Article

• *Is resignation a solution?*
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We will be looking mainly to the 30th chapter of I Samuel. As an introduction, David and his men, to avoid Saul’s persecution, went to Achish the king of the Philistines who accepted them and gave them the city of Ziklag. In the 29th chapter of I Samuel we find the Philistines gathering together all their armies in Jesreel to fight against Israel. It was this fight that cost the life to Saul and Jonathan. In order to avoid any plot by David and his men, the Philistines denied to them to be a part of their army and sent them back to Ziklag. I Samuel 30:1-6 tells us what they found there:

I Samuel 30:1-6

“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.”

I was in a church some weeks ago and God showed me this passage. It is a period where I think a lot about the subject of losing and recovering and I believe God wants us to hear the message of I Samuel 30. Many of us we can relate to the situation described in I Samuel. We don’t inhabit Ziklag nor we live in the days of Saul and David. But we may have something in common with David and his men: the enemy may have invaded our territory, at the time that we were out or “sleeping” and he may
have stolen us things very valuable to us. Whatever this may be at the end may be translated to disappointment, loss of hope and orientation, loss of vision and enthusiasm. Brothers believe me: if the devil does not steal your hope and enthusiasm HE IS DEFEATED. He does not aim to simply steal you something. His end purpose is to steal your hope, your enthusiasm, your HEART. The aim of the devil is your heart and your hope. For he knows that only hopeful hearts are alive hearts. Our problem is not that we haven’t seen God. We have seen Him. The problem is that we have also seen the devil. The problem is that we expected that our Ziklag (whatever this may be) would never be stolen. We hoped that God would somehow protect it from any destruction. But things may have turned differently. Stuff may have happened in our lives that we never expected and we suddenly discovered that bad things may also happen to good people. “Cities” of good people may be invaded by the enemy of our souls. To face these arrows, many of us have chosen to anesthetize our hearts so that it does not feel pain any longer and we carry on to what we call “the road of faith”. It may be a road full of service and works, WITHOUT however the enthusiasm and the warmness our relationship with God used to have. Many we feel OK with this situation and we deny to admit that there are things that have been lost and need to be recovered. Many feel OK to just survive, without hope and dreams, and call this “faith”, instead of pursuing again for the lively relationship they once had with the Lord. I have discovered that God may leave us in this stage till we DECIDE WE WANT to change. Till we no longer compromise with the defeat nor we accept and hide the loss but we make the decision to pursue and recover all that was stolen. And let me remind you that what is stolen is mainly THE HOPE, THE ENTHUSIASM, THE HEART. Once we made this decision, God immediately becomes also very near to us. The message today is not that there will be no stealing. I don’t intent to give you the 10 steps that will ensure the devil will never touch you. I don’t have them! As long as there is a thief there will be stealing! BUT we can overcome it. The message today is ATTACK to recover all that the enemy has stolen from us: enthusiasm, faith, hope, joy and others. We can cry for as long as we want. We can say that life is tough. And it is! However, as David and his men did, so we have to make a decision: either we will cry for the losses, hiding probably our frustration by anesthesia, apathy and religious
activity or we will deny to compromise, we will ENCOUHRAGE OURSELVES IN THE LORD and we will stand up to recover everything. It is really a very critical decision, a decision of spiritual life or death. **Either we will live as spiritually wounded, or as spiritual heroes.** What I want to emphatically say today is that if you are wounded, your wound will not be healed by accepting the defeat and the loss and forgetting the alive fellowship you used to have with God with the false idea that “it is impossible to go that far again”. The wounds will be healed only if you stop crying and instead stand up to recover everything, to return at least where you used to be! GOD HASN’T CHANGED MY BROTHER. He is exactly the same God as when you first met Him. We may be wounded but we will not find healing in resignation but in “encouraging ourselves in the Lord” and standing up to recover everything. Not with religious works that many use to cover the emptiness of their true relationship with God. Do you want to find the level of your relationship with God? Don’t look at your activities! They will show distorted results! Instead imagine yourself without any activity. **Could you live with God without any activity or is your faith “activity maintained”?** Is your relationship with God at least as alive as it used to be when you first believed? Again deny to use works and logic to hide the truth. You need the truth! Paul tells us to examine ourselves whether we are in the faith! You don’t need to cry for any loss you might have. What you need to do instead is to STAND UP and encourage yourself in the Lord. STAND UP and you will recover everything. That’s what David chose to do:

I Samuel 30:6-8, 18

“No, 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 recovered all that the Amalekites had carried away”
The people were crying. David also did the same. Nobody reacts to the pain with gladness. The pain is pain and it brings cry. However after the first shock there were two reactions. All the others continued crying and they moved with anger against David (similarly, many being angry for their pain, pick up stones against the state, ministries, people, God and generally everybody they consider as responsible for what was stolen) but David encouraged himself in the Lord and asked Him what to do. The Lord then gave him the assurance that if he pursued after the Amalekites he would recover everything. See here the following:

Though there was a stealing, there was a way to recover everything.
God didn’t obstruct the stealing.
Also God didn’t tell David what to do before he stopped crying and turned to Him to ask Him.

Many of us spent our days, months and even years with the question “Why God?” Many we feel bitterness why God didn’t protect us since we know He could. I don’t know why He didn’t protect you or me but I know that when this goes further than a genuine expression of the heart as Job did, then it leads nowhere. My personal answer to life’s frustrations is that ALL things work together for good to those who love God (Romans 8:28)! ALL, what we think as evil and what we may think as good. Your life is NOT in the hands of the devil BUT IN THE HANDS OF GOD. Even if the devil has wounded you there is a way to recover! The question my brother is not why God didn’t protect you. The critical question is whether you will stand UP, encourage yourself in the Lord, not accept to compromise with the loss, not accept anything less in your relationship with God than what at least you used to have. If you do this, if you stand up, THEN I KNOW 100% WHAT WILL HAPPEN: YOU WILL RECOVER. YOU WILL RECOVER EVERYTHING. That’s what happened also with David and his men. GOD HASN’T CHANGED. Remember the sweet times you had with Him, before the Ziklag was invaded. HE IS THE SAME. You can have the same relationship with Him, NOW. It is not a matter of eventual recovery. The recovery can
be instant. If you only make the decision to not compromise and that you cannot live any longer with anything less in hope, faith and enthusiasm that what you used to have. The situation is turned upside down exactly at that moment. David and his men turned the situation upside down at the moment they decided not to accept an invaded Ziklag, with the enemy having their hopes, dreams and enthusiasm stolen, but they wanted a Ziklag as it used to be, a heart with the hope faith and enthusiasm that it once had. At that moment the enemy had lost the battle. For at that moment they stopped crying and they started fighting. And fighting, they recovered EVERYTHING!

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