon Him in the day of trouble? The answer is that we don't call upon Him. Because as soon as we are getting ready to pray, the devil brings the list, he opens the scroll – 'Do you know what you did in 16 months? And you think you can pray? And He is going to answer?' He just threw the scroll at him and said, "Let me go and talk to Him because He said, '*Call upon Me in the day of trouble and I will deliver you.*'" You know how many people miss their blessings and breakthroughs because they don't ask. That is why Jesus says,

### **James 4:2<sup>c</sup>**

***<sup>2</sup>ye do not have because you do not ask.***

***<sup>2</sup>Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.***

God's purpose for His children never changes. You can name your calamity and Word of God still says that *in all these you are more than conquerors through Christ Jesus. It never changes.* You can take your calamity and stick it on the wall and over that write the verse

### **Romans 8:37**

***<sup>37</sup> Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.***

Not in some things but in all things.

The third part is that after he heard, he obeyed fully.

# Ask clearly

# Listen carefully

# Obey fully

Once God gives you an answer, you need to obey fully. He did not let the weariness of physical exhaustion stop him. Are you going to let your weariness stop you, your tiredness stop you? They are weary, they have marched for three days and they have not eaten. When they come here the whole thing is a mess. It has been burned down, they have cried their guts out and then they hear the Word of God. They did not say, 'Let me sleep for 2 hours and then get up,' they immediately took off.

When God gives you a promise, He also gives you the power. He does not give you a promise and say, 'Do it in your power.' He does not do that because then the glory will belong to you. He obeyed fully. On the way you will have issues.

### **2 Samuel 30:10**

***<sup>10</sup> But David pursued, he and four hundred men: for two hundred abode behind, which were so faint that they could not go over the brook Besor.***

Among them were two hundred who were very tired. We don't know who these two hundred are. So suddenly in this journey in which you are running with six hundred, two hundred fall back, will you stop? He was smart. Everything that looks like a disadvantage, if you have the Word of God with you and the Wind of God, which is the Spirit of God behind you, you will learn how to turn your disadvantages to your advantages. The question is do you want to slow down because of these two hundred when something is at stake over there. No. What you do is that you ask the two hundred guys to stay here and tell the remaining four hundred to take their load off (lighten the load). "All you need to carry is your sword and your shield. Let us go." Suddenly you can move faster.

That is exactly what David did. I am on a race and God is on my side, the Spirit is on my side and now time also will be on my side. I am going to turn my disadvantage into my advantage.

How do you put this spiritually in the New Covenant –

### **Hebrews 12:1**

***<sup>1</sup> Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,***

You need to ask Lord, (sin everyone knows the problem is with weights) to show you the weights that slow you down. And all the good believers here struggle with weights, ‘What should I wear? What should I eat? etc. This is our problem because these are weights. There is joke that I always tell, which really happened, and this was a long long time ago. I had to buy sarees for my sisters and aunts. I walked into a store and in ten minutes my shopping was over. Somebody asked me, “How can you buy like that?” I replied, “When a woman goes to the shop, she sees everything and is satisfied with nothing. I will tell you, when I go and give the sarees to each one, they will say, ‘Wow! Where did you get this? What great taste!’ and everyone said the same thing.

Don’t waste your time over irrelevant things. These are the weights of our lives. I am just giving you one weight; many weights are there. It is like a gym, there are many different kinds of weights in your life. Allow God and His Word to reveal the weights in your life and discard them so that you can run the race. Start spiritual dieting and lose some weights. That is what David did. You will be able to run the spiritual race faster because you are light. What to wear, what to eat, what to drink; Jesus put them into these three categories and everything is added to these.

### **1 Samuel 30:11**

***<sup>11</sup> And they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he did eat; and they made him drink water;***

You know what happens, there is a wounded Egyptian lying there in the field and they are rushing to rescue their families. They are in a hurry and on the way they see this wounded Egyptian. Our problem is that (even though we have heard and we are on the road to pursuing and overtaking) we often miss our target because we despise the little things that God left on the way which would have helped us in our progress. We despise small things. If David had not stopped for this man he would have probably been late. A wounded man lying on the road does not look like someone who will aid your success. We always look for big signs, we miss the small signs.

*2 Kings 5:1-3* – a small sign. Will you listen to a small voice?

### **2 Kings 5:1-3**

***<sup>1</sup> Now Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because by him the LORD had given deliverance unto Syria: he was also a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper. <sup>2</sup> And the Syrians had gone out by companies, and had brought away captive out of the land of Israel a little maid; and she waited on Naaman's wife. <sup>3</sup> And she said unto her mistress, Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy.***

She was just a servant girl and she says, “There is a prophet and he can heal Naaman.” Do you know how many people in this city, non Christian families have got their deliverance because they listened to their Christian maids. When they come to a dead end and the servant asks if they can pray and they get on their knees and cry to Jesus and He answers because they did not despise that little thing. Do you despise small



things? You have to hear them pray with passion and tears. The problem is that we always look at big things and despise little things.

### **John 6:9**

***<sup>9</sup>There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?***

Jesus said, "Give it to Me." Don't despise that little things on the way. God has put them strategically there for you, to help you. Through it all before David had spoken, even before Ziklag had burned God is already working. That is what you need to know that God is already working in your life. He is already working behind the scenes for you. If only our eyes would be opened like Elisha said, "Lord, open my servant's eyes for a second that he may see that You are always with us and always for us. You are always working for us."

Let us see how God was already working

### **1 Chronicles 12:19-21**

***<sup>19</sup>And there fell some of Manasseh to David, when he came with the Philistines against Saul to battle: but they helped them not: for the lords of the Philistines upon advisement sent him away, saying, He will fall to his master Saul to the jeopardy of our heads. <sup>20</sup>As he went to Ziklag, there fell to him of Manasseh, Adnah, and Jozabad, and Jedaiel, and Michael, and Jozabad, and Elihu, and Zilthai, captains of the thousands that were of Manasseh. <sup>21</sup>And they helped David against the band of the rovers: for they were all mighty men of valour, and were captains in the host.***

Two hundred are tired. Do you know God said, "Don't worry I have sent mighty men into your army to fight this battle?" They came just on time because God was already planning your victory. He had already made provision for your success. The question is - will you ask, will you hear, will you obey?

This Egyptian would be David's GPS. He takes him straight to the target. That is why *Zacharias 4:10* says,

### **Zacharias 4:10**

***<sup>10</sup>For who hath despised the day of small things? for they shall rejoice, and shall see the plummet in the hand of Zerubbabel with those seven; they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth.***

Do not despise the day of small beginnings. We despise these people who are below us like maid servants, prostitutes, pimps and all these kinds of people. We would not listen to them. If Naaman had not listened to that little servant girl, he would in the long run have to stay away from his duties, stayed in a house alone and died as a leper. Don't despise anybody and think he is so small. That is how Gideon looked at himself but God looked at him differently.

Imagine four thousand five thousand years ago you were passing by Harran to Canaan and you saw one man and he has nothing with him but one bag and does not even have a pillow and is sleeping with his head on a stone. You would have looked at him and said, "Poor fellow!" without realizing he would become a nation which would be there forever. If you were to see Jacob that day sleeping no one would have given him a second look. But nobody knew that this guy would become Israel.

So be very careful, be attentive because God has put your steps to success on the way. That is why we have to hear. If we look at Jacob and say, "Poor guy!" God will say, "Jacob I have loved." When Lord? "From his mother's womb." You mean before he did anything. "Yes." Success is guaranteed? "Yes" Blessed to be a nation? "Yes" When Lord? "When he was in his mother's womb."

### **1 Samuel 30:17<sup>a</sup>**

***<sup>17</sup> And David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day:***

Do you think that the battle is easy? I have a promise and I will sit in my easy chair. No. You will have to fight for it. These are people who are tired. How many hours did they fight? They fought for approximately 20 hours. This is what God told Paul,

### **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**

***<sup>9</sup> And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. <sup>10</sup> Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.***

He became weak before God and said, "Lord, what shall I do?" Only the weak kneel before God. "What shall I do, shall I pursue, shall I overtake?" and God said, "Go!" This man is really weak and he is tired and very weary but the grace of God is sufficient, in fact it is more than sufficient.

This is a battle. Be ready for the battle. Spiritual battles are not won easily. That is why God tells through apostle Paul to Timothy and to all young men to *endure hardship as discipline*. Have you endured the hardship of relentless, persevering prayer? Can you? The most difficult spiritual hardship is the hardship of prayer to endure it even though you see no answer. It is the elect who cry out to him day and night and give Him no rest. They cry for 1 month, 2 months, 1 year, 2 years, 3 years, 10 years, 11 years, 12 years they endure in hard prayer. Then everything changes in *1 Samuel 30:18-20*,

### **1 Samuel 30:18-20**

***<sup>18</sup> And David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away: and David rescued his two wives.***

***<sup>19</sup> And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all.***

I am telling you heaven is going to be a surprise for people who have fought this battle. People will say, 'Lord in this battle for You I lost,' but God says, "You gained." You ask, 'Where Lord?' "You will see; *eyes have not seen; nor ears have heard what God is preparing for those who love Him.*"

David fought a physical battle, we are fighting a spiritual battle. The enemy steals a lot of things from us and we voluntarily give away a lot of things, but God is no man's debtor. That is why when Peter said, "Lord, we have left everything to follow You." Jesus said, "You will get hundred times over." Do you believe? He is the same God.

They are on their way back. Actually, David got more than he lost. He got the other things the Amalekites had looted. He got theirs as well, so he took it.

### **1 Samuel 30:21-25**

***<sup>21</sup> And David came to the two hundred men, which were so faint that they could not follow David, whom they had made also to abide at the brook Besor: and they went forth to meet David, and to meet the people that were with him: and when David came near to the people, he saluted them. <sup>22</sup> Then answered all the wicked men and men of Belial, of those that went with David, and said, Because they went not with us, we will not give them ought of the spoil that we have recovered, save to every man his wife and his children, that they may lead them away, and depart.***

Do you know that in the group of 400 there were still some worthless and wicked men? Even the best of best churches there will be few crooks. As long as they stay, take them into the battle it is ok. You will think that all this hardship would have refined them out but there are still a few crooks among them.

***<sup>23</sup> Then said David, Ye shall not do so, my brethren, with that which the LORD hath given us, who hath preserved us, and delivered the company that came against us into our hand. <sup>24</sup> For who will hearken unto you in this matter? but as his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike. <sup>25</sup> And it was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel unto this day***

Ye shall not do so. Do you know what David is saying, real principle of a king? He is a king before he is crowned. He is saying you and I received grace when we did not merit it and now it is our turn to pass on grace to those who do not merit it. David said, "Be careful! We did not merit this victory; He gave it to us. Now we give it to them."

Be careful of this. Will you be gracious in your victory? That is what *James 4:6* says,

**James 4:6**

***<sup>6</sup> But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.***

These are fundamental lessons in the Bible. He recovered all. He goes beyond that,

**1 Samuel 30:26-31**

***<sup>26</sup> And when David came to Ziklag, he sent of the spoil unto the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, Behold a present for you of the spoil of the enemies of the LORD; <sup>27</sup> To them which were in Bethel, and to them which were in south Ramoth, and to them which were in Jattir, <sup>28</sup> And to them which were in Aroer, and to them which were in Siphmoth, and to them which were in Eshtemoa, <sup>29</sup> And to them which were in Rachal, and to them which were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, and to them which were in the cities of the Kenites, <sup>30</sup> And to them which were in Hormah, and to them which were in Chorashan, and to them which were in Athach, <sup>31</sup> And to them which were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men were wont to haunt.***

David, before he came to the Philistine territory, said to himself, "Let me look back and remember everybody who was a blessing to me," and he sent them gifts. "I want to be a blessing to everybody." The best part is that he has no clue about Saul. But God is moving his heart.

Can God move your heart to be liberal; to be generous? Do you know what this will do? In a few days he will get the news that Saul is dead and all these people will gather to him and say, "You will be king." He has already won their hearts with his graciousness without even knowing that the other king is going to die. You have to see/know how God is going to move. Keep listening to the Spirit of God, keep being led by the Spirit of God, keep listening to His prodding, be gracious in victory. Don't forget the people who were a blessing in your life and all those names should be there in your prayer list. Pray for them. They may not be there in your life now. I keep telling 1984 (which was 36 years back), Varghese Ninan in October at 11 PM came to my room and brought me to the Lord. Can I forget him? Every year I encourage him.

Below is the conversation:

Varghese Ninan: James, I am just a regular CSI church member.

James: That is okay, you brought me to the Lord.

Varghese Ninan: I don't do anything now.

James: I do. You are a blessing.

Don't forget those people. If we look back none of us reached where we are if there weren't people to bless us, spiritually, on the way. That is what David is doing. This is the mark of a spiritual king. He is gracious in victory.

On the other side there was another king who too was anointed by the same prophet, who refused to humble himself before God and ended a rebel.

### **1 Samuel 31:4-6**

***<sup>4</sup> Then said Saul unto his armourbearer, Draw thy sword, and thrust me through therewith; lest these uncircumcised come and thrust me through, and abuse me. But his armourbearer would not; for he was sore afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword, and fell upon it. <sup>5</sup> And when his armourbearer saw that Saul was dead, he fell likewise upon his sword, and died with him. <sup>6</sup> So Saul died, and his three sons, and his armourbearer, and all his men, that same day together.***

Two things are happening in parallel; one man who never sought the Lord, never humbled himself before the Lord, he lost all, he fell on his sword, his armour bearer fell on his sword, it was a group suicide taking place. On this side the other man who humbled himself before the Lord recovered all.

God says, "Both were anointed by the same prophet. Which route do you want to go? Do you want to lose all or do you want to recover all? What is your testimony? You can choose your destiny and your testimony."

The question, as we come to communion is, what has the devil stolen from you? *For he comes to kill, to steal and to destroy but Jesus came to give life, abundant life.* That is why we need to know God and that He came to give life. I want to read to you something which I came across today.

This is from Spurgeon - When Ziklag was Burnt Down.

The Lord seems to say to David, "All that you have ever got of Achish is this village of Ziklag, and I have caused it to be burnt up, so that you have nothing left to be a tie between you and Philistia. The princes said, 'Send this fellow away,' and they have sent you away; and now the town that Achish gave you is utterly destroyed; there is no link left between you and the Philistines, and you have come back to your natural position." The hardest blow that our God ever strikes, if it puts us right and separates us from self and sin, and carnal policy, is a coup de grace, a blow of love. If it ends our life of selfishness, and brings us back into the life of trust, it is a blessed blow. When God blesses His people most, it is by terrible things in righteousness. He smote David to heal him. He fetched him out from the snare of the Philistine fowler, and delivered him from the noisome pestilence of heathen association, by a way that brought the tears into his eyes till he had no more power to weep. Now the servant of the Lord begins to see the wonderful hand of God, and he shall yet say, "Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now have I kept Thy Word."

Some of the most painful, brutal blows in our lives were afflicted by God in love to cut our ties away from flesh and the world so that we could come back to God and become everything God wanted us to be. That is how you look at life. That is why God is always Love even in your darkest hour. He is always Love. He never changes.

Today is our final communion of 2020. As you come to the table see with different eyes, this is a table of love. *Behold what manner of love.* The Bible says that *someone may even dare to die for a righteous man but who will die for a wicked man? When we were yet sinners Christ Jesus died for us.* What looked like the most foolish act and symbol on earth; the cross and the crucifixion was God's greatest display of power and victory in the heavenly realm. Through the cross Jesus destroyed, spoiled, the powers and principalities. That is why He said, "*Do this in remembrance of Me.*" We go to this table; this is an awesome table.

Prayer:

Father we come to You, this first Sunday of the final month. We just want to look back again and say thank You Lord. Yes, there were storms, yes there were trials, there were dark, dark, days and all kind of things, but You brought us through. Nobody can deny that, You brought us through. Through the pandemic, through the lack, through the joblessness, through it all you brought us through. Every one of us can testify, 'I got clothes on my back and food on my table. The Lord was good to me.' We just want to thank You Lord. Today with hearts full of thanksgiving we want to come to Your table because the greatest thing that You ever did for us is represented here. You let Your Son to die on our behalf so that we can live. Immortal God, Everlasting Father became man so that we could become Your children. We just want to thank You Lord. Thank You, Lord. I pray that as we partake of these emblems it will bring healing, strength and an awakening in our inner man that we continue to pursue and overtake and defeat the enemy and recover all that he has stolen from us. Thank You, Father. In Jesus' Name, amen.

Closing prayer:

*Father we just come to You Lord. The God who went with and before David is the same God who is with us now. The Way Maker, Miracle Worker. I pray for everyone who is struggling, who thinks that every door is shut, O Father You are the Way Maker. The door that You open no man can shut. The door that You shut no man can open. Let every Ziglak which is built in our lives in opposition to God's will be burnt down in Jesus' Name. It has no place in our lives. Let it burn to the ground. Everyone who has camped in the Philistine territory let them be drawn out by the hand of God, in Jesus' Name. Let every pursuer of my destiny who has pursued me all these years, let him fall on his sword and die, in Jesus' name, for what God has blessed no man can curse. All my enemies, all our enemies in the spiritual realm, their own swords shall consume them. Goliath came after David; Goliath's sword took off Goliath's head. Saul came after David, Saul's sword devoured Saul. That is the destiny of God's people. Those that pursue you they will be destroyed by their own sword. You will pursue, you will overtake, and you will recover all, for the Lord has said, "Surely." He said "Surely" Take it as His Word today and surely you will overtake and recover all. Thank You, Father. You are the God of restoration. Even Your hardest blow is in love and not in wrath or anger for Your children. You burnt Ziglak down, it was Your hand, the Amalekites were just instruments in Your hand. You burnt it down so David could be enthroned in Hebron. Help Your children to see it. The things that God burns down in our lives are so that we can be enthroned in another place. Ziglak is not our destiny, Hebron and Jerusalem is our destiny. Let no one miss God's purpose in their lives. Thank You, Father. This 12<sup>th</sup> month, twenty-five days to go everybody who did not have a good start or a good middle, I pray, will run well and finish well.*

*What you could not do in eleven months God can cause you to do in 25 days and you can look back on 31<sup>st</sup> night and say, 'I recovered all, for God was with me and God was for me.' Thank You, Lord. We just thank You, praise You and worship You Lord. Thank You, Father. We give You the glory, we give You the honour and we give You the power, it is all Yours Lord and by faith, in Your house, in Your presence, we lift up holy hands and bless Your holy name. Be blessed God of Israel, My God, Our God. Be Blessed. For in Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.*

*Now the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with each one of us. Amen*

