



EUROCLYDON

Sustaining faith through life's storms



SUSTAINING FAITH THROUGH LIFE'S STORMS

Primary Verses: *Mark 7:24-27*

Takeaway: With strong faith in Christ Jesus, you will weather every storm!

What was the first verse of Scripture you put to memory? Write it on your handout. Take a moment right now, grab your pen and scratch out your verse. If you're like me, you memorized it because it was meaningful. It spoke to you. What was the first verse of Scripture you put to memory? And don't say "Jesus wept!"

- ***John 3:16*** is a strong contender. It's one of the best in the Bible!
- ***Jeremiah 29:11*** is another favorite. God says, ***"I know the plans I have for you..."***
- Any verse from ***Romans chapter 8*** is worthy of our first memory verse.
- Of course, there's ***Proverbs 3:5-6: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart..."***
- Here's a winner: ***"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."*** ***Phil 4:13***

There are so many powerful verses to memorize. My verse is also good, but it's not very popular. It's rarely quoted in sermons. I Googled the top **50 most beloved verses** in the Bible ... mine did not make the list! I upped the ante and perused the **130 most popular verses** in the Bible. Notta!

My story...

- I'm a new believer and I'm reading my Bible ... and bam ... this verse detonates right in front of me.
- It captured my attention, and I knew in my spirit this verse needed to be in my arsenal ... so I memorized it. ***1 Peter 1:7...***

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:"

Peter points to a fundamental truth: Your faith, my faith ... it will be ***"tested by fire."*** Jesus addresses the reality of storms in one of his parables...

²⁴ "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

Throughout my life, I have obsessed with saying the right thing.

- Probably due to my own insecurities.
- I heard the Lord say, quit trying to say the ‘**right**’ thing, and say the ‘**real**’ thing!
- That was a liberating moment for me.
- So, this year I have come to this conference to say the real thing!
- Let’s start with this...

If you are seeking to live trouble free – Christianity is not for you! Just walk away! Some will argue bad theology. But that has been my experience. You have been given armor for a reason. There will be seasons of difficulty. This parable supports my claim.

Three lessons emerge...

1. The sensibility of the builder.
2. The stability of the foundation.
3. The severity of the storm.

THE SENSIBILITY OF THE BUILDER

The man who built on the rock understood the **significance of preparation**.

What are we preparing for? The Storms!

- The storms are coming! (Hardship / calamity / betrayal / etc)
- You can prepare for them, but you can’t stop them!
- Storms are inevitable, unpredictable, and temporary (approximately 20 minutes)
- They can wreak havoc in a short span of time.

In the church, preparation is often underrated and undervalued.

- The quality of your preparation will influence the strength of your stance.
- The man who built on sand was ill prepared. His plan was sufficient for the sunshine...
- Heavyweight Boxing Champion Mike Tyson says, “*Everyone has a good plan until they get punched in the mouth!*”
- Sand is okay so long as there is never storm! But...
- Sunny days and stormy days will happen.
- You can’t control either, but you can certainly be prepared for both!

- Bottom line: to worry less, prepare more.

Our confidence is in our preparation. In the boxing world the phrase 'Champion of the World' is awarded to the winner.

- The title Champion of the World is not awarded to someone whose killing it in a boxercise class!
- Titles are attained, not granted.
- You stepped into the ring and fought for it. You won.
 - To earn the title overcomer ... you must overcome something!
 - To say "I am more than a conqueror ... you've got to conquer something!"
 - To declare "I'm a survivor ... you've got to survive something!"
 - The term victor can only be awarded to you when you have defeated something!

THE STABILITY OF THE FOUNDATION

The stability of the foundation determines the security of your future.

THE ROCK VS THE SAND

Jesus said that the ***"wise man built his house on the rock."*** The other builder was foolish because ***he built his house on the sand."***

Q: Why does the Foundation Matter? A: Because there will Always be Storms!

- Tony Evans said, *"You are either in a storm, just heading out of a storm, or about to experience a storm."*
- Each house was subjected to the same storm. One house survived. The other fell.
- The glory is not in the house; it's in the "foundation" upon which it is built!
- The foundation is hidden, dull, and underappreciated ... until the storms arrive.
- When your life, or your marriage, or your ministry, or your church are built on the wrong foundation (sand), the storms will dismantle it.

Waves, winds, storms, torrents, and the like will come and go, but we get to choose what we build our lives on. Build on the rock! Hang

- When the wind and rain come, we'll know our foundation.
- When the tide turns, we'll know where our anchors are.

THE SEVERITY OF THE STORM

The Bible tells us that ***"the driving rain, and the rising floods, and the gale force winds blew and BEAT on the house."***

Here's what I know, not all storms are created equal! In the natural realm storms are rated by their intensity.

- A **dust devil** is the least ferocious. He is small and isolated with minimal intensity. This storm represents distractions, irritations, or mild inconveniences.
- A **tropical cyclone**, on the other hand, is a beast! They are tenacious, destructive, and unrelenting. The devastating force keeps pounding you. Maximum level of intensity.
- This storm type is testing your faith, resolve, courage.
- As their name suggests, **firestorms** are a type of storm that is caused by major wildfires. wildfire can spawn convective systems which could include **gale-force winds**, severe **thunderstorms**, **straight-line winds**, **lightning**, and a **tornado**.

I am celebrating 40 years of ministry this year ... I know **firestorms**!

- A state overseer pressured me, and I took a pastorate I didn't want to take.
- Within four months a firestorm erupted – rebellion, discord, inherited financial challenges, staff layoffs, lawsuits, rapid decline.
- A perfect storm was mounting. It was intense! We were sinking quickly. Go under.
- **1 Samuel 26. "The Lord caused a deep sleep to come upon them."**
- If you listen to me, I will put your enemies to sleep!

For those who are facing a firestorm ... take a deep breath / cancel the noise / get alone with God / and listen to him. **HIT REPAET!** Let's put the enemy to sleep. He cannot inject lies when he is sleeping!

Here is my response to firestorms...

1. **Pray.**
2. **Practice the Word.**

Jesus starts the parable by saying, **"...whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them..."**

How does the wise man build? Very simply. Two ways: By **hearing, and doing, the words of Jesus**. How can you build on that foundation? The same way.

- It's not what you hear. It's not what you know. It's what you **do**!
- The Bible has no promise for those who only 'hear'.
- Protection in a storm is in direct relationship to the **practice** of the Word.

3. **Play your storm song.**
4. **Pick up the mess.**

Storms leave behind evidence of their presence that often requires post-storm clean up. You likely need to do some post storm cleanup yourself. Practice forgiveness. Repair the breaches. Initiate love.

CLOSING

Jesus reminded us that in the ***world we will have tribulation.***

- The Bible is a “anything is possible” manual.
- It is also a “anything can happen” manual.
- In its pages you will find that the miraculous and the mayhem intermingle.

Here’s the promise ... ***“When the enemy comes in like a flood the Lord will lift up a standard against him.”*** The standard is always greater than the storm.

Here is my declaration...

- My **problems** do not **overwhelm** me! My **rivals** do not **intimidate** me!
- My **mistakes** do not **own** me! My **concerns** do not **control** me!

These declarations are not sermon sound bites ... they are an adopted attitude! They embody reasons I can boldly declare **with strong faith in Christ Jesus, you will weather every storm!** My faith enables me to weather the stormy seasons!

STORMS I AM FACING RIGHT NOW

MINISTRY STORMS

Model: The Apostle Paul

Focus: Euroclydon

In **Acts chapter 27**, the Apostle Paul is described as a traveler on con-ship. He is an inmate, and along with his fellow prisoners, he is in transport to Rome. It was smooth sailing when they departed Lycia, but the unexpected happened ... A storm occurred. But this was no ordinary gale; this one was different. It was a beast. Verses 14 & 15 illustrate the event ...

“But not long after, a tempestuous head wind arose, called Euroclydon (your-rock-lee-don). -Think Typhoon- So when the ship was caught and could not head into the wind, we let her drive.” Acts 27:14-15 NKJV

“They lost all control of the ship. It was a cork in the storm.” Vs. 15 MSG

LOST. ALL. CONTROL.

We struggle to find equilibrium because we are being tossed like a “cork in the storm.”

- You fight the waves and manage to get your head above water, only to be pulled back down by the vicious undercurrent.
- A sense of hopelessness emerges because the storm has taken over.
- You’ve lost all control, and you are at the mercy of the storm.
- Euroclydon is not a passive rain shower; it’s a torrential downpour that can wash away years of ministerial investment.
- It is wave after relentless wave that crashes against you and your crew time and again until its unyielding strength crushes you.

Some of you have weathered Euroclydon on a personal level as well as a ministerial level.

- Things are increasingly unhinged, uncommon, and uncomfortable.
- Even when you find yourself a plank to stay afloat, you look around and quickly realize that there is more at stake than your own personal survival.
- Other shipmates are attempting to weather the same storm.
- As far as storms go, it doesn’t matter how together you might be personally because the mayhem AROUND YOU still affects you.
- It’s the stuff you did not produce on your own, but you’re forced to deal with it.
- You can’t control Euroclydon! You simply try to survive it.

Covid was my Euroclydon. I was ill-prepared for the magnitude of that storm.

- People. Lost. Their. Minds!
- Back-to-back-to-back phone calls. / Jimmy, Mike, Dave, and a bonus call, Becca.

- There was confusion. There was uncertainty. There was fear. There was death. There was anger. There was DEEP division.
- Should we remain open or close? Mask or no mask? Vaccination or no vac.
- We closed, and 12 weeks later we reopened with ¼ of the people.
- I Lost. All. Control. It was gut wrenching. It was stressful. It was awkward. It was draining. Emotionally, physically, mentally, and spiritually.

COVID introduced us to a form of spiritual paralysis, but we are walking again! We can and are rebuilding. And this time, we are building it stronger.

THE CHAOS WILL NEVER FIX ITSELF

neither can you count on others to do it for you.

Acts 27 is a lesson on the ability to stand firm when surrounded by mayhem. It is also a striking reminder that mayhem will NEVER FIX ITSELF! Left to itself, things will only worsen.

- Your personal/pastoral Euroclydon will require immediate attention in the form of leadership, spiritual directive, and renewed hope.
- The fact is, the people under your care need you!
- They need you to be strong, confident, and Spirit directed.
- **Dream on island**

Paul is our example. He shifts from prisoner to pulpiter: "Fellow passengers and crew, regardless of how things look right now, God is in control!" When things were at their worst, God spoke to Paul, and he passed it on, saying...

***"So keep up your courage, men, for I have faith in God that it will happen just as he told me."* vs. 25**

A few verses later, Luke tells us...

***"After he said this, he took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all."* Vs. 35**

Out-of-control situations find equilibrium in the hands of a still-in-control God! It's why we can ***"cast all our cares on Him."*** Its why momentary panic can give way to ***"peace that passes ALL understanding."***

Paul should be freaking out with the rest of the freakers! Instead, he is composed, confident, and calculated. ***In verse 25, he is strong in faith. In verse 35, he is bold in praise.***

Paul kept his faith and maintained inner peace despite the crashing waves and panicked shipmates. We can do the same.

- Don't lose hope today! I know you've taken a beating!
- I understand you might be tired, overwhelmed, and frustrated.
- But rather than **GIVE up ... STEP up!** Step up in faith and lead with renewed passion.

When you have a God assignment, the enemy will taunt you. Your ministry will never amount to anything. You don't measure up. You don't have what it takes. You'll never have the resources you need. You lack the necessary leadership skills.

Paul combatted his storm by claiming a promise.

- *The God I serve promised that I will stand before Caesar.*
- *He would not have allowed this storm if it was going to keep me from my destiny.*
- With God ... **the promise is greater the problem.**
- When you have a promise deep down in your heart, everything in the world can come against you, but you know that setback is not permanent. It's only temporary.
- It's not going to keep you from becoming who God's created you to be.

So, you are now living in the light of the problem, or in the light of the promise? God never wants your circumstances to trump his Word. Not only does he not want your circumstance to trump his Word, he doesn't want your circumstance to trump his presence

The Bible says **everyone lost hope except Paul (vs27)**. So, he stepped up in a spirit of encouragement. We must become dealers of hope. We must speak to the fears of those around us and find a way to calm their spirits while the storm rages on!

Consider with me one last thought. Euroclydon was a savage opponent, but he did serve a purpose. His violent nature demanded a unified effort of the 276 people aboard the ship.

- The captain, crew, and prisoners were now on level ground.
- It would take all of them working together to land safely onshore.
- There was one unifying factor: SURVIVAL.

Gather your crew and restate your vision and mission. Ensure your leaders are on the same page as you and speaking the same language. A unified voice will inspire hope to members. Remind your crew that the **gates of hell cannot prevail against God's church**. You can rebuild stronger! You can unite your team!

ACTION STEPS:

1. Acknowledge that God is in control of even the most out-of-control situations.
2. Take Charge whenever and wherever you can.
3. Take care of yourself.
4. Lighten your load.
5. Get ready to do your part.

THINGS THAT ARE OUT OF CONTROL

FAITH STORMS

Model: Joshua and Caleb, Job

Focus: Giants

But the men who had gone up with him said, "We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are." And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, "The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size. We saw the Nephilim there (the descendants of Anak come from the Nephilim). We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them."

"When you plan for 2023 remember this, don't plan looking at your capacity, but plan looking at God's capacity." -Daniel David

12 Spies! 10 Doubters! 2 Believers!

Ten of the twelve looked at the giants and took inventory. They sized them up and said ... They are really big ... we're not. Final analysis? We can't win! No way, not today, not ever, zero possibility of victory. They never factored in the power of God.

The problem? They spent too much time looking at the giants! When you lock in on your giant you lose sight of God's promise! **Your future successes cannot be gauged solely on observable circumstances.** The ten saw the size of their opposition and quit. They returned to camp speaking the language of fear!

New giants often breed spiritual amnesia. Just two months earlier these same men witnessed the power of God over the mighty Egyptians and the Red Sea. Yet...! That's why Scripture encourages us to ***"Walk by faith, not by sight."***

Giants have the gift of taunting! See that? Take a good look! You won't live another month; you have heart failure. You might as well file bankruptcy, you can see there's not enough money. Your child is addicted, and there's nothing you can do about it.

Somebody shout, ***"I'm going to walk by faith, not by sight!"***

Regardless how true or reasonable our fears and doubts may seem; it is dangerous to focus on our insecurities and our weaknesses and STOP THERE without moving on to consider God's power. To reflect on His greatness. To remember His promises to strengthen us to obey Him and bring Him glory.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM FAILURE TO ENTER THE PROMISE

Your promise from God will likely require giant removal.

- The bigger the promise, the bigger the giant
- It's beautiful land, but there are giants there!

Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful.

A "giant" is:

1. anything that distracts us from our focus on God;
2. anything that detours us from our service for God; and
3. anything that drains us of our driving passion for God.

Do not empower your giants with a negative confession! You were never designed to speak anything that opposes the Word of God! The bible says that the ten spies brought back an evil report. In Ephesians, the book of warfare, it warns, **"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth". Ephesians 4:29a KJV**

Their confession led to their demise. They got in trouble. Get a load of **Numbers 14:28**. God says this, **"Say unto them, truly as I live", sayeth the Lord. "As you have spoken in my ears, so will I do to you".**

The community of Israel heard two reports...

1. **Report one:** *the people living there are powerful, and their towns are large and fortified. We even saw giants there, the descendants of Anak! "We can't go up against them! They are stronger than we are!"*
2. **Report two:** *"Let's go at once to take the land. We can certainly conquer it!" "Don't be afraid of the people of the land. They are only helpless prey to us! They have no protection, but the LORD is with us! Don't be afraid of them!"*

Report #1 is evil. Report #2 is good. Which of the two do you think everyone believed? Answer: The evil report. Now watch crazy get crazier. The people agreed to stone the messengers of report #2. God had to step in to save Caleb and Joshua!

So, when those 10 spies told the people what they wanted to hear, all of them died in the wilderness. Every one of them! NOW THAT'S NOT YOUR DESTINY. Your destiny is Canaan. Don't get your mail forwarded to the wilderness. Forward your mail to Canaan.

Giants can keep a church divided. Just like Samson, he hung around with that woman so long that he fell asleep and didn't know the power left him. The next thing you know the Philistines came on him. And she says, **"The Philistines are on you Samson"**. He woke up but had no power.

What is the first thing they did with Samson? They put out his eyes. I'm saying the first thing that happens with the church when they're walking too close to the world is that they lose revelation. And if you lose revelation, you lose faith. But I'm here to say restoration is coming to the church!

Your fulfilled promises must focus on God's power!

Joshua and Caleb said, ***"...if the LORD is pleased with us, he will bring us safely into that land and give it to us. It is a rich land flowing with milk and honey."*** Numbers 14:8 NLT

STOP looking at your giant! That's the only report of the ten. Their huge, we're small, their strong, we're weak. They're fortified, we're nomads. J & C were like, STOP it! Stop looking at the giants. Instead, take a good look at our God. That's what you call God-Centered! If God is telling us to go - He will do it if we obey!

J & C did not deny the presence of giants, and neither should we. They believed God was superior to the giants, and so should we. They were focused on the promises of God, not the size of those who opposed it. When you focus on your giant, you surrender easily.

The temptation to quit, to despair, to give in to bitterness, to flee the struggle, to yield to lust, to give in to greed, to indulge ourselves, to walk in pride...these things either destroy us or they make us stronger.

In this life we will encounter trips, tumbles, errors and failures. The "voice" we often hear is that of the adversary. He doesn't say, "Nice try." He shouts, "FAILURE!" He asserts, "You can't live this Christian life." Or, "You were better off before you started on this faith journey." Or, "You deserve better than this."

DON'T LISTEN TO THAT VOICE! Do not let the ten get into your head! Giants are gifted discouragers. Don't be a victim of that attack. Maybe you are so disheartened that you are ready to give up — on your job, on your marriage, on your family, on yourself.

- Ignore the voice that's saying things will always be the way they are today.
- Ignore the voice saying give up and go away.

There is another voice. The voice of God delivers a different message. His Voice says, "Let me help you with that." Or, "I have been there before, and I know you can make it." Or, "My strength is sufficient for you." Or, "I will never leave you or forsake you."

Proverbs 24:16 reminds us that God sticks closer than a brother, to honor our achievements, not punish us for our failures. Consider the Message paraphrase...

"No matter how many times you trip them up, God-loyal people don't stay down long; Soon they're up on their feet, while the wicked end up flat on their faces."

God has a word for you today. It's not a condemning word. It's not a critical word. It's not an indictment against. When you fall God does not shout "Epic Fail." Quite the opposite. He shouts, "Try Again." Can you receive that into your spirit today? Even if you fall seven times...Get up, brush yourself off, and TRY AGAIN!

God knows your potential. He knows you can rise from a fall because He deposited in your spirit resurrection power! You may be struggling to make ends meet / sin that you can't seem to conquer / failure and defeat in virtually every area of your life, and it may seem impossible for you to become the kind of person you want to become.

But God knows your potential. He believes in you. He knows what you can become. So, child of God, GET UP! Stand tall. Stand proud. Stand in faith and try again!

James asks us to consider Job, a righteous man. Job stepped into the octagon against multiple giants ... And it was brutal! Satan was relentless. The outcome was agonizing. His riches were gone, his servants and children were killed, his body was racked with disease and his friends turned on him. Job lost it all ... EXCEPT HIS FAITH! His faith survived!

The Apostle James was impressed. He wrote, ***"You have heard of Job's perseverance and have seen what the Lord finally brought about. The Lord is full of compassion and mercy." James 5:11 NIV***

How did Job survive? He knew who God was. Victory depends on our view of God.

There was harsh punishment for looking at the giants. For refusing God's visitation. 40 years of wandering in the wilderness. This is meaningful for me because I am approaching 40 years of ministry. In recounting my steps, I wonder how many years I've wasted wandering in the desert because I couldn't stop looking at the giants.

Not any more. My eyes are fixed on the promises of God!

THE GIANTS I NEED TO SLAY

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RELATIONAL STORMS

Model: King David

Focus: Elah Vs Ziklag

“Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy,” (Jn 10:10a). That’s his manifesto. He is a thief. It’s who he is...it’s what he does! And make no mistake ... Satan has stolen something from you.

He walked in your home, evaluated your merchandise and ripped you off! And he did not take the old junk you didn’t want any more. No, no, no...he took your best stuff. You’re precious stuff ... like your peace of mind, your children, your spouse, your capacity to love, your passion and your faith!

While it is true Satan came to steal, it’s also true that Jesus came to give it all back! ***“I am come that you might have life, abundant life.” (John 10:10b).*** He came to equip us with the stuff we need to defend our faith. To repair our broken relationships. To teach us how to forgive. To enable us to win the battles we never thought we could win.

If I’m being honest, sometimes I feel like I can Break Every Chain and other days I doubt I can break a \$3 knockoff necklace. It’s maddening, because I know who I serve, and I know He does the miraculous, but there are times I struggle to connect the dots between what I believe and what I experience.

I’m not alone!

ELAH VS ZIKLAG

10.8. That’s the mileage between Elah and Ziklag. It’s the same distance between this church and Milan. A runner can achieve that distance in 2.5 hours. By horse, you can get there in about an hour. The way some of you drive ... 10 minutes!

As far as king David is concerned, it might as well be a million miles away. Because the difference between Elah and Ziklag is staggering ... but not unfamiliar.

Elah

- The valley where David defeated the giant Goliath.
- He is dripping with confidence. Standing tall. Bold. Defiant. Brave. Faith filled.
- Fellow soldiers carry him off the field of battle on their shoulders.
- David captured the attention of a nation. Kings’ daughter. Wealth. Status.
- Elah is a place of victory. A conquerors playground. Great vibes. Champions.

Ziklag

- The stronghold where David and fellow warriors lost everything.
- He is seized with despair. Bowing low. Confused. Stressed. Faithless.
- Fellow soldiers (friends) start talking about killing him.
- David's family was captured, along with all his wealth. Status is all time low.
- Ziklag is a place of defeat. A victim's prison. Negative vibes. Losers.

I appreciate these alternate realities. This is the same man. Same God. Very different reality. Some people live life from victory to victory, but that is not my story. I'm an Elah to Ziklag to Elah to Ziklag kind of guy. I like Elah. I want to live there ... permanently. But I often find myself hanging out in Ziklag.

And I'm not a defeatist. In fact, I am 'glass always full' guy. But relational storms hit hard. They are the most difficult to clean up post storm. David and his mighty men were a tribe. They were bro friends. Tight. They fought with each other and protected one another. They had an unbreakable bond, yet they turned on him. He is abandoned by the brotherhood.

It was a punch in the gut, and for the first time David was alone. In just 10.8 miles David went from **emboldened to discouraged**.

- **Discouragement** is what brings a mighty man to acting like a weak man.
- **Discouraged** means your courage ran before your fight was over.
- **Discouraged** means I had it, but I lost it.

David, King David, anointed David, gifted David, powerful David was discouraged, and he's balled up in a knot. So, David **"encouraged himself in the Lord"**. Sometimes you're alone in the battle and nobody's encouraging you. Not your neighbor, not your boss, not your spouse, not your daddy / momma. Sometimes you just have to encourage yourself!

So, David's praying, and he says to God, *"I don't know if my life is over, I don't know if I'm going come out of this or not,"* he said, *"I don't even know whether I've got another fight in me, but God, I could use a Word right now!"*

God responded back through the priest and ephod, and in essence He said two words: "FIGHT BACK". Somebody shout: "FIGHT BACK".

So, I've got a message for every man and women who wants to quit / For every person here who's at your wit's end / For everyone who's tired in the middle of the battle, and for every one of you who's wondering, *"Do I have what it takes for this season in my life?"* My message for you is bold yet simple ... FIGHT BACK!

I looked at the first **6 verses of 1 Samuel 30**. Here are the words I extracted from the Ziklag catastrophe...

Raided, attacked, burned, taken captive, carried off, destroyed by fire, wept aloud, no strength left, exhausted, captured, greatly distressed, talked of stoning David, bitter in spirit.

But ... David found strength in the LORD his God. 1 Samuel 30:6b

What do you do when you've been raided, attacked, burned and your closest allies are talking about how to stone you? You ***encourage yourself in the Lord*** and you **FIGHT BACK!**

- When you get overwhelmed with a sense of discouragement, FIGHT BACK.
- When you go through relational hell, & the enemy taunts you, FIGHT BACK.
- When you go home and everything's breaking loose, FIGHT BACK.
- Slap somebody and tell them, *"I'm about to FIGHT BACK and I'm going to get it all back!"*

You see, that's the conclusion of the Ziklag calamity. After David prayed and encouraged himself in the Lord, he took a deep breath, wiped the tears from his eyes, threw back his shoulders, armored up and led his warriors in a chase of their own! They pursued the invaders and caught up to them. David got his fight back and then he fought back!

He looked the enemy square in the eyes and shouted, "I want it back". Somebody here needs to get their fight back! The devil came in and took your stuff. Your precious stuff. Your hope. Your peace. Your joy. Your sanity. Your children. Your relationships. Your prayer. Your spiritual language. Your anointing. Your faith.

Tell your enemy ... *"I want it back. Give me my joy. Give me my peace. Give me my child. Give me my spouse. Give me my family. Give me my friend. I've made up my mind. I want my life back!"*

Now watch this. I can be BOLD and audacious when I say this. I can be confident and speak with authority because the Bible says that David and his men fought back, from dusk until evening the next day ... **and they RECOVERED ALL!** Touch your neighbor and say, *"I'm a recovery agent!"*

None of us are strangers to the pain of a relational storm. Ziklag is traumatic and emotionally draining. But with the help of God you will heal, and you will laugh again, and you will love again, and you will trust again.

Refresh yourself if needed and then get on your feet. I know you're tired. I know you're battle weary. I know Ziklag has been a real downer ... but Elah is just down the street!

I've amended the Action Steps for this one.

ACTION STEPS:

1. Move out of Ziklag! It's not your home.
2. Encourage yourself in the Lord.
3. Initiate the necessary conversations.
4. Forgive and receive Forgiveness.
5. Fight back and against the real enemy.
6. Recover ALL.

ACTION STEPS:

1. *Never give up if you know you're right.*
2. *Don't let the odds discourage you – God's bigger than all of them.*
3. *Never let anyone intimidate you or deter you from your goals.*
4. *Remember, every winner has dealt with defeat and adversity.*
5. **FIGHT BACK!**

RELATIONSHIPS THAT NEED MENDING

LEADERSHIP STORMS

Model: Moses

Focus: Opposition

Numbers 11:4-34

The story takes place in **Numbers 11**.

- In Egypt the children of Israel were slaves. God was ready to flip the script.
- Moses successfully led God's people out of Egyptian captivity.
- Their God-ordained destiny was a land flowing with milk and honey — Life of freedom and prosperity.
- Instead they endured an extended wilderness journey.

Moses successfully led God's people out of Egyptian captivity. Turns out that was the easy part! The transition from captivity to freedom required a major shift.

- The transition from captivity to freedom required a major shift.
- A cultural shift was essential, but the Mosaic congregation failed to buy in.
- Through the course of this story Moses learned valuable leadership lessons.

POPULARITY HAS A SHELF LIFE

Moses had skills. He had favor. He carried a God-anointing. Heavy anointing. Dude was a world-class leader. Moses had it going on! He was popular ... and then his ratings went down.

- Egyptian Deliverance ... Popularity was way up here! Trapped at Sea ...
- The Red Sea divided ... Popularity was way up here! No water ...
- Water flows from rock ... Way up here! People are hungry ...



Popularity has a shelf life! The Bible says...

4 The rabble ("contemptable people" -HCSB / "riffraff" -MSG) **with them began to crave other food, and again the Israelites began wailing and said,**

5 "If only we had meat to eat! We remember the fish we ate in Egypt at no cost — also the cucumbers, melons, leeks, onions and garlic.

6 But now we have lost our appetite; we never see anything but this manna!"

Numbers 11:4-6

- In the wilderness, God rained down Manna, literally "bread from heaven."
- Guess what? The people tired of the Manna / Murmuring & complaining.
- The church members were unhappy.

- They were no longer impressed with the parting of the Red Sea;
- they were annoyed because they had to live on manna.

Leadership is not a popularity contest!

- Moses should be revered ... not targeted!
- Folks were mad at him because they tired of the food God provided!
- No matter how well you do your job, some people will complain... and they will gladly TURN UP THE VOLUME.

Moses chose principle over popularity!

THE ONE-MAN SHOW HAS LIMITS

When the rabble began to complain to Moses, Moses had an epiphany ...

"I cannot carry all these people by myself; the burden is too heavy for me." Vs 14

"I can't do this by myself—it's too much, all these people." MSG

Moses needed a team ... so do we.

- Train people who have leadership potential.
- Determine your core team and invest in them. Disciple them. Equip them.

Great teams have contagious optimism – it starts with the leader.

- Share your optimism, belief and faith with your team.
- Show them the way forward – transfer your belief to them. Feed them positivity. Speak life to them.
- Believe in them when they don't believe in themselves.

Leadership is not just about what *you* do ... but what you can inspire, encourage, and empower *others* to do.

THE LEGACY LEADER HAS TENACITY

Moses became frustrated with the attitude of the people he was leading. So he uttered a very powerful prayer in **verse 15** ...

"Why are you doing this to me? Please kill me right now; it will be a kindness! Let me out of this impossible situation! I've seen enough; I've had enough. Let me out of here." Vs 15 Multiple

I am no stranger to this prayer! It is thick with tension ...

- *"Enough God. I'm trying to lead YOUR people in response to YOUR bush-fire calling and now these people are seriously on my last nerve!*
- *I want out. Show me the escape route!*
- *Kill me if you must because I'D RATHER DIE than lead this congregation!"*

Here's the response he gets from the Almighty:

- ***"Gather together seventy men from among the leaders of Israel, men whom you know to be respected and responsible.*** (Previous point – God is introducing the concept of team)
- ***Take them to the Tent of Meeting.*** (3 things God will do) ***(1) I'll meet you there. (2) I'll come down and speak with you. (3) I'll take some of the Spirit that is on you and place it on them;*** (Strategy – ask for leaders who carry your same spirit – not personality but spirit)
- ***they'll then be able to take some of the load of this people—you won't have to carry the whole thing alone. Vs 16-17 MSG***

My greatest ministerial strength is tenacity.

- I'm not the greatest communicator / can't sing / leadership flaws.
- But if you need someone with tenacity, I'm your guy!
- Tenacity: Stubborn persistence & unwillingness to admit defeat!

I know there are pastors and ministry leaders who are battle weary, frustrated and depleted. Discouragement is at its peak. Some of you have decided...ENOUGH! There's too much disappointment / pain. I QUIT!!!

I understand ... but when you give up, you close the door on God doing something miraculous. If God has called you to a task, be tenacious.

GOD HAS A KNACK FOR DOING THE "IMPOSSIBLE"

When God told Moses that the people of Israel would be eating meat until they were more than satisfied, Moses said...

21 "Here I am among 600,000 men on foot, and you say, 'I will give them meat to eat for a whole month!'

22 Would they have enough if flocks and herds were slaughtered for them? Would they have enough if all the fish in the sea were caught for them?"

23 The Lord answered Moses, "Is the Lord's arm too short? You will now see whether or not what I say will come true for you."

Moses did what many leaders do when they're stressed out. In his mind, he began making the situation worse than it really was. He said, ***"There's not even enough fish in the whole sea to satisfy them!"***

God's response was simple and straight to the point: ***"My arm isn't short!"*** God is saying, *"When you work for me, the word 'impossible' doesn't exist. There isn't anything I can't do."*

Even Moses had to be reminded that God is ALL-POWERFUL.

- There was the burning bush. The plagues of Egypt. The parting of the Red Sea.
- Still, Moses spews doubt ... not faith!
- We need to learn to forget the meaning of "impossible" — because when God is involved, the word doesn't exist. This is what Jesus said to his disciples...

"With God all things are possible." (Matthew 19:26)

CHALLENGES THAT MUST BE ADDRESSED

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Final Thoughts...

The Bible is an “anything can happen” manual! From cover to cover it screams all things are POSSIBLE!

- It is physically impossible to birth a child at 90 ... Sarah can testify, it's possible!
- There's no way a man outrun a chariot ... Elijah can testify, it's possible!
- You cannot be swallowed by a whale and live ... Jonah can testify, it's possible!
- It's foolish to believe you can walk on water ... Peter can testify, it's possible!
- You can't recover from four days in the grave ... Lazarus can testify, it's possible!

Let me remind you that God has called you, anointed you, positioned you, and ordained you to **DO SOMETHING** in and for the kingdom.

- You not only have potential ... you have kingdom potential!
- Don't let anyone underestimate you. And do not sell yourself short.
- Even when something screams impossible ... with God's help it's doable!

SO ... Launch out into the deep on nothing more than the Word of God. Attempt what they say can't be done.

Here's what I like about **1 Chronicles 28:20** ... We get to listen in as the king of a prevailing nation talks to his son. There's some moxie in his delivery ...

“...Be strong man. Have courage, AND DO IT; don't be afraid. The Lord God—my God—will be with you...”

PERSONAL PRAYER GUIDE

From pages 1-8, transfer the information you wrote in each box. Believe that God will help you to RECOVER ALL through this daily prayer template.

1. It is my prayer that God will deliver me from **all storms** in Jesus' name. I call them out by name...

2. I take charge of every **out-of-control situation** in Jesus' name. I call them out by name...

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3. The **giants** that have **defied my faith** will be conquered in Jesus' name. I call them out by name...

4. I ask for healing from the **hurt I have suffered** from every **broken relationship** in Jesus' name. I ask God to help me to forgive...

5. I ask for clarity and direction with the **various challenges** I am facing in my **life**, my **home**, my **church**, my **relationships**, and my **ministry**. I call them out by name...