

A MESSAGE OF THREES

1 Samuel 30:1-20

Now it happened, when David and his men came to Ziklag, on the third day, that the Amalekites had invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and those who were there, from small to great; they did not kill anyone, but carried them away and went their way. So David and his men came to the city, 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.

Then David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, "Please bring the ephod here to me." And Abiathar brought the ephod to David. So David inquired of the Lord, saying, "Shall I pursue this troop? Shall I overtake them?" And He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake them and without fail recover all." So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the Brook Besor, where those stayed who were left behind. But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so weary that they could not cross the Brook Besor. Then they found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David; and they gave him bread and he ate, and they let him drink water. And they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. So when he had eaten, his strength came back to him; for he had eaten no bread nor drunk water for three days and three nights. Then David said to him, "To whom do you belong, and where are you from?" And he said, "I am a young man from Egypt, servant of an Amalekite; and my master left me behind, because three days ago I fell sick. We made an invasion of the southern area of the Cherethites, in the territory which belongs to Judah, and of the southern area of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire." And David said to him, "Can you take me down to this troop?" So he said, "Swear to me by God that you will neither kill me nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this troop."

And when he had brought him down, there they were, spread out over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil which they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. Then David attacked them from twilight until the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men who rode on camels and fled. So David recovered all

that the Amalekites had carried away, and David rescued his two wives. And nothing of theirs was lacking, either small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything which they had taken from them; David recovered all. Then David took all the flocks and herds they had driven before those other livestock, and said, "This is David's spoil."

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The overall theme of this message, as I see it anyways, is not just a continuing saga of how David and his rowdy band of misfits went about the land of Canaan, plundering and killing. There were three groups of people involved in their adventures. In our story, there was David and his group, the Amalekites, and then there was the lone Egyptian. Beyond and above all of those people is God Almighty, the King of kings and Lord of lords. With the Amalekites not regarding and honoring God, there was a problem. When David's men initially did not regard or honor God in their plight, there was a problem. But when David consulted the Lord on behalf of himself and his group, there was a solution and the favor of God. Then, with the help of the lone Egyptian there was added help and direction. One thing about this story that doesn't translate to our time in history or our culture or in how God is presently operating is that no matter how much we consult or seek the Lord, He is not going to call us to go about killing our enemies, that is, killing all those who have wronged us or who are not honoring and serving the Lord as we are. Our Lord and Savior Jesus said this, "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." Nevertheless, there are some powerful principles at work for us in this story.

The time in history of our story was at a time when God leading His nation of Israel, to be His people, as He was to be their God. There were whole nations that were not recognizing, serving, or honoring God, just as we can read through historical accounts in the Bible of that being true from the time of the building of the tower of Babel all the way up to this present time. God was clearing out the godless people of the land of Canaan so that His people could have their own land and be their own nation. As we know from the historical accounts in the Bible, the people of Israel and Judah (as Israel was divided into two separate nations because of the grave sins of King Solomon), they continually were worshipping false gods and not honoring and serving the One True God. For us today though, we are to recognize that the battles that we face are not in the physical realm but in the spiritual. "For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (**Ephesians 6:12-13**) How do we go about doing that? Paul continues to say, "Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done

all, to stand." This message isn't specifically about the armor of God that we can read about in Ephesians, but it does speak to how if we don't have the proper perspective in our circumstances, good or bad, awesome or catastrophic, we are going to be digging for ourselves a pit that we can't get out of, or perhaps a better example is in how things were progressing in our story with David and his men. They were all overwhelmed with grief over their circumstances. Their city was burnt up, their possessions were stolen and their wives and children were missing. I've said it before, many, many, many times because I've personally experienced it many, many, many, many times and there are many, many, many examples in the Bible of how it can seem as though God will show up at just the last minute. Yet really that is just our limited vision and perspective. In fact from our perspective it can seem as though God didn't show up at the right time at all. Did Jesus show up too late when his friend Lazarus had died and Mary and Martha were grief stricken that Jesus hadn't quite made it in time? I personally have scores of examples of how I or Susie and I have taken a certain problem, which at the time usually appears as an insurmountable problem, and then God had made a way through that problem. Whether spiritually bound in chains or in the physical realm where I am seemingly being surrounded by certain elements that are robbing me of my peace of mind or in the calling of God on my life, God has gotten us through, time and time and time again. I don't say all of that for anyone to be looking at me, after all, I am but a sinner saved by the grace of God. But I do want to give glory to God and testify to His wonderful works and ways to which He has delivered me (and Susie) time after time.

I'm calling this message a message of threes for three different reasons. I'm not sure if that is a pun intended or if it's just the way it is. (1) First of all, as mentioned, we have three different groups of people in our story. To go along with that, there are then, as it is with each of us, three perspectives from the three different groups of people. I say, as it is with us, because we live our daily lives with a threefold of perspectives influencing us in some way or another. There's our own perspective, which is us individually operating within that perspective, there's the perspective of others that affects us and sometimes influences our actions, and then there's the perspective and operations of God Almighty, the Creator of all things, the Sovereign God who rules over all of His creation, whether one chooses to acknowledge that fact or not. For our story we also have three human perspectives. The one group, is David and his men. The second is the Amalekites. Then the third human group is the lone Egyptian straggler that was left behind. In comparison, in the here and now, there is us personally, that is, me and my perspective, and each of you with your own perspective, which is mainly developed from our worldview in what we believe about the world that we live in and what it all means, and then also there is the perspectives and situations and worldviews of those around us. Lastly, but certainly

not leastly (is that a word?), is the perspective and operations of our Sovereign God, the One who put all of this in motion and who continues to maintain it according to His pleasure and purpose. A great Psalm speaking of the providence of God is **Psalm 104** that makes us realize that it is God who allows the rains to water the grounds and the seeds to make things grow and provide food for all creatures of the earth. God has also provided places to live for all the creatures of the earth whether it's in a hole in a mountain or in the branches of trees. **Verse 24** says, "O Lord, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions." The writer of that Psalm recognized the sovereignty and provision that comes from God and we find in our story that David knew who to go to. In this story and in our lives and in the purpose of God what we are to see and understand is that God is leading us collectively towards His eternal purpose and that is meant to include all of us as we continue to serve God, seek God, and to do His will, as it can best be summed up that we are to be sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Next, (2) we have three ways that we can see from this historical example, of how God wants to not only reveal Himself to us, but for us to understand and realize what God is emphasizing and showing us, in each and every circumstance or our lives. That is, to recognize God in His Sovereignty, that He is our Redeemer, our Savior, and that He is our Leader, our Shepherd so to speak. As we see in God's Word, and through experience, that God IS always presently and actively operating towards His plan and purpose and pleasure. God is not dead and He is still very much working towards His purpose of building His eternal kingdom, which means getting His people ready for His eternal kingdom. (3) The three ways in which God reveals Himself to us personally can be seen in **1 John 5:7**, that "there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one." We have then God the Father, God the only begotten Son, and then God the Holy Spirit, as those three are of one God. We have therefore our Sovereign God, who is the one and only true God, we have our Redeemer, our Savior, our Deliverer in Christ Jesus. Even Job, in the midst of his suffering, losing practically everything, his servants, his children, and he sat on the ground scraping his boils he said, "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, whom I shall see for myself, and my eyes shall behold, and not another. How my heart yearns within me!" (**Job 19:25-27**) Not only was Job speaking of the coming Savior in Christ Jesus, he was also recognizing the redemption of our bodies and the perfect restoring of our bodies in Christ Jesus. "Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed [Christ], we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." (1

John 3:2) As I've said before, if you're yearning for more of Jesus and longing for Him your on the right path.

Now with the Holy Spirit we are comforted, prayed for by the Holy Spirit and led into God's truth in the Word and we are also led here and there by the Holy Spirit. It is most important for us to know then that we HAVE TO BE IN THE WORD. Jesus tells us to abide in Him in **John 15** and in **John Chapter 1** we know of Jesus as The Word. As God spoke through Isaiah, He says of His Word, "So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (**Isaiah 55:11**) That is exactly what David was seeking after when his men were considering stoning him. Now that we have the fullness of the Word of God, which we call the Bible, more times than not we get His Word from---reading His Word. We are to be actively and regularly seeking God when we read His Word. But that doesn't mean that we should take His Word out of context to suit our purposes. But that is where the Holy Spirit does His work in ministering to us, through the Word of God. Yes, there are many times where we are led by the Spirit of God but if it doesn't line up with the Word of God then it is not coming from the Holy Spirit. I'm of course speaking to those who ARE born-again, those who HAVE received and believed on Christ, "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (**John 1:12-13**). That is what it is to be "born-again" as Jesus said we all must be in order to be saved and inherit eternal life. Once again, speaking of God's Word, Jesus said, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him." (**John 14:23**) That Holy Spirit that dwells in us then, begins to lead us into all truth as Jesus said, as is recorded in **John 16:13**. How does one receive the Holy Spirit. Jesus said His ministry was in calling sinners to repentance. (**Matthew 9:13**) That means God is calling to us to have a change of mind, to no longer be living for our lusts and sins of the flesh but to turn to Him for forgiveness of sins, be reconciled back to God through the perfect sacrifice through Christ Jesus, who bore our sins on the cross, dying on the cross and raising from the grave on the third day so that we too can have the forgiveness of sins, be reconciled to God, and we are to then begin living our lives for God which is an eternal life, as we too will raise from the grave as Jesus did, unto the full glory of God. It is in Christ alone that we can find the Wisdom from God and Righteousness and Sanctification, and Redemption, all to the glory of God. (**1 Corinthians 1:30-31**)

One other association we can make with our message of threes in **1 Samuel 30** is that it is most likely that we can relate to at least one of the groups of people in this story or maybe even all three of

them. One could consider the parable of the sower of seeds to where the seed either falls by the wayside and dies, or it is choked out by the thorns, that is, the sins and cares of this world, or it falls on rocky ground to where it cannot develop its roots because it is not in the good soil (that by the way is saying that we must get grounded in the Word), or the seed lands in good soil and grows and bears fruit. (**Matthew 13, Mark 4, Luke 8**) In that parable, many have said, including myself, that I have been all of those seeds. Some good, some not so good.

With our example of the different characters in **1 Samuel 30** the same could be said of us. At times it may seem as though you have seized the world in your grasp, to where everything is seemingly is going your way, as it was with the Amalekites, without regarding who were they were harming or affecting along the way. Or you may relate more with the group that was with David to where it seemed as though the whole world had come crashing down on them as they seemingly had lost everything and they were ready to take matters in their own hands with violent rage. You may even relate to David as he said that the people were ready to stone him (as if it was his fault that their town had been besieged and ransacked). Or you may relate most specifically with the Egyptian servant that was left to die by the brook Besor. I personally can relate to all three of those human groups. At times in my life when I thought things were going pretty good, seeking after the things of the world, living in the ways of the world, not considering the damage I was doing to others just seeking what I could get, not even caring about the grief I was causing my parents and my grandma, and others. Little did I realize what awaited me, as it was with the celebrating Amalekites, who were rejoicing over their gaining of their booty from Ziklag. Likewise I have been on the other end of that scenario to where I've lost everything, many times it was me just squandering away what I had though, sort of like the parable of the lost son who came back to his dad after he had frittered away his inheritance on wine, women, and song. I like that some call that parable the parable of the forgiving father. Yet we certainly don't want to be so steeped in rebellion against God that He gives us up to where He won't even hear our prayers anymore as He did in the days of the prophet Jeremiah. God said to Jeremiah to quit praying for them, for they are lost, gone, done, finished. But after they had gone into captivity to Babylon we see in our Heavenly Father, how He is gracious and forgiving, calling us back to Him, saying then to the Israelites, "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you." (**Jeremiah 29:10-12**)

There are times in my life that I have either cried out to God, begging for Him to save me from my situations yet sadly there are

times I had thought of just trying a little harder at building my kingdom for my own selfish pleasures. I think to an extent we all look for a sweet spot to settle into to then say, this is my life. Yet God and His ways and His calling to us is to come out from that hole in the ground, that place we call our sweet spot. We have a neighbor's dog that I've mentioned before, it crawls under our garage and just hides there most of the day-most likely because it has been abused. I've tried to block its holes but it just keeps digging a new one to go under the garage. We've tried loving on the dog, giving it food day after day and treats, but it still is apprehensive and is triggered at the smallest commotion and will run away in fear. If that dog were a person I would certainly consider that the only thing that will save and help that dog is God alone. Yet, so it is with us. God can use other people to help us, to encourage us, and to show kindness and the grace of God but at the end of it all what is going to make THE difference is if that person is going to turn to God and seek His favor, His redemption, His provision. We can't save anyone, heal anyone, deliver anyone, or fix anyone but God can. Jesus tells us, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
(Matthew 11:28-29)

Our third group, is the lone Egyptian that was abandoned by his master because he was sick. It is quite likely that his master hadn't cared whether he would live or die, especially after acquiring the new servants and riches from the people of Ziklag. The Egyptian probably had no idea that God's purpose was for him to be in that place at that time for the saving of His people. You ever ask the question, "why am I here Lord?" Perhaps the better question that will get an answer is, "ok Lord, here I am, what do you want me to do now?" We have to settle it in our hearts and minds that God is ever present and He will do everything He can to be for us-the question comes to us whether we will be for God, good or bad, rain or shine, feast or famine, rich or poor? We have to realize that we are being tested and prepared for God's eternal kingdom, to which really it has already begun, we just have to understand that this testing period, this training ground, is not the end-all of what awaits us on the other side of eternity. As we are called into God's eternal kingdom we have to continue to trust in Him, clinging to Him for He IS our life, to keep looking unto Jesus, as He is the author and finisher of our faith. If God is allowing something to happen, He will make good of it, guaranteed! Yes, I need to be reminded of that as well. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose." **(Romans 8:28)** That is not a platitude, or a mental exercise to get us thinking positively. That is a promise from God! We just have to take hold of that promise. In the meantime, with each situation that comes our way, as David did, we go to our Heavenly Father and ask, "what do you

want me to do here?" He is God Almighty! He knows where He is leading us. "A man's heart plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps."
(Proverbs 16:9)

Whether your perspective is as David's to where you're that example to others to turn to God for guidance and direction or whether you've been looking to do things your own way, or whether you feel as though you've been abandoned to take care of yourself, we are all being called into the same family of God, to be His people, to encourage one another, to pray for one another, and to be used by God for His building His eternal kingdom-one person at a time. God didn't overlook the lone Egyptian servant, and He didn't miss it on delivering His people from the hand of the Amalekites. For us it all goes back to Jesus who alone could claim, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (**John 14:6**) and many times and to each of us Jesus is saying "Come follow Me." (**Matthew 19:21**)