

48. The Book of 1Samuel—30:21-25

“A Word for the Weary”

(5/29/16)

As we come to 1Samuel 30—we see David facing one of the most difficult experiences of his life.

As you remember Saul was king of Israel at this time but God had removed the anointing from Saul's life and had placed it upon David to whom He promised would be king in Saul's place.

Because of this Saul sought to kill David and hold onto the Kingdom by force.

This caused David to run for his life and for the next ten years he became a fugitive from Saul hiding in caves throughout the Judean wilderness.

During this time a small group of men, numbering six hundred, joined themselves to David and together with him they became one of the finest groups of fighting men in the world.

However, after ten years as a fugitive running for his life, living in caves like an animal and enduring one close call after another in fleeing from Saul—David reaches a point in chapter 27 where he's tired, worn out, depressed and ready to *‘throw in the towel’*—

1 Samuel 27:1 (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."

David here does a major backslide and instead of believing the promise of God that he would someday be king over Israel and staying in the Promised Land—he runs to Philistine country—to the camp of the enemy to find sanctuary.

David was already going through difficult times—but now he escalates things by running to the Philistines for help and because of it he finds himself facing one of the greatest crises of his life.

How did David get himself into such a mess?

Well, 1Samuel 27:1 tells us, “*And David said in his heart, ‘Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul...’*”—in other words he talked himself into this course of action.

Instead of praying to the Lord he simply convinces himself things are so bad that he has to take matters into his own hands—and that causes him to make a decision I’m sure he later came to regret.

Proverbs 3:5-6 (NLT)

⁵ Trust in the LORD with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. ⁶ Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.

Listen, it’s not that I can’t sympathize with David—he was in a difficult position.

Having King Saul with the armies of Israel chasing you all over the Judean wilderness for ten years would take its toll on the toughest man.

Just like the constant oppression from the enemy can take its toll on you too and if you’re not careful will wear you down, burn you out and you’ll find yourself in the same place David found himself—wary, depressed, beaten down and like David you may be tempted to run away.

You might be tempted to run away from church and from the people of God—all the way to enemy territory (the world) for help and comfort.

Achish, King of Gath, opened his arms to David thinking he had defected from Saul and gave David and his men (and their families) the city of Ziklag to live in.

It was a Philistine city in the land of the Philistines—how David ever expected to find comfort in the world away from the worship of God in the Land of Promise is beyond me.

But over the course of 35 years of ministry I have never been able to figure out how Christians, who are going through difficult times, think they would be better off back in the world rather than staying in their church with the people of God.

Now while David and his men are out doing their thing they come home one day and find something terrible has taken place—

1 Samuel 30:1-4, 6 (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...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...

We studied this last week but let me just say once again that this event was so devastating to David and plunged him into such deep despair (he hit rock bottom) that he had nowhere to look but up.

In fact, the experience was so desperate and devastating—that it actually became a turning point in his life.

As we said, he had been going through a backslidden period—but now in the face of this great crisis he turns back towards God and the next thing we read is—

“But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.”

Sometimes it takes facing our own personal ‘Ziklag’ where our world is burning down, where everything in life that really matters has been taken from us and we hit rock bottom before we’re ready to turn back to God (or turn *to* God).

Do you feel wiped out and weary?

Does it feel like your whole world is going up in smoke?

Does it seem as though everyone around you has turned against you—even blaming you for what’s wrong in their lives?

God used those very things to break David and bring him back to Himself—and so maybe God is using similar things to break you so that you come back to Him—

2 Samuel 14:14 (NLT)

¹⁴ ...God...devises ways to bring us back when we have been separated from him.

I’ve entitled the message today—“*A Word for the Weary*”.

Weariness has reached epidemic proportions in the Body of Christ.

I'm seeing more and more Christians who are feeling drained, discouraged, and disenchanted in their walk—in other words they've grown weary.

And because of it they have stopped going to church (or cut way back), they've stopped serving the Lord and many have backslidden altogether and have gone back to the world.

I see them on Facebook and they're holding a beer or they're dressed inappropriately and hanging out at parties with unsaved friends.

When enough people in a church fall prey to spiritual weariness where the things of God no longer interest them and they walk away—it can have a devastating effect on the whole church.

I just talked to one of our Calvary Chapel pastors in Michigan who sent me, and some other Calvary pastors in the Midwest, a text asking us to pray for our Calvary churches in Michigan.

He said in the last few years four Calvary Chapels have shut their doors—three of them due to a lack of attendance.

I called him and asked him if he had talked with other Calvary pastors in other states to see if they were experiencing the same thing and he said “yes”—but that it's not just Calvary Chapels—it's other churches as well he said.

In Illinois we have lost several—and could have lost two others recently if God hadn't brought two new pastors to take over those Calvary Chapels whose pastors quit because of weariness and lack of attendance.

I have a meeting in Valparaiso on June 10th to talk about whether or not we should close the door on Calvary Radio...(finish).

Cyndi had to shut down our women's prayer meeting (which only met once a month) due to lack of attendance—and she was thinking about doing the same for her once a month women's Bible study for the same reason—a lack of interest.

I have seen our men's and women's retreats and pastor's wives conference drop by forty to fifty percent over the last few years due to a lack of interest no doubt fueled in part by weariness.

I. The Reality of the Weary

What are the things that make us weary?

A. We can become weary when we lose sight of the finish line

We lose sight of the finish line when we get our eyes off the eternal and onto the temporal—

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NLT)

¹⁶ That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. ¹⁷ For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! ¹⁸ So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.

The church of Ephesus was faithful in doing this and so the Lord Jesus commended them when He said to them, "*you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name's sake and have not become weary*". (Rev.2:3)

One author commented on this—

“People in America have a spiritual disease based on a mistaken view of life. According to it, life is lived on a big bell curve. You go up, up, up, to the age of say, fifty. And then you go down, down, down, until you die. . . In contrast, Scripture teaches that life is meant to be up, all the way to heaven. There is a goal, and the goal determines the process we must go through to get there. Whatever is valued in heaven grows more and more valuable on earth. Whatever matters not in heaven, matters less and less on earth. The longer you live, the more it is so

B. We can become weary when we try to do the work of God in our own strength and not in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luke 24:49 (NKJV)

⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

Acts 1:8 (NKJV)

⁸ But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."

I believe that this is the greatest need in the Church today and the single greatest reason why we are losing the culture war to the devil in America when Jesus clearly promised us that against His Church the gates of hell would not prevail.

It's because we are trying to do the work of God in our own strength and not in the power of the Holy Spirit—the result is a lot of activity, a lot of weariness and exhaustion—with very little lasting fruit to show for it.

We have substituted programs for the power of God and theological degrees for the dynamic of the Holy Spirit—

A.W. Tozer—*“If we removed the Holy Spirit from the work of the early church 90% of what they were doing would have come to a stop. If we removed the Holy Spirit from the work of the church today 10% of what is being done would come to a stop.”*

Hudson Taylor (after he was baptized in the Holy Spirit) said, “*Without the power (baptism) of the Holy Spirit even the easiest things seem hard—but with the power of the Holy Spirit even the hardest things seem easy.*”

C. We can grow weary when we try to do too much—overloading and overextending ourselves

There’s an old saying, “*If the devil can’t make you bad he’ll make you busy.*”

Burnout is the number one reason for pastors leaving the ministry more than anything else—including falling into sexual sin.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NKJV)

²⁸ Come to Me, all *you* who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For My yoke *is* easy and My burden is light."

Jeremiah had a phrase he was fond of saying—a phrase God hated, “*The burden of the Lord, the burden of the Lord...*” (Comment)

When God instituted the priesthood in the O.T. He forbid the priests from wearing wool clothing when they served Him—only *linen* was allowed for them to wear—because He didn’t want their service to produce ‘sweat’ and therefore cause them to get *worn out* or *weary* in their service to Him.

We often become weary when we are personally drained.

If the gas tank in your car is empty you don’t sit around hoping and praying it will suddenly fill itself up—you take it to a gas station and fill it up!

The same is true when we're feeling spiritually and emotionally drained—you don't just hope and pray you'll be filled up—you go to church, to the Word, to the Lord and get filled up!

1 Samuel 30:7-10 (NKJV)

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*." 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.

Sometimes taking a Sabbatical from ministry to rest and get recharged is legitimate—even Jesus took His disciples away from the rigors of ministry on different occasion to deserted places so they could rest—as He taught them privately (there was still a spiritual purpose in it).

So once in a while when we sense we have become weary in our service for the Lord taking a little time off to rest is legitimate—but not taking time off from church and away from God!

It's never legitimate to take time off from ministry where you stop coming to church and start sitting home watching TV or hanging out with unsaved friends in the world doing *whatever*.

D.L. Moody warned, "*It is okay to be tired in the work but it's not okay to be tired of the work*".

Before you take that break from ministry you need to ask yourself which category do you fit into—if it's the latter and you take a break from church you may never come back.

It's one thing to be weary in the work—it's another to be weary in your walk.

If it's the former you need rest—if it's the latter, you need revival!

D. We will grow weary when we feel like failures in our ministry

This is why, I believe, so many pastors are leaving the ministry—because their church isn't growing (in fact the numbers are sometimes diminishing) so they interpret that to mean they have failed in ministry.

Jesus hasn't called us to build big churches—He has called us to make strong disciples.

When a pastor is faithful in making strong disciples by teaching “the whole counsel of God”—there will be those who will leave because the Word of God is challenging their lifestyle and they don't like it—this is what some have called “blessed subtractions”.

God often subtracts before He multiplies—before He begins to do a greater work.

But Jesus also told us that in the last days many of the largest and wealthiest churches would be apostate churches—those that are no longer standing up for biblical truth.

When a pastor equates numbers with success in ministry he has fallen prey to the world's thinking and opens the door for the devil to discourage and weary him right out of the ministry.

One author illustrated this when he said,

“A number of years ago, a Scottish pastor stood before his congregation and resigned, saying, ‘In the past two years, I have seen only one conversion in this congregation: wee Bobby Moffatt. With such little fruit, I can no longer serve in this ministry.’ And he walked away from the pulpit a broken man. Little did he know that wee Bobby Moffatt grew up to be Dr. Robert Moffatt, the missionary who opened the entire continent of Africa to the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

We are not the best judges of our ministries—and we won't know if we've really been a success in ministry until the day we stand before Jesus at the Bema Seat to receive our rewards—until then keep serving the Lord faithfully and keep building into people—they will be the real measure of your success in the ministry.

One pastor had this to say to the weary—to those who feel they are failures in ministry because they haven't accomplished what they set out to do—

“The movie, *Mr. Holland's Opus* [1995 starring Richard Dreyfuss], is a beautiful story of a musician who becomes a reluctant high school music teacher. Not meaning to stay, he remains at the same school for over thirty years. In the end he faces forced retirement because of budget cuts in the school system. All his life Mr. Holland has sought to write a unique opus that would bring him fame and fortune. Because of the demands of teaching high school, he is never able to accomplish his dream. As he sits talking to his best friend, the high school football coach, Holland reflects on all the years of teaching music appreciation, leading the marching band and the orchestra at the high school. He considers himself a total failure because of what he has not done in life.

As he is leaving the school for the last time with his son and wife, he hears a noise in the school auditorium. Entering the auditorium to discover what is happening, he finds a collection of music students from his past years of teaching. They are gathered to give honor to their musical mentor. One of the students is now the governor of the state. In a statement to Holland she puts his life in total perspective. She says, ‘*Mr. Holland, we are your music. We are the opus that you meant to write.*’

When warriors in the kingdom of Christ become weary and wounded they should remember that each new believer, each growing disciple and each willing worker who has been mentored by them is a note in the beautiful melody that they are constructing for praise to our Lord. Once we see life from that perspective, we are ready to return to our first love, renew our gift, have our joy restored and return to the battle for the kingdom of Christ.”

Galatians 6:9 (NKJV)

⁹ And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. [if not in this life then for sure in heaven]

I. The Reality of the Weary

II. The Reward of the Weary

1 Samuel 30:21-25 (NKJV)

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

²² Then all the wicked and worthless men of those who went with David answered and said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them *any* of the spoil that we have recovered, except for every man's wife and children, that they may lead *them* away and depart." ²³ But David said, "My brethren, you shall not do so with what the LORD has given us, who has preserved us and delivered into our hand the troop that came against us. ²⁴ For who will heed you in this matter? But as his part *is* who goes down to the battle, so *shall* his part *be* who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike." ²⁵ So it was, from that day forward; he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

Do you know that we are all one—whether we are weary or strong?

There are times when I grow weary and I can't be in the heat of the battle—but I can rejoice in my stronger brethren who *are* fighting the enemy and recovering those he has taken captive.

We're one Body and as Paul the apostle said, "*When one part of the Body is exalted we are all exalted and blessed.*"

And so when the Son of David returns we shall all be rewarded for our service—but in the meantime let the stronger encourage the weaker.

And for those who are weary don't forsake the fellowship of the saints—because you need the fellowship of the strong to help you when you're feeling weak.

And remember not everyone can or is called to be on the mission field—many of us are called by God to stay home and "*guard the supplies.*" (v.24)

In our passage two hundred stayed with the supplies—they guarded the supplies.

It's true they weren't on the front lines—but they were still fulfilling a vital ministry—they were protecting the supply lines.

Maybe you're thinking "*I just can't be a missionary*"—that's okay, you can pray for the missionaries and financially support missionaries as you stay back and oversee the supply lines that help make those ministries possible.

Matthew 10:41-42 (NLT)

⁴¹[Jesus said] If you receive a prophet as one who speaks for God, you will be given the same reward as a prophet. And if you receive righteous people because of their righteousness, you will be given a reward like theirs. ⁴² And if you give even a cup of cold water to one of the least of my followers, you will surely be rewarded."

Some are called to the front lines—some are called to the supply lines—both are vital and both will share equally in the reward when the Son of David, Jesus Christ, returns—

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work." (Rev.22:12)

This has been a word for the weary—comfort one another with these words.

If you're weary this morning, then you must do as David did—"*David strengthened himself in the Lord his God*". (v.6)

As you serve the Lord some may criticize you—some may condemn you—but Jesus commands you to let your weariness drive you *to* Him not away *from* Him.

He loves you—He is coming back for you and when He does His joy will overflow you—a joy that will be inexpressible and full of glory—and that alone is enough to comfort our weary souls!

Romans 15:13 (NKJV)

¹³ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.