

GO AND GET YOUR FAMILY

by Carter Conlon

"So David and his men came to the city, and, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, and their sons, and their daughters, were taken captives. Then David and the people that were with him lifted up their voice and wept, until they had no more power to weep. And David's two wives were taken captives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. And David was greatly distressed; for the people spake of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters: but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod. And Abiathar brought thither the ephod to David.

And David inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all" (1 Samuel 30:3-8).

David was just a youth when God first appointed him to rule and reign as king over Israel. The prophet Samuel was sent to the house of David's father Jesse, where he singled out David from among his brothers. He poured oil on David's head, which signified he was God's appointed king.

David's life and calling are symbolic of our own in that God has called us to rule and reign with Christ. Do you remember the day God singled you out? You may have looked at your family or the people closest to you, and felt they were more suited or

better qualified to represent Christ. Perhaps they were more gifted or talented than you, yet God selected you and placed His approval upon your life. If you had been present in Jesse's house when Samuel anointed David, you may have seen this young man struggling with similar questions. But God, who knows all things, sought out David because he had a heart after Him. The Bible goes on to say how the Holy Spirit rested upon David from that day forward. David was a worshiper of God, a harp-playing psalmist whose songs were filled with incredible sweetness. Yet in this sweetness was an anointing that was so powerful it forced darkness to flee. King Saul, who was frequently troubled by an evil spirit, sent for David to play and sing for him at his palace. And when David played and worshiped God, the evil spirit departed from Saul.

David exploded on the inside and ran throughout the Israelite camp shouting, "Is there not a cause? Is there not a cause?"

■ POWER TO FIGHT

The favor of God was with David, and he was given supernatural ability to fight battles that could not ordinarily be won by man's ingenuity or military might alone. The Israelites faced the formidable Philistine army and their champion fighter, Goliath.

Each day Goliath would challenge the army of God to send a man to fight him. If an Israelite soldier could defeat this giant, then the Philistines promised to be subject to the Israelite army. If Goliath won, Israel would be ruled by the Philistines, and that was what the Israelites feared most: slavery. Each day as Goliath's booming voice roared across the valley, the Israelite army cowered and failed to respond, and they failed to send a man to fight Goliath. It wasn't because the Israelites were not trained and seasoned soldiers of war. They were well-trained in the tactical use of both sword and shield and they had won numerous battles and defeated neighboring armies. They were experienced men of war, but now they were cowering in fear before their enemy.

David, the shepherd boy and psalmist, was sent by his father to the Israelite camp to see how his brothers were doing and to bring fresh supplies to them. When he arrived, he heard the jeering and taunting of the Philistine giant, and he watched in total disbelief as Goliath's challenge went unmet. David knew that the Philistines were mocking the army of the living God; He exploded on the inside and ran throughout the Israelite camp shouting, "Is there not a cause? Is there not a cause?" Why were the Israelite soldiers allowing this buffoonish giant to mock the armies of the God of Israel?

David's formal military training was nonexistent, but he had killed the lion and the bear

and he knew that the God of Israel was with him. It was God's honor that was at stake. Amazingly, Saul agreed to allow the young boy David to fight for Israel against their most fearsome enemy.

Sling in hand, David advanced quickly toward the Philistine and shouted, *"You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of Heaven's Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the Lord will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! And everyone assembled here will know that the Lord rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the Lord's battle, and he will give you to us!"* (1 Samuel 17: 45–47 NLT).

As David sprinted toward the enormous and intolerant Goliath, he reached into his shepherd's bag and retrieved a small smooth stone. With expert precision, he inserted the stone into his well-worn leather sling and trusted in God for the victory. David swung it with increasing motion until he released the projectile directly toward the forehead of the giant. Goliath stumbled and his huge frame fell face downward to the ground, dead. And that was the end of this season of the enemy's railings against the armies of the living God—all because a young lad was willing to risk everything for the honor of God.

Do you remember the day when you were willing to put everything on the line for God? You were willing to risk your reputation, your future, and your job. The most important thing in your life was the name of Jesus Christ being lifted up! You kept your sweet song, and the anointing of the Lord was upon you. You had the supernatural

power of the Holy Spirit to fight the battle to which God had called you.

■ SUPRISE ATTACKS

The believer's life is not free from surprise attacks by those we once considered and respected as our friends. King Saul had brought David back with him to the palace after the victory over Goliath. David was serving Saul loyally and winning many battles for the God of Israel, yet Saul became insanely jealous and turned against him with fierce opposition. He wanted to kill David, *"Saul who had a spear in his hand, and he suddenly hurled it at David, intending to pin him to the wall"* (1 Samuel 18:10–11 NLT).

The lesson is this: Satan will come after those who have the anointing of God resting upon their lives. He will use whatever vessel he can influence and control to speak against God's anointed. He does not discriminate. Whether a person is in or outside the church of Jesus Christ, he is vulnerable to Satan's manipulation. If someone has been used of the devil to speak against you, remember, you learn a lot more in the valley than on the mountaintop! I would love to live on the mountaintop all of my Christian life, and I am sure you would, too. I would love to simply play my sweet songs, and have a chariot come one day, sweep me up and take me home to glory. Unfortunately, we all have to keep on the journey, and there will always be valleys, but it is in those valleys that we find the strength of God and experience His faithfulness. Listen to the psalmist in Psalm 119:75, *"I know, O Lord, thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me."* It has been in the valleys that God has worked something in me that I might not have been willing to hear on the mountaintop. It is in the hard places that my heart opens up and says, *"God, are you trying to tell me something? Please speak to me."*

■ A WRONG CONCLUSION

King Saul continued to pursue David with a vengeance—trying to kill him twice with a spear. After David fled for his life into the wilderness, Saul became unrelenting in his search for him. It was in this season of difficulty and hardship that David arrived at a wrong conclusion that resulted in spiritual defeat. In the midst of being pursued like an animal, David mistakenly believed that King Saul would kill him and he forgot about God's promise of kingship that had been pronounced earlier by the prophet Samuel. *"And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul"* (1 Samuel 27:1). Similarly, many Christians are swayed by the challenging circumstances facing them and they forget God's promises of victory. They often end up lifeless and without success.

The moment you and I give place to faithless reasoning, we begin to travel a path of our own making. It becomes fruitless human reasoning. David's next step of reasoning was to escape to the enemy's camp to seek refuge from Saul. *"And Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand"* (1 Samuel 27:1). It is amazing to me how David ended up in a place where years earlier he had fought against them and defeated their giant. Now he sought their protection and support.

■ WRONG DIRECTION

Having escaped from Saul, David attracted to himself a band of dissatisfied misfits in Israel. Under his leadership, they wandered in the wilderness and experienced minor victories over former enemies. But, like many people today who purport victories yet live according to their own reasoning, the future king of Israel had ended up on the wrong side of the battle and did not even realize it. David's newly forged loyalty to Achish the Philistine king

had polarized him from King Saul and his son Jonathan. He was caught in a place of wanting the favor of two opposing kingdoms. Can you imagine this? I don't know to this day what David was thinking. We too can be caught between two kingdoms when we allow the love of the world to rule and operate through human reasoning. Christians want the presence of Christ, but they also want to embrace all the world has to offer. They are caught between two kingdoms and two worlds! How tragic!

■ REALIZATION

While David was living in the land of the Philistines, he and his men were given the town of Ziklag by King Achish. David and his men were rejected from fighting with the Philistines and were now returning from the king. Upon their arrival they found their small town of Ziklag burned to the ground and their wives and children taken captive by the Amalekites. David's men lifted up their voices and wept until they had no more power to weep. David was in serious trouble because his men were very bitter about losing their wives and children, and they began to talk about stoning him. David's wives and life partners from God had also been taken from him that day.

■ THE HOLY SPIRIT, YOUR LIFE PARTNER

I wonder if this was not the beginning of the eyes of David being opened to the kind of pathway he was really on. God needed to show him that his true spiritual life partner was God Himself. This was a low point in David's life: the town was burned, his men were angry and bitter toward him, and his family had been taken captive. David may have remembered the time when Samuel came and anointed him with the horn of oil. The oil symbolized the anointing of the Holy Spirit in his life, and this anointing enabled him to be more than he ever could have

been by his own reasoning. Mere reasoning and planning would never have given a teenage boy the courage to face a giant with only a stone in his pocket.

I wonder how many Christians who travel from seminar to seminar realize that their life partner is the Holy Spirit and not these seminars. Christians should be asking God: What have I done with the Holy Spirit in my life? How have I let your Holy Spirit govern me? How have I let You manifest the glory of God through me? Have I let You take me into impossible places relying on Your strength alone, so that You may be glorified through me? The Christian's cry needs to be, "Oh, Holy Spirit, what have I done?" Many things can be taken from the church of Jesus Christ, but the moment you remove the Holy Spirit, the power and anointing of God is lost. Remember, it is the anointing of the Holy Spirit within us that enables us to stand against powers of darkness.

■ A RETURN TO PRAYER AND THE WORD

David easily could have capitulated into grief and despair, but instead, he encouraged himself in the Lord. Then he said to the priests, "*Bring me the ephod*" (1 Samuel 30:7). The ephod was a garment used in seeking the Lord. In other words, David was getting back to the place of prayer and the will of God. He was again believing in the realm of the impossible, the place where God begins to speak. "*And David inquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all*" (1 Samuel 30:8). After David sought the Lord, he initially set off in pursuit of the Amalekites with 600 able-bodied fighters, but 200 men were so exhausted and faint that they stayed at home. After a lengthy battle, David and his men

recovered "*all that the Amalekites had carried away*" (1 Samuel 30:18).

It had appeared as though David's enemies triumphed over him by burning Ziklag to the ground and capturing all the women and children. However, God opened the heavens and brought the victory. God will bring victory in your life, when you too, arrive at the realization that your Christian walk has been compromised. Now is the time to earnestly seek His guidance and intervention.

■ GO AND GET YOUR FAMILY

Ziklag was a place of grieving and sorrow, but it was also a place of seeking the Lord and His resolve. David and his men had been pursuing neighboring enemies and living for their own comfort and survival while leaving their families unprotected and vulnerable to be attacked. God's directive was clear to them, and it is equally clear to us today: "GO AND GET YOUR FAMILY!"

Like David, we must never lose a tender heart, but always be open to hearing the voice of God and then obeying it. God gave David the assurance that he would overtake his enemies and recover everything. In other words, God said, "GO AND GET YOUR FAMILY, DAVID!"

Today, multitudes of sons, daughters, mothers, wives, husbands and fathers are bound by the shackles of sin's captivity. God's call to you is clear and will always be, "Go and get your family." No amount of prosperity or other pursuits can be traded for your family. David obeyed the Lord and took all his men with him except those who were too weary to fight. You, too, must make every effort to rescue your family from the clutches of the enemy. You must leave behind anything that hinders your journey, including your own fears, worldly reasoning, and selfish pursuits. Failure to leave these hindrances

in the past has made the church a laughingstock among the nations of the world. You no longer have to have the world sneer at you; God's anointing and power is but a prayer away. Turn now to Him and receive fresh anointing to "GO AND GET YOUR FAMILY BACK."

■ TAKE BACK THE KINGDOM OF GOD

As you read this message, you are going to recover all that the enemy has taken from you. The anointing and leading of the Lord, along with your sweet song, will be restored. You will experience freedom from fear. You may be facing seemingly impossible odds, but Jesus Christ will show Himself to be God in your life. The Lord says, "Start in your own home and take back what the enemy has taken from you." In your zeal to serve Christ, do not make the mistake of neglecting family members who have not accepted Christ as their Savior. Go back to your extended family! Don't write them off as if they were insignificant and unimportant. Rather, listen to the voice of your life partner, the Holy Spirit, and initiate contact in some way, perhaps through a postcard, phone call, or e-mail.

When you return to the prayer closet and the Word of God, you will experience the life of Christ that you have been called and anointed to live out. You will no longer be trapped between two kingdoms, but will be fully submitted to the kingdom of God. Just as David, you must realize that it is not about you. You have been forgiven and have received the promise that one day you will rule and reign with Christ. Now it is about others! Have the courage to cry out to God. Ask Him to take your life and use it. Being a Christian is not about

getting a promotion in your company, but rather, it's about winning your family to God and bringing them home for eternity.

Fear of Saul detoured David and turned him from the pathway of God. So many people turn from God's pathway for fear of the future, fear of failure, and fear of losing all they have. We must not be afraid! Paul the Apostle said it this way: *"If God be for us, who can be against us?"* (Romans 8:31). Who can stand against the testimony of Christ?

It is time for the church to be the church and lay hold again of the promises of God by faith. It is time to put off all the boundaries that you create regarding what God can do and cannot do. It is time to let Christ be glorified in you again as His body, His beloved bride, on this side of eternity. There is so little time, and there is a world now crying for the glory of God to be seen in His house again. They are crying for somebody to stand up and say, "This is who God is. This is what God does. This is how God delivers. This is the mind that God gives. This is the heart that God puts within those who are willing to call out to Him and are willing to walk and risk all for His honor."

Count me in! I have come through this battle just as much as you have and like David, I am in this righteous battle right to the end. Let us pursue God's kingdom together. Praise God.

Carter Conlon
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TIMES SQUARE CHURCH

Times Square Church was founded in 1987 by Pastor David Wilkerson, author of "The Cross and the Switchblade." It is an interdenominational church located in the heart of New York City.

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WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

Sunday	10:00AM	3:00PM	6:00PM
Tuesday	7:00PM	Church Service	
Thursday	7:00PM	Prayer Meeting	
Friday	7:00PM	Church Service	

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