

This sermon delves into the repercussions of King David's deceptive alliance with Achish, as explored in the previous two sermons. As the saying goes, "when you sow the wind, you reap the whirlwind." Let's uncover what this means for David.

THE CALAMITY AT ZIKLAG (1 SAMUEL 30:1-6)

The Amalekites, a nomadic group from the Arabian Peninsula, attacked Ziklag when David and his men were away. The Amalekites, associated with Esau's descendants, returned David's previous aggression. Interestingly, David had killed every Amalekite in his attack, while the Amalekites took women hostage during their raid.

The devastation was significant for David and his men. Their town was reduced to ashes, and their families were missing. David's wives, Ahinoam and Abigail, were taken captive. The disaster caused his men to blame him, considering the calamity a direct result of his decisions.

Amidst the chaos, "David encouraged himself in the LORD his God" (v. 6), signifying a return to his faith amidst the catastrophe.

DAVID SEEKS GOD'S DIRECTION (1 SAMUEL 30:7-8)

Recognizing his need for divine guidance, David inquires of the Lord through the Ephod, seeking advice on pursuing his attackers. He receives an assurance of victory. This contrasts with Saul, who, without the benefit of priests or the Ephod, resorts to a witch for guidance and receives a message of defeat. Unlike Saul, David, with the Ephod, consults the Lord directly in his time of need, marking a significant spiritual turning point. This prompts us to question how differently things might have unfolded had David sought divine guidance earlier, possibly avoiding the tragic event at Ziklag.

THE PURSUIT (1 SAMUEL 30:9-10)

After assurance from the Lord, David and his 600 men pursued the Amalekites. They journeyed to Brook Besor, today's Wadi Ghazze, where 200 men, exhausted from a roughly 100-mile round trip from Ziklag to Aphek and back, plus an additional 15 miles after discovering Ziklag's destruction, couldn't continue. David and the remaining 400 men pressed on.

AN EGYPTIAN SLAVE PROVIDES CRUCIAL INFORMATION (1 SAMUEL 30:11-15)

David, a seasoned military leader, valued good intelligence. His men found a young man near death in the Negev desert, a strategic point for information on army movements. They saved him, hoping he might offer useful information. The man, an Egyptian slave of the Amalekites—David's targets—revealed their recent whereabouts.

This information was crucial for David. The slave mentioned they had invaded the "south of the Cherethites", a region in the northern Negev, home to various tribes including the Cherethites, future mercenaries for David. The slave also

mentioned invading Judah and the "Negev of Caleb", but most importantly, he revealed that "we burned Ziklag with fire".

David, needing his help, promised the slave safety. This negotiation highlighted the differences in legal treatment of slaves between Israel and other nations. While codes like the Hittite Law and Code of Hammurabi called for the execution of those harboring fugitive slaves, Hebrew law forbade returning an escaped slave to his master and mandated respectful treatment. This incident emphasized the distinctive humanitarian ethos in Israel's legal system, a rarity in the ancient Near East.

DAVID'S VICTORY OVER THE AMALEKITES (1 SAMUEL 30:16-20)

Guided by an Egyptian slave, David's men located the celebrating Amalekites and launched a surprise attack. The battle lasted a day, ending with the enemy routed and only 400 young men escaping. They recovered everything they had lost, including their captive families and possessions. Additionally, they gained the flocks and herds of the Amalekites, making the victory a recovery and an unexpected gain.

THE DISPUTE OVER DIVIDING THE SPOILS (1 SAMUEL 30:21-25)

Upon returning to the Besor Valley, a conflict emerged amongst the warriors concerning the division of spoils. David, the leader, decreed that spoils be evenly divided among all men, including those who didn't fight, and made it a rule in his kingdom. The victory and spoils were attributed to the Lord, not to their strength. This reflects David's acknowledgment of God's providence and his commitment to ensure all his followers share in God's blessings, irrespective of their contributions.

DAVID SENDS GIFTS TO THE ELDERS OF JUDAH (1 SAMUEL 30:26-31)

These verses depict David declaring his loyalty to Judah's citizens, particularly those in and south of Hebron. He shares his Amalekite victory spoils with the elders, strategically strengthening relations. This gesture underlines his leadership and care, influencing them to soon perceive David as their king. These actions set the stage for his eventual rise to the throne.

CONCLUSION

David's time in Gath represents the consequences of fear and deception, and the redemptive power of repentance and trust in God. His fear led to deceit, pain, and loss, but his repentance and trust in God led to deliverance and fortune restoration.

This story is a timeless lesson. Like David, we often forget God's promises and create unnecessary complications. Yet, redemption is always possible through learning from mistakes and relying on God.

Though we don't have the same protection as David, we can benefit from the blessing of making godly decisions based on His Word. This helps avoid pitfalls and aligns our lives with God's will. Ultimately, David's story reminds us of Proverbs 3:5-6 about trusting and acknowledging God for guidance.