

The following is a rough transcript, not in its final form and may be updated.

My Grace is Sufficient I Samuel 30:7-31

Intro: For 16 months, David has been living by his wits & his own wisdom. He's been operating as tho his safety & sustenance depended on his ability 2 outsmart a Philistine king & out fight any tribes that were enemies of Israel. All of this came 2 a screeching halt when Achish, king of Gath, commanded David 2 join him in fighting against Israel. Tho Achish was a firm believer in David, none of the other Philistine princes would accept him; they told him 2 leave.

It seems the Lord delivered David from this sticky situation only 2 lead him into the most tragic situation of his life. When he & his 600 men arrived home, they found the city burned 2 the ground & all the women & children were taken as captives. 1st there was shock, then great grief, then bitterness, then anger. David was greatly distressed b/c on top of everything he had lost, his men were bent on stoning him. But David turned 2 the only resource he had left.

David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. How? He remembered the promises **YHWH** had given 2 him & he also remembered that **YHWH** had always proven Himself 2/b a God who was **faithful 2 keep** all His promises! What David **said in his heart** in **27:1** is what got him into this whole mess in the 1st place; but now, what he tells himself about **YHWH** (promises & faithfulness) brings him strength & encouragement. But, that's **not all** David does here!

7-8- ephod- The next thing David does 2 **strengthen himself in the Lord** is 2 make use of the **access** he has 2 **YHWH's** presence. This is significant b/c we haven't heard David ask 4 the ephod since 23:9 nor have we heard him even mention **YHWH** since ch26. During all his time spent among the Philistines, this is the 1st we hear of him seeking **YHWH** in anyway. During those 16 months of self-confidence & self reliance, David simply didn't inquire of the Lord in this way. In the same way, a lack of prayer in the believer's life is indicative of a deeper spiritual problem.

I've always said prayer is like a fuel gage: it indicates the strength of your faith. When you're walking close w/ the Lord & are trusting in Him completely – you have a lot 2 pray about! When you're not walking very close & are just winging it on your own then you really don't have much 2 say on a regular basis, not until the wheels fall off! David recovers himself here & seeks guidance from **YHWH** thru Abiathar the priest using the sacred lots associated w/ the ephod. He **strengthens himself in the Lord his God** by using the **privilege** of **access** he had into **YHWH's** presence.

Of course, Christians don't have Abiathar, the ephod or the lots. But, the very same resource is available 2 us b/c we do have a priest! We have a High Priest who is **greater** than Abiathar (**Heb 4:14-16**). B/c we have such a great High Priest, we can confidently "draw near" & we really need to. Why? 2 **obtain mercy** & **find grace** 2 help in our need. Sure, we might not get specific answers 2 our questions but we will **find grace 2 help**. 2/b honest, we usually need **grace** more than answers. More than information, we need

endurance in this Christian life. We don't need 2 know something, we just need 2 stay on our feet & it's the **mercy & grace** of God that **enables** us 2 just keep standing! Use your Priest, use your access 2 the throne of God: its part of the process of strengthening yourself in the Lord.

I'm curious of the wording in **Heb 4:16** when the writer says we may **obtain** mercy & **find** grace at the throne of God. The word **obtain** is pretty straight forward, it simply means **2 receive**; boy, don't we like receiving stuff from God! But what's this about **finding** grace? Does God hide His grace in our lives like so many Easter eggs that we have 2 tramp about looking around every tree or under every rock just 2/b able 2 put God's grace in our basket? Not at all, the word **find** simply means **2 perceive, 2 see**. God doesn't hide His grace from His children, He puts it all around us b/c we need it so much. In 2 Cor 12, the Lord said 2 Paul, "**My grace is sufficient 4 you.**" 4 what? 4 everything! Whatever we need, whatever we're lacking, whatever we run out of, God's grace is sufficient 2 meet the need. Grace is invincible – but it's not invisible, at least not 2 those who are looking w/ eyes of faith. Self reliance & self confidence blinds us 2 the reality of grace that surrounds us & it's only when we humble ourselves & turn 2 the throne of God in prayer that we begin 2 see, 2 perceive all the grace the Lord has bestowed on our lives.

God's grace is all over this story. Most will say its seen 1st in **vs2 "they did not kill anyone"** & that's certainly true, especially in light of how David & his men treated the captives from all of their previous raids. In that culture, this would be considered a minor mercy b/c everyone knew why captives were kept alive: 2/b sold 2 the highest bidder as slaves & eke out the rest of their lives in isolation, bondage & misery. Death wasn't necessarily the **worst** thing that could happen 2 you. No, the 1st instance of **YHWH's** grace was when Achish told David & his men 2 leave Aphek. He didn't say they could hang around a few days 2 watch all the proceedings & preparations; he told them 2 get up early the next morning & hit the road. If David & Co hadn't arrived at Ziklag as soon as they did, they would have been too late 2 find the Amalekite raiders let alone recover all their family members. Grace doesn't stop there...

9-10- weary- Now, **YHWH** had told David 2 pursue & pursue he did, he & his 600 men. **YHWH** had also promised that David would overtake the raiders & would recover everything that was stolen by the enemy. These guys were hot 2 trot b/c they had 2 rescue their families & their stuff but now come another challenge. 200 men have reached the breaking point; **weary**= exhausted, dead tired. They'd just rode for 3 days straight; had wept 2 the point of exhaustion & now have ridden an additional 16 ml on horse back. Not sure if the horses were tired of running or they were tired of riding but the point is: they couldn't go any further. David's losing a full 3rd of his troops & has no idea of the size of force he's going 2 face. He doesn't eve know who he's chasing after or where they're even located. What does David do now? Well, he's just prayed 4 the 1st time in 16 months, has received specific directions & a specific promise. David has **strengthened himself in the Lord** so he's going 2 pursue, he's going 2 simply **trust & obey**.

11-16- Egyptian- if we seem 2 run into God's grace everywhere its b/c **we are**; b/c it **is everywhere**. David had no clue who he was looking 4 or where they were; **YHWH** didn't give him **that** bit of critical info, He just told him 2 pursue. Yet, it still begs the question: how

does 1 go about finding them? Nomadic raiders were traditionally hard 2 find. They were constantly on the move. How's David going 2 find them when he didn't even know who "them" were?

As always, **YHWH** provides. David & Co find a washed up Egyptian slave in open country. This discovery is not some optional luxury, it's an absolute necessity if David & Co are ever going 2 locate the Amalekite raiders. God's grace is not some cool extra 2 take or leave in this Christian life, its **essential** & it must be honored as an essential.

Now, David doesn't get any info from this guy until he's refreshed himself w/ food & water. Then, after he's promised immunity from death & extradition, this Egyptian agrees 2 lead David & Co 2 the Amalekites & their captives. Apparently, his former master was of high rank in the Amalekite band b/c this guy knew all their plans & even the location of their camp. The point is: finding this discarded Egyptian is the whole key 2 David's recovery operation. He alone is used by **YHWH** 2 fulfill His promise 2 David. Yet, no theological bells go off in vs11 2 announce God's grace 2 us. We're expected 2 see it on our own, 2 hear its quiet work. It seems like such a small grace, finding this half-dead slave but small graces make **big differences**! Only pagan Amalekites think that mustard-seed matters don't matter. Little did that Amalekite master know that the piece of human machinery he discarded 3 days ago would prove 2/b his undoing! **They found an Egyptian** – God's grace is **essential**, we couldn't take our next step w/o it!

16-25- It wasn't hard 2 surprise the Amalekites: they didn't know they were being pursued so they stopped 2 enjoy some of the fruits of their labors. When you're well into an all night bender – you're not really thinking straight. They wiped out everyone except those 400 youngsters on their suped-up camels. The writer describes David's success in the most emphatic terms: David recovered everything – wives (both), people, kids, the plunder (not just from Ziklag).

Now he returns 2 Besor 2 catch up w/ the 200 that stayed behind. David's men weren't known 4 good manners or good breeding. We can safely assume that some (if not most) of the 400 who went 2 fight the Amalekites were just dirty, rotten scoundrels. Here, they attempt 2 hide their greed under the guise of justice. They say the **luggers** can have their families back but not any of their possessions nor share in any of the plunder that **they** had recovered. But David won't stand 4 it. He squelches their scheme w/ a masterful statement that included warmth (**my brothers**), theology, logic & authority. He establishes a principle that becomes standard military procedure in Israel.

Let's focus on David's theology "**what the Lord has given us.**" The directive of vs24 is the result of David having a theology of grace, a theology that keeps its eyes focused in **YHWH's generosity**. The scoundrels operated from a philosophy of works that's always impressed w/ its own contributions: **the spoil that we have recovered**. This only makes sense or sounds logical if you never lift your eyes 2 look 2 the hills 2 ask where your help has come from. But David knew better. This is **not** plunder we have recovered but what **YHWH has given** us! The difference between grace & works is the difference between worship & idolatry! The believer saturated w/ the idea that all they possess is God's gift 2 them will find themselves constantly on their knees: adoring Him, thanking Him, praising

Him! How could you not? I'll tell you: if you **fail** 2 grasp the theology of grace, **fail** 2 keep your eyes fixed on God's generosity; then you will crash dive into **idolatry** b/c **idolatry** goes hand-in-hand w/ **self-sufficiency**. W/ that kind of faulty theology, you'll walk around talking about all the plunder **you** have recovered – or something similarly foolish.

Its critical 4 us 2 see that 4 David, grace wasn't just some theological concept, it was his world view! Its not just something that applies 2 how we enter God's kingdom; it applies 2 every aspect of that royal life. "**What the Lord has given us**" dominates David's thinking & controls his decisions & actions. So 2, grace must be the **dominating & decisive** factor in the believer's life (practical theology). We must constantly realize & confess that our success, job, health, family, meal – is **what the Lord has given us**. Paul asks us a pointed question in **I Cor 4:7** "**what do you have that you did not receive?**" Thus, every Christian has the responsibility 2/b a good theologian who both speaks & lives a theology of grace. It may be humbling but it's the only thing that will keep you from worshipping yourself!

26-31- David's a smart guy. All the extra spoil that was taken from the Amalekites, he claimed; not 4 himself but 2 share w/ the cities in southern Judean. It was only right that he should share w/ them: they helped hide David & Co when Saul was after him & they also endured Amalekite raids as well. But David's gifts were also smart (shrewd). They would win hearts & minds & grease both palm & path 2 David becoming king in Judah. There's nothing illegal about these transactions – you can be smart w/o being sinful. But the central focus of this ch30 is David's victory & he alludes 2 its importance in his greeting 2 the elders of Judah: their gifts were spoil from **the enemies of the Lord**.

Amalekites weren't just Israel's enemy but **YHWH's** too & b/c they mangled His flock they must deal w/ its Shepherd!

This conflict points 2 the reality of a greater war. There is God's people & God's enemies. There are 2 kingdoms: God's & this world's. There are 2 humanities: the seed of the woman & the seed of the serpent. Here in ch30, God's enemies have been whipped! This victory serves as a promise, a scale model scenario of what'll happen when God makes the Messiah's enemies His footstool (Ps 110:1). This victory here is both a preview & pledge of final victory. Knowing that God's enemies will perish should breed a holy defiance in God's people against all the threats of the enemy. God will rule, this I know, 4 the Amalekites tell me so.

Ch30 begins in **tragedy** but ends in **triumph**, God has a way of doing that in the lives of His obedient servants.