

On faithfulness

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What is faithfulness?

Perhaps to explain it better, turn with me to this story on David (before he became a King) in 1 Samuel 30: 3 - 6 :

“So David and his men came to the city [Ziklag], and there it was, burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters had been taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David’s two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the widow of Nabal the Carmelite, had been taken captive.

Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and his daughters.

But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.”



Start

Grow

Mature

In the story above, you can quickly see a few things happening:

- David has come back from somewhere (with his soldiers) to a city - his home town of Ziklag.
- He finds the city has been burned while he was away.
- The invaders of the city have taken the wives and children of the city’s inhabitants – including David’s wives.
- All the men (for the women and children are gone) start crying. The men cry loudly. This is deep grief – as serious perhaps as an African funeral with the professional wailers. These men probably cry all day - until they have no strength left.
- The grief eventually turns to anger (as it often does). The men in the city now want to stone David! It seems they are blaming him for this loss. Mind you these are his friends, not strangers. His fellow soldiers. People in his neighbourhood.
 - His workmate – the guy who always speaks good of him at the water counter.
 - The shop keeper from whom he buys the halloumi.
 - The Uber taxi driver who takes him to see his best friend Joab.
 - The old man next door who tells him the same story time and time again.
 - The man who does the pedicure of his beloved wife Abigail.

What does David do?

David turns to his Lord, the Lord who gives strength.

In the midst of a crisis, he remembers his God – he doesn’t seek revenge. He probably doesn’t even hold a grudge against these distressed people (people in distress often do terrible things).

Why does David turn to God?

He remembers that God has been with him. God has been faithful.

Faithfulness means sticking to it, no matter what.

David is not angry to ask God – Where were you? Aren't you supposed to be my protector as you promised? I put my trust in you. It wouldn't have happened if I was here, to protect them but soon as I turned my back, this happened.

Why was David faithful to God?

You see this story of Ziklag is really a climax of sorts. Happening after so many things have happened to David. By this time some of the things that have happened in David's life were include:

- **Saul anointed king.** Saul has been anointed and declared as the first king of Israel by the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 10: 1 -27).
- **Saul rejected by God as King.** Saul had started good but then he disobeyed God and so God rejected Saul as King (1 Samuel 13: 1- 14).
- **God chooses David to replace Saul.** God has chosen David to replace Samuel. David was a mere shepherd. The last son of Jesse, no one really thought much of him, not even his father (1 Samuel 16: 1 – 13). Even his brothers despised him (1 Samuel 17: 17-28).
- **David slays Goliath.** God was with him and gave him victory over Goliath the Philistine giant (1 Samuel 17: 32 – 52).
- **David is famous!** David became so famous that even songs were sung about him. Saul (king) has slain thousands, but David tens of thousands (1 Samuel 18: 7).
- **King Saul becomes jealous of David.** David's fame caused Saul the King to become jealous of him and now he wants to kill him! David has to eventually run off He spends many years moving from town to town and even in caves as the King continually tries to hunt him down. A game of cat and mouse ensues. During this time, David has the opportunity to twice kill the king but he spares his life. (1 Samuel 19 – 1 Samuel 26).
- **David in exile.** Eventually the pressure of running from Saul leads to David running to exile to the Philistines, his very enemies (1 Samuel 27). He lives there over 1 year. During this time, he is a marauder. A mercenary soldier attacking various towns. He even attacked his own country of Israel and even his home region of Judah. He changed loyalty!
- **David rejected by his new home.** A decisive battle is coming up, the Philistines are going to fight against the Israelites. King Saul leading his people. David wants to fight on the Philistine side. He has left his home town of Ziklag to join the Army. The philistines however refuse David to fight with them. They remember he is the one who they had sung songs about. David has to return home (1 Samuel 28 – 29).
- **David's home is attacked.** While gone, David's home town has been attacked by the Amalekites – hence the story background.

Faith in action

Bad things happen to good people – even those who are anointed by God. As in the case of David, he had been promised by God to become King but instead of things becoming better, they had become worse! He had instead of becoming king, run for his life. Now he had lost his family and friends.

Faithfulness means knowing the one you trust (God) – that he will come through. So you remain faithful to him. You do not give up, knowing that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. ⁱ

David must have known that through it all, his redeemer would rescue him. He probably knew the story of Job who had suffered. Job had remained faithful and had declared:

*For I know that my Redeemer lives,
And He shall stand at last on the earth;*

*And after my skin is destroyed, this I know,
That in my flesh I shall see God.* ⁱⁱ

So you see that one statement “*But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God*” means so much. It was a declaration of faith.

David was declaring that despite all that was taking place in his life, he would remain faithful, for where else would he go? To whom would he go except his Lord, who had the words of eternal life? ⁱⁱⁱ

It must have been this trust in God – no matter what that must have formed part of the background for David declaring in his famous psalm:

*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.* ^{iv}

David knew that problems come, sure – but God is with you in the troubles and you know he will eventually redeem you. So you trust him. You believe him, even when you can't see him. You know that God blesses those who believe without seeing. ^v In fact you know that you have no chance of pleasing God and becoming God's friend (as David was) unless you have faith. ^{vi}

Do you know how many years David waited on God? That's your home work. I hope when you find out you can say with me:

“Now that's faith. Now that's being faithful. “

Your turn

What will you now do differently? Examples to think about include:

- How has God been good to you in both good and bad times?
- In what ways have you been unfaithful? How can you change that?
- What do you think happened to David shortly after the above? Read 2 Samuel 1: 1 – 27.

Write here

Notes

ⁱ James 1: 3

ⁱⁱ Job 19: 24 - 26

ⁱⁱⁱ John 6: 67 - 68

^{iv} Psalm 23: 4

^v John 20: 29

^{vi} Hebrews 11: 6