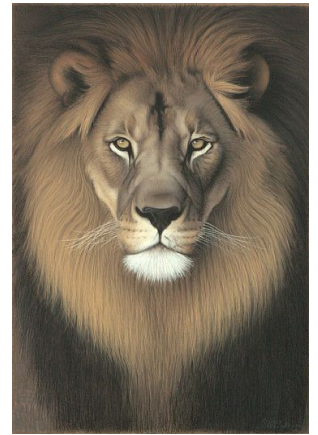


## **St. Luke Ev. Lutheran Church-WELS**

### **Sermon by Pastor Anthony E. Schultz 1 Samuel 30 January 30, 2011 Epiphany 4.**



#### David Destroys the Amalekites

<sup>1</sup> David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, <sup>2</sup> and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way.

<sup>3</sup> When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. <sup>4</sup> So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. <sup>5</sup> David's two wives had been captured – Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. <sup>6</sup> David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

People of God – rescued from the flaming lake of fire in hell by the innocent blood of the very Lamb of God:

It was a Monday when a little girl was playing in the front yard with a whole bunch of her cousins. Her Mom was in the front yard, too, watching the little children play. All of a sudden – all the little children started running toward the road. The mommy yelled for all of them to stop – and they all did stop except one little girl – just 1 year, 9 months and 21 days old. One little girl didn't stop. She ran into the ditch – onto the gravel shoulder – and onto the blacktop. The little grandpa who was driving by – didn't see her until it was too late! When something like that happens – it would seem to me – it would be very tempting to say, "That's it! This is too much! I cannot bear this!" It would be very tempting to think this is overwhelming! That's when this chapter of God's Word would be a powerful comfort. Not that we are strong. But we look up. We look heavenward.

#### **We Find Strength In the LORD!**

- I. He has defeated our enemies**
- II. He has given us generous hearts**

There is probably no one in the Old Testament in God's Word better known than King David. The littlest people in Sunday School know the story of David and Goliath. **Saul and the Israelites assembled and camped in the Valley of Elah and drew up their battle line to meet the Philistines...A champion named Goliath, who was from Gath, came out of the Philistine camp. He was over 9 feet tall. He had a bronze helmet on his head and wore a coat of scale armor of bronze weighing about 125 pounds...His spear shaft was like a weaver's rod, and its iron point weighed 15 pounds. ..Goliath stood and shouted to the ranks of Israel, "Why do you come out and line up for battle? Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man and have him come down to me. If he is able to fight and kill me, we will become your subjects; but if I overcome him and kill him, you will become our subjects and serve us?"** Then the Philistine said, "This day I defy the ranks of Israel! Give me a man

and let us fight each other.” On hearing the Philistine’s words, Saul and all the Israelites were dismayed and terrified...For 40 days the Philistine came forward every morning and evening and took his stand. 1 Samuel 17:2f We know how the shepherd boy David said to that Philistine, “You come against me with sword and spear and javelin, but I come against you in the name of the LORD Almighty, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. This day the LORD will hand you over to me, and I’ll strike you down and cut off your head. Today I will give the carcasses of the Philistine army to the birds of the air and beasts of the earth, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel. All those gathered here will know that it is not by sword or spear that the LORD saves; for the battle is the LORD’s, and he will give all of you into our hands.” As the Philistine moved closer to attack him, David ran quickly toward the battle line to meet him. Reaching into his bag and taking out a stone, he slung it and struck the Philistine on the forehead. The stone sank into his forehead, and he fell facedown on the ground. So David triumphed over the Philistine with a sling and a stone; without a sword in his hand he struck down the Philistine and killed him. David ran and stood over him. He took hold of the Philistine’s sword and drew it from the scabbard. After he killed him, he cut off his head with the sword. When the Philistines saw that their hero was dead, they turned and ran... What a glorious victory the LORD—the Great I Am—gave his people again! Whenever there is triumph—whenever there is victory—even over sin and death and the grave—Jesus is our Champion. His victory becomes ours by grace alone, faith alone and Scripture alone!

*Flash forward*—move ahead. King Saul has killed his thousands—David killed his tens of thousands?! King Saul is paranoid—a murderous paranoia—and David—a grown up professional soldier—David and 600 men—armed men—mercenaries—are running—hiding for their lives! <sup>1</sup> David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, <sup>2</sup> and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. David and his rag tag army return from fighting—pillage and plunder—only to find their home base—their base of operations—the city of Ziklag—a smoldering ash heap! All their “things and stuff” stolen! And far *far* worse than that—their wives and their children all gone—carried off literally in chains into slavery and abuse. The enemy soldiers doing *heaven only knows* what—to our wives and our daughters and our grandchildren! How horrible is that? Stop and think! Sometimes we think we have troubles! The *Super Bowl* is coming—and we don’t have one of those flat screen high def TVs with the subwoofer that literally makes the floor tremble when they play that music they always play at the start of a NFL game! Sometimes we think we have troubles—there are rusty parts on our cars—and the tread on our tires is thin—and soda cans rolling around behind the front seat—and there isn’t air in our spare tire—and we don’t know where all the parts of our car jack are! We think we have troubles when the zipper doesn’t work on our winter coat—until you see a little person 2 ½ years old—with leukemia. Real troubles are people we love—who don’t know or don’t care that Jesus is coming—maybe sooner than anyone thinks—and they aren’t ready to meet him! Real troubles are children in the world that are literally dying from being malnourished—and real troubles are little children that are dying from being spiritually malnourished! Real troubles are marriages that are unraveling—and wives are beaten by alcoholic and abusive husbands—while little children cry and scream in their bedrooms—afraid to come out—lest their father beat them, too! Real troubles are people who are snatched and abused and molested and murdered. Real troubles are hearts that are hurt and lives that are lost—and *eternal spiritual harm* is done!

<sup>3</sup> When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. <sup>4</sup> So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. <sup>5</sup> David's two wives had been captured – Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. <sup>6</sup> David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God. Ahinoam and Abigail – both – what's wrong with this picture – both of David's wives were gone – and his men were talking about picking up the rocks at their feet and throwing them at David – until he was dead! When we don't know where to turn or what to do – we need to look up! Not down in depression – not around to human strength and wisdom that so often fails – not deep inside where we only find weakness and doubt. *Lift up your eyes to the hills. Where does our strength come from? It comes from the LORD – the maker of Heaven and earth!* David looked to the LORD! <sup>7</sup> Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, "Bring me the ephod." The kind of vest that the High Priest wore – containing the Urim and Thumim – the way the LORD would make clear his plan for His people. Abiathar brought it to him, <sup>8</sup> and David inquired of the LORD, "Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them?" "Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue." <sup>9</sup> David and the six hundred men with him came to the Besor Valley, where some stayed behind. <sup>10</sup> Two hundred of them were too exhausted to cross the valley... Have you ever been that tired – so tired you literally couldn't go on? This is too tired to go after your wife and your children? I would think you would collapse trying – but I don't know. Again – it isn't for us to judge! It's not for us to judge someone else's heart! People do it all the time! They judge the heart of a quarterback who says he's injured! They judge the heart of politicians – *people in positions of great public trust* – as the hymnal prayer calls them. They judge the heart of people accused of crimes in the newspaper. And that's wrong! It's a sin to put our self in the position of judge of another person's heart. We are to judge – to test teaching and preaching and publications – to see if they are faithful to God's Word. But we are not to judge people's hearts. That's for God – not for us!

David and the other four hundred continued the pursuit. <sup>11</sup> They found an Egyptian in a field and brought him to David. They gave him water to drink and food to eat – <sup>12</sup> part of a cake of pressed figs and two cakes of raisins. He ate and was revived, for he had not eaten any food or drunk any water for three days and three nights. <sup>13</sup> David asked him, "Who do you belong to? Where do you come from?" He said, "I am an Egyptian, the slave of an Amalekite. ... we burned Ziklag." <sup>15</sup> David asked him, "Can you lead me down to this raiding party?" Take an oath by the LORD that you won't kill me or give me back to my master – and I'll show you the way! He showed them the way--and there they were, scattered over the countryside, eating, drinking and reveling because of the great amount of plunder they had taken from the land of the Philistines and from Judah. <sup>17</sup> David fought them from dusk until the evening of the next day, and none of them got away, except four hundred young men who rode off on camels and fled. That was like fighting – hand to hand combat – for literally 24 hours straight! The LORD made David and his soldiers strong enough! Do we see and understand that? Strong enough! That's how strong the LORD makes us when we need to be strong! He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can endure. With the temptation – with the trouble – with the grief or the difficulty comes the strength to not just survive and endure! The Apostle Paul told the Romans – <sup>37</sup> *No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.* <sup>38</sup> *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers,* <sup>39</sup> *neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Romans 8:37-39 We can face death itself – unafraid – because nothing

will ever separate us from Jesus' forgiving love. We are **more than conquerors** through Jesus who loved us!

<sup>18</sup> David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. <sup>19</sup> Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back. <sup>20</sup> He took all the flocks and herds, and his men drove them ahead of the other livestock, saying, "This is David's plunder." <sup>21</sup> Then David came to the two hundred men who had been too exhausted to follow him and who were left behind at the Besor Valley. They came out to meet David and the men with him. As David and his men approached, he asked them how they were. <sup>22</sup> But all the evil men and troublemakers among David's followers said, "Because they did not go out with us, we will not share with them the plunder we recovered. However, each man may take his wife and children and go." <sup>23</sup> David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiding party that came against us. <sup>24</sup> Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike." Wow! It would be very simple to say to the *Besor Valley people* – you didn't help fight – so you get none of the plunder. You didn't help fight – so you don't get paid! Notice God's Word says – **all the evil men and trouble makers** among David's followers said – they didn't go out with us – so they don't get a share! Would you have been among ***all the evil men and trouble makers***? Would you be quick to say – that's not fair? Or would you be generous? Would you be generous – realizing that what you were sharing wasn't really yours to hoard? Would you be generous – realizing all the plunder – was entirely and completely because God was good? It was by the grace of God alone that David's Army had rescued everyone! Everything recovered – nothing missing! This was because God is good! When we remember how good God is – we will be generous. When faith replaces fear – I will be generous!

I could tell you sad stories all day long. The father in the cold autumn--who was fishing with his son – pulled the cord to start the fishing boat motor – and it didn't catch – and he pitched overboard. His heavy clothes were so quickly soaked with lake water he never surfaced – not even once. He was trapped in the weeds beneath. We know – pieces of a parking garage can fall. Cars can crash. There can be terrible accidents! It has been said – sometimes – when it seems we have lost everything. Sometimes – **when it seems – Jesus is all we have – we realize – Jesus is all we need – now and forever. Amen!**

*The battle belongs to the LORD!*

*Rev. Anthony E. Schultz*