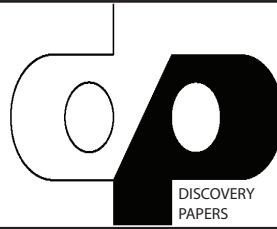


# THE KING'S SYMPHONY

**SERIES: A LIFE OF PASSION:  
THE STORY OF DAVID.**



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1 Samuel 29:1-11  
18th Message  
Scott Grant  
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*1 Samuel 30:1-31*

In the film *Amadeus*, Salieri, a composer, pores over the pages of a score by Mozart, and he's astounded. He feels as if he were listening to "the very voice of God."<sup>1</sup> He remarks: "Displace one note, and there would be diminishment. Displace one phrase, and the structure would fall."<sup>2</sup>

Jesus Christ, the King of the world, is composing a symphony, so to speak, to heal the world, and we are the notes. However, some "notes" minimize their importance, while other "notes" exaggerate their importance. If we're the notes in Christ's symphony, how are we to think about ourselves? How are we to think about others? How does David think about the men under his charge and their collective mission?

The Israelites of old crossed over into the promised land, but David and his people crossed over from the land of promise to the land of the pagans and settled in Ziklag, which must have seemed like the new land of promise (1 Samuel 27).

David and his men had left Ziklag to join the Philistines as they were marshaling their forces for war against the Israelites. After David and his men were dismissed by the Philistines, who didn't trust David, they returned to Ziklag.

## **Strength in the Lord**

**1 Samuel 30:1-6:**

**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 2 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. 3 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. 4 Then David and the people who were with**

**him raised their voices and wept until they had no more strength to weep. 5 David's two wives also had been taken captive, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail the widow of Nabal of Carmel. 6 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. But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.**

David and his men return to find their city in ruins and their families nowhere in sight. This is the new promised land? Everyone weeps, including David, but David is especially distressed because his men blame him and consider stoning him. Those who were "bitter in soul," refugees from Saul's kingdom, gathered to David in the first place, but now that he has failed them, they are once again called "bitter in soul"—bitter toward David (1 Samuel 22:2).

What does David do? All the people, including David, wept until they had no more "strength" to weep, but David "strengthened" himself in the Lord his God. How does he do this? If we read David's psalms, we can surmise that David strengthened himself in part *by* weeping, by pouring his heart out to the Lord, who then gave him strength.

Like David, Saul was "greatly distressed" as he stared down the Philistines (1 Samuel 28:15). Instead of strengthening himself in the Lord, however, Saul sought out a witch (1 Samuel 28:7-8). Who's fit to be king of Israel?

David wept when he saw that Ziklag had been destroyed and its people taken captive by the Amalekites. The Son of David wept when he saw that Jerusalem would be destroyed because its people had already been taken captive by Satan:

**And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon**

**you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation.” (Luke 19:41–44)**

## **Inquiring of the Lord**

**1 Samuel 30:7–10:**

**And David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, “Bring me the ephod.” So Abiathar brought the ephod to David. 8 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.” 9 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. 10 But David pursued, he and four hundred men. Two hundred stayed behind, who were too exhausted to cross the brook Besor.**

Saul sought out a witch of the spirit world, but David seeks out a priest of the Lord. Who’s fit to be king of Israel? The ephod, a priestly garment, held the Urim and the Thummin, sacred lots that were used to inquire of the Lord (Exodus 28:30, Leviticus 8:8). The narrator doesn’t mention their use, but it seems likely that they were employed in David’s inquiry. The Lord answers David with a command and a promise: pursue the Amalekites, and you will overtake them and rescue your loved ones.

David and his men take up the charge, even though they are exhausted and ill prepared, having just concluded a three-day march from Aphek. The rescue mission stalls by the brook Besor, when two hundred men are too exhausted to continue. Nevertheless, David and the remaining four hundred men press on.

David obeys the Lord and pursues the Amalekites. Saul, on the other hand, disobeyed the Lord when he failed to exercise the Lord’s wrath against the Amalekites (1 Samuel 28:18). Who’s fit to be king of Israel?

David, after weeping over Ziklag, strengthened himself in the Lord and inquired of the Lord. The Son of David, after weeping over Jerusalem, strengthened himself in the Father and inquired of the Father in Gethsemane. David obeyed the Lord and set out overtake his enemies and rescue his people from the Amalekites.

The Son of David obeyed the Father and let his enemies overtake him so that he could rescue his people from Satan, sin, and death:

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” (Luke 4:18–19)**

## **Blessing an enemy**

**1 Samuel 30:11-15:**

**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, 12 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. 13 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. 14 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.” 15 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.”**

David and his men revive the sick Egyptian who had been left for dead by one of the Amalekites, presumably because he was slowing them down. They bless an enemy, giving him bread, water, and high-quality food. The enemy ends up providing them with important intelligence, but they blessed him before he told them anything of importance.

Might David see a picture of himself in the Egyptian? The Egyptian was left behind three days ago. It took David and his men three days to journey from Aphek. The Egyptian was alone in the wilderness. Likewise, David had found himself alone in the wilderness (1 Samuel 22:1). The Egyptian is worried that David will deliver him “into the hands of my master.” Likewise, David was worried that the men of Keilah would deliver

him into the “hand” of Saul—and they would have, if the Lord had not warned him (1 Samuel 23:11-13). After his three-day journey, David, on the verge of death at the hands of his angry men, strengthened himself in the Lord. Now David strengthens the Egyptian, who reminds him of himself. The Lord has been merciful to David, and David is merciful to the Egyptian.

Saul lost strength when Samuel, through the witch, encountered him, and he didn't eat or drink. The witch, though, fed Saul (1 Samuel 28:20-25). A witch feeds Saul and strengthens him; David feeds an Egyptian and strengthens him. Who's fit to be king of Israel?

An Amalekite left behind a sick servant to die in the wilderness. David left behind two hundred exhausted men by the brook Besor. David revives the servant who was left behind. If he meets up again with the men he left behind, what will he do? The Egyptian, having been revived by David, promises to lead him to the Amalekites.

David gave food and drink to an enemy, the Egyptian slave of an Amalekite. The Son of David gave food and drink—the best food and drink!—to an enemy, Judas Iscariot:

**And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. 18 For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” 19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. (Luke 22:17–21)**

## Recovering everything

**1 Samuel 30:16-20:**

**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. 17 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.**

**18 David recovered all that the Amalekites had taken, and David rescued his two wives. 19 Nothing was missing, whether small or great, sons or daughters, spoil or anything that had been taken. David brought back all. 20 David also captured all the flocks and herds, and the people drove the livestock before him, and said, “This is David's spoil.”**

The Amalekites go on a pagan binge to celebrate their victories, which makes them unprepared when David comes upon them. That David and his four hundred men found the strength to fight from “twilight until the evening of the next day” is remarkable in that what they had already been through before engaging the Amalekites was enough to exhaust two hundred of their comrades. It is also noteworthy that David defeated a superior force: four hundred Amalekites escaped, but David fought with only four hundred men. Moreover, David's rescue operation was complete: everyone and everything that was taken by the Amalekites has been recovered. What the Lord promised has come to pass: David overtook his enemies and rescued his people.

David not only recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, he also captured all their flocks and herds. David's men, who earlier wanted to stone him, now hail him as the conquering hero and declare the livestock to be David's spoil.

David “recovered all” and “brought back all.” The apostle Paul, speaking of the crucifixion of the Son of David, says that “one has died for all” (2 Corinthians 5:14), and, “Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men” (Romans 5:18).

## Unrest in the ranks

**1 Samuel 30:21-25:**

**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. 22 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.” 23 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. 24 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.” 25 And he made it a statute and a rule for Israel from that day forward to this day.

What a celebration this must have been! The two hundred men who were too exhausted to pursue the Amalekites are reunited not only with David but also with their loved ones, whom David has rescued. But certain men, whom the narrator calls “wicked and worthless fellows,” are in no mood to celebrate. They contend that the two hundred who stayed behind should not receive any of the spoils. David, though, will have none of it. He sees the Lord as responsible for the victory, not the four hundred. Therefore, all should share in the spoils.

David resists the wicked and the worthless: “Who would listen to you in this matter?” It should not be lost on the rabble that there would be no spoils at all if certain men who wanted to stone David were heeded. David, who blessed the sick Egyptian who was left behind, now blesses his exhausted men who were left behind. Everyone and everything was recovered, and none is left out.

More narrative space is devoted to the aftermath of the battle than to the battle itself. The Amalekites may be the enemy, but the greater threat is disunity among the people of God. David steps in to repair the breach.

After Saul defeated the Amalekites, he “listened” to the people instead of obeying the Lord (1 Samuel 15:24). David, on the other hand, refuses to “listen” to the wicked and worthless fellows. Who’s fit to be king of Israel?

David, having defeated the Amalekites, shared the spoils with his people. The Son of David, having defeated Satan, sin, and death in his death, resurrection, and ascension, shares the spoils—spiritual gifts—with his people:

**But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift. Therefore it says,**

**“When he ascended on high he led a host of captives,  
and he gave gifts to men.”**

(In saying, “He ascended,” what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower regions, the earth? He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love. (Ephesians 4:7-16)

## Enriching Judah

### 1 Samuel 30:26-31:

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.” 27 It was for those in Bethel, in Ramoth of the Negeb, in Jattir, 28 in Aroer, in Siphmoth, in Eshtemoa, 29 in Racal, in the cities of the Jerahmeelites, in the cities of the Kenites, 30 in Hormah, in Bor-ashan, in Athach, 31 in Hebron, for all the places where David and his men had roamed.

David not only enriches his men, he also enriches the cities of Judah. David blessed an Egyptian who was left behind. He blesses the two hundred men who were left behind. Now he blesses the cities of Judah, which he expects to reign over some day. The last region to be mentioned is Hebron. Hebron will be the place where the people of Judah publicly anoint David as king (2 Samuel 2:1-4). Who’s fit to be king of Israel? Not Saul. David is fit to be king of Israel.

David enriched his people with flocks and herds. The Son of David enriches his people with “every spiritual blessing” (Ephesians 1:3):

**“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9).**

## **Everyone is needed**

Who’s fit to be king—King of the world, that is? Not Saul. No, not David. Who’s fit to be King of the world? Jesus Christ, great David’s greater Son!

The Son of David weeps over Jerusalem—and over all of us. He rescues us from captivity to evil. He gives us, who were his enemies, the best food and drink: his body and his blood. He dies for all of us—for each of us. Having defeated evil, he gives grace to each of us: spiritual gifts so that we could do the work of his ministry. Finally, he enriches us with every spiritual blessing. Awesome!

With 1 Samuel 30 in mind, how do we respond to the Son of David, our king? As his body, animated by the Holy Spirit, we are to do “the work of ministry,” bringing the healing, loving rule of God to earth (Ephesians 4:12). In order to do so, the members of the body of Christ need to embrace two biblical axioms: 1) You’re important. 2) So is everyone else. “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (1 Corinthians 12:12). If Christ is composing a symphony to heal the world, we need all the notes. Displace one note, and there would be diminishment.

## **You’re important**

In the body of Christ, everyone is important. Everyone is needed. Everyone is gifted, both those who go into battle, so to speak, and those who stay by the baggage, so to speak.

Some of us minimize our importance.

**For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.” (2 Timothy 1:6-7)**

Some minimize their importance because they compare themselves to others, observe that they don’t measure up, and feel sorry for themselves. Others minimize their importance because they don’t want to

disappoint people, for if you don’t believe you have much to offer, not much will be expected of you. If you feel sorry for yourself because you don’t think you measure up or if you hold yourself back because you don’t want to disappoint people, you may think that you’re being humble. But self-pity and self-negation have nothing to do with humility. In fact, they represent an affront to God, who created you, redeemed you, and gifted you:

— “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of Christ’s gift” (Ephesians 4:7).

— “But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose” (1 Corinthians 12:18).

If you minimize your importance in the body of Christ, you scorn both Christ’s gift and God’s will. Those who minimize their importance and hold themselves back thereby withhold their gifts from the body, and the ministry of Christ is diminished.

## **So is everyone else**

On the one hand, some of us minimize our importance. On the other hand, some of us exaggerate our importance.

**For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.”(Romans 12:3)**

Like those who minimize their importance, those who exaggerate their importance often compare themselves to others, but instead of concluding that they don’t measure up, they deem themselves superior—so superior, in fact, that they don’t need God. And that’s what motivates many of those who exaggerate their importance: they don’t want to need God, whom they don’t trust, nor do they want to need anyone else. Their pride, just like the self-pity and self-negation of those who minimize their importance, represents an affront to God, who created them, redeemed them, and gifted them: “What do you have that you did not receive?” (1 Corinthians 4:7).

If you exaggerate your importance in the body of Christ, you deny the God who gifted you. Those who exaggerate their importance often overlook others and, again, the ministry of Christ is diminished.

## How are you gifted?

Many people in the body of Christ wonder how they're gifted. There is value in looking over the lists of spiritual gifts in the letters of Paul and Peter, to get a sense of how you may be gifted.

However, neither Paul nor Peter commands us to identify our gifts. Those who understand the identification of spiritual gifts as an important undertaking for the believer often harness 1 Corinthians 12:1: "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brothers, I do not want you to be uninformed." However, there is nothing in this verse, or in its surrounding context, that has anything to do with the discovery of personal spiritual gifts. Moreover, the spiritual gifts are mostly listed, not defined. It's difficult to know what many of them are or what their practice accomplishes. Furthermore, inasmuch as there is no indication that combining the lists would give us one exhaustive list, you may have gifts that don't appear in any of the lists.

Involve yourself with community, ask people in the community to tell you what they see in you, make yourself available to the Lord, and he will show you what you need to know. In 1 Samuel 30, for example, it became obvious who needed to go to the front lines and who needed to stay on the back lines.

## Displaced note

Years ago, I led a Bible study for college students at a church in Pleasanton, in the East Bay. We met in the apartment of a woman who made everyone feel at home each week. Diane cooked dinner for everyone, and when she cooked her lasagna, it was a special treat. She opened her home, and I opened the Scriptures. One day she informed me that maybe it was time for her to move on. I didn't appreciate her properly, and I don't think she felt appreciated. She minimized her importance, and in some way I let her do so, because I exaggerated my importance. I concluded rather arrogantly, that I could do the ministry without her. I even felt a twinge of pride.

The next week, we met at my house, which I shared with four other guys. It was livable, but a feeling of hospitality was lacking. When the students came over, I put out a plate of Oreos. I looked over at the plate a few times during the Bible study and thought to myself, "This

isn't good." It took me all of about one week to realize that I needed Diane. I apologized to her, told her how much I appreciated her, and begged her to come back. She agreed, we started meeting at her apartment again, and all was well with the world. In fact, all was better with the world, because I now appreciated Diane, and she felt appreciated.

One note was displaced, and there was diminishment.

So here I am today, opening the Scriptures, almost thirty years later. I preach, but I do not preach alone. Many people have prayed for the ministry of the word. Nak Bou has designed the visuals. Jim Thornton, who leads the Sunday visuals team, enables you to see the visuals today. Brian O'Neal leads to the sound team, and today, Kunle Oyedele enables you to hear me. Xin Chen, the other musicians, and Kathy Means, move us both into the sermon and out of the sermon. Atul and Ayrin Ayer and Steve and Christine Kurihara lead our team of ushers. Steve Kurihara leads our communion team. Cheryle Eymil leads the floral team. David Lin leads a prayer team so that you can have someone to pray for you after the service. Conrad and Kathy Sill lead the hospitality team. After the sermon is preached, Louise Williamson edits it and puts it on our website and in the foyer. Moreover, countless numbers of people have influenced me, many of whom without even knowing it, to make me who I am today, including my old friend Diane, who opened her home and her heart almost thirty years ago.

It may look as if I'm alone when I'm preaching, but an entire army is standing here with me, battling for the hearts and minds and souls of men and women and children. Thank you to all of you!

You're important. So is everyone else.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Amadeus (Orion Pictures, 1984)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.