

ENCOURAGE YOURSELF IN THE LORD

1 Samuel 29:4-5 (NLT) But the Philistine commanders were angry. "Send him back to the town you've given him!" they demanded. "He can't go into the battle with us. What if he turns against us in battle and becomes our adversary? Is there any better way for him to reconcile himself with his master than by handing our heads over to him? Isn't this the same David about whom the women of Israel sing in their dances, 'Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands'?"

1 Samuel 30:1-6 (KJV) 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; ² 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. ³ 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. ⁴ Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. ⁵ And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. ⁶ 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. ⁷ 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. ⁸ 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.

The Philistines gathered to attack Israel. According to the text (1 Samuel 29:4-5) King Achish has to send David back home to Ziklag. David was well known and exalted higher than King Saul. Well, David went back to Ziklag. On the third day the Amalekites had invaded the south. They also invaded Ziklag and tried to destroy it. In fact, they burned the city with fire. They took the women and children as captives. David and the people that were with him began to weep and cry until they couldn't weep anymore. David was greatly distressed. In his time of great distress, when he was down and feeling lowly, the people begin to talk about stoning him. This is a huge turnaround. These men who were with David through the good times and bad times turned on him. They wanted to kill David. O' how the souls of the people grieved. They were all grieving because of their sons and daughters. The scriptures says "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God."

Giving Honor to God the Father, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. To all Clergy and Laity. To All of God's Sons, Daughters, and Children. Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow. Let's turn to 1 Samuel 29 as we lift up the Name of the Lord. Good morning Big Bethel. Let me start by asking you a couple of questions. Have you ever experienced a

bad day? Have you ever experienced a bad week? Maybe you can testify that you had a rough month. Some may be able to say that they experienced a dismal year. The reality is when we look into the life of David during 1 Samuel 29 and 1 Samuel 30:1-6A, we can conclude that David was greatly distressed. David found himself completely alone. There was no one else on his side. No one but the God he served. So, David encouraged himself in the Lord.

There was a good reason for David to be distressed. He had trouble on every side. His distress didn't define who he was as a person or as a leader. He felt abandoned and alone. David was criticized. Regardless of how well you live your life or try to conduct yourself well in front of others, there will always be those around you who will find something about you to criticize. In August of 1972 the soulful Philadelphia group, whom Don Cornelius called the Mighty O'Jay's, sang a song calling them backstabbers. "They smile in your face, all the time they want to take your place." Backstabbers... Can I get a witness? Now, there are few of us that can truly say that we've gone through a situation as bad as David. We're not threatened by physical harm and prison like Christians in many parts of the world are. But we face prejudice and bigotry for being Christians and people of color in the community, on the job, and even from our own relatives. Sometimes it can be very discouraging. Like David, many are distressed over their family members and friends. What can we do about it? We must encourage ourselves in the Lord. David's situation was awful beyond description. He was greatly distressed. But David did not stay that way. How did he come out of it?

What did he do? Thank You; I'm so glad you asked. We can follow the blueprint David followed.

DAVID ENCOURAGED HIMSELF IN THE LORD.

1 Samuel 30:6 (KJV) - "And David was greatly distressed...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"

A. DAVID ENCOURAGED HIMSELF IN GOD AND NOT MAN.

Picture David's situation. His enemy seemed to have conquered him. His family was captured. It appeared he needed help from man. But the men turned against him and talked about stoning him. *Psalm 20:7 (ESV) - Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.* David knew that no chariots or horses could help him unless he had God's blessing. He knew this because he remembered the power of Encouraging himself in the Lord.

HOW TO ENCOURAGE YOURSELF IN THE LORD

1. David remembered his past.

Here's what he had said to Goliath so many years ago. *1 Samuel 17:46-48 (NLT) - Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! 47 :And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!" 48:As Goliath moved closer to attack, David quickly ran out to meet him. When David remembered the Lord he was absolutely fearless. He said, Psalm 27:1 (NIV) - The Lord is my light and my salvation whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life of whom shall I be afraid? Romans 8:31 - "If God be for us, who can be against us?" David encouraged himself by remembering God's past deliverances. When you feel distressed and discouraged, remember how many times that God has delivered you, and you will be encouraged.*

2. He Prayed

- David encouraged himself through prayer to God.
- The life of David was a life of prayer. He cried out to God. When he didn't he got in trouble. He was the Psalmist who was always in prayer or praising God for His goodness.

Psalm 34:4 (NLT) - I prayed to the Lord, and he answered me. He freed me from all my fears. God does not want you to live in fear. He will hear your cries. He will deliver you from your fears. Pray to our Heavenly Father, and you will be greatly encouraged.

3. He realized God is in control

- David encouraged himself by knowing God was in control of his life. *Psalm 31:5 - My times are in your hands; deliver me from the hands of my enemies, from those who pursue me.*
- David prayed for deliverance but at the same time knew that his "times are in [God's] hand."

4. He asked God what to do (David inquired of the Lord)

1 Samuel 30:7-8 - And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 And David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue." He sought the direction of God

- *When nothing else will work, encourage yourself in the Lord. Do it with the word of God. "Be assured, if you walk with Him and look to Him, and expect help from Him, He will never fail you." –George Mueller*

In closing, don't be overwhelmed by the troubles you are going through. Keep everything in perspective. Encourage yourself in the Lord your God. Remember what God has done in your past, in your life, and in the world. Lift up your eyes unto the hills. Pray for yourself and for others. Minister to others and minister to yourself. Look in the mirror and say "I'm gonna Make it." Pray to establish your connection with God. Realize that God is in control. Your times are in His hand, you can trust Him and finally, ask God what to do -- "Lord lead me, guide me, I will follow." I'm above and not beneath, I'm the head and not tail, I'm more than a conqueror thru Christ Jesus. Sometimes you've got to look at yourself in the mirror and say "Greater is He that's in me, than he that is in the world." All that He's done for me... Speak a Word of Blessing over yourself, encourage yourself in the Lord. Hallelujah, Amen.