



Scott Turansky, Senior Pastor
August 20, 2017

1 SAMUEL 29:1-30:6

1 Samuel Series

I think it is very important for us to pray for our country. Things are going on in our country that are disheartening, upsetting. I think that the greatest thing we can do is come before the Lord and then be proactive in taking a stand with our friends and others. It provides great discussions for us to have discussions with other people about the true meaning of Christianity, what it is, and what it does. So would you join me in prayer please?

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we're coming before you now because of the challenges that are happening in our world – this whole thing with the whole white supremacists and others who are just doing things that are totally against who we are as Christians, Lord, we want to disassociate ourselves with them, we want to take a stand against evil. We know that you are a God who reconciles, you are a God who brings people together, and that's your message to do that. There is no one who is better than anyone else. We are all sinners. We all need Jesus Christ. And Lord, we want to speak against that hate. We want to take a stand for the love that you provide for us. We accept that love in our lives and we ask that you would cause us to be a lighthouse for that. That as we have opportunity to have conversations with others, we will be able to proclaim who you are and the tremendous need for us in our lives. Lord, take away any form of pride that we might have. I pray that as a Christian community we might be these reconcilers that bring people to faith in you and an understanding of who you are. Your name is powerful, Lord, so we pray this in Jesus' name. And all God's people said, amen.

Would you stand with me? I want to read to you a verse from God's word. I'm going to read this verse that's a really special verse that describes the relationship that God has for us and cares for us. It just has so much packed into it and I trust that you'll be able to grasp these ideas today just a little bit. Just even a little bit of grasping these ideas will do a tremendous amount for your heart and your soul. The verse reads this way: *The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save; he will take great delight in you; he will quiet you with his love; he will rejoice over you with singing.*

It's just packed with this sense of God's care, His love. If you ever feel distant from the Lord, you need to know that you can experience Him. I'm going to read it again because I want it to sink in just a little bit. *The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save; he will take great delight in you; he will quiet you with his love; he will rejoice over you with singing.*

A lot of good stuff there. We'll come back to it several times in our sermon today. You may be seated.

As I prepare messages, I am trying to think in terms of what God wants to say to me first, personally. I want to know what He wants to say to me, but then I also want to know what I should present to you and how God might want you to be touched by the message.

When I do that, I think in terms of three different words. They are think, feel, and do. If you are in management and you set up goals for people, then you think in these terms too because these are the terms that we use to describe goals that we want to create for a particular objective. We want someone to think, or feel, or do. But God, in His word, wants us to think or believe things differently than we do. We are constantly adjusting our belief system to match God's belief system. So today I want you to believe something differently.

He also wants us to feel differently. God is concerned about feelings. Feelings are not anti-spiritual. God wants us to feel certain things and He wants us to experience them. Experience is good as well. So we have that whole peace that we want to have in our lives and in a message or a sermon as well.

And lastly (we emphasize this one a lot), we talk about take Jesus home, the doing. What am I going to do with this truth when I leave here? So this isn't just about feeling good when you're here at church. It's about taking something away from here that's going to help you. So let me define for you today what my goal is and what I think God's goal is for us in this particular sermon that we would think about God's grace. That we'd feel comfort and be encouraged (that's the feeling part), and that we would live mindful of this grace in the course of the week. That's the goal. That's where we're headed and I believe that's what God wants us to understand from the passage today.

In order to do that, we're going to look at 1 Samuel 29 and 30. We are going verse by verse through the Bible. We happen to be in 1 Samuel 29 today. It only has thirty-one chapters and when we're done we're jumping to 2 Corinthians, which is a fabulous passage. I'm fully looking forward to that after we take three weeks of talking about the church and so on.

So what I want to do now is we're going to look at 1 Samuel 29. I'm going to read it. As I do, I'll take it through and stop here and there and talk about the passage and try to bring application to our lives so that when you leave today you'll have something that you can believe, that you can feel, and that you can do. That's our goal as we're going through our passage today.

In 1 Samuel 29:1 it says this: *The Philistines gathered all their forces at Aphek, and Israel camped by the spring in Jezreel.*

Now I've got to bring you up to speed. If you haven't been with us, I'm going to bring you up to speed in this story so you understand. This is a battle that's about to take place. This is one of the most historic battles in all of the Old Testament because this is the battle where King Saul as a result is going to die, opening the throne for David who is going to be the king. But that's getting a little ahead of our story. I just want you to know it's a very important battle.

But as we look back in the story to see where we got to where we are today, we have to realize this: David, in a point of despair and discouragement, decides to run away from Saul by leaving

the Israelite camp and going over to live with the Philistines. So he goes over and visits Achish in the city of Gath (Gath being the place where Goliath was from, so just a crazy decision that he makes), and he goes over there to live. Achish gives him a town of Ziklag where he is going to now live in Ziklag with his 600 soldiers, and all of their families are going to stay in this particular city.

But David in his moment of discouragement, because he's not happy with what's going on and needs some comfort in his life...that's usually the ticket that gets you in this place. "I want comfort, I'm unhappy with the pain I'm experiencing in my life, so I'm going to make a decision," and that decision sometimes is not good. David did that. "I want comfort."

So people get comfort in a lot of different ways today, whether it's in pills, or their relationship, or with their anger, or whatever it is. They find comfort and they go after that comfort. Now when you go after the world and comfort that you can find in the world, you often find what you're looking for. You'll get immediate relief from your pain. It will feel good immediately. But the problem is when you go to the world for comfort it starts to form this bondage that creates an entrapment and so you then become entrapped by whatever this is. So people become addicted to whatever they're addicted to. Or they find themselves in situations that are not good and damaging to themselves. It's a terrible place to be. In fact it's not only bad; it's dangerous.

I just want to suggest that when you go to find comfort in the world's system and you try to find good things in the world that you like that make you feel happy, pleasure, experience pleasure or comfort, you are in serious danger. It doesn't take much to look around in life and see people who have gone and you see the bad things that are happening to them. That's not a good place to be. It may look attractive at first, and it does give you some immediate benefit, but in the long run it is terribly dangerous.

Today in 1 Samuel 29 we see it all come together for David. Now here comes all the bad stuff. Oh yeah, I'm sure he had relief from Saul. Saul was no longer pursuing him, the Bible says, and now Saul is leaving him alone. David is free from that. But remember he is living in Ziklag and he's going on these raids. He's actually attacking the Canaanite people. The Canaanites, the enemy of the land, he's attacking them, but he's killing all of them and he's bringing back the produce (this is kind of his way of earning a living), so you'd have all the animals and so on. But he would have to lie to the king, Achish, and tell him, "Oh I attacked the Israelites." So Achish is developing this opinion of David based on a false presentation and David is having to live his lie on both sides.

Whenever you try to live both sides of life, that is one foot trying to live the Christian life while the other foot is over here trying to live in the world, you are in danger, and it's going to catch up to you at some point.

It catches up to David right now in his story because now what happens is the Israelites are being attacked by the Philistines. There's going to be this battle between them. And where's David? David is in the Philistine's camp. So David is going to be called upon to fight his own people. It has got to be the most uncomfortable situation. Because David's been told he's going to be the

king, yet now he's going to fight against the Israelites? He's in a very difficult situation. Not only bad, but dangerous.

I just want you to know that when you're living in the world and trying to get comfort and pleasure from the world's opportunities, the things that are out there, the question isn't what's wrong with it. Don't ask the question what's wrong with it. That's just going to get you deeper into all kinds of things. It's dangerous. It's not just bad. It's dangerous.

Verse 2 – *As the Philistine rulers marched with their units of hundreds and thousands, David and his men were marching at the rear with Achish. The commanders of the Philistines asked, “What about these Hebrews?”*

So you have to picture now they're getting ready to go into battle and there are these commanders who are having all of the troops march in front of them in formation, probably, marching through. They're inspecting the troops before they go into battle. As the troops are passing by, you've got this big group of 601 soldiers (if the numbers are exact it's 600 soldiers plus David) going by and they're Hebrews. It's a problem. The commanders see it as a problem and they want to do something about it.

So it says, *“What about these Hebrews? Why are these Hebrews in line to fight?”* Now Achish is going to defend the Israelites that are with him by saying this: *“Is this not David, who was an officer of Saul king of Israel? He has already been with me for over a year, and from the day he left Saul until now, I have found no fault in him.”* That's because he doesn't know the true David and what's going on. He only has the opinion from the presentation David has made.

But the Philistine commanders were angry with Achish. This is ridiculous! You can't have these guys here for three reasons. Notice what the three reasons are. *“Send the man back, that he may return to the place you assigned him. He must not go with us into battle, or he will turn against us during the fighting.”* And likely he would. Do you really think David would fight against the Israelites? David's in the back here with his 600 guys, the Israelites are fighting, what a great opportunity for them to flank them and to attack them and to kill them. So it's very wise of the commanders to say, *“Let's get rid of the Hebrews.”* One of their reasons is because look, they could *turn against us in the fighting.* The second reason, in other words, maybe what he'll do is he'll want to get Saul's blessing and so he'll take advantage of the opportunity and this definitely would be an opportunity to come in and start killing Philistines. And thirdly – *“Isn't this the David they sang about in their dances: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands?”* What they're saying here is this guy has a reputation. He is a soldier. He is not somebody we want in our camp.

So we have this situation now where Achish is going to be disappointed and now he's got to go talk to David about this and we see the ensuing comments. Let me just read this and then I'll make some comments about it.

So Achish called David and said to him, “As surely as the Lord lives, you have been reliable, and I would be pleased to have you serve with me in the army. From the day you came to me

until today, I have found no fault in you, but the rulers don't approve of you. Now turn back and go in peace; do nothing to displease the Philistine rulers."

"But what have I done?" asked David. "What have you found against your servant from the day I came to you until now? Why can't I go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?" So I don't know whether David is being honest or not. It's hard to tell by what he says what he's planning to do. But we do know he's lied in the past, so certainly his word is unrealizable at this point.

Achish answered, "I know that you have been as pleasing in my eyes as an angel of God." Very interesting that a person can have a persona or a perception to other people that looks very attractive and good, but have something very difficult on the inside. Just think about that. Trying to live one side and then the other side it's a dangerous place to be. Achish has this opinion of him. He says, "Nevertheless, the Philistine commanders have said, 'He must not go up with us into battle.' Now get up early, along with your master's servants who have come with you, and leave in the morning as soon as it is light." So David and his men got up early in the morning to go back to the land of the Philistines, and the Philistines went up to Jezreel.

Now I want you just to think about these men for a moment because they must have thought, "Oh no," when they heard that they were going to have this battle, "Oh no. We're going to go into battle with our own people. This is ridiculous. What are we going to do here?" They're in a difficult place. And now the situation has turned out that they are on their way home. It's a three day journey back home. They're going to spend time with their families, they're going too go back and not fight in this battle. So they're relieved of this pressure of this particular situation.

I would suggest here that this is a place where they're experiencing some relief. Oh wow. God has worked in the midst of this difficult situation to bring out a resolution that maybe they didn't anticipate.

You see, the generals are looking at the armies going by and they're deciding that in their company they have to lay off some people. So they choose to lay off 601 people that are going to get pink slips. They're going to give pink slips out to people in the business, in their company. You know if you've been through this you know what it's like. You get the pink slip you go, "Oh no, I'm laid off from my business." But at the same time you may be saying, "Oh good. Because this opens up opportunities," or "I needed to get out of that place." I'm sure that's what they were feeling in the midst of this.

Here's what we have. We have a touch point right here, a very important theological truth that we need to catch today. It has to do with God's grace. God worked out this difficult situation in the life of David and his men and provided for them a good thing, a way out of a painful situation and they're going to go back to their homes to be with their families. That's their goal.

Now I want you to listen to me very carefully, young people, because often we as older people or parents say to you, "If you're doing the wrong thing, there's going to be a consequence," because that is true. We talk about the consequences of your actions and there are consequences to the choices that we make. So we have to be really careful about your choices.

But I want to share something else with you that we don't often talk about, but is a reality of life. God's grace will come to you, even if you're doing the wrong thing. Did you know that? God's grace will come to you even if you're doing the wrong thing. Because God pursues us and God gives us His kindness. I believe He does that even when we're doing the wrong thing because He wants to woo us back. It's not just the consequences, although they are a reality. The consequences cause us to go back, but it's also the grace of God that says, "Wow, there is something bigger out there that God wants to do and God is doing things for me now even in the midst of this difficult situation." If you ever feel or you ever say to yourself, "Oh my life is too messed up, I can't turn to the Lord," you're missing something about God's grace. It is bigger than all those things.

Even if you're doing the wrong thing, God's grace will touch you. You will get gifts of God's grace along the way. Don't misinterpret them. Don't misinterpret them to think that they are an affirmation of what you're doing, that they are a stamp of approval on your wrong choices. Don't do that. Just recognize that God's grace is so big that He wants to give it to you even if you're doing the wrong thing.

That is why Paul in his understanding is trying to explain God's grace to people in Romans. He's trying to tell them how big God's grace is. In Romans 6 he takes an objection. Here's the objection. Well if grace is so big, then why not sin more so that we can get more grace? That's the question. It's right in the text in Romans 6. There's a temptation for us to think that if we're going in the wrong direction and God's grace is there and we keep going in the wrong direction, God will just forgive us for anything we do.

Realize there's another side of this. God will give you grace. There's more grace available to you when you're moving in the right direction and there's terrible consequences when you're doing the wrong thing. Sin has negative effects on our lives. But God has this tremendous ability to pursue us even if we're doing the wrong thing. So I just want to say to you today that if you're not following the Lord 100% you will still see God's grace in your life. When you see it, it's a call to come back to Him. It's a call to appreciate who He is, to trust in Him.

I want to look at this verse. I want you to see it because this is what happens when you have a close relationship with the Lord. Listen to what the Lord says to us – *The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save*. Whatever problem you're finding yourself in, you don't have to go to the world for comfort, you don't have to get pleasure out of the enemy camp. God has solutions for you. Sometimes it means waiting for them. Sometimes it means seeking Him. But the solutions are with the Lord. *He is mighty to save; he will take great delight in you; he will quiet you with his love; he will rejoice over you with singing*. I just think that's such a beautiful verse.

The point we're trying to make here in the end of this chapter is this: God's grace is huge. It's big. It will follow you wherever you go. It's a reminder for you to come back to Him. Let's go into the next chapter. I want you to see another aspect of this grace.

In 1 Samuel 30:1 it says – *David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day*. That means they're going home. It took them three days to go home. *Now the Amalekites had raided the*

Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. This is bad and it's getting personal. It's their families. When it starts to get personal, it starts to hurt in your heart a lot. It's very painful when it gets personal. It's hard to live with the pain.

In fact look at the next verse, how they described it. *When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.*

I don't know if you've been there, but when your heart aches so much that the pain is just overwhelming, there's just no strength left to weep. It's such a hard place. When you're in that place, it's such a painful, painful place. And that's the story. That's what's happening here. I just want you to see what happens and I want you to feel the pain of what's going before we bring the truth here of what needs to happen.

David's two wives had been captured—Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him. So now even his men, his friends who would go with him right into the kingdom (these are the guys who will go with him into the leadership of the kingdom in a little bit) are talking about stoning him. *Each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters.* That *bitter in spirit* feeling is just this overwhelming feeling. In your job or your finances or your relationship or wherever it is, your physical health it's just a hard place to be.

But I want you to see the bottom line in this, which is the last part of the verse that we're going to look at today. Because in the midst of all of this stuff, this very bad experience, this painful place in his life, it says – *But David found strength in the Lord his God.*

What is that? This is the theological touch point where here again, same truth, God's grace is really big. That when you tap into God's grace He can bring to you a strength that you wouldn't have had otherwise. That is so powerful.

It doesn't use the word comfort there and I do think that God comforts us. But here's the problem. When you go to the world and you try to find comfort, you don't get the strength. You get weaker and weaker and weaker because you make wrong decisions and you get trapped by what it going on, and bad things happen in your life. God provides the comfort, but He also provides the strength to be able to live with life. And so David somehow in the midst of this, the man after God's own heart is doing what we need to do. Find comfort and strength in God. That is big. It says – *David found strength in the Lord his God.*

Today people will go and find themselves going to comfort in the world system in a lot of different ways because the big signposts out in the world are "pleasure, comfort; come here, I'll give it to you." So people find themselves going there because of the promise of comfort and pleasure. And the promise is true. There is some comfort by going to the world for a short period of time. But then comes all the pain associated with it. It makes it very worse than you were in the very beginning. It's a very dangerous place to be.

So there are lots of addictions, of course. Addiction is when you take the pills that make you feel good, but then you're stuck on them and you can't get away from them. But it's not just pills that form addiction. There's people who are addicted to all kinds of things. Some people are addicted to negativity. Just everything is bad and they get some benefit out of complaining all the time when they turn around. I think there are some people that are addicted to problems. If things are going well, they generate a problem so that they can feel better about it. Some people are just addicted to problems.

God wants to provide for us this strength. Just look at the last words here. *Strength in the Lord his God.* And in the other verse – *the Lord your God.* Do you see *the Lord your God* is in both those places? It's the Lord. Lord means boss. He's the one who controls me. He's my God. God is something you worship. It is something you put your time, energy, and money into. And what you spend your time, energy, and money will reveal what your God is.

The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save; he will take great delight in you. Those words are tickling kinds of words in my mind. Where God just delights in you. He kind of tickles you when you laugh, and you see that experience between a parent and child. It's just a delight that God has in us. *He will quiet you with his love.* This is such a beautiful thing. God's love is like this: It's so amazing, it's infinite love, *agapé* love, this beautiful love that goes over us in the midst of our pain, struggle, and challenge, and it envelops us and it quiets our heart. That's big. *He will rejoice over you with singing.* Oh I love that. *He will rejoice over you with singing.*

Early in our family's life we had a privilege of living in a real commune. I am sure not too many people get this privilege. We went to the Bruderhof. The Bruderhof is the name of a commune and we had some special privileges. They don't just let anyone come in, but because of some of our friends they let us go live in the Bruderhof for a few days. We worked with them. There's no money exchange. It's actually a commune of Christians who are living together in this interesting environment. We worked with them, we ate with them, and after the meal they read aloud a story to everybody in the commune, adults and children. It was really interesting how they functioned in the commune, the Bruderhof. Trying to be the Christian community in a community.

It's one of the things, by the way, that led the Millers and Turanskys to live in community in our neighborhood. So the Millers moved into our neighborhood and we share all these things. This picture of community we learned from the Bruderhof is just really fascinating.

But I just want to tell you one story about the Bruderhof. At night while you're sleeping a guard is walking around. As the guard is walking around, he is singing. He is singing. You might find that very uncomfortable because you might wake up while he's singing. But there's something very comforting about this singing that you go, "Yes, all is well." The singing is such a powerful thing that happens in the midst of the night, of the dark. The guard is walking around singing and it's very comforting. That just made a mark on me. So important at night.

When my children were young I would sing to them before they went to bed. Some of you have heard me tell you this before. I'll tell you it again sometime. But I'll tell you it again today. I

would sing to my kids and I would sing this one song from Psalm 8. I'm going to sing it for you in a minute. Psalm 8. It's a song that the kids would ask for. In other words, "Come tuck me in, Dad." Even when they were twelve, thirteen, fourteen years old, I'm still coming in and tucking them in and singing them the song. My granddaughter Hanale was over – "Come in. Sing the song, Grandpa." So I would go in and pray for them, rub their back. It's a special time before kids go to bed. I'd rub their back, talk to them a bit, I'd pray for them, and then I would sing this song from Psalm 8.

*"O Lord, our Lord, how excellent Your name is.
How excellent Your name in all the earth.
Your glory fills the heavens beyond the farthest star.
How excellent Your name in all the earth.
When I think about the heavens, the moon and all the stars,
I wonder what You ever saw in me.
But You took me and You loved me and You've given me a crown
And now I'll praise Your name eternally.
O Lord, our Lord, how excellent Your name is.
How excellent Your name in all the earth.
Your glory fills the heavens beyond the farthest star.
How excellent Your name in all the earth.
How excellent Your name in all the earth."*

Have a good night's sleep and good dreams.

I trust the Lord will use this message today from His word to touch you in your own heart because God delights in you and sings over you. Do you know God sings and He has a great voice? He delights over you and sings over you. Wow. That is so great.

We make a choice in our lives. James 4:8 says – *Draw near to God and he will draw near to you.* You want to be close to the Lord in your life. Don't go over to the world's system for pleasure. If you've done that, get back on the track with the Lord. Repent and change and determine to follow the Lord because He will not just give you comfort, He will also give you strength and that's what we need every day of our lives to be the people that God has called us to be. Amen? Amen.

Let's stand and pray together.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, I thank you for your love for us that is so all-consuming. It is something that we desperately need and it's not something that is just that earthly love that has to do with you made me feel good so I love you, but it's that deep, deep infinite love that overpowers us in ways that are life-changing. So we do thank you for Jesus dying on the cross. We do thank you that we can be people of reconciliation in a world that is dominated by hate. We thank you, Lord, that you pursue us even when we're doing the wrong thing and give us grace. Lord, we're grateful that we can experience that grace even in the most difficult and challenging and painful places of our lives. We need you, we're grateful for you, and we thank you. We worship you in Jesus' name, amen.