

Stronger Empowering your future – part 6

Opening Scripture: 1 Samuel 30:1-4, 6

Ziklag is an old Hebrew word that means “*place of pressure or distress*”.

1. Ziklag was that place where everything that could possibly go wrong, went wrong.

David and his men had been on a long 3-day march, covering approximately 120 kms when they arrived just north of the city. They would have arrived tired, hungry and expecting the comforts of home. However, the Amalekites had taken advantage of their absence and plundered the city with its inhabitants taking them captive. Not only that, but they burned the city to the ground. There was nothing left.

They saw a ghost town, a pile of burned rubble and with no voice of survivors, it seemed that everything and everyone was lost!

4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

a) *No more power to weep*

What little comfort weeping could bring them - even that came to an end just as their strength also came to an end.

6 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.

What extreme grief, pain and distress – on top of the physical exhaustion they already experienced because of such a long march. They were weak and weary.

In verse 10 we read how, later on, David returned to fight the enemies. However, one third of them (200) were so wearied that they could not even cross the brook Besor (not a river, just a brook).

Those places of pressure in life can at times leave you like that: depleted, frail and vulnerable.

b) It looked like there was no way out for David

6 Now David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him

The distress also got to David. He feels alone, without options and any type of support. He has no allies left and no one for him. However, *David strengthened himself in the Lord!*

- c) While he had no power to weep, He remember God who gives power to the weak!

Isaiah 40:29 - *He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength.*

As we saw in the 4th session of this series, *Jehovah is strength!* In fact, this whole series is designed to direct you to finding strength in the Lord, to lead you to the Source of all power.

Ephesians 6:10 - *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.*

- d) The rest of the story shows us that David pursued his enemies, overtook them and recovered all!

The second part of the story is there to show us what can happen when we run to God and strengthen ourselves in Him! God gave him the strength to master his own distress, look past the rejection of his own men and to recover all!

All was lost but only temporarily because David recovered ALL. His secret? – he strengthened himself in the Lord.

Maybe it was around this time that David wrote **Psalm 27:1b** -... *“The Lord is the strength of my life”* ...

2. What does it look like to ‘*strengthen yourself in the Lord*’?

- a) **Habakkuk 3:17-19** - *Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines; though the labour of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there be no herd in the stalls—¹⁸ Yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.¹⁹ The Lord God is my strength; He will make my feet like deer’s feet, And He will make me walk on my high hills. To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.*

This passage shows us a similar scenario to that which David experienced, when everything seemed lost and gone. However, Habakkuk shifts the focus to the strength we can receive from God. And then he adds: *To the Chief Musician. With my stringed instruments.*

He gives the song to his “worship leader”, so he can sing it and play it. That is how you strengthen yourself in the Lord: Worship! You can sing your way into the heart of God and out of the heavy heart you carry.

- b) David had a song for every problem he faced
- David wrote Psalm 59 when pursued by Saul,
 - He wrote Psalm 56 when imprisoned in Gath

- He wrote Psalm 3 when fleeing from Absalom
- He wrote Psalm 63 when hiding in the wilderness in Judah etc.

c) Paul had a song when he was in prison with Silas

Acts 16:25 - *But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.*

d) Abram had a song when he believed God for the impossible

Romans 4:20 (AMPC) – *No unbelief or distrust made him waver (doubtingly question) concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong and was empowered by faith as he gave praise and glory to God*

e) Jesus had a song before the cross

Matthew 26:29-30 - *But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."*

³⁰ And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

This "hymn" is called by the Jews (up to this day) '**the Hallel**'. It is a group of 6 songs, from Psalm 113 to Psalm 118 sung during Passover. The Jews call Psalm 118 "the sorrows of the Messiah".

6 songs: that is a whole worship session! Like Jesus, we can draw upon the strength that comes from praising God to face our greatest moments of pressure. We can praise our way into victory.

One last passage about the connection between praise and strength:

Matthew 21:14-16 - *¹⁴ Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. ¹⁵ But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" they were indignant ¹⁶ and said to Him, "Do You hear what these are saying?" And Jesus said to them, "Yes. Have you never read, 'Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have perfected praise'?"*

Jesus was quoting **Psalms 8:2** – *Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have ordained strength*

Now did Jesus misquote Psalm 8? Is it *praise* or is it *strength*? Jesus did not misquote that passage. In the Hebrew language *strength* and *praise* are the same word! They are synonymous in Hebrew.

That's is why we read in Exodus 15:2, Isaiah 12:2 and Psalms 118:14 – *"My strength and my song"*

God ordains His strength in your praise. It is an exchange: you give Him praise and He gives you strength. Grow in strength by growing in praise!

3. One last thought

4 Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voices and wept, until they had no more power to weep.

Ziklag, the place of pressure and distress. The place of no power, not even to weep.

3 things 'the weak' can still do:

a) Sing

b) Say - **Joel 3:10** "*Let the weak say I am strong*"

c) Pray - **Romans 8:26** - *Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.*