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1 SAMUEL 25:28-31

1 Samuel Series

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, thank you for your work in each one of our lives. Lord, we often get hung up in our week by some of the challenges we face. Not just life situations, but inside of our hearts. Sometimes the pressures that we feel inside are rather challenging. It takes us a while to overcome them. Lord, we know that we can trust you in any situation, but we ask that you would show us what it means to take Jesus home in every area of our life so that we can live a life that follows you in the most strategic way. Lord, we're here today because we love you. We love you, we love worship, we love each other, and we also love your word. So now as we open your word we ask that you would speak to us and teach us from it. In Jesus' name, amen.

How are you all doing today? Someone said to me, "If I was doing any better I'd be twinned." I don't even know what to do with that. But maybe this verse will help you.

I'd like you to stand with me as I read this passage of scripture this morning. We're standing out of reverence for the Lord. I trust that this passage of scripture will minister to your hearts and build your faith. That's my prayer every week as I prepare the message that God would increase your faith because it's your faith that's going to guide you for the week in order to experience the presence of God.

This passage is from Ephesians 4:22-26. The Lord led me to this passage. Let me share this with you. It says – *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin."* And then it continues to talk about anger in that passage.

I want you to see this is part of a passage dealing with emotions and we're just taking the first part of it here. That's one of the passages we're going to look at today. Before you sit down I want you to turn to your neighbor and say, "I've got two people inside of me." Go ahead and say that to them. They might think you're weird, but that's the truth. Go ahead and have a seat. Two people inside of you. We're going to look at that today. You can go ahead and sit back down.

We're going verse by verse through the book of 1 Samuel. As we go through the book of 1 Samuel we come to chapter 25, which is one of the key passages in the Bible about anger. You've just got to know this. If you're going to study anger or understand what the Bible has to say about it, you're going to come to 1 Samuel 25, a great passage.

We're spending some time here actually going slow motion through this passage because we see some great truths here that we don't want to miss. I can just give you an outline of the first five things that are taught here and we can go on next week to the next passage. But I think we would miss being able to take Jesus home with us. We wouldn't get the maximum amount out of this. So we're going to look a little more at this passage.

So last week we did look at this and we saw that one of the principles (two weeks ago when we looked at this at first) we see that David is livid. He is so mad that Nabal has refused him, insulted him, put him down, has disrespected him. If that's happened to you, you know what that mad feeling is that he was experiencing inside. So he's livid. He's coming to get revenge. He's come with four hundred men and justice. They're going to kill this guy and all of his men. That's their goal. But on the way he runs into Abigail who strategically prepares to stop him and appeal to him. She does this in a way that's just so strategic and we're going to see several ideas in here that help us.

So two weeks ago one of the solutions that we saw is to shift your attention. We got it straight out of the text. If you're dealing with negative controlling emotions, we're looking at three big ones now. Anger, sadness, and anxiety. If you find yourself locked into those and you're experiencing negative controlling emotions, you're going to want to look at this and see how Abigail dealt with David and how David made a change. He's livid, he's attacking, he's on his way, and then through the dialogue he makes a change inside. Something happens to him on the inside and we're taking that apart and looking at it. Because we want to take those ideas and apply them to our own lives because we need this, don't we.

We all experience negative controlling emotions at times. Don't tell me you don't. You look great here on Sunday morning, but when it comes to Monday we have challenges. All of us experience it, young people, adults, all of us experience that.

So we took our first principle from this verse 25 where she says – *Pay no attention, my lord, to that wicked man Nabal*. So she's saying change your attention. We talked about this idea of managing our attention. We know that some kids are labeled with attention deficit disorder. I'm suggesting we all need to manage our attention. Because our attention is invested in something that's not good and negative, it just feeds on itself. You know how that is. Whether it's sadness, or anger, or anxiety. It just feeds on itself and starts growing into this huge mess. So diverting our attention is very important.

Now it's interesting that she says *pay no attention*, but if you look in verse 27 she's bringing a gift and she's saying – *And let this gift, which your servant has brought to my lord, be given to the men who follow you*. She brought a whole meal, a big one, for all the people.

So in essence what is happening in this passage, keep this in mind about your own emotions. If you can shift from the negative controlling emotion to gratitude, that's what we saw is happening right here then something changes. Your disposition changes. Your ability to manage your own emotions changes.

Oh but some people will say, “I can’t do that. People make me so angry. Our life situations make me so angry.” So we looked at this last week and I want to just remind you that if you’re going to shift your attention, you have to understand that no one makes you angry. Young people, get this. If you’ll get this now it will save you from so much problems later on. No one can make you angry. They just provide triggers. Triggers that align with something inside of your heart. God says you have a heart and inside that heart are things like desires and beliefs and expectations. If you hold onto your expectations too tightly, then you start blowing up. Like the little black bomb guy in the Angry Birds. He blows up, right? That’s what happens.

If you hold on too tight to your desires, then something comes along and these emotions start to take place. So we have to realize there’s a thing in the middle. That’s what I call it as I’m working with young people. It’s the thing in the middle. Get the thing in the middle and you’ll be able to then be empowered to work on your emotions. Notice though it’s the heart. And where does God like to live in our lives? In our hearts. So it’s aligning our heart with God. Trusting Him is so powerful in our lives.

Now I sent out an email this week to you guys who are on my list. If you’re not on my email list, write on the communication card “put me on the list” and we’ll make sure you get on the list. I asked people, “Could you tell me how you deal with negative controlling emotions in your life?” We all experience it. So everybody could have responded. Several people did. I really appreciate that. Thank you. And you’ll see some of those verses that people gave or some of the strategies and techniques. You’ll see those show up as we go forward.

Now I’m going to go to the next verse. I’m just taking one verse, like I said, slow motion. We’re going to take this very next verse that’s in 1 Samuel 25 and we’re going to draw out from this a second principle that can help us deal with these negative, controlling emotions that we experience. I want to illustrate it for you and show you what it looks like today. Let’s read the verses and then kind of take it apart because we want to draw our principles straight from God’s word, not from some psychology textbook. There’s a lot of psychology textbooks that will help you deal with emotions, but I would suggest that God’s word is the most powerful psychology textbook that’s out there. So let’s look and see what God has to say.

Abigail continues by saying – *“Please forgive your servant’s presumption. The Lord your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord (God’s in control here; He’s doing something in your life), because you fight the Lord’s battles, and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live.* But you need to be careful about wrongdoing.

Three things are right here that I’m going to tie together in a moment, but see them in the passage first. One – God is in control and doing a work in your life. Number two – you have your part to do. And number three – be careful that you don’t get involved in wrongdoing or sin. So from those ideas I come up with this kind of thing that ties them all together. Anger doesn’t fit your calling. That’s what Abigail is saying to him. David, anger doesn’t fit your calling.

Now as we look at that, we’re going wow, that’s really interesting. It doesn’t fit our calling. What does that mean it doesn’t fit our calling? That’s not who I am. I’m not that kind of person, but sometimes you’ve got this battle going on inside.

I don't know about you, but sometimes I feel like I got more than one person inside of me. That's why this passage is so helpful in Ephesians 4 because it talks about the people that are inside of me. You see, this passage of scripture I want you to know is not a passage telling you how to become a Christian. This isn't a passage saying leave your self back over here and you be a new self now because Christ is living in your life. That's not what it's saying. He's writing to Christians and he's telling them you've got an old self you've got to deal with. In other words, you're regularly dealing with the old self and the new self.

Notice some things I just want to point them out in the verse what happens here. He says – *You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires.* In other words, I would suggest that the old self is sneaky.

This came out in our Take Jesus Home Bible study because this is what we're talking about in the Wednesday group. You're welcome to join us. But one of the people said there that it just gives the impression that it is a sneaky thing that the old self does. I don't know about you, but I feel that way. The old self sneaks up on me before I realize it and then I'm in some kind of a problem in my life.

To be made new in the attitude of your mind (so we have to change the way we think as we're moving forward) and to *put on this new self, created to be like God.* So the new self is the person that's like God inside of me that's moving in that direction in true righteousness and holiness. So we have these two kinds of persons inside and that really makes a lot of sense to me in my life. I'm going to give you a personal illustration of this to help you kind of think it through in your own life.

These last couple weeks I've been trying to become more emotionally aware of just my own self. So there are sometimes I kind of take my emotional pulse and okay now I feel kind of normal. Normal for me is like I'm a little bit positive. I just feel generally good about life. I enjoy that. So that's my normal. Sometimes I'm taking my pulse and I'll say I don't feel anything now, I just feel like normal. And then every once in awhile something will happen and I'll start to feel different and I want to ask the question, why am I feeling different? What's going on here? You see there's an old self that he's saying you've got to deal with. You're trying to work on it. You're trying to put away the old self. You're trying to build something inside of you that's really strategic.

Maybe you're asking, how do I know what the old self is? What is that? What's going on? What is the old self? It's a great question. You know how some of you guys like to watch detective shows on TV. When you're watching a detective show and they're trying to find who the murderer is or the guy who committed the crime or who did this, one of the statements that they'll sometimes make is this: Follow the money. So you look at the bank accounts and maybe you'll be led to the person who did the bad thing. So that's how they do it. Well I want to tell you, if you want to find more about the old self, follow the emotion.

Now I better clarify this. Follow the negative controlling emotion. But I don't want to say all emotions are bad. I don't believe emotions are bad. I don't want to say that even negative

emotions are bad because God can use anger to prompt us to take some action. He can use sadness to help us grieve over a loss. He can use anxiety to help us do a report we've got to make. God can use negative emotions, so I'm not saying they're bad. But if they're controlling you in a way you don't want to be controlled, then there's probably something going on inside that needs to be adjusted inside the heart. So you want to know what's going on in the old man? Follow the emotion. The emotion can lead us there sometimes and put their finger on something that's very important that's going on on the inside.

This week I was measuring my emotional pulse. I happened to get my thing at the grocery store and I come to the line and there's eight people in line. Eight. And there's only one cash register open. There's lots of cash registers, but there's only one open. I'm thinking something's wrong here. If I were the manager of this store, I know what I would do. I would open another one. There's eight people here, there's got to be a signal somewhere. Of course nobody can tell that I'm saying that. That's just going on inside of me. I'm first disappointed, then I'm feeling frustrated, and I'm a fixer in my life so I'm wondering who's going to solve the problem of the eight that nobody seems to be around. So I'm destined now to stand in a line with these eight people.

I'm saying to my self, "Hmm. Maybe I should take my emotional pulse." So I did and then I start asking the question, why is this bothering me so much? Why is it bothering me that I'm going to have to wait probably ten minutes to get through this line? Well, I started to think about that. What's going on here. Here's what I realized in my own heart. I'm wasting time here. Ten minutes. I'm wasting time. So what? I've got ten minutes. I can take ten minutes and waste it. But I realize I really value productivity. It's one of those high things on my list. It's a value, it's a desire of mine, and I want to be productive. This is not being productive, waiting ten minutes in line to buy whatever I'm going to buy.

But I'm still saying to myself, "Why is this important to me that I'm not being productive right now?" Here's where I got to the point that it made sense to me. Not only do I value productivity, but I have a temptation to make productivity a measure of my self-worth and self-content. I like myself better when I'm being productive. I like myself better when I'm getting things done. I don't feel so good about myself when I'm wasting time. In fact I'm tempted to think other people like me because I get things done and I'm productive. I'm not sure other people would like me if I wasn't productive. I think maybe God likes me because I'm productive. Maybe He wouldn't like me if I wasn't so productive.

Now I'm at this really important core belief inside of my heart that I'm wrestling with. I realize that the emotion that I'm experiencing has just revealed something in my heart that I'm not feeling so good about. But I realize I need to do something with this old self. We can call this old self the productive self. And then all of a sudden I feel uncomfortable about that because does this mean productivity is bad? No, it's not bad. But for me when I call it the productive Scott, what I'm saying is it's the person who values himself based on productivity, and I don't want to be that. I want to be the Spirit-filled Scott who doesn't have to get upset when he's standing in line with eight other people.

So what am I going to do about it? This is a very significant moment for me and I'm trying to evaluate what my beliefs are. I'm getting to the conclusion that all negative controlling emotions come from some kind of a belief inside of a person that's a problem that needs to be addressed. That's the working place that I'm at right now. So I'm trying to test it out on myself and other people I'm working with right now, primarily children.

So I get to a place where I say, "Okay, what do I want to do now? How do I want to change this?" I thought about there's another value that I have. I have a real strong value of people. I love people. I believe every person has a story. Even the obnoxious people have a story. They're interesting and I like that. So nobody really wanted to talk to me right around me in this line, but I started thinking about this little girl that I love. She's a one year old. Her name is Maddie. She comes to visit me in my office, maybe once or twice a week. I really love her. She's just so smart and I even got last week a big stuffed bunny. She likes bunnies, so I'm enjoying introducing her to the bunny. She hasn't seen the bunny yet.

So I'm thinking about that, and now there's only one person in front of me and I got to put my stuff down and I'm ready to go. I'm thinking wow, my emotions changed in that path from eight people down to one and something happened inside of me, probably something more significant than I realized. But it was an illustration for me of some of the things that God wants to do, I believe, in our lives.

So Abigail comes to David and says, "David, God is the one who is building a dynasty. He's doing something in your life. Number two, you need to do your part. Number three, you need to stay away from sin." That's what she's saying. Basically anger isn't part of who you are.

Remember I'm talking about anger in the negative controlling sense, not that all anger is bad. Don't misquote me or get mad at me because I said that. I'm just saying that part of controlling emotion is not where I want to be. It's not a part of being the Spirit-filled Scott. David, it's not a part of who you are. And somehow in the midst of this dialogue with David, he went from being livid and attacking to being able to pull back and turn around and go back to his home. Something happened inside of his heart. Something I think we want to have happen in our own hearts as we take this idea and practice it in our own lives.

She says – *"Please forgive your servant's presumption. The Lord your God will certainly make a lasting dynasty for my lord (she's saying God is working) because you fight the Lord's battles (you're doing your part), and no wrongdoing will be found in you as long as you live."* Do the right thing because anger isn't a part of your calling.

I have an identity. My identity to be the Spirit-filled Scott is something I want to be working towards in my life. That's what I want. It means I need to have my focus and my attention on who I am in Christ and maybe some of these other things that cause a problem will diminish because I'm focusing on Christ in my heart.

I want to give you a little tour for a moment. A tour about identity and what God wants to do in our lives, how He wants us to think about ourselves in relation to Him.

In Genesis 1:27 it says that He created us. *So God created man in his own image; in the image of God.* God created me. I am made in God's image. That's part of my identity. Each one of us has that identity because no matter whether you're a Christian or not, you're made in God's image and you're valuable before God.

Jeremiah 1:5 says – *Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart.* Just the fact that you are a human being means that you are special, set apart, designed by God. Yet there's something more than you can experience that's even more powerful, and that's salvation.

John 1:12 says this: *Yet to all who receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right.* Wow. I have this right. It exists in me because I responded to God to be called a child of God. That is really special. That is my identity that God has given to me.

Another way to describe is this way: *For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will.* Wow. I am part of God's family. That is my identity. That is who I am.

In 1 Peter 2 he says – *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.* God has given me something really special in my relationship with Him. That is my identity.

I just want to say to you today, if you haven't accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you're not fully complete yet. You've got to understand there's something waiting for you that God wants you to have. It is yours. If you're a young person today and you're relying on your parents' faith or your friend's faith, that's not good enough. You're missing out on something really powerful. God wants to have a personal relationship with you that just changes your identity because now you walk over all of these things and you're able to deal with the things inside of your heart with new power than you ever had before. Wow. That is just stunning to understand who I am in Christ. I have this identity of living with Christ that makes me a different kind of person.

I love this verse in Ephesians 2:10 – *For you are God's masterpiece (like a painting, something He's working on), created in Christ to do good works, which God prepared in advance for you to do.*

God is in the middle of working on me. Does that mean we're perfect? No. We're continuing to do this work with Him. But God is doing something deep inside of us. Will we ever get to the place where we're overcoming all the emotional challenges we have? I don't think so. But every day that we move forward our identity is better than the day before. So we can experience God in new ways and we can enjoy Him. We don't have to be hung up with emotions that are driving us in negative ways. God can do this deeper work inside of us that's really powerful.

Colossians 1:27 says – *To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is (what?) Christ in you, the hope of glory.* God wants to do some good things inside of our hearts. He wants to do some good things inside of our lives. But it means sometimes that we have to do a little bit of work to understand what's going on.

I would encourage you this week to think about some of the emotions that are controlling. For some people controlling emotions are thirty seconds long and then they go away. For others you kind of live with them day in and day out. I believe God wants to do something powerful in our lives to help address some of the challenges that we face on this level. He wants to give us this ability.

Am I saying that God wants us to be robots so we don't have any emotion? Maybe that's what you're thinking. No, I don't believe that's the case. In fact I would suggest that right now some people are acting like robots because they follow the anger path now and they're angry. They don't know how to move to something else. Some people follow the sadness and they're sad or depressed. Some people follow the anxious path and they're stuck. Those are the robots. They're stuck in an emotional pit. They're stuck and they can't get out. I would suggest that as God allows us to deal with these things He gives us emotional freedom. Now we have the things to choose, like love and joy and peace.

How do we choose those? We submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit because those are fruit of the Holy Spirit and work in our lives. That's something completely different. We're not robots. We just want to have the freedom to choose a little bit more and not be captured by these negative controlling emotions.

Man, this is such a rich passage. I'm so excited because God has made us special. God has given us a heritage that God has redeemed the sins or the problems or the pain of the past that we would like to forget. The problems that capture our lives, that we focus in on, that we wish that weren't there, God wants to take those and turn them into ministries in our lives. God is at work in our lives. He wants to do some powerful things and emotions often indicate where God wants to work. We just have to be willing to listen and allow God to do that deeper work in our hearts. Amen?

Stand up with me.

[PRAYER] Lord, I just pray that you would do that work in our hearts. I ask that you would help us in the midst of that storm, in the eye of the storm that we would allow you to be able to control us. That when the sails are torn on our boat that we would still be able to trust you all the more. Lord, we love you, but bringing that down into an emotional level sometimes is challenging. We all experience this. We humbly admit that before you now. We ask that this week you would empower us all the more to address the deeper issues of our heart so that we can enjoy life more, so that we can live life to the full as you've called us to live. Lord, we give ourselves to you today. We dedicate ourselves to you. In Jesus' name, amen.