

# How to Live Through a Crisis

2 Samuel 15:13-37

## INTRODUCTION:

- A. Horatio G. Spafford, a successful Chicago lawyer, lost most of his wealth in the financial crisis of 1873. There was the death of his only son in 1871 followed by the great Chicago fire which ruined him financially. Then in 1873, he had planned to travel to Europe with his family on the *S.S. Ville Du Havre*, but sent the family ahead to France while he was delayed on business. However, on their way, their ship was struck by another, and sank. Of 225 passengers, only 87 of them survived.
1. Mrs. Spafford was among the survivors, but the four daughters perished. As soon as she reached land, she telegraphed to her husband: "Saved alone. Children lost. What shall I do?"
  2. Spafford left for France to join his wife and return her to Chicago. In the depth of this bereavement, he wrote his only hymn: *It is Well With My Soul*. Perhaps the words of the first stanza will take on new meaning for you, as you ponder them:
 

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrow like sea billow roll;  
Whatever my lot,  
Thou hast taught me to say,  
"It is well, it is well with my soul."
  3. In the midst of the greatest crisis of his life, Horatio Spafford was able to rise above the power of his pain. How do people live through a crisis? Now most of us will not go through situations like that of Spafford, but when we go through personal turmoil, how do we get through the problems of life?
  4. The Spaffords later had three more children, one of whom (a son) died in infancy. In 1881 the Spaffords, including baby Bertha and newborn Grace, set sail for Palestine. The Spaffords moved to Jerusalem and helped found a group called the American Colony; its mission was to serve the poor. The colony later became the subject of the Nobel prize winning *Jerusalem*, by Swedish novelist Selma Lagerlöf.
- B. I want to look at one of the most troubling times in the life of David and examine some of the principles that we see in his life as he went through a major crisis. If you have your Bible, please open it to **2 Samuel 15:13-37** for our lesson text.
- C. Since we face crises in life, and need all the help we can get when they occur, let us benefit from the help afforded us in our lesson text.

## **HOW TO LIVE THROUGH A CRISES**

### **A. UNDERSTAND THAT THE MOST PAINFUL CRISES ARE THOSE OF A PERSONAL NATURE**

1. Picture the scene for a moment, a messenger enters the palace throne room and brings urgent news of dire proportions.
  - a. As the messenger speaks the words stab at David's heart like a knife.
  - b. David hears that the nation of Israel has turned against him but the worst part is the cause. Absalom, David's own son, was leading a rebellion to overthrow him and seize the throne.
  - c. It has become clear that Absalom has the goal of killing David to take over the kingdom.
2. What a heartbreaking moment for David. This situation is soaked in personal turmoil and literally tears at the fabric of David's own family.
  - a. This national crisis flows with personal heartbreak. You may even know, to a degree, the pain that David was feeling.
3. A crisis can come at you through your workplace, your home or even just minding your own business. Crisis is not a respecter of persons nor is it fair when it comes.
  - a. A crisis becomes personal when it involves your family
  - b. A crisis becomes personal when others assault your character
  - c. A crisis becomes personal when others seek to inflict pain on you

### **B. SOMETIMES YOU NEED REGROUP BEFORE YOU ACT**

David takes immediate action to begin regrouping. At this point David has only two options fight or flight. If he stands and fights the forces that Absalom has it would be likely that he would be defeated and Jerusalem pay the price of protecting him as king. If he flees and regroups his position there would be time to gain strength and face the situation on his own terms.

1. By fleeing the coming coup attempt David does three key things:
  - a. Preserves the sanctity of Jerusalem
  - b. Provides for his family
  - c. Protects his military strength
2. There will be times in your life when you will need to regroup and pull things together. When you stop to regroup it allows you to:
  - a. Get a clearer understanding of the big picture
  - b. Get focused on the real problem at hand
  - c. Get an opportunity to recover some strength
3. There are times when quick responses are not always the best course of action

### **C. REDUCE THE RISK OF INJURY TO OTHERS**

1. As David leaves Jerusalem, he speaks with one of the military leaders traveling out of the city. Ittai (**It-ay-igh**) was not Jewish but rather was a foreign mercenary under the service of King David. Both Ittai and his men befriended David during his wilderness experience in Ziklag (1 Samuel 30) and returned to Israel with David. These men served as a type of honor guard for David and did not have to leave with him.
2. David understood that the agreement that he had made with Ittai and his men could no longer be met. Essentially he was a foreigner in foreign land now being exiled to who knows where. This was no situation for innocent people.
3. We learn from David that we need to do our best to keep those who are innocent out of the crisis in order to keep them safe. Several reasons are involved in David telling Ittai to return to Jerusalem.
  - a. David wants Ittai out of harms way
  - b. David cannot fulfill his end of their agreement any longer
  - c. David does not know his course of action
4. Notice what Ittai does here, he pledges his loyalty to David in either life or death.

#### **D. TAKE TIME TO WORSHIP**

1. Even in the midst of this dangerous situation David takes the time to worship God. Zadok brought the Ark of the Covenant out to where David was and Abiathar offered sacrifices to God until everyone had left the city.
  - a. David was literally running for his life but that did not mean that he would not seek the presence of God.
  - b. When we take the time to worship it is literally seeking the presence of God.
  - c. David placed such a value on being in God's presence that he stopped to offer sacrifices to God.
  - d. David understood something that we often forget, when a crisis comes worship needs to remain a priority in our lives.
2. Far too often, we allow circumstances and difficulties to come between us and our ability to worship. Worship must be a priority in our lives because when we go through hard times we must seek the presence of God.
3. The sad reality is that worship has become a side item in our priorities.
  - a. Many people use any excuse to skip service and they lose out on building a deeper relationship with God. If you cannot take time to worship God when things are going well how will you ever be able to seek His presence when the waters get rough. If you never seek God's presence during hard times, how can you expect to gain His deliverance?

**E. APPROACH THE CRISIS WITH AN ATTITUDE OF FAITH**

1. David gives instructions to Zadok to return to Jerusalem and to take the Ark back to the temple.
  - a. This was a bold move for David because the Ark was the empowered symbol of God's presence.
    1. The understanding was that if you had the Ark with you, God was on your side.
    2. When David sends the Ark back to Jerusalem it is an act of absolute trust and total faith.
    3. Look at the words David uses: "Take the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the LORD's eyes, he will bring me back and let me see it and his dwelling place again. But if he says, 'I am not pleased with you,' then I am ready; let him do to me whatever seems good to him."
  - b. David understood that his entire situation was now in the hands of God and that the only way to live through the crisis was to place His complete trust in God. David shows also that he belongs to God because he says that he is committed to God's will whatever it may be.
2. When a crisis comes in your life, so you approach it with an attitude of faith or do you just get frustrated?
  - a. The reality is that most of us, if we're honest, are usually more frustrated than we are faith filled.
  - b. Frustration is a by product of not looking to God for His help and His guidance.

**F. LET THE EMOTION, OR EMOTIONS, COME OUT**

1. As David leaves the Jerusalem, literally running for his life, the emotion of the situation comes pouring out. The power of the pain came to the point that he could no longer contain it.
2. Look at the pain points that David had to face:
  - a. David's own son wanted him dead
  - b. Many of David's friends had turned against him
  - c. The nation was being plunged into civil war
  - d. David was leaving the Ark of the Covenant behind
  - e. David was headed for an unknown future on the run
3. As David leaves Jerusalem, he is a man in exile . . . . . A man marked for death and a man whose followers were more foreigners than his own people.
  - a. David covered his head, walked barefoot and openly wept as he climbed the Mount of Olives.
  - b. No doubt looking back down to see Jerusalem one more time before he headed to exile in the desert.

4. Too often we try to hold our emotions in when we experience the difficulties of a crisis.
  - a. We rely on our own strength to get us through and we put up a brave face.
  - b. The reality is that there are times when the emotions simply must come out.
  - c. Like David, there will be times when the tears have to flow. Whether you let yourself cry or you go out and scream your head off . . . . . You need an outlet for your emotion. The longer you hold on to the pain, the more difficult it will be to let go and experience the needed release.

### G. REMEMBER TO PRAY

1. When David climbs the Mount of Olives he takes a moment to turn to God once again and asks for God's help. Ahithophel was one of David's personal counselors who had been a trusted advisor. David knew how valuable Ahithophel would be to Absalom because he was both wise and a good advisor. He needed God's help to thwart this betrayal and the attempt to overthrow his rule in Israel.
  - a. David teaches us a valuable lesson that we sometimes seldom learn during a crisis . . . . . Namely, God can accomplish what we cannot.
  - b. The same is true of our lives today, when the situation moves beyond our ability to deal with, we must give it over to God.
2. Prayer is one of your most valued resources during a crisis.
  - a. Just as worship is a seeking of God's presence, prayer is a seeking of God's provision.
  - b. David understood that if he was going to get through the crisis, he needed God's provision.
4. When you go through a crisis seek God's provision because he has the ability to deliver all of your needs.

### CONCLUSION

- A. Crises are a fact of life and we all have to deal with them. Your problems may not be to the extent that David had to deal with but the reality is that when you go through them, you don't go through them alone.
- B. How to Live Through a Crisis:
  1. **Understand that the most painful crises are those of a personal nature.**
  2. **Sometimes you need regroup before you act**
  3. **Reduce the risk of injury to others**
  4. **Take time to worship**
  5. **Approach the crisis with an attitude of faith**
  6. **Let the emotion, or emotions, come out**

**7. Remember to Pray**

- C. When trials face you and you face trials, that is the time to seek God's presence and provision even more earnestly.
- D. This very hour you maybe you are going through a crisis, take some time to seek God and find His strength and support for your life in a fresh way.
- E. **God's Plan for Man's Salvation**