

Remnant Life Church
July 24, 2022
A Tale of Two Kings
Pt 5
Dealing with Discouragement
I Chron 21:1-16

There was a nationally known preacher who once told his very large church of several thousand, "I never get discouraged."

- Now with all due respect I don't believe he was being completely truthful when he said that but in all fairness...
 - Perhaps he was emphasizing a point
 - Perhaps his statement was taken out of context
 - Maybe he was speaking in hyperbole
 - But if he was being earnest I don't believe him
- So, what is discouragement?
 - Webster defines it this way: To deprive of courage or confidence
 - In other words, to dishearten, unnerve, demoralize, dismay, frustrate
 - This pastor has never been frustrated?
- But you know another reason why I don't believe him?
 - Because some of the greatest men who ever lived, whose lives we read about in the OT, got discouraged
 - Even Jesus became frustrated at his disciple's lack of faith
 - I don't believe this pastor was able to remove himself from something that not only impacted Jesus and the great men of the Bible, but each and every one of us today
- Who are the men I'm talking about?
 - John the Baptist got discouraged
 - He got so discouraged that we read in **Matthew 11** that Jesus sent John's disciples back to him with an encouraging word about what was happening while he was in prison
 - Remember that Jesus called John the greatest man born of a woman (**Matt 11:11**)
 - Now if John was who and what Jesus called him, and I think it is very smart to believe what Jesus says
 - If John got discouraged I don't care how big the church or how famous this pastor is, he is not speaking truth
 - Because he is actually saying that he is greater than John!
 - Elijah got discouraged
 - In **I Kings 19** Elijah ran for his life from Queen Jezebel just after God had given him a great victory involving 400 prophets of Baal at Mt. Carmel
 - There are many who believe that, given the conditions that are described in the Scripture, Elijah was at the very least dealing with depression and perhaps even close to having a nervous breakdown

- Even Jesus became frustrated at the lack of understanding and faith His disciples had even to the very end of His time with them
- And David...
 - A man after God's own heart...
 - Struggled greatly at times with the circumstances of his life

READ – I Samuel 30:1-6 (Miles Saksek)

- Let's look at a little bit of the background that brings David to this event
 - In the first verse we read that David and his men have arrived at Ziklag
 - This was a town on the southern most end of Judah that had originally been given to the tribe of Simeon when Joshua had divided the promise land among the 12 tribes of Israel (**Joshua 19:1-9**)
 - During the reign of Saul, however, it was part of the Philistine territory
 - Now, prior to this time, Saul had been in pursuit of David to kill him out of jealousy and fear that the people were going to want David to be their king
 - When David fled he went to the land of King Achish
 - He was the king, of all places, the land of Gath which had been the home of Goliath
 - King Achish remembered David as the one who had killed Goliath but that had been many years ago and he did not consider David a threat since he was not king at that time and was living life on the run as a fugitive
 - David lived in the land of Gath with 600 of his men and all their families
 - Over time, Achish came to trust David since he thought there was no way that David could ever return to the Israelites and would be his servant forever (**I Sam 27**)
 - But in that time, David and his men also invaded and raided many of the surrounding Amalekite towns
 - In the 29th chapter, just before what Miles read, David and his men set off on a journey to Ziklag, the town that they had settled in during their time with Achish
 - When they arrive, they see that the Amalekites had raided the town, burned it to the ground, and taken their wives and children as hostage
 - Now this was not a random act of violence
 - This was payback
 - David had been raiding and plundering their towns and they had come to exact revenge
- This is the position David finds himself in in the 30th chapter
 - This is more than a battle brought close to home
 - The entire town, David's home, is in ruins
 - All the wives and children of the men have been taken captive
 - Including David's two wives Ahinoam and Abigail and his children
 - And this is all discovered after a 3-day marching journey of somewhere around 100 to 125 miles
 - David and his men are exhausted and this is what greets them upon their arrival

- Is David disheartened, unnerved, demoralized, dismayed, and frustrated?
- Knowing this helps to explain the men's reaction to David
 - *I Sam 30:6 – David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him;*
 - They most likely were blaming David for what they are facing since they knew what they had been doing to the Amalekites all this time
- IOW – David brought this on himself
 - Circumstances that discourage us are caused by one of two events
 - Something done to us
 - Something we do
- Look at what happens to David as a result
 - *I Sam 30:4 – So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep.*
 - That is exactly what discouragement sounds like
- But something else that Miles read this morning is also the very reason David was so richly blessed by God in spite of his many failings
 - David trusted God in the face of the great and the tragic
 - His wives and children are gone
 - His own men want to stone him for what has happened
 - But what does David do?
 - *I Sam 30:6b – but David found strength in the Lord His God*

How could David have done this?

It is because of two very important decisions that he needed to make that we all must make when faced with circumstances that can bring us to the place of discouragement

1. We must choose to **refuse** it
 - a. Have you noticed that there are those people who are rarely ever discouraged?
 - b. And then there are those who always seem to be either upset and downcast about something or on the verge of it?
 - c. It is always a choice
 - i. Not necessarily in what has happened
 - ii. But in how you will respond
 - d. My family and those who know me best know that I am a glass-half-full person will do everything in my power to avoid a negative situation becoming one filled with drama
 - i. That NEVER works out for the best
 - ii. As a matter of fact it ALWAYS makes a bad situation worse
 - e. Conversely, I have known people in my life who, I am convinced, actually pursued discouragement
 - i. Why would someone do that?
 - a. For some it is to justify how they treat others
 - b. For some it is to justify other decisions

- c. And for some they are only really happy when they are unhappy
 - ii. My feeling is that there are enough things in our lives that we must deal with that are very hard, we don't ever have to go looking for them
- f. But that is what some people do – they don't have to live in discouragement, they choose to – but you certainly don't have to – you can refuse it
- g. I'll give you a real-life example...

In 1955, there was a 65 year-old-man who was regularly receiving his social security check in the amount of \$105. He had in his lifetime worked as a stoker on a steam engine, a lawyer, hotel manager, insurance salesman, and gas-station owner. As he looked down at the meager amount, a wave of discouragement began to settle over him. He certainly thought, "Is this what my life is going to be from now on--sitting around waiting for my check to arrive once a month?"

He decided right then that he was not going to settle for that, and he began to make a list of all of the things he had going for him, all the blessings and the personal capacities, the unique things that were in him and a part of his life. The list grew longer and longer he continued writing absolutely everything he could think of. One of the items he included on his list was the fact that he was the only person on earth who knew his mother's recipe for southern fried chicken. It was a dish he had served regularly at the little diner he had opened at his gas station. Only he knew the proper mixture eleven different herbs and spices.

The chicken had quickly become the most popular items on his limited menu, and so he opened his own stand-alone restaurant, and then another, and another until there was a string of restaurants serving his chicken. Eventually Harland Sanders was selling his Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise all across America.

He finally retired, for all intents and purposes for the second time and he continued in the service of the company as a public relations representative for a reported quarter of a million dollars a year until his death in 1980 at the age of 90.

Now here was a man who did not allow himself to be defeated by discouragement. He certainly had many circumstances that were discouraging as he was fired from job after job through his younger years for insubordination and brawling with his co-workers and even customers. He was even involved in a gun fight with a rival restaurant owner that resulted in one of his employees being shot and killed. But in spite of his short, violent temper, he saw the discouragement when it came, recognized what it was, but then went on to look at what he had in order to deal with it and chose to take that path.

He chose to refuse it!

2. The second decision that we must make in order to deal with discouragement is to **reveal** it
 - o And the first place you need to reveal it is to God
 - o We know that God is aware of all things – it is called omniscience

- But one of the first true marks of humility in a person's life is their ability to admit when something is wrong
 - IOW – I can't handle this all alone
 - Paul writes of this in his second letter to the church in Corinth
 - *2 Cor 1:3-4 - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.*
- Who does Paul say God is?
 - The Father of compassion
 - The God of all comfort
 - That comfort is available in all our troubles
 - Why? Again, Paul spells it out in the 4th verse
 - So that we can then turn and comfort others because God has comforted us
- But what is it that most of us do when we encounter those circumstances that can bring discouragement?
 - For many, it means clamming up and doing all that we can possibly can to "fix" the problem
 - Or, worse yet, jamming into the back of our brains in some dusty corner so that we don't have to face it
 - Neither of those solutions is going to end well
- God also provides others for us to reveal our struggles to
 - *Prov 15:22 - Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed*
 - For the Christian this is why accountability is so important
 - Not just someone to confirm everything you say or want to do but those who love you enough to speak the truth, even it is difficult to hear
- For David, it was a about trusting in the God of all comfort
 - *1 Peter 5:7 – Cast all your anxiety on him; because He cares for you*
 - My favorite word in that verse is **all**
 - Not just certain kinds of troubles
 - Not just those where you were the innocent bystander who got caught in the cross-fire
 - But all your anxiety

There are countless numbers of people in this country running back and forth from counselor to counselor, therapist to therapist and they are not getting any better – as a matter of fact most get worse.

- They are like the woman with the issue of blood in *Matt 5:25-30* who spent all of her money going from doctor to doctor but got no better
- It was only after touching the hem of Jesus' garment that she was healed
- So too, for us today, the first place we must go is not to man, but to God
- He is the great comforter and the great healer of our hearts, our minds, and our bodies

But you must not embrace discouragement when it comes

You must not withdraw and shut out not only the voice of God but those He has in your life to help guide and love you.

Discouragement does not have to be a part of your life

- But it is your choice
- How will you respond when discouragement is trying to bear down on you?

It is the mid 1770's and after suffering major defeats at both Brandywine Creek and Germantown, George Washington finds himself face to face with one of the worst winters in recorded history. He has 12,000 exhausted troops remaining to stand against the approximately 50,000 British soldiers pursuing them and the howl of a deadly winter was breathing down his neck. He leads his men into the desolate, mostly barren farm land of Valley Forge, Pa. just a little over 90 miles from where we are meeting this morning. They are going to spend the winter there and try to recuperate from the stinging defeats that the enemy has dealt him. There is virtually no shelter for his men, and his army is without sufficient ammunition, descent warm clothes, and they are starving to death as the seeds of defeat, discouragement, and hopelessness are being sown all around them. It looks like total defeat and it appears that the new nation the United States of America will be annihilated by the bitter winter and the British army. All appears lost. But there is a man in the camp; his name is Fredrich Wilhelm Von Steuben. History would know him as Baron Von Steuben. He is a Prussian military strategist and professional soldier who has joined Washington in an effort to train and shape the beleaguered Colonial army into a fighting force. He continually encourages them to get up and continue preparing for the battles to come. Through his training they would go on to win major victories at Saratoga and then Yorktown as the tide of the war begins to slowly shift paving the way for independence.

- There were victories waiting for George Washington but first, he had to handle the discouragement that was trying to beat him down and defeat him
- We too must deal with those same forces as satan is always trying to discourage us in our walk with the Lord
- Chose to not allow that to happen.
- And like David, trust in God who brings comfort and victory