

## David's Secret, part 2

Steve Watson, March 24, 2019

### 1 Samuel 30 records one of the many crises in David's life. Take a few minutes to read the story.

Verse six tells us that David was greatly distressed, something everyone who has ever faced extreme crisis can relate to. Though the words were written by David when facing a different crisis, Psalm 69:1b-2 likely described how he also felt during his Ziklag experience:

These floods of trouble have risen higher and higher. The water is up to my neck! I'm sinking into the mud with no place to stand, and I'm about to drown in this storm. (TPT)

1 Samuel 30:6 also reveals David's secret for regaining courage when faced with a devastating crisis:

But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God. 1 Samuel 30:6b

The Orthodox Jewish Bible renders it:

But David made him *chazah* in Hashem Elohav.

This, of course, reminds us of Psalm 27:14, which we considered last week.

Wait for the Lord. Be strong (*chazak*)! Take Courage in Heart! Wait for the Lord.

In that study, we saw that the key to being strong and taking courage in heart is waiting on the Lord, which could be described this way: remain consciously and expectantly entwined with the Lord... which really describes a lifestyle of engaging with the Lord relationally.

The same Hebrew word (*qavah*) rendered *wait* is also used in Psalm 130:5:

I wait for the Lord; I wait and put my hope in his word. (CSB)

Verses 1-2 place this in the context of crisis:

Out of the depths I call to you, Lord!  
<sup>2</sup>Lord, listen to my voice;  
let your ears be attentive  
to my cry for help.

*There's remaining consciously and expectantly entwined with the Lord as a lifestyle... and there's consciously and expectantly entwining yourself with the Lord in crisis. Both are valid and important expressions of qavah.*

**The focus of this study is *qavah* in time of crisis, and that is what "But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God" is referring to. But what, exactly, did that look like for David?**

While we're not given the answer to that question in 1 Samuel 30, we can take a look at David's 'journal entries' from nine other times of crisis for clues. (see Psalm 3, 52, 54, 56, 57, 59, 60, 63 and 142).

A study of these crisis psalms reveals a four-part pattern:

- He chose to put his trust in the Lord and declared it... no doubt verbally, but also in writing.
- He chose to make God his refuge and expressed it, again verbally and in writing.
- He poured out his heart with brutal honesty
- He asked for God's intervention in very specific terms.

As Eugene Peterson observed in his 20th-Anniversary Preface to *A Long Obedience in the Same Direction*, the Psalms have "always been the primary means by which Christians learned to pray everything they lived." In the spirit of that thought, I would suggest that through David's crisis psalms we can learn how to wait upon (qavah) the Lord in our times of crisis.

To do this effectively would include...

- meditation on the psalms that speak most powerfully to our circumstances,
- and taking time to consciously and expectantly write our own crisis psalms according to David's four-part pattern.

*Each of these four parts is explored in more depth below. To make application easier, there are written as a statement of exhortation.*

### **Chose to put you trust in the Lord and declare it to the Lord, both verbally and in writing.**

A beautiful example of this from David's crisis psalms is found in Psalm 56, written by David "when the Philistines seized him at Gath." Read the whole psalm, but notice especially verses 3-4 (also see 9b-11):

Psalm 56:3-4a  
When I am afraid,  
I put my trust in you.  
<sup>4</sup>In God, whose word  
I praise, in God I trust;  
I shall not be afraid.

The Hebrew word rendered trust, *batach*, "expresses that sense of well-being and security which results from having something or someone in whom to place confidence."

Though not written by David, one of the most powerful declarations of trust in the whole Bible is found in Psalm 46:1-3. Just meditating on this brief passage seems to strengthen trust in God.

God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
<sup>2</sup>Therefore we will not fear  
though the earth gives way,  
though the mountains be moved  
into the heart of the sea,  
<sup>3</sup>though its waters roar and foam,  
though the mountains  
tremble at its swelling.

### **Because God is *trustworthy*, make a conscious decision to take refuge in him and, again, express it verbally and in writing.**

David expresses this perhaps most beautifully in Psalm 57, which he wrote "when he fled from Saul, in the cave."

Psalm 57:1-3 CSB  
Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me,  
for in you my soul takes refuge;  
in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge,

till the storms of destruction pass by.  
<sup>2</sup> I cry out to God Most High,  
to God who fulfills his purpose for me.  
<sup>3</sup> He will send from heaven and save me;  
he will put to shame him who tramples on me. Selah  
God will send out his steadfast love and his faithfulness!

Psalm 59 was written "when Saul sent men to watch his house in order to kill him."

Psalm 59:14-16 ESV  
Each evening they come back,  
howling like dogs  
and prowling about the city.  
<sup>15</sup> They wander about for food  
and growl if they do not get their fill.  
<sup>16</sup> But I will sing of your strength;  
I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning.  
For you have been to me a fortress  
and a refuge in <sup>(E)</sup>the day of my distress.

God as refuge was central to David's understanding of God. And throughout the Psalms he uses a wide variety of analogies to express this reality. In Psalm 18 (though not a crisis psalm but a psalm of praise, written "on the day when the Lord rescued him from the hand of Saul, and from all his enemies, and the hand of Saul"), David seems to reach for every analogy at his disposal to express his confidence in God as refuge.

Psalm 18:1-3 ESV  
I love you, O Lord, my strength.  
<sup>2</sup> The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,  
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,  
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.  
<sup>3</sup> I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised,  
and I am saved from my enemies.

In Psalm 62 (not specifically noted as a crisis psalm but certainly applicable in times of distress) David again expresses the themes of trust in God and God as refuge, and he adds an exhortation to God's people, which is the third element of our four-part pattern.

**Pour out your heart before him. Write it down. Tell him verbally.**

Psalm 62:6-8 ESV  
He only is my rock and my salvation,  
my fortress; I shall not be shaken.  
<sup>7</sup> On God rests my salvation and my glory;  
my mighty rock, my refuge is God.  
<sup>8</sup> Trust in him at all times, O people;  
pour out your heart before him;  
God is a refuge for us.

He expresses the same thought in different words in Psalm 55:22:

Cast your burden on the Lord,  
and he will sustain you;  
he will never permit the righteous to be moved.

Through Psalm 142, a crisis psalm written by David "when he was in the cave," we have an example from his life. Take a few minutes to read through this psalm. Let David's example serve as a template for brutal honesty before the Lord.

*In Psalm 142, we also find the fourth element of David's four-part pattern:*

**Ask for God's intervention, and be specific. Verbalize your petitions and requests. Write them down.**

Note David's specific petitions and requests in Psalm 142:5-7:

I cry to you, O Lord;  
I say, "You are my refuge,  
my portion in the land of the living."  
<sup>6</sup> Attend to my cry,  
for I am brought very low!  
Deliver me from my persecutors,  
for they are too strong for me!  
<sup>7</sup> Bring me out of prison,  
that I may give thanks to your name!  
The righteous will surround me,  
for you will deal bountifully with me.

Take a few minutes to note David's petitions in Psalm 54:1-2 and Psalm 3:7, both crisis psalms.

### **Wrap up**

There's remaining consciously and expectantly entwined with the Lord as a lifestyle... and there's consciously and expectantly entwining yourself with the Lord in crisis. Both are valid and important expressions of *qavah*. Use David's four-part pattern for waiting on the Lord in crisis as a template for waiting on the Lord in your times of crisis and distress.