



Recovering Faith

Social Quote: "Far too often, we focus on erasing past realities rather than creating future blessings."

1 Samuel 27-30

INTRO

I believe it's safe to say that all of us, at some point in our lives, have been up against life circumstances that feel too heavy for us to carry. Things feel more like a crushing weight than a bearable load.

- Perhaps you've hit a point in your marriage where disillusionment has set in, and things seem to be irreversible falling apart.
- Maybe your financial picture has passed the threshold of your ability to get out of the hole that seems to be getting deeper by the moment.
- Maybe your kids have gone off the rails, and you've lost them to the world.
- Maybe you just received that diagnosis that the cancer is incurable.

Those things are hard. The only thing harder is when you realize that those things are partially a result of bad decisions you've made.

- Your marriage is falling apart because you've had too much pride to apologize, forgive, or change.
- Your finances are a wreck because of the lack of discipline, control over your spending, and poor decision-making.
- Your kids have gone off the rails partly due to your lack of intentionality, teaching, and discipline as they grew up.
- Your health is deteriorating because of poor lifestyle choices, smoking, or a lack of healthy decisions.

Before you get up and leave calling me a meany, you should know that you are not alone if you have experienced that or are experiencing that. In fact, I would say you're in the high majority of all human beings, including most of our biblical heroes.

- While we should never aim for failure, the fact that we are human means that some failure will find us by default.

And failure has a strange way of trying to define us, defeat us, and discourage us from believing that there is hope for the future. Even people without Christ in this world recognize this dynamic. It's one of the reasons people like Winston Churchill would pen one of the most famous statements on failure:

“Success is not final, failure is not fatal: it is the courage to continue that counts.”

QUOTE

“ John Wooden, UCLA's famous college basketball coach who won 10 NCAA tournaments within 12 years, was also a devout follower of Jesus Christ. He added a very important extra thought to Churchill's famous words.

“Failure isn't fatal, but failure to change might be.”

It's not simply the courage to continue that counts. It's the courage to continue the right way that counts.

INTRO (CONT)

King David, who, by God's own admission, was a "Man after God's heart," also experienced failure, great lapses of faith and judgment, and some great losses because of some of his decisions.

- David lost his firstborn child shortly after birth due to his moral failures.
- David lost children as adults due to his parental failures.

- David lost the lives of innocent inhabitants of Israel due to some of his leadership and political failures.
- And in the story we study today, David was on the verge of loss based on some fear-based decisions.

But for all of David's losses, David finished faithfully, having recovered more than He lost. How did this happen? Ultimately, when David failed to seek God's heart or do things God's way, there was always a point where he humbled himself, returned to the Lord, turned from His sin, and arose to obedience. And I believe that some in here today need to know that your failure, loss, foolishness, or ignorance doesn't have to be the end of the story if you're willing to take note of what God's Word has to say this morning.

AS WE COME TO OUR PASSAGE, A LITTLE CONTEXT:

Before Saul's death, there was a prolonged season in which Saul (Israel's first king) was becoming increasingly convinced that God had removed the throne from Him and had given it to young David. During this time, David was becoming increasingly paranoid and fearful (probably because Saul kept throwing spears at him and tried to kill him at every turn).

- As God deals with Saul, we see a man who refuses to truly repent or even attempt to ask God's mercy or forgiveness. Rather, he resorts from one desperate act to the next to try and salvage and save His position. He never cared about getting right with God; he only cared about maintaining his throne.
- During this season of fleeing from the wrath of Saul, David's faith is also tested. We see Him seeking to honor and fear God in the process. He refuses to kill Saul even when given the opportunity. He was confused and afraid, yet God allowed this in His life to solidify David's trust in God's faithfulness.
 - David had moments when he saw the faithfulness of God over and over, despite the fact that it looked as though his life might be over.
 - When he was hiding from Saul in a cave, he would write, "**[Psa 57:1-3 NKJV] Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me! For my soul trusts in You; and in the shadow of Your wings I will make my refuge, until these calamities have passed by. 2 I will cry out to God Most High, to God who performs all things for me. 3 He shall send from heaven and save me; He reproaches the one who would swallow me up. Selah God shall send forth His mercy and His truth.**"

- But David, like all of us, didn't always find himself on the side of strong faith. One moment he was trusting in the Lord, and then the next he was making crazy decisions based on his fear.

In 1 Samuel 27, we find a moment where David makes a fear-based decision based on his circumstances that end up having far greater consequences than he could imagine. First, let's take a look at three characteristics of David's failure:

1 The Wrong Response (to his negative circumstances)

BIBLE PASSAGE

[1Sa 27:1-2 NKJV] 1 And David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand." 2 Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath.

APPLICATION

David is in a pickle. He's exhausted of running continually from Saul, not knowing if he will show up at any given moment. So David thinks about this and devises a plan "within his heart."

- Notice that the only counsel David gets for this decision was his own. He didn't pray about it. He didn't consult the ephod, the priest, or any wise counselors.
- David was afraid. David was tired. David was frustrated. David was at his wit's end. And David was isolated.

Please always remember a very simple principle:

QUOTE

“*Fear, frustration, loneliness, and weariness are never wise counselors.*”

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

David thinks, "I need protection. I need rest. I need to fix my problem. I need to get off Saul's radar." And in response to those concerns, he rashly reacts and seeks strength, refuge, protection, and encouragement from the sworn enemy of God and His people, the Philistines. The same people that brought forth the great giant Goliath that He destroyed were now going to become his protection from a paranoid, crazy king Saul.

- This wasn't the first time David tried this stunt! He went to the Philistines once before but almost got caught and decided to pretend to be mentally insane to escape unharmed.
- Many of us can look at this and already see the error of his decision.
- First, hasn't David learned by now that if he needed strength, protection, and encouragement, all he needed to do was turn to the Lord?
 - **[Psa 118:8 NKJV] 8 It is better to trust in the LORD Than to put confidence in man.**
- Secondly, what about His family, his men, and his people? David was so consumed with his own situation that he was willing to abandon those he was called to protect to protect himself.
- Third, of all people, why the sworn enemy of God's people? Because fear and anger cause you to do unwise things with unwise people. **Something was appealing to David's flesh about the carnal strength of the Philistines that convinced his worried mind that the answer to his problems could be found in the protection of the world.**

Sadly, initially, this decision seems to work. We read:

[1Sa 27:4 NKJV] 4 And it was told Saul that David had fled to Gath; so he sought him no more.

Hey, Saul quit. David's safe. The Philistines seem to have accepted him. All is good, right?

WRONG.

David's fearful and rash compromise led to a prolonged season where everything seemed right, but it wasn't.

APPLICATION

To this point, we need to ask ourselves, "How do we respond to difficult life circumstances that we didn't ask for and don't want?"

- We must be aware that our natural minds will always scheme to find the easiest way out of trouble. We will have no problem becoming self-preserving and self-serving. Panic and frustration can cause us to rashly react to a situation by running to the world thinking that there is a solution outside of waiting on God.
- Some try to drink it off. Some try to drug it off. Some try to sleep it off. Some try to eat it off. Some try to sin it off. Some try to pay it off. Some try to work it off. Some try to alliance themselves with the unethical or immoral to find an easy way out.

We just need to realize that by doing so, we are putting ourselves and others in danger.

Notice how much time is wasted on futile endeavors by David:

2 The Wrong Investment

BIBLE PASSAGE

[1Sa 27:8-9 NKJV] 8 And David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites (AMALEKITES ARE IMPORTANT). For those nations were the inhabitants of the land from of old, as you go to Shur, even as far as the land of Egypt. 9

Whenever David attacked the land, he left neither man nor woman alive, but took away the sheep, the oxen, the donkeys, the camels, and the apparel, (and what did he do with it?) and returned and came to Achish.

APPLICATION

David, God's anointed King of Israel, one of God's most devoted followers, was now spending his time, risking his life and his men fighting for the Philistines. The plunder and riches he acquired, instead of going to the families of his men and the future of Israel, were being thrown into the Philistines' treasury. Now, was God's will being done? Were some of Israel's enemies being fought? Sure. Maybe that's how David excused it away... ***"I'll fight Israel's enemies, and that's how I'll justify my decisions."***

- The problem? God wasn't calling David to fight the Philistine's battles. God wasn't calling David to live in fear, seeking comfort and protection from the enemy. David's season with the enemy was a season of personal escape. David wanted to escape his calling to be king... it was too much trouble and hassle, and Saul was too much to deal with.

In this season, we see a tragic reality:

QUOTE

“David went from fighting battles for the Lord and His people to fighting battles for the enemy and his own self-preservation.”

APPLICATION

It's a bit embarrassing, but haven't we all experienced the same temptations?

- I'm tired of the spiritual battles.

- I don't want to be persecuted. I don't want to lose anything in this world for the sake of Christ.
- I'm sick of the constant struggle in this relationship.
- I'm tired of the responsibilities that are strangling me and the constant pressure of this life God's given me.
- **I'll turn to the world for refuge. I'll turn to sin for release. I'll turn to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life to find escape.**

My friends, if you are in that season, or tempted to be in that season, learn a lesson from David before it's too late.

QUOTE

“Any season of looking to the world for what only God can give you is a season of wasted investment.”

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

And by the way, those are seasons you can't get back. As we'll see, God can redeem, but that doesn't mean there might not be some regret for wasted seasons, effort, time, money, and investments.

3 The Wrong Outcome

APPLICATION

Eventually, the Philistines are paranoid about David. After all, this is the David who killed his ten thousands, mostly Philistines --he will turn on us! So David heads back to Ziklag where his camp was set up.

- Interestingly, Ziklag was a Philistine city gifted to David by Achish. David moved all of his men and their families into Philisitne territory. Was he really expecting no trouble?

BIBLE PASSAGE

Turn now to chapter 29 - [1Sa 29:11 NKJV] 11 So David and his men rose early to depart in the morning, to return to the land of the Philistines. And the Philistines went up to Jezreel. [1Sa 30:1-5 NKJV] 1 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, 2 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. 3 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. 4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. 5 And David's two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive.

APPLICATION

David thought he had stress with King Saul. Now it's multiplied tenfold. He comes home to the loss of everything. They probably didn't know initially whether their families were still alive. David started this whole thing afraid of Saul for his own life, and now it ends with 600 warriors weeping like babies until all their strength was gone.

Remember when David went to the Philistines that he took 600 men? Who was left to protect their wives, children, and possessions from the local marauders? Was David trusting the Philistines would protect His camp?

- David failed to realize the full scope and impact of his decision. He thought, "As long as I get Saul off my back, that's all that matters." He didn't consider what abandoning his post meant for his family, friends, and people under his care.
- **David returns only to find greater weeping, pain, and distress than when he left.**

Our fear-based, frustration-driven decisions for self-preservation always have a broader impact than we anticipated.

- **When you respond to a bad circumstance with a bad decision, there will be more weeping on the tail end than on the front end.**

Again, don't miss the source of the pain: The Amalekites. While David was fighting for Achish, he raided and destroyed Amalekite villages. Apparently, they didn't forget.

- *These are the people that betrayed Israel. God saw fit to judge them and commanded Saul to wipe them out. Saul wanted to do things his way and let the king live. From then on, the Amalekites became a constant thorn in the flesh of Israel.*
- *Amalek is often a picture of the fleshly nature.*

QUOTE

“ Like the Amalekites, the flesh will always take advantage of the opportunities it's given.

Pastor Josh

DILEMMA

David is now at a Crossroads. What do you do at this point?

We now have three right decisions that are the opposite of David's first set:

4 The Right Response

BIBLE PASSAGE

[1Sa 30:6-8 NKJV] **6** 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. **7** Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. **8** 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."

Look at the three things David does as a correct response to the situation:

A. DAVID RAN TO THE RIGHT SOURCE**A. David ran to the right source**

David already tried "strengthening himself in the Philistines." Now he goes to the right source.

- **Strengthen = Encourage.** David's soul was in despair; his hope was utterly lost. He was afraid of the people who wanted him dead. It was no longer just Saul but the Amalekites and even his own people!
- On top of that, he, no doubt, felt like a complete failure of a leader and protector. If David had taken the same track as the last time he felt like this, he probably would have found a quiet place to kill himself.
- Instead, David goes to his roots and remembers what he did when he faced threats tending his father's sheep; the Lord is my shepherd... he leads me. He returns to the source of transcendent strength that is outside His circumstance. The LORD.

Noticed he strengthened himself: sometimes you can't wait for or depend on others to get you where you need to be with God. We are very good at coming up with excuses:

- If so and so would get their act together.
- If that person would stop being so difficult.
- None of this would have happened if these people had their act together.
- We can be such good victims.

But David refuses. He doesn't blame shift. He doesn't allow his regret and despair to keep him from doing the necessary thing. David strengthened himself.

- I have learned the hard way that you will not be much good to the people around you if your relationship with God depends on their actions. You have to get into Christ yourself. You and I have to learn how to have a self-driven pursuit of the Lord.

IN THE LORD:

- Here we find the source of David's supernatural strength. It wasn't self-help. He didn't look in the mirror and talk himself up. He didn't look for affirmation from some other person. He went into the Lord

ILLUSTRATION

What does this mean?

- If I said, "You can cool off IN the pool," you have to get IN the pool.
- If I said, "If you want to sweat, go into the sauna," you have to go INTO the sauna.
- I've recently been going back to the gym (I swear one of these days I'm going to get consistent). I see all these guys with massive legs, arms, and chests and I'm over there trying to get 20 pounds over my head. I remember thinking, "How do these guys look like this?" I know the answer. They are IN the gym like it's their religion.

If you want to find supernatural strength, wisdom, and guidance, you have to get IN the LORD.

- It's not merely a physical exercise (though we have to discipline our bodies), it's mental, and it's spiritual. It's disciplining our minds and our hearts to respond to our challenges by praying in everything. Faith comes by HEARING and hearing by the Word of God. I need to preach the gospel to myself. I need to remind myself of God's promises in His word. I need to pray before reacting. I need to let His peace reign in my heart.
- The benefits God offers don't come to those who sit and look at the water or watch the weights.

B. DAVID CHOSE TO SEEK RATHER THAN REACT

David's history was replete with examples of how right things went when David sought the Lord, and how wrong things went when David acted according to his dictates.

- David's dependence on seeking the Lord won him victories over lions, bears, and giants.
- David's commitment to inquiring of the Lord won him great victories over invading enemies.
- In fact, ten times in David's story, we see the words recorded ***"David inquired of the Lord..."*** And guess what? Every time David sought, heard, and obeyed the Lord, things went well for him!

BIBLE PASSAGE

[Psa 77:1-2 NKJV] 1 I cried out to God with my voice--To God with my voice; And He gave ear to me. 2 In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord; My hand was stretched out in the night without ceasing; My soul refused to be comforted.

[Psa 34:4-6 NKJV] 4 I sought the LORD, and He heard me, and delivered me from all my fears. 5 They looked to Him and were radiant, and their faces were not ashamed. 6 This poor man cried out, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

APPLICATION

How we react when pressure sets in reveals much about where we are in a moment.

- The fact is, we all fail. We've all been pressed at times only to realize that our reaction was not one of turning to the Lord, humbling ourselves, and repenting of our sin, but rather reacting to the pressure in a carnal way.
- Instead of strengthening yourself in the Lord, you lashed out at the person next to you. Instead of inquiring of God in His word, you rashly jump at what you perceive to be the easiest fix.
- Instead of turning to Jesus for strength, comfort, and wisdom, you turn to the nearest worldly pleasure to grant you a brief moment of escape.

C. DAVID CHOSE ENDURANCE OVER QUITTING

[1Sa 30:9-10 NKJV] 9 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. 10 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.

Again, these are hard things to say, because I have to learn them too, but the truth is the truth. A leader can't afford to quit when the rest of the people get to tired to continue on.

- David was tired too. He could have said, "we've come this far, but we are just to weary to go on." But the Lord told him they would recover everything.
- David chooses hard faith to persevere rather than any easy excuse out.

5 The Right Investment

BIBLE PASSAGE

By God's divine chance, David finds a young Egyptian slave who has a bone to pick with the Amalekites, and he leads them straight to their camp.

[1Sa 30:16-17 NKJV] 16 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. 17 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.

APPLICATION

David had already spent a season of far too much time wasted on fighting for the Philistines. Now he would put his time, effort, and energy into obeying the Lord and recovering that which the enemy stole. He works through exhaustion and physical toil all day and night in order to get back what was stolen.

QUOTE

“*True repentance always seeks to restore the things lost due to one's wrong actions.*

Pastor Josh

BIBLE PASSAGE

Remember Zacchaeus? He was a tax collector who purposefully ripped people off them to make an extra buck. When he met Jesus and recognized the error of his way, we read:

[Luk 19:8 NKJV] 8 Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold."

APPLICATION

I'd like to exhort us all in the Lord. Let's put our efforts ahead of us. Paul was a man who made his own share of mistakes, yet his attitude was clear in the book of Philippians:

[Phi 3:13 NKJV] 13 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing [I do], forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead,

Many people refuse to move forward because they can't stop living either in past regret or past hurt. Here's what I've found:

QUOTE

“ *Far too often we focus on erasing past realities rather than creating future blessings.* **”**

Pastor Josh

APPLICATION

What needs to be done? Do it by faith in the strength of the Lord. Don't give up the pursuit, but see that whatever can be recovered is recovered. You can't do anything to change past losses, but we can move forward by faith to ensure future blessings.

6 The Right Outcome

BIBLE PASSAGE

18 So David recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. **19** 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.

APPLICATION

It would be poor exegesis if I was to suggest that in this life you can recover ALL that sin has stolen. Thank God in Christ Jesus, one day when we arrive at eternity's shore, everything will be recovered. Not one thing will be lost because Jesus has pursued and defeated the enemy.

- But that doesn't mean that here and now, all hope is lost. By choosing the right path, what satan meant for evil God will turn for good. but we have a part to play.
- David recovered. ANd what he recovered turned into a blessing for everyone. The 200 men who were too tired to continue... David gave them a portion of the spoils. He sent spoils to each elder and leader of the various tribes throughout Israel.

The beauty of this is that out of our trouble, God can birth a testimony that will not only bless us but help bring God's strength and victory to others!

QUOTE

“It's never too late to choose a redemptive path that recovers what the enemy sought to steal.”

CONCLUSION

If you are on the verge of losing faith today, it's time to recover it. It's time to make a change of course, not by your own strength, but the strength God wants to give you as you humbly turn to him. The road ahead may be challenging, tiring, and risky, but I promise you this, if you strengthen yourself in the Lord, seek his face, and obey His word, you will recover and make it out stronger than when you started.