

FRIDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2014

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 30:1-31, Psalm 56

THE WAY BACK

David was in one of the darkest valleys of his life. Everyone around him is out of touch with God. Clearly David's backsliding had affected his men. At a point like this, Saul turned to a medium. But David does something different. A crisis often reveals our real spiritual character. Now he recognises what he has done and the fallibility of man. Instead he looks only to God, "*but David encouraged himself in the LORD his God.*" This is another of the many great "buts" in the Bible! From David's lowest low, he reaches out to the highest heaven. This was a deliberate act of David not to wallow in the pit he had dug for himself. Only grace can do that.

Jonathan taught him this in 1 Samuel 23:16. Amid the ruins of his life, David will learn to stand alone, dependent only on God. Some people emerge stronger from such in experiences, whereas others weaker. The thieves could take the goods of David but they could never take the God of David away! When God is all we have – we will find God is all we need.

No doubt, David encouraged himself by reminding himself of who God is, what God has promised, what God has done for him, and what God can do for him. This is not positive thinking or increasing your self-esteem. It is a truly victorious sight observing David rejoicing in the faithfulness of his God. He does not hit back at his critics but simply leans upon the Lord. His faith returns in the crisis to its old resting place – GOD. The clouds part and the sunshine of God's love come flowing through. It is no wonder David could write, "*In God have I put my trust: I will not be afraid what man can do unto me.*" (Psa. 56:11).

The next step David takes reveals the changes in the heart of David, "*And David said to Abiathar the priest, Abimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David. And David enquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them?*" (v7-8a) When you reflect on the revelation of God in His Word, it invariably drives you to prayer. The Word and prayer are interconnected. Now, when he leans on God, David will find Him a very present help in trouble. God always is open to a broken and contrite heart. For the first time in 16 months, David is seeking God's will – you will find the same today!

David is determined to be in the will of God now. He has learned a painful lesson. It is sad that it took David 16 wasted and empty months to seek the Lord. But at least he did so! This incident reminds us of the danger of backsliding. It also is a reminder that dark valleys need a vertical focus as well as a horizontal focus in order to get through. Failure is not necessarily final. No matter how low you go, the way back to the Lord is always open. There is always hope in the Lord! Maybe today is the day that you can look up to the Lord and turn your life round.

HYMN: HGG 344 – Jesus, I Come¹

PRAYER: May We Keep Our Eyes on Thee

¹Lyrics available at <http://www.sermonaudio.com/hymnlist.asp>