



"Where Do You Turn?"

1 Samuel 30:1-20

September 6, 2026

THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURE

1 Samuel 30:1-20

David's Wives Are Captured

30 Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid against the Negeb and against Ziklag. They had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire ²and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great. They killed no one, but carried them off and went their way. ³And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. ⁴Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep. ⁵David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. ⁶And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God.

⁷And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. ⁸And David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue."

⁹So David set out, and the six hundred men who were with him, and they came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed. ¹⁰But David pursued, he and four hundred men. Two hundred stayed behind, who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor.

¹¹They found an Egyptian in the open country and brought him to David. And they gave him bread and he ate. They gave him water to drink, ¹²and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit revived, for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights. ¹³And David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago. ¹⁴We had made a raid against the Negeb of the Cherethites and against that which belongs to Judah and against the Negeb of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire." ¹⁵And David said to him, "Will you take me down to this band?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this band."

David Defeats the Amalekites

¹⁶And when he had taken him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. ¹⁷And David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day, and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men, who mounted camels and fled. ¹⁸David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. ¹⁹Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken. David

brought back all. ²⁰ David also captured all the flocks and herds, and the people drove the livestock before him, and said, "This is David's spoil."

MAIN THEME

Life can change without warning. A phone call, a diagnosis, a struggling child, a broken relationship, or an uncertain future can suddenly leave us wondering what to do next. First Samuel 30 places David in exactly that kind of moment. He returns to Ziklag and finds the town burned, his family gone, and his own men so bitter that they talk about stoning him.

David grieves deeply. He weeps until he has no strength left. His faith does not make him emotionless. But when the tears stop, David knows where to turn: "David strengthened himself in the LORD his God." His response was not created in the crisis. David had cultivated a relationship with God over time, so when everything fell apart, he turned to the one he already knew and trusted.

David then brings his pain and questions directly to God. He asks whether he should pursue the Amalekites, and God gives him direction. David does not ask God to bless a plan he has already made; he seeks God first and then obeys what God tells him to do.

Ziklag is not a promise that every loss will be restored in this life. It is a reminder that God is present, that he hears his people, and that he can be trusted with whatever comes next. Because of Jesus, our great High Priest, we can come confidently to God for mercy and grace in our time of need. When trouble strikes, the question is simple and deeply important: Where will you turn?

DISCUSSION & APPLICATION

1. Decide Before the Crisis Where You Will Turn

1 Samuel 30:1–6; Psalm 142:1–5

- What made David's return to Ziklag such an overwhelming crisis?
- What do you learn from the fact that David wept until he had no strength left?
- Why is it important to build a relationship with God before a crisis comes?
- What habits can you cultivate now so that turning to God becomes your instinct when life falls apart?

2. Bring Your Pain and Questions Directly to God

1 Samuel 30:7–8; Hebrews 4:16

- What did David do before deciding whether to pursue the Amalekites?
- How was David's response different from Saul's search for direction in 1 Samuel 28?
- What pain, fear, or unanswered question do you need to bring honestly to God?
- How does Hebrews 4:16 change the way Christians can approach God in a time of need?

3. Follow God's Direction When He Shows You the Way

1 Samuel 30:8–10; Proverbs 3:5–6

- What is the difference between asking God to bless a decision you have already made and genuinely seeking his direction first?
- Why can obedience be difficult even after we know what the right next step is?
- What are some ways God's direction becomes clear to us today through Scripture, prayer, and wise counsel?
- Is there a next step you already know is right—telling the truth, asking for help, forgiving, waiting, or moving forward faithfully?

4. God's Way Is the Right Way

1 Samuel 30:18–20; Hebrews 4:14–16

- What happened when David followed the direction God gave him?
- Why should we be careful not to treat David's recovery of everything at Ziklag as a promise that every loss will be reversed in this life?
- What temporary sources of relief or control are people tempted to turn to when pain becomes unbearable?
- What does it mean for you, practically, to turn to Jesus rather than away from God when life becomes painful or uncertain?

PRAY

Dear Father,

Thank you that you are present when life changes suddenly and when we do not know what to do next. Help us build our lives around you now so that when trouble comes, our hearts know where to turn. Teach us to bring our pain, fear, grief, and questions directly to you.

Amen.

DIG DEEPER

For Further Study:

- Psalm 142:1–7
- Proverbs 3:5–6
- Psalm 46:1–3
- Hebrews 4:14–16
- Philippians 4:6–7
- 1 Peter 5:6–7

NEXT WEEK'S BIG IDEA

Mourning the Fallen King

2 Samuel 1

David mourns Saul rather than celebrating his death. Israel's next king shows humility and honors God in the process.