ASSEMBLE church
Know God · Find Freedom · Discover Purpose · Make A Difference

Message

Title: Finding Strength In God
Speaker: Pastor Lilly Brightwell
Date: 22 November 2026

"When you've wept until you can't weep any more, you can still strengthen yourself in the Lord."

Introduction

This week, before you react to the pressure you're facing, turn to God first — worship, pray, and ask Him what to do next.

Have you ever reached the point where you've cried until there were no tears left — and had no idea what to do next?

In 1 Samuel 30, David and his men return home to Ziklag to find it burned to the ground and their families taken. They weep until they have no strength left to weep, and then the people David is leading start talking about stoning him. It's grief, trauma and blame all at once. And in the middle of it, Scripture says six quiet words that change everything: "But David strengthened himself in the Lord." Pastor Lilly Brightwell walks us through what happens next — how David inquires of God rather than charging ahead on his own wisdom, and how that one decision shapes everything that follows.

This message is an encouragement that we are never expected to grow strong apart from God's presence. Through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we have access to a spiritual endurance that doesn't come from us. But it doesn't stop there. David's strength in God shaped a whole culture: a community where the exhausted were allowed to rest, where an abandoned enemy servant was shown compassion before he was useful, and where those who stayed behind still shared in the victory. Your condition matters. How you treat people on the journey matters. And whatever we gain, we get to share.

Scripture

1 Samuel 30:1-6 — When David and his men had come to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid on the South, and on Ziklag, and had struck Ziklag, and burned it with fire, and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great. They didn't kill any, but carried them off, and went their way. When David and his men came to the city, behold, it was burned with fire; and their wives, their sons, and their daughters were taken captive. Then David and the people who were with him lifted up their voice and wept until they had no more power to weep. David's two wives were taken captive, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the wife of Nabal the Carmelite. David was greatly distressed; for the people spoke of stoning him, because the souls of all the people were grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters; but David strengthened himself in Yahweh his God.

1 Samuel 30:7-10 — David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Please bring the ephod here to me."
Abiathar brought the ephod to David. David inquired of Yahweh, saying, "If I pursue after this troop, will I overtake them?"
He answered him, "Pursue; for you will surely overtake them, and will without fail recover all." So David went, he and the six hundred men who were with him, and came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men; for two hundred stayed behind, who were so faint that they couldn't go over the brook Besor.

1 Samuel 30:11-16 — They found an Egyptian in the field, and brought him to David, and gave him bread, and he ate; and they gave him water to drink. They gave him a piece of a cake of figs, and two clusters of raisins. When he had eaten, his spirit came again to him; for he had eaten no bread, and drank no water for three days and three nights. David asked him, "To whom do you belong? Where are you from?"
He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite; and my master left me, because three days ago I got sick. We made a raid on the South of the Cherethites, and on that which belongs to Judah, and on the South of Caleb; and we burned Ziklag with fire." David said to him, "Will you bring me down to this troop?"
He said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me and not deliver me up into the hands of my master, and I will bring you down to this troop." When he had brought him down, behold, they were spread around over all the ground, eating, drinking, and dancing, because of all the great plunder that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah.

1 Samuel 30:17-20 — David struck them from the twilight even to the evening of the next day. Not a man of them escaped from there, except four hundred young men, who rode on camels and fled. David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken; and David rescued his two wives. There was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither plunder, nor anything that they had taken to them. David brought back all. David took all the

flocks and the herds, which they drove before those other livestock, and said, “This is David’s plunder.”

1 Samuel 30:21-25 — David came to the two hundred men, who were so faint that they could not follow David, whom also they had made to stay at the brook Besor; and they went out to meet David, and to meet the people who were with him. When David came near to the people, he greeted them. Then all the wicked men and worthless fellows, of those who went with David, answered and said, “Because they didn’t go with us, we will not give them anything of the plunder that we have recovered, except to every man his wife and his children, that he may lead them away, and depart.” Then David said, “Do not do so, my brothers, with that which Yahweh has given to us, who has preserved us, and delivered the troop that came against us into our hand. Who will listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down to the battle, so shall his share be who stays with the baggage. They shall share alike.” It was so from that day forward, that he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day.

1 Samuel 30:26-31 — When David came to Ziklag, he sent some of the plunder to the elders of Judah, even to his friends, saying, “Behold, a present for you from the plunder of Yahweh’s enemies.” He sent it to those who were in Bethel, to those who were in Ramoth of the South, to those who were in Jattir, to those who were in Aroer, to those who were in Siphmoth, to those who were in Eshtemoa, to those who were in Racal, to those who were in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, to those who were in the cities of the Kenites, to those who were in Hormah, to those who were in Borashan, to those who were in Athach, to those who were in Hebron, and to all the places where David himself and his men used to stay.

1 Samuel 23:16 — Jonathan, Saul’s son, arose, and went to David into the woods, and strengthened his hand in God.

1 Samuel 27 — David said in his heart, “I will now perish one day by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me any more in all the borders of Israel. So shall I escape out of his hand.” David arose, and passed over, he and the six hundred men who were with him, to Achish the son of Maoch, king of Gath. David lived with Achish at Gath, he and his men, every man with his household, even David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal’s wife. Saul was told that David had fled to Gath: and he sought no more again for him. David said to Achish, “If now I have found favor in your eyes, let them give me a place in one of the cities in the country, that I may dwell there. For why should your servant dwell in the royal city with you?” Then Achish gave him Ziklag that day: therefore Ziklag belongs to the kings of Judah to this day. The number of the days that David lived in the country of the Philistines was a full year and four months. David and his men went up and raided the Geshurites, the Girzites, and the Amalekites; for those were the inhabitants of the land, who were of old, on the way to Shur, even to the land of Egypt. David struck the land, and saved no man or woman alive, and took away the sheep, the cattle, the donkeys, the camels, and the clothing. Then he returned, and came to Achish. Achish said, “Against whom have you made a raid today?”

David said, “Against the South of Judah, against the South of the Jerahmeelites, and against the South of the Kenites.” David saved neither man nor woman alive, to bring them to Gath, saying, “Lest they should tell about us, saying, ‘David did this, and this has been his way all the time he has lived in the country of the Philistines.’” Achish believed David, saying, “He has made his people Israel utterly to abhor him. Therefore he will be my servant forever.”

Jude 20 — But you, beloved, keep building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 3:16-17 — that he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, that you may be strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; to the end that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

2 Timothy 4:17 — But the Lord stood by me, and strengthened me, that through me the message might be fully proclaimed, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.

Philippians 4:13 — I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me.

John 15:5 — I am the vine. You are the branches. He who remains in me, and I in him, the same bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.

1 Corinthians 14:4 — He who speaks in another language edifies himself, but he who prophesies edifies the assembly.

Matthew 20:1-16 — “For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was the master of a household, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius
a day, he sent them into his vineyard. He went out about the third hour,
and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour,
and did likewise. About the eleventh hour
he went out, and found others standing idle. He said to them, ‘Why do you stand here all day idle?’ “They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’
“He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and you will receive whatever is right.’ When evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers and pay them their wages, beginning from the last to the first.’ “When those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius. When the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise each received a denarius. When they received it, they murmured against the master of the household, saying, ‘These last have spent one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat!’ “But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Didn’t you agree with me for a denarius? Take that which is yours, and go your way. It is my desire to give to this last

just as much as to you. Isn't it lawful for me to do what I want to with what I own? Or is your eye evil, because I am good?' So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen."

1 Peter 5:10

Don't Miss This

- Strength Is Something You Turn To, Not Something You Muster: Scripture never tells us what David prayed or which psalm he read — only that he strengthened himself in the Lord. In the crisis, he kept his relationship with God alive. Jesus said, "Apart from me you can do nothing." Every time you worship, pray, or simply turn towards Him, you are being built up by the Holy Spirit. You were never meant to do this on your own.
- Ask Before You Act: Having found strength, David didn't charge off on adrenaline — he asked for the ephod and inquired of the Lord. Pressure is precisely the moment we're most tempted to rely on our own wisdom. Align yourself with God's perspective first, then move. God rarely gives the full plan; He gives the next word, and that's enough.
- Your Condition Matters — And So Does Everyone Else's: Three times in this chapter we meet people who are physically and emotionally spent. Two hundred men were too exhausted to cross the brook, and David let them rest. An abandoned Egyptian servant was fed before he was questioned. And when the victory came, David insisted that those who stayed with the baggage shared equally. Strength in God shapes a culture where the weary are carried, not cast aside, and where victory is shared, never hoarded.

Let's Chat

1. David wept until he had no strength left to weep — have you ever been in that place? What did turning to God look like for you, or what made it hard?
2. Practically speaking, how do you "strengthen yourself in the Lord"? What rhythms (worship, prayer, Scripture, praying in the Spirit) actually work for you in a crisis?
3. Jonathan strengthened David's hand in the Lord by calling out his fear and reminding him of God's purpose. Who plays that role in your life — and whose Jonathan could you be this week?
4. What sort of decisions do you tend to make under pressure? What would it look like to pause and inquire of God before you act?
5. David refused to let the exhausted be cut out of the victory. Where might we be quietly measuring people by what they contribute, and how can our group become a place where it's safe to say, "I can't carry on right now"?

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