

Refuge for the Weak, Confused, and Vulnerable

1 Chron 12:17-18

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18 Then the spirit came upon Amasai, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.

1. Introduction

1. David is an amazing figure in the history of Israel. As king, all other kings in the future were compared to him as the model.

2. He made many mistakes but also had a guiding principle in his life—the heart of God.
3. There was a time that David was weak, confused, and vulnerable, and if things had only gone slightly different, his story would have been a mighty short story.
4. He wasn't far from being overcome and destroyed a number of times, but because David continued to turn to God, or return to God, God placed guidance and refuge before David that saved him.
5. And this morning, there are plenty of people who have grown weak in faith, or maybe cold in faith, have been confused, and found themselves in a vulnerable place, and need a refuge.
6. I want to preach about a refuge for the weak, confused, and vulnerable.

II. David's low place

A. Weak

1. Fortunately for us, David was a prolific writer who kept a journal of his thoughts and emotions, both good and bad.

2. He wrote about his weakness:

Ps 6:1-2

6 O LORD, rebuke me not in thine anger, neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed.

3. Twice Saul had hurled his spear at David to kill him, and David fled. For about 6 years, Saul sought to hunt down and kill David.

4. During that 6-year period, David had to flee home and family and lived in caves in the wilderness.

5. In time, a group of 600 soldiers, who were also societal rejects like him, joined up with David.

6. Rejected by his king, David and his men fled to the land of the enemy, the Philistines,

and offered their allegiance to the Philistine king in their battle against Saul.

7. But the lords of the Philistine didn't trust David because he might change his allegiance in the middle of the battle and kill the Philistines to gain back favor with Israel and King Saul.
8. So **David was now double-rejected**. He returned to his temporary home in Philistine territory, the town of Ziklag. On arriving in Ziklag, he discovered it had **been attacked by another enemy who had stolen all their property and their wives and children**.
9. On learning this, some of **David's warriors spoke of killing David**.
10. David's youthful and bold strength had become reduced to weakness.

B. Confused

1. David was confused by the circumstances. Things seemed to be shouting at him, you

are a worthless reject who doesn't fit in anywhere. Everything you try falls apart. People close to him turned on him.

2. David wrote about this time of confusion:

Ps 55:12-13

12 For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him:

13 But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

3. Friends had become enemies. Enemies became double enemies. Close companions turned on him.
4. And there while in need of rescue, all he heard were voices of confusion that seem to be denying every dream you ever hoped in.

c. Vulnerable

1. David weak, confused, and was also in a very vulnerable position and could have easily been destroyed by an enemy.
2. We find that David did find the faith to encourage himself in the LORD:
1 Sam 30:6 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.
3. David sought council from the Lord who encouraged David to fight for his family and for the families of his soldiers.
4. They did and recovered all their belongings and their families who had been captured. So that brought them all needed encouragement.
5. But in the midst of that celebration, David got word that the Philistines had indeed attacked Israel and Saul's army, and Saul and his sons had been killed.

6. David's best friend, Jonathan, who was one of Saul's sons, had been killed in battle. The Philistines won the battle and had invaded Israel's cities.
7. Now it was not just David who was weak, confused, and vulnerable, his whole nation was in danger of being annihilated.

III. The way up

A. Reorient

1. Now with this scene set before you, I want to talk about where some of us are this morning.
2. Your faith has been weakened by some devastating circumstances. You have been rejected, double-rejected, and choices you made have brought more trouble your way.
3. Confusion has stolen your joy and crashed your dreams, and the relationships and even the fragile sense of order you were clinging to for a little comfort and security, have crumbled around you.

4. I believe that accurately paints the scene some of us have found ourselves in.
5. David--the weak, confused, and vulnerable David--eventually became King David the worshiper, the man with a heart after God, the man who restored worship to Israel and brought the Ark of the Covenant, the symbol of God's presence, back home where it belonged, and who led Israel in many victorious military campaigns.
6. So how did he get from near total despair to rediscovering his strength, joy, and dreams?
7. David had to get reoriented through some encounters with God and God's people. These made all the difference in the world. It started with owning up to some bad choices.

B. Own up to wrong choices

1. When David fled Israel into the enemy territory, it was a desperate and rash decision:

*1 Sam 27:1 And David said in his heart, I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul: **there is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape into the land of the Philistines; and Saul shall despair of me, to seek me any more in any coast of Israel: so shall I escape out of his hand.***

2. Or like the prodigal son in Jesus' parable who left home and sought friends and happiness in the world.
3. The prodigal left behind the morals and values he had learned in his childhood and decided he would get all he could out of life while he was young. Money and the party life quickly gained him some friends and he had fun.
4. But it didn't take long for him to discover it was empty fun and shallow pleasures that didn't truly make him happy or satisfied for long. He thought the rules and high standards of morality of home were what was keeping happiness from him.

5. But as the money ran out, the very thing he had run away from became the thing he longed for the most.

Luke 15:17-19

17 And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

18 I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee,

19 And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants.

6. *****LEFT OFF HERE*****

7. We need to be willing to honestly search our hearts and admit that some of our wrong choices have contributed to the problem. This is not the place to be stubborn and blind. Be humble, submitted to God, and open your eyes as you open your heart.

8. At another time, David prayed this prayer:

Ps 139:23-24

*23 Search me, O God, and know my heart:
try me, and know my thoughts:*

*24 And see if there be any wicked way in
me, and lead me in the way everlasting.*

- c. Return to God

1. The way out of weakness, confusion, and vulnerability, starts with owning up to bad decisions.

2. Next, David took some decisive steps toward God:

1 Sam 30:6 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.

3. That was a starting point for David's return to God.

4. After this, we read that time after time, David called for the “ephod”, which was their way of seeking the Spirit and mind of God. The ephod was a garment the priest wore during his prayer, and God would speak to him.
 5. Calling for the ephod meant David was seeking for God’s Spirit.
 6. The God that David had walked away from, welcomed him back when David started calling on God again.
- D. Lean on each other
1. Owning up to mistakes, returning to God, and next, help from brothers.
 2. 1 Chronicles chapter 12 has a list of names of people who joined David in his dream of making Israel great for God.
 3. There were many people with specialized skills and experiences that David would need around him in order to complete his own destiny.

4. There might be some who believe they are self-made men, that they got to where they are, and achieved what they have achieved, solely because of their efforts.
5. But that is the farthest thing from the truth. We need God and we need others. We need our brothers and sisters, even with all their imperfections. And especially with all MY imperfections, I need others.
 - E. Let others contribute
 1. 1 Chron 12:2 lists some warriors who joined David who were good with bows and arrows and hurling stones, with both their right and left hand.
 2. 1 Chron 12:8 list other warriors came to him who were fit for the battle who could use shield and buckler and were also swift as roes on the mountains, whose faces were like lions. Sounds like true mountain men!
 3. 1 Chron 12:15 lists others came who were especially skilled at crossing the Jordan

during flood season, who could surprise and defeat the enemy.

4. And 1 Chron 12:16 lists even some of the family of King Saul who came offering to help David.
5. Now this was a potentially perilous situation for David. These could have come pretending to help when their intent was really to bring harm—to cut him down from within.
6. So David was cautious:

1 Chron 12:16-17

*16 And there came of the children of **Benjamin** and Judah to the hold unto David.*

17 And David went out to meet them, and answered and said unto them, If ye be come peaceably unto me to help me, mine heart shall be knit unto you: but if ye be come to betray me to mine enemies, seeing there is no wrong in mine hands, the God of our fathers look thereon, and rebuke it.

7. Remember the state of mind David had been in at this time—he was weak, confused, and vulnerable.
8. And David was perhaps never more vulnerable now, standing there having a conversation with the relatives of the man who had tried to kill him.
9. David wanted to know where their loyalty was. Are you here to divide and destroy, or to unite the family of God?
10. If you desire peace, my heart shall be knit unto you.
11. By the way, those warriors I mentioned who were skilled with both right and left hand with bows and slinging stones—do you know whose family they were of?
1 Chron 12:2 They were armed with bows, and could use both the right hand and the left in hurling stones and shooting arrows out of a bow, even of Saul's brethren of Benjamin.

- F. Unite in purpose
1. So there stood David, allowing himself to be in a very vulnerable position by being humble before a former enemy.
 2. But you might be surprised how many people are not against you but are for you. Especially when you show yourself humble and vulnerable.
 3. We can fight against our brother and sister if we want. That is, if our goal is to weaken our position against the REAL enemy. Or we can unite with brothers and sisters, and stand strong against the enemy.
 4. Notice the spirit of those men of Benjamin:
*1 Chron 12:18 Then the **spirit came upon Amasai**, who was chief of the captains, and he said, Thine are we, David, and on thy side, thou son of Jesse: **peace, peace** be unto thee, and **peace** be to thine helpers; for thy God helpeth thee. Then David received them, and made them captains of the band.*

5. You see what David's potential enemy did? He relied on the Spirit, leaned on the Spirit, his heart was transformed by the Spirit, and he called out for peace, peace, peace, and for God's help.
6. That is what David needed to hear! Brothers can stand beside brothers when they lean on the power of the Spirit. Sisters can stand beside sisters when they lean on the power of the Spirit.
7. The nation was in a bad state and needed strength and unity. And now David has that with these who joined with him.
- G. Understand the times
 1. But in addition to strength and unity, they also needed understanding and wisdom. David was blessed to have some of the tribe of Issachar who also came to join him who had a unique gift of understanding the times:
1 Chron 12:32-33

*32 And of the children of Issachar, which were men that **had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do**; the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.*

2. Church, we need to understand our times. If we only understood our times, we would be less inclined to be divided, less inclined to focus on that guy who threw a spear at you a couple of times.
 3. Yes, that was bad, but the kingdom is bigger than that.
 4. I can get bitter about that event in the past when Saul tried to thrust a spear through my heart, or I can approach these times with understanding.
 5. And the tribe of Issachar understood their times, that it was time to unite!
- H. Be greater than the sum of the parts
1. Keeping in line is important to unity, and these men of war recognized that:

*1 Chron 12:38 All these men of war, **that could keep rank, came with a perfect heart** to Hebron, to make David king over all Israel: and all the rest also of Israel were of one heart to make David king.*

2. And there are so many more we could read about in chapter 12, but I want to conclude this list of help from brothers by showing what happens to a mixed group who decide to come together in unity:

*1 Chron 12:22 For at that time day by day there came to David to help him, until it was a great host, **like the host of God.***

3. That mixed group—or we can say, “mixed up” group, gathered under the influence of the Spirit, had a heart for peace, a perfect heart, a single-hearted purpose, and were able to keep rank.
4. That group of soldiers of Israel was transformed into the “host of God!”

5. Since the day David had to flee Saul for his life, he initially attracted a band of 600 outlaws and downcast warriors.
6. But day by day as David leaned on the Spirit, and others started leaning on the Spirit, those of various backgrounds gathered around David, and before it was all said and done, David's 600 was no up to nearly 300,000 mighty men. When you add up all the numbers of those who came to David in chapter 12, you come up with 299,522 who came to David's help.

IV. Conclusion

1. Flee to God, take refuge in the church. Not once, but many times.
2. 10 lepers came to Jesus and all were healed. One came back and his life was made whole.
3. Things get better just for showing up again.

4. David was vulnerable but Amasai showed that by leaning on the Spirit, unity prevailed and amazing growth.
5. When we are vulnerable before God, the church can be the very place where our life can be transformed in such a way that we are moved toward our destiny.
6. I think of the Apostle Paul as well.
7. When he was still Saul of Tarsus and had become blinded by the brightness of God's glory, he was in a very vulnerable position.
8. Saul had come to Damascus to kill Christians.
9. Yet when he was blind and vulnerable, by God's design, a man of God named Ananias found Saul and helped him.
10. Shortly after, when the governor of Damascus wanted to kill him, the Christians could have betrayed him, but instead, helped Saul escape by lowering him over the wall in a basket on a rope.

11. And when Saul was vulnerable as a new Christian and the church wasn't sure they could trust him, Barnabas spoke up for him.
12. You see, when we get into a vulnerable position and choose to seek the Spirit of God, turn from past errors, mistakes, and sins, and call on God in prayer, He will rescue you, and in a beautiful fashion, will send people around you in the church family that will help you, not destroy you.
13. And there from that point of vulnerability may very well be the door to your destiny.