

Introduction: ‘Conventional wisdom’ has some value. In the history of the human race many truths have been discovered and preserved. Any person who consistently lives by these truths will experience life the way it is ‘supposed to be’. There is only one problem! Not one person ever born in the usual way has ever had the strength to live by the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth! *** True life as it is ‘supposed to be’ experienced, enjoying goodness and beauty, can only be lived supernaturally. In other words, people must have the same intimate relationship with God, as do small children who love their father, because they know and believe he has always given them everything they need. So, they desire to always be near their father and are always trying to imitate him. However, because all people are flawed, at some future date they will see for themselves that neither their human fathers nor they themselves can build a good life in their own strength. When the life they tried to build collapses, they may be ready for God. *** People who find God to be the perfect Father begin to walk the right path to a good life. When they pray to receive God’s Son, Jesus, because they believe Him to be THE Way, Truth and Life, He becomes their Savior and reconciles them to His Father. At the same time they are filled with the Holy Spirit and receive the supernatural strength they need to live an abundant meaningful life, full of goodness, beauty and truth. *** But, people who have only a ‘head knowledge’ of these realities about God are still lost in sin and spiritual death. They will be easily frustrated and angry. They will fail every time they are tested. In college, I learned by hard experience it is fruitless to ‘cram for an exam’. The ‘A’ I got on the test was wasted because the material was soon lost and useless to me! It is best to truly learn a little that ‘sticks to our ribs’ every day. *** Finally, Jesus said: no one knows the day of his or her ‘final exam’! So, always be ready. *** In our story of David and Saul, Saul is about to die soon and has a poor relationship with God. This is because of his life-long self-reliance and disobedience to God. *** David’s ongoing intimate relationship with God allows him to strengthen himself in God and be guided to lead his people. An unknown psalmist expresses these universal, timeless truths about God in beautiful poetry. *** Let’s open ourselves to God as He has revealed Himself, seeking Him and asking Him to continue His ‘good work’ in us (Philippians 1:3-11).

I. David and his men weep, finding their families are captives; the men turn on David who strengthens himself in God and seeks God to pursue Amalek; he shows compassion to his exhausted men and an Egyptian informant. (1 Samuel 30:1-15)

- A. When David and his men discovered that the Amalekites took their families captive, they wept; David’s men turned on him; but, he strengthened himself in God, consulted the high priest and sought Yahweh for guidance. (*Verses 1-8*)
1. David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites raided the Negeb and overcame Ziklag and burned it with fire; they took women captive, small and great; they did not kill, they carried off and went their way; when David and his men came they found the city burned and their wives, sons and daughters taken captive. (*Verses 1-3*)
Surprise at Ziklag: After Achish dismissed them, they took three days to go sixty miles. Saul failed to destroy Amalek, the enemies of God’s people, as their God had said they would do when He gave them the land (Deuteronomy 25:17-19). David and his men are ‘paying the price’ for Saul’s disobedience.
 2. David and the people with him raised their voices and they wept until they had no more power to weep. (*Verse 4*)
Great weeping: After all they had been through, it is understandable that their grief would cause grown men to weep themselves out over the plight of their families.
 3. David’s two wives were captured: Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel; David was greatly distressed because the people spoke of stoning him because all the people were bitter, each for his sons and daughters; David strengthened himself in Yahweh, his God. (*Verses 5-6*)
Men wanted to stone David: We can also understand why God’s people ‘blamed’ David, not God. This is the pressure on a leader: David is distressed because he feels he let down his loyal men.
Strengthened himself in Yahweh: Unlike Saul, David found his strength in his close relationship with God since he was a young shepherd (1 Samuel 17:33-37) and the resulting faith that made him a ‘man after God’s heart’ (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22).
 4. Then David said to the (high) priest Abiathar: You must bring me the ephod; and he brought the ephod to David; then David enquired of Yahweh: will I pursue this band? Will I overtake them? He answered: You must pursue because you will surely overtake and you will surely rescue. (*Verses 7-8*)
Consults with (high) priest: Yahweh had Moses tell Joshua that, as he fought the Canaanites, the Urim on the high priest’s ephod would be how he would receive guidance from Him (Numbers 27:15-18).
Asks Yahweh about pursuit: After David properly sought Yahweh’s guidance, he was commanded to pursue the Amalekites and given great assurance they would rescue their families.

God will answer prayers to rescue families

Application: We must learn from David’s example to rely on only God for our strength every day to establish a close relationship with Him, so we will be ready to hope in and trust God in the worst of times and know He will respond with love and truth, mercy and justice when we pray for guidance.

- B. David allows two hundred exhausted men to stay behind; then, those advancing find an Egyptian abandoned by Amalek, feed him, and he becomes an informant. (*Verses 9-15*)
1. David went, he and his six hundred men, and they came to Besor Brook where those left behind stayed; then David pursued, he and four hundred men, the two hundred who stayed behind were too exhausted to cross the brook. (*Verses 9-10*)
Two hundred: David shows compassion to his two hundred men who were so worn out they were ‘dead on their feet’. They had been through a lot, and he was assured of success!

2. They found an Egyptian in the field and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate; and they had him drink water; then, they gave him a slice of pressed figs and two raisin clusters; after eating, his spirit returned because he had not eaten bread and drunk water for three days and nights. (*Verses 11-12*)
Find Egyptian: They providentially found a nearly dead Egyptian and brought him back to strong life with simple food first, then stronger food.
3. Then David said to him: To whom (are) you? Where from here (are) you? And he said: A young man from Egypt, I (am) a servant to a man of Amalek; my master left me behind because I became sick three days ago; we raided the Negeb ... that belongs to Judah ... of Caleb, and burned Ziklag with fire. (*Verses 13-14*)
Abandoned by Amalek: He tells them he was used and abused by the Amalekites. He will likely repay their kindness to him by helping them.
Intelligence: He has given them their first useful piece of intelligence. David's prayers are being answered from an unlikely source!
4. David said to him: Will you take me down to this raiding band? He said: Swear to me by God you will not kill me or hand me over to my master and I will take you down to this raiding band. (*Verse 15*)
David enlists his help: On his way to rescue their families based on God's sure word to answer his prayer, David receives this Divine gift to guide him to where to find and rescue their captive families.

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Application: From this we must be encouraged to ask God IN faith that He will do more than we can ask or understand with our mind (Ephesians 3:20); and, be open to an unexpected answer, especially concerning members of our families who do not have an intimate relationship with God.

II. Kings are saved by reverent waiting on Yahweh, not by natural strength; then all the people know joy and hope in the faith of the God of LOVE. (Psalm 33:16-22)

- A. Kings are not saved by human strength, but by reverent waiting on Yahweh. (*Verses 16-20*)
 1. A king is not saved by an abundant army / a mighty man is not delivered by his great strength // A horse (is) false salvation / and it will not deliver (by its) great might. (*Verses 16-17*)
King not saved by natural strength: Using repetitive word pictures, the anonymous writer states what David knew, even the most powerful human leaders are not saved by their great human strength or a large well-trained army. Being mounted on powerful horses is a false hope.
 2. Behold! The eye of Yahweh is on those fearing Him / to those waiting in hope (of) His steadfast love // To deliver their soul (life) from death / to keep them alive in famine. (*Verses 18-19*)
Reverent waiting: This describes how David could strengthen himself in Yahweh when his six hundred men threatened his life. David had a reverential relationship with Yahweh from his youth and sought Him in patient hope when he desired to rescue their families.
 3. Our soul longs in waiting for Yahweh / our help and our shield (is) He. (*Verse 20*)
Help and shield: It is not about human weapons. The psalmist says the king and his men wait in hope, longing with all their soul for Yahweh, who uses His supernatural weapons to answer their prayers to save and rescue all His people.

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- B. When all the people know the joy of faith in the God of strong, saving love, they can continue to serve God in patient hope. (*Verses 21-22*)
 1. Because in Him our heart will rejoice / because in His holy Name we have trusted. (*Verse 21*)
Joy of faith: The people of the godly king now declare that their hearts rejoice because they have trusted in the holy (and perfect) Yahweh, who is all His Name suggests, especially His steadfast love to those fearing Him.
 2. Your steadfast love will be on us, Yahweh / as we have waited in hope (of) You. (*Verse 22*)
Steadfast saving love: God's people end by rephrasing their hope in the strong life-saving love of their covenant God!

Hope is in the saving love of Yahweh

Application: In light of all we have heard from God this morning, we must pray to have patient faith to wait for God's timing; then, while waiting, we must continue to faithfully obey how God guides us so we will experience and enjoy His LOVE now!

Conclusion: David and his men weep when they return to find their families taken captive by the Amalekites. When his men threaten to stone David, he strengthens himself in God and seeks through God's high priest to know if he should pursue Amalek. David has compassion for his exhausted men and helps an Egyptian cast off by Amalek who becomes an informant. Kings are saved by reverent waiting on Yahweh, not by the strength of themselves and creatures. Then, their people know joy and hope in the faith of the God of LOVE.

God will answer prayers to rescue families