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J. W. Sperling - Tyler

Sermon preached by our Pastor

on Thursday Evening,

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Lesson. 1 Samuel 30. vv. 1-25.

And David enquired at the Lord, saying, Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them? And he answered him, Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all. 1 Samuel 30. 8.

There is narrated here in the chapter in the early stages what is referred to proverbially as being the darkest before dawn. Truly this dear man of God, His servant, His anointed one, David, was in the deepest distress he had ever come into. How soon did the Lord unveil the whole of the work of Christ to him, and the ultimate glorious victory that would be accomplished at Jerusalem and Calvary, and in the garden where there was a sepulchre, wherein was man never yet laid; from whence when He was buried He rose and recovered all. For I cannot contain in my spirit indefinitely that it was our heavenly Warrior, Christ who pursued a troop, sin, death, and hell, and overthrew them; He overtook them at Calvary, and when He rose from the dead He had recovered all. This is the divine doctrine, the holy foundation for ~~xxx~~ the subject.

So this evening we sing of victory: we join by grace in His victory. He has pursued our mortal foes, sin, death, hell and the devil and overtaken them. My friends, can you hear the cry of victory from His cross when He had overtaken them? He was victorious over them and He said; "It is finished." and He gave up the ghost. So there is no uncertainty concerning your cases and my case as to the issue. There is nothing ambiguous about our path. There will be often in life a degree of similarity with David's path. You lose so much, and you will be sad, as I confessed to the Lord I felt sad. Every tender, feeling, loving heart feels great sadness. Look at the blessed message for you; you will recover all; and not only all, more than all. You will get twice as much as before.

So I have tried ministerially to well lay the foundation, the holy, precious, vital doctrine for you to build your heavenly hopes upon. Christ has recovered all. We are not waiting for victory; it has been won. You will find a wonderful word in Isaiah 40, 1st verse. "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished." Your victory was ~~won~~, secured at Calvary, my friends. This is the method of the Lord by the Holy Ghost communicating to you the efficacy and fruits of His victory. We are not waiting to know the issue. I recognise there is conflict; you know temptation and fear. Once you know the love of Christ in your soul and His visits, you know you will be brought through. If you are in unison with Him your overcoming is certain, and the principle of it is ~~xxxxxx~~ illuminated in this wonderful narrative. "Pursue: for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." Surely the positive nature of this blessed terminology impresses your mind. What a subject for such a day as this! So I have given you the secret at the outset, and you will see the expectation in it,- an expectation that shall not be cut off.

Let us develop the subject. I said at the outset you could say it is darkest before dawn. You can soon turn over the pages in the Holy Bible and find that David had complete deliverance. Soon he is king; all his gloomy sorrows,- this section of them.- are over. I propose to make a few comments on the principle constituents of the subject in the chapter and the context. I can single out a few of the salient points so you will see the blessedness of them in relation to our cases. Take the circumstances he found himself in. No.1, he had been dismissed by the Philistines as you will see. Achish dismissed him with a commendation of fidelity. He was expelled and pursued by his father-in-law, Saul.- No.2. No.3, he found the city of Ziklag burned with fire and everything precious to them carried away. Mark you, you will see the mercy of God moderating things in your path. You will be in trouble: you will say there is mercy. It might have been tenfold worse. They had been carried away: they were not slain. They might have been, but they are alive. I have never yet come into any trial or sorrow without seeing mercy moderating,- the good hand of God; the angel form appears. It is nothing so black or so bad as it

appeared at first: there is mercy.

Everything precious had been carried away. You know the language,- it is overwhelming to express. They were weeping; probably it was a good thing they were able to. It would do you good to weep. It is a relieving thing to weep in the right place. There<sup>are</sup> many conditions I come into before God when I would love to have a good weeping time because He said in His message to king Hezekiah; "I have seen thy tears." If you could have a good weeping time at the feet of Christ He would say; "I have seen thy tears." The Lord interprets them. When He saw Mary and the Jews weeping He wept. So this was a place where they wept until they had no more power to weep. I could well say to you; "What beauty e'en in grief appears." There is a great, exquisite beauty in weeping, in grief. If you said; "Spell it out." I will: it is because it shows you have got a loving, feeling, tender heart. It proves there is someone you love and your heart is not a stone. Precious characters are these who are able to weep in a right way before the Lord and at His dear feet. I wonder how many tears you have in the Lord's bottle? "Put thou my tears into thy bottle." says the Psalmist. (Psa.56.8) How many of your tears are in His bottle in heaven? "are they not in thy book?" Indeed they are! Right through His Book you will find these tears that are sowing to the Spirit. If you are like that you will reap in joy. Our Saviour wept and bled and died for you, "What more, ye saints, could Jesus do" for you?

So there is union between a poor weeping, broken-hearted sinner and a bleeding Saviour: they come together. There is a sweetness in this to me tonight because I have found some of you. When he was in this there was something that added to his distress with David. His own men were on the point of mutiny and they spoke of stoning David. You know about mutiny. David's men were on the point of mutiny and speaking of stoning their leader. I suggest to you he would not have been in a more grievous state. This is human nature. The baseness of human nature is that it always wants to find a scapegoat to put the blame on. With these men they wanted to make David the scapegoat, so you see how extreme his circumstances were. My text flows out of them.

There are two things I will present to you under this heading: A

Precious Remedy Against Despair. You imagine yourself in despair! David had been expelled; the city was burned, everything carried away, and his own men were on the point of stoning him. What could he do? The first thing was, "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God," and the preacher knows what this is so he can speak on it. This is the way it is when all other channels of relief are cut off from you in the earth; where there is nowhere and no one to look to on earth. This is where God will bring you back to your own soul and favour you with something from Himself so that you encourage yourself. An occasion stands right out with me: there are others, but this is a highlight. I had gone something like the best part of seven or eight months in such a painful trial and the Lord had not delivered me. I thought He would close my mouth and I should sink under it. I was cut off from all relief on earth. I had no one I could open my mouth to. How I came into the pulpit I hardly knew. The devil said; "This is the last time." When I got into the pulpit I found God was here. When I went down the stairs after the service I went back into my cell like a prisoner. Are any of you like that? I should not be surprised if you have a taste of it. You come to the House of God and you feel a little help; God is with you, You go back in as though a prison-officer is waiting for you and in you go. Do you know what this is? I had no one to comfort me. The Lord brought it to a close in the vestry at Bexley. I got in on the Monday evening an hour and a half before the service. I had a solid hour before any obtruded. (I do not say it unkindly. I wanted to be alone.) In that vestry I groaned, pleaded, prayed, cried. After a little He came and spoke a word from a hymn of Cowper's,- "Yet I will remember thee."

"Can a woman's tender care  
Cease towards the child she bare?  
Yes, she may forgetful be,  
Yet I will remember thee." (968)

That did it. It brought my soul out of prison. I was still in the same trial, but I encouraged myself in the Lord my God because He had spoken. I had not a soul in the earth to look to, but I could encourage myself in the Lord my God. You will find there is not a soul in the earth you can speak to: you are alone but God has given you something,- a precious

remedy against despair. I believe this year I have known the same.

"A word of Thy supporting breath  
Drives all my fears away." (139)

You have got something from God, my friends, and you will encourage yourself in the Lord your God. He has come with power, unction and efficacy and you will encourage yourself in the Lord your God. Everything around seems against you but God has given you something. They spake of stoning David; they had lost everything, but David encouraged himself in the Lord his God, and it was not long before he was on the throne.

So I will leave this concept with you in your local experiences, your personal path, however dark. Presently,- "Watchman, what of the night?... The morning cometh." (Isa.21.11 & 12) I am here to strengthen and comfort you in the dark path you are in. That is why I came.

The second precious remedy seems to have <sup>been</sup> unique in this period of the Church's history. The method has changed, but we still have the same precious remedy. He inquired of the Lord his God. We have little knowledge of the method that obtained. "And David said to Abiathar the priest, Ahimelech's son, I pray thee, bring me hither the ephod....And David inquired at the Lord, saying, -" Although the method is obscure we have some information on it. The ephod was a vestment of the high priest's, and it included the breastplate which had on it or in it twelve precious stones. Engraved in each stone was the name of one of the twelve tribes of Israel. It is believed that when one inquired through Urim and Thummim he went to the high priest and he came before Shakinah, the glory of God, and proposed to God the inquiry. The one he proposed for stood at a distance, waiting for God's answer. The glory of God shone on the stones of the breastplate and the letters stood out and provided the answer. This is altogether congruous with God's method to day. How do you get your answers? Do you know when you have an inquiry what it is to open this blessed Book and read, and presently there is a verse stands right out in golden letters and you read it. I have known it a number of times. The letters of a verse shine out with resplendent glory and the Lord has given you an answer. I have had the same experience in seeing the letters on the front part of

the gallery. There was the answer. It is the glory of God shining on the letters to give you your answer. Have you known when in a path of trial or in reading the Scriptures or in the ministry, for the words to leave the Book and spring into your heart? I am suggesting that the method is the same. It is the glory of God shining on the letters and you have your answer.

What was the answer? It was three-fold. "And he answered him, Pursue." That was the first. What does 'pursue' mean? To go after someone or some thing? No. To pursue means to go after with the purpose of overtaking and recovering. That is what our Saviour did when He was born. When the Son of God assumed our nature in the womb of the virgin and was born at Bethlehem He pursued sin, death, hell and the devil. Now you see the beauty of the work of Christ. He pursued.

There are two other parts to the answer. "Thou shalt surely overtake them." He overtook devils and captivity and led them captive. He overtook all ~~the enemies~~ our enemies and recovered all. You, child of God, have lost a lot. In Adam we lost everything: there is nothing left, only ashes, ruin, death, complete separation and banishment from the Lord. Through the fall we are in an awful, lost, ruined, undone state. In your path you come into this internally and externally, and the two combined. Every precious sensation of comfort, peace and joy you quickly lose, - not the reality of it. We must be very lucid on this. You do not lose what God has done for you: you lose the comfort, joy, and the sweet feeling of it. How often through the commission of sin you wonder if you have got a particle of religion. Said Mr Hart; "Alas! there's worse than nothing there." (875) Don't you use the language unless you know it. It seems as if you lose everything. "My earthly joys are from me torn." (289) and every sweet and precious thing you seem to lose. Am I speaking the truth? You feel as Job when he lost substance, wealth, family, health, everything. He did not lose his God, but he could not find Him. The choicest saints of God walk this. You will turn to the Book of God and say it is the Book of Job suits you. It is as if you are clean stripped of all. Poor soul, Pursue, overtake, recover. How? By prayer, by faith you will pursue; you will overtake. You will find the devil is lagging behind. You will claim things. You will

say; "This is mine: God gave it to me." You will be as David. "I have heard the slander of many: fear was on every side: while they took counsel together against me, they devised to take away my life. But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God. My times are in thy hand."(Psa.31) He pursued and overtook them. "But I trusted in thee, O Lord: I said, Thou art my God." He had overtaken them completely. "My times are in thy hand." And the verse at the end of the Psalm which we had at Uckfield,- "Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!" That is the message for inquirers. Blessed be God. Amen.