

1 Samuel 29-30 – God’s Grace For The Backslidden

November 20, 2022

Background

How does God show grace to the backslidden?

1. God saves us from ourselves.

Now the Philistines had gathered all their forces at Aphek. And the Israelites were encamped by the spring that is in Jezreel. 1 Samuel 29:1 (ESV)

As the lords of the Philistines were passing on by hundreds and by thousands, and David and his men were passing on in the rear with Achish, the commanders of the Philistines said, “What are these Hebrews doing here?” And Achish said to the commanders of the Philistines, “Is this not David, the servant of Saul, king of Israel, who has been with me now for days and years, and since he deserted to me I have found no fault in him to this day.” 1 Samuel 29:2–3 (ESV)

But the commanders of the Philistines were angry with him. And the commanders of the Philistines said to him, “Send the man back, that he may return to the place to which you have assigned him. He shall not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he become an adversary to us. For how could this fellow reconcile himself to his lord? Would it not be with the heads of the men here?” 1 Samuel 29:4 (ESV)

Is not this David, of whom they sing to one another in dances, ‘Saul has struck down his thousands, and David his ten thousands?’” 1 Samuel 29:5 (ESV)

Then Achish called David and said to him, “As the LORD lives, you have been honest, and to me it seems right that you should march out and in with me in the campaign. For I have found nothing wrong in you from the day of your coming to me to this day. Nevertheless, the lords do not approve of you. So go back now; and go peaceably, that you may not displease the lords of the Philistines.” 1 Samuel 29:6–7 (ESV)

• God’s grace saved David from the mess he made of life, and he didn’t deserve it.

And David said to Achish, “But what have I done? What have you found in your servant from the day I entered your service until now, that I may not go and fight against the enemies of my lord the king?” 1 Samuel 29:8 (ESV)

- David's frustration when he wasn't allowed to fight with the Philistines may have been another plank in his deception of Achish.
- David's frustration when he wasn't allowed to fight with the Philistines may have been genuine because he planned to turn against them in the battle.

And Achish answered David and said, "I know that you are as blameless in my sight as an angel of God. Nevertheless, the commanders of the Philistines have said, 'He shall not go up with us to the battle.' Now then rise early in the morning with the servants of your lord who came with you, and start early in the morning, and depart as soon as you have light." 1 Samuel 29:9-10 (ESV)

So David set out with his men early in the morning to return to the land of the Philistines. But the Philistines went up to Jezreel. 1 Samuel 29:11 (ESV)

Applications

- A. God's grace saves us from ourselves.
- B. God's grace saves us in unexpected ways.

The king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will. Proverbs 21:1 (ESV)

- C. God's grace doesn't give up on us, no matter how far we have gone.

2. God's grace may ruin our life to save our life.

Now when David and his men came to Ziklag on the third day, the Amalekites had made a raid against the Negeb and against Ziklag. They had overcome Ziklag and burned it with fire and taken captive the women and all who were in it, both small and great. They killed no one, but carried them off and went their way. And when David and his men came to the city, they found it burned with fire, and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. 1 Samuel 30:1-3 (ESV)

Then David and the people who were with him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep. 1 Samuel 30:4 (ESV)

David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 1 Samuel 30:5 (ESV)

*And **David was greatly distressed**, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters... 1 Samuel 30:6a (ESV)*

- When Saul was greatly distressed, he turned away from God and consulted a witch. When David was greatly distressed, he returned to God and consulted the priest. Where will we turn when the bottom falls out of our world?
- Why did the tragedy of Ziklag come into David's life?
 1. When we sin, we will suffer. Living life by our wisdom instead of God's word always leads to suffering.

2. God allowed tragedy in David's life to bring him to the end of himself so he would turn his heart back to God.

...But David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. 1 Samuel 30:6b (ESV)

- Strengthening oneself in God means turning back to God and being in the Bible, so we know the truth about God and His promises. (Jonathan did for David earlier in the book, 1 Samuel 23:16.)

And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 1 Samuel 30:7 (ESV)

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession... Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. Hebrews 4:14+16 (ESV)

And David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue after this band? Shall I overtake them?" He answered him, "Pursue, for you shall surely overtake and shall surely rescue." 1 Samuel 30:8 (ESV)

- When we obey God, he usually doesn't give us everything we need to know. Most of the time, God only gives us the next step.

3. God's grace is quick to use us when He restores us.

So David set out, and the six hundred men who were with him, and they came to the brook Besor, where those who were left behind stayed. But David pursued, he and four hundred men. Two hundred stayed behind, who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor. 1 Samuel 30:9–10 (ESV)

They found an Egyptian in the open country and brought him to David. And they gave him bread and he ate. They gave him water to drink, and they gave him a piece of a cake of figs and two clusters of raisins. And when he had eaten, his spirit revived, for he had not eaten bread or drunk water for three days and three nights.

1 Samuel 30:11–12 (ESV)

And David said to him, "To whom do you belong? And where are you from?" He said, "I am a young man of Egypt, servant to an Amalekite, and my master left me behind because I fell sick three days ago. We had made a raid against the Negeb of the Cherethites and against that which belongs to Judah and against the Negeb of Caleb, and we burned Ziklag with fire." 1 Samuel 30:13–14 (ESV)

- God's providence helps those walking with Him.

And David said to him, "Will you take me down to this band?" And he said, "Swear to me by God that you will not kill me or deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will take you down to this band." 1 Samuel 30:15 (ESV)

And when he had taken him down, behold, they were spread abroad over all the land, eating and drinking and dancing, because of all the great spoil they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from the land of Judah. 1 Samuel 30:16 (ESV)

And David struck them down from twilight until the evening of the next day, and not a man of them escaped, except four hundred young men, who mounted camels and fled. David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken. David brought back all. 1 Samuel 30:17–19 (ESV)

- The God that can take everything from us is also capable of restoring everything to us.

4. God's grace transforms a deceptive heart into a gracious and generous one.

David also captured all the flocks and herds, and the people drove the livestock before him, and said, "This is David's spoil." Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow David, and who had been left at the brook Besor. And they went out to meet David and to meet the people who were with him. And when David came near to the people he greeted them. Then all the wicked and worthless fellows among the men who had gone with David said, "Because they did not go with us, we will not give them any of the spoil that we have recovered, except that each man may lead away his wife and children, and depart." 1 Samuel 30:20–22 (ESV)

But David said, "You shall not do so, my brothers, with what the Lord has given us. He has preserved us and given into our hand the band that came against us. Who would listen to you in this matter? For as his share is who goes down into the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage. They shall share alike." And he made it a statute and a rule for Israel from that day forward to this day. 1 Samuel 30:23–25 (ESV)

- When we experience God's grace, we extend God's grace.

When David came to Ziklag, he sent part of the spoil to his friends, the elders of Judah, saying, "Here is a present for you from the spoil of the enemies of the Lord." It was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, in Aroer, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, in Racal, in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenites, in Hormah, in Borashan, in Athach, in Hebron, for all the places where David and his men had roamed. 1 Samuel 30:26–31 (ESV)

- When we experience God's generosity, we extend generosity.

Applications

How does God show grace to the backslidden?

1. **God saves us from ourselves.**
2. **God's grace may ruin our life to save our life.**
3. **God's grace is quick to restore us and use us.**
4. **God's grace transforms a deceptive heart into a gracious and generous one.**

Life Group Questions

1. Read 1 Samuel 29-30. What did you learn in the message that was important to you?
2. When David was forcibly enlisted in the Philistine army, God graciously saved him from the consequences of his sin. Share a time when God graciously saved you from the consequences of your sin even though you were living in disobedience to Him.
3. What does 1 Samuel 29-30 teach us about God's heart for those who have backslidden? Read Luke 15. What does this parable teach us about God's heart for those who have backslidden? How does this change how you feel about those who grew up in the church but walked away?
4. Read Galatians 6:1 and James 5:19-20. What do these verses teach us about how to handle someone who has backslidden in their faith and is caught in sin?
5. Read Hebrews 12:4-13. How does God get those who are backslidden back on track? Where do we see this happening in David's life? Has God done this in your life?
6. **EXTRA CREDIT:** Read Hebrews 6:4-9, 1 John 2:19, and Luke 8:11-15 with a special focus on v.13. These verses do not describe a backslider. They describe an apostate. An apostate tasted the goodness of what God did for them. They temporarily appeared to be Christian and may be part of the church, but in times of difficulty, they walked away from Jesus permanently. Is there a way to differentiate between a backslider and an apostate? How do we treat them differently?