



Rest 1 Samuel 7:1

Heart – The Story of David Message 4

Pastor Nate Atwood, Kempsville Presbyterian Church

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PRAYER

I. The Pattern

We're going to zero in on 2 Samuel 7:1. It's a profound verse . . . twelve short words that say so much. However, before we do so, I want to pull back and paint the larger pattern of 2 Samuel for you. There's a movement – a spiritual sequence of events – that helps us understand how God's Kingdom and His principles work.

Let's start with **2 Samuel 1**. Saul dies. What does Saul represent? The "old man." That is, the sin nature. That part of us which has to die, that part which only the cross of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit can really deal with.

2 Samuel 2-4. It's the civil war that ends in unity. The entirety of Israel is consolidated under one throne.

2 Samuel 5 is about victory. David attacks Jerusalem and takes the city. It was the stronghold of a tribe known as the Jebusites and considered impregnable. It was a great victory followed by two more victories against the Philistines.

Chapter 6 (we talked about it last week), is the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem, and it is a passage of praise and worship. David danced before the Lord, celebrating, with all his might. When was the last time you worshiped God that way? Has it been too long?

And then **chapter 7**, and this statement is about God giving David rest from his enemies who were all around him. By the way, don't be freaked out if the enemies are all around you. That was David's experience, and God delivered him.

So . . . notice the pattern. It matters.

Death (of our sinful nature) produces unity.
Unity produces victory.
Victory produces praise and worship.
Praise and worship produces rest.
Rest produces . . . productivity.

And, by the way, if you'll read deeper into 2 Samuel 7, you'll see that rest produces productivity.

That one makes sense.

Said with a little amplification . . . death of the old man, our sin nature, our sinful self, that part of us that is in constant rebellion against God produces unity. We are less and less divided within our own souls and less and less divided with others.

Unity produces victory. Spiritual victory. Maybe unseen, but victory just the same.

Victory makes you want to celebrate. Specifically, to celebrate God. Who He is and what He has done. And then, amazingly and counterintuitively, praise and worship produces rest. Why do I say that? Well, it's the pattern here, but it's also the pattern of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20. Maybe you know the story. They were surrounded by their enemies, outmanned and out-resourced. They had one option. They went into battle leading with the choir. They praised God, and the Bible says that the Lord set ambushes against their enemies and defeated them.

In 2 Chronicles 20, Jehoshaphat praised God and found rest from his enemies.

The same happened in 2 Samuel 6 and 7.

II. The Enemy

I want you to notice that word “enemies” in 2 Samuel 7:1. God gave David rest from his “enemies.” You may be tempted to think of Saul or his son Ish-Bosheth as David’s enemies, and they were. But 2 Samuel lists several enemies David was given rest from . . . check out a breakdown just one chapter later:

¹¹ King David dedicated these articles to the LORD, as he had done with the silver and gold from all the nations he had subdued: ¹² Edom^e and Moab, the Ammonites and the Philistines, and Amalek. ¹

^e Some Hebrew manuscripts, Septuagint and Syriac (see also 1 Chron. 18:11); most Hebrew manuscripts *Aram*

¹*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (2 Sa 8:11-12). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Each of these enemies, these tribes or people groups or nations, were unique and distinct. They were all pagans and, as such, all under the sway of idolatry and the demonic powers, which the Bible tells us is the source behind every idol.

In other words, each tribe that David defeated represented more than a people group. Each tribe was a distinct spiritual power. A demonic force of large proportion. If you doubt that kind of thing as reality, then consider the maniacal hatred of the Iranian leaders for Israel. It's more than human, isn't it? It's a spiritual hatred. A spiritual power.

This is the kind of thing Paul talks about in the New Testament when he famously said that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against powers and principalities and spiritual wickedness in high places.

These are the kinds of things God gave David victory over and rest from. This is exactly the kind of thing God wants to do for each of us.

Say it with me, "God wants to give me victory and rest."

It's critical that you grasp this point -- these Old Testament battles are our New Testament realities. Just as David fought against these nations, we fight against the same demonic powers.

And, more than any of them, we fight against one power in particular.

Amalek.

The Amalekites

Who were the Amalekites? They were a tribe, a people, like many others, who lived near Israel. They were pagans and were warlike. But the Amalekites were unique and in a very significant way. You need to know that the Amalekites were "first":

Then Balaam saw Amalek and uttered his oracle: "Amalek was first among the nations, but he will come to ruin at last."² (Numbers 24:20)

What's "first among the nations" mean? The consensus is that the Bible itself gives us that answer when we're told that the Amalekites were the first to make war on Israel when she left Egypt. There's a primacy to the Amalekite spirit – this powerful spirit of evil. It's a primary spiritual battle. *It's the most ancient of the battles.* Amalek was first to attack the people of God on their spiritual journey. He still is.

Here's the second thing you need to know. *It's a generational battle:*

¹⁵ Moses built an altar and called it The LORD is my Banner. ¹⁶ He said, "For hands were lifted up to the throne of the LORD. The^a LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."³ (Exodus 17:15-16)

²The Holy Bible : New International Version. 1996, c1984 (Nu 24:20). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

This, in fact, is exactly what we see in the Scriptures. Moses fought the Amalekites. Gideon fought the Amalekites. Saul fought the Amalekites. David fought the Amalekites. Almost every generation found themselves in this same battle.

We should expect the same.

Thirdly, it was a particular battle.

The Amalekites were known for doing three things.

- 1) They wore their enemies down.
- 2) They targeted the vulnerable.
- 3) They stole the harvest just before it came due.

This is where you and I particularly need to pay attention. Do you feel worn down? Have you seen evidence of the weak and the vulnerable being attacked spiritually? Have you had the experience of a harvest being stolen just as it seemed it was coming due?

If you are experiencing any of these realities – or have experienced them – then you might start asking yourself the question if whether or not you’re really dealing with people. Or if perhaps you are fighting the same battle David fought. The Amalekites. If so, you might start looking forward to God giving you rest from your enemies.

I believe that is God’s Will.

All right, I need to Scripturally back up what I’ve just said. That is, I need to anchor in the Bible this three-fold tactic of the Amalekite demonic force – this primary and generational spiritual battle.

Amalek Wears You Down

First of all, the tactic to wear down. Notice Deuteronomy 25:

¹⁷ Remember what the Amalekites did to you along the way when you came out of Egypt. When you were weary and worn out, they met you on your journey and cut off all who were lagging behind; they had no fear of God. (Deuteronomy 25:17-18)

Notice those words “weary and worn out.” Now check out 1 Samuel 30:

^a Or “Because a hand was against the throne of the LORD, the . . .

³The Holy Bible : New International Version. 1996, c1984 (Ex 17:15-16). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it,² and had taken captive the women and all who were in it, both young and old . . .³ When David and his men came to Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive.⁴ So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. (1 Samuel 30:1-4)

Twice more in this passage we read about the Amalekite reality emptying God's people of their strength.

So, let me ask you a question. Have you been worn down? Are you feeling not just physically exhausted, but spiritually exhausted? Emotionally, relationally exhausted?

Maybe Amalek is coming against you. And why wouldn't he? The devil sees your potential. He also sees your desire to be God's person. You are exactly the kind of person he would attack. Amalek wears you down . . . leaves you exhausted.

In a little bit we're going to talk about how you can do exactly what David did here in 1 Samuel 30. Remember, the Scripture says in the second half of verse 4 . . . ***"But David found strength in the Lord his God."***

You can do that too.

Amalek Attacks the Vulnerable

Deuteronomy tells the story of Moses and the people of God. The Amalekites attacked them and it's worth noting that when they attacked, there was not only a spirit of exhaustion, they attacked the rear of the column. Who's in the rear? Women, children, the sick, the weak, the elderly. In other words, the vulnerable. You can be vulnerable by virtue of a lack of physical strength, but remember this is now a spiritual battle. In other words, you can be vulnerable by virtue of spiritual weakness. And that has nothing do with age or sex.

In 1 Samuel 30 we saw the same thing. At Ziklag, David's temporary home city, the Amalekites carried off the wives and children of David and his men. Again, the vulnerable. Here's the question, are you spiritually vulnerable? Isn't it the truth that we all are? That we very much need the strength of the Lord? Daily? And probably more than we realize?

Amalek Steals the Harvest

Judges 6:3 tells us:

³ Whenever the Israelites planted their crops, the Midianites, Amalekites and other eastern peoples invaded the country. ⁴ They camped on the land and ruined the crops . . .

This was typical Amalekite warfare. Going after the harvest. It's exactly what we saw in 1 Samuel 30, because the Amalekites not only carried off the women and children, the carried off the harvest as well.

They were raiders.

Why plant crops when you just wait till the Israelite crop was about to come in? The method is simple. Destroy the crops of your enemy. Better yet, steal them. That is, steal the harvest of God's people.

So, has that ever happened in your life? A harvest stolen? Or a crop ruined? How often has that happened in the life of God's people? How often has that happened in the life of the church?

A Generational Battle

I want to take you back to this foundational truth . . . the battle against Amalek is a generational battle. Moses fought the Amalekites. Gideon, Saul, and David did the same. That covers 300-years plus of Biblical history. But while David defeated the Amalekites, he only defeated them in his time. The Book of Esther, another Old Testament story, was written over 400 years later. In Esther 3:10, we read the following:

¹⁰ So the king took his signet ring from his finger and gave it to Haman son of Hammedatha, the Agagite, the enemy of the Jews.⁴

What's an "Agagite"? We'll get there in a moment. First of all, let's talk about the king. His name was Xerxes and he was the emperor of Persia. Two of his subjects, Esther and Mordecai, were Jews. Haman was the enemy of the Jews, and he concocted a plan to have all the Jews throughout the Persian Empire wiped out in a single day. By the way, the Persian Empire covered much of the known world in that day. It was genocide.

Now if you know the story of Esther, you know that God used this young woman and the old man Mordecai to defeat Haman and his plan. That needed to happen. Indeed, Haman the Agagite, was the enemy of the Jews.

Again, what's an Agagite? Check out 1 Samuel 15:7-9 . . .

⁷ Then Saul attacked the Amalekites all the way from Havilah to Shur, to the east of Egypt. ⁸ He took Agag king of the Amalekites alive, and all his people he totally destroyed with the sword. ⁹ But Saul and the army spared Agag and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat calves and lambs—everything that was good.⁵

Agag. There it is. To be an "Agagite" was to be a descendant of Agag. The king of the Amalekites. Despite God's direct command to do so, Saul didn't kill the Agag king.

Oh, my.

If you know the story of 1 Samuel 15, you know that shortly after the battle, Samuel the prophet figured out what happened, severely rebuked Saul, and went to Agag with the sword and struck him down.

⁴*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (Es 3:10-11). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁵*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 15:7-9). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Too late.

The queen – who was apparently pregnant – got away. The seed survived. Agag had a son. The Amalekites regenerated.

And over four centuries later, the Amalekites sought once again to destroy the people of God. Haman the Agagite planned genocide against the Jews.

Indeed, it is a generational battle. And it is the primary battle. Amalek is first among the nations. The Bible tells us that the Lord will be at war against Amalek from generation to generation.

I hope you are now seeing that.

Today's Battle

Do we fight Amalek today? The answer is “yes.” In fact, we fight him on a scale unknown since Biblical times. Amalek has returned and with a vengeance.

My parents' generation fought Amalek. Do you know his name?

Hitler.

Think about it. An enemy of the Jews. A Haman-like plot to destroy. Women and children carried away. The primary and generational battle back on the scene. The more things change the more they stay the same. The Bible is the epic Book of all time that defines all our battles, all our struggles, all our goals, all our failures, all our successes, all our hopes and dreams. All our enemies. And, of course, it defines our great Friend. Jesus Christ. That is why we know it as the Word of God.

So in the 20th century Amalek returned. Hitler was defeated but . . .

Do we fight him today?

What about abortion – the destruction of children's bodies and women's souls which that brings about? The devil is fighting against us. What about sex-trafficking and the literal carrying away of women into captivity? What about the minds and hearts of our children being enslaved by gangs or being carried away by all the false gods of immorality of our time or the false truths of our time?

What about how worn down you feel? What about the harvests you have seen stolen? What about the weak you have seen carried away? What about your own weaknesses and how the devil has exploited them?

Your enemy is not people. It is Amalek.

Do you see that the Amalekite spirit still seeks to attack God's people. I cannot think of a more likely attack on a fruitful believer or a Fountainhead church than Amalek. Wear them down. Attack their weak. Steal the harvest.

There is what the people of God desperately need . . . 1 Samuel 7:1 . . .

. . . and the LORD had given him rest from all his enemies around him⁶

I suspect that's exactly what many of you need to have happen in your life.

God means to do that for you today.

III. Rest

I want you to consider very carefully the words of 2 Samuel 7:1 . . . *“the Lord gave David rest from his enemies . . .”* Here's a principle of rest . . . it's God who gives it to you. It comes from Him.

This is where the first Amalekite battle is so significant. Do you remember who fought it? And how?

¹⁰ So Joshua fought the Amalekites as Moses had ordered, and Moses, Aaron and Hur went to the top of the hill. ¹¹ As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning. ¹² When Moses' hands grew tired, they took a stone and put it under him and he sat on it. Aaron and Hur held his hands up—one on one side, one on the other—so that his hands remained steady till sunset. ¹³ So Joshua overcame the Amalekite army with the sword. ⁷ (Exodus 17:10-13)

If you'll consider these words, you'll notice that the critical ingredient was not the sword of Joshua. It was the prayer of Moses. If you are going to gain victory of Amalek and gain God's rest . . . you will do so on your knees. There is no substitute. No other way. It is a spiritual battle.

Do you know what it is to “pray through,” my friend? It's critical that you do. Praying through is this . . . it is praying beyond the point where your prayer reaches God. That happens instantly. It is praying to the point where God reaches you. God floods your soul with peace and rest. Wherein you know that something is in God's hands . . . I mean you really know that. That you can trust God with it. That you can cease your striving.

Remember, Amalek wants to wear you out. God wants to give you rest.

⁶*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (2 Sa 7:1). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁷*The Holy Bible : New International Version*. 1996, c1984 (Ex 17:8-13). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Here's a second principle. In 1 Samuel 30 – the story of David at Ziklag – the Amalekites carried off the wives, the children, and the harvest. David and his men were devastated and wept till they had no more strength.

The Bible says that David found strength in God. That he went to the priest and they prayed together. That's the Moses 17 principle. It's what they did first.

In that story, David asked God a critical question . . . the Amalekites have carried away our families and our wealth. Can we get them back? Is it even worth trying? It is so easy to give in and give up.

Here is where we see the heart of David. God said, "Yes. Go after them. You can recover what Amalek stole." Through the rest of the story that's exactly what happened. David and his men pursued what they had lost, and God restored it to them. The Bible is careful to say that the restoration was complete. You see, David's heart was a heart that didn't give up.

Don't you give up, either. Go after the person who has been carried into captivity. Maybe it's your wife, whose heart has been stolen. Maybe, men, you were a part of that stealing. You failed to love her fully and faithfully. Listen to the Word of God . . .

⁷ Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelech, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him, ⁸ 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."⁸

This is not complicated. David went to his pastor. Together they prayed. God gave David a word . . . go and you shall succeed. Why? Friends, you've got to remember this good news. We read it already . . . Exodus 17, the takeaway of Moses after he fought in prayer against Amalek and over the people of God . . .

The LORD will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation."⁹
(Exodus 17:16)

Already the strategy against Amalek is building. First pray. Then pursue. Praying first is critical. You have to somehow be at rest even while you work.

Thirdly, praise. Don't miss the pattern. The chapter we looked at last week – the arrival of the Ark in Jerusalem – was a praise passage. It's hardly coincidental that the first verse of the next chapter begins with this statement – God gave David rest from his enemies. Praise defeats the spiritual forces against us. Ask King Jehoshaphat. Read 2 Chronicles 20.

It seems to me that Hebrews 4:10 speaks profoundly to our spiritual battles and our heart's cry that God give us rest from the enemies of our soul . . .

Let us labor, therefore, to enter into God's rest. (Hebrews 4:10)

⁸*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (1 Sa 30:7-8). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

⁹*The Holy Bible : New International Version.* 1996, c1984 (Ex 17:16). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.

Wow. That will mess with your head. I thought rest was the absence of labor. No . . . we have to work, spiritually work, to get to the place of rest. Again, prayer, pursue, praise. It's not complex. It's just that doing it is where we break down.

I wish I could tell you everything about that. I've already told what I could. The enemy is real. His name is Amalek. I've named the demon.

Amalek was defeated time and again. Moses did so. Gideon did so . . . and with a radically diminished army. David did so. A young girl and an old man did so . . . Esther and Mordecai.

Why? Because they were great? No. Remember. ***The Lord will be at war against the Amalekites from generation to generation.***

God's is already fighting against Amalek. God's fighting on your behalf. God's pretty big, you know.

2.1 There is but one only, living, and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection . . . unchanging, immense, eternal, incomprehensible, almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, most absolute; . . . most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering . . . abundant in goodness . . . terrible in his judgments, hating all sin . . . infinite, infallible, independent (Excerpts from The Westminster Confession, chapter 2)

This series is entitled "Heart." It's about David's heart. A heart after God. Review the Scriptures and you'll see that David dealt with Amalek with the threefold principle of prayer, praise, and pursuit. And God gave him rest.

Jesus had the same heart. And when He fought against the demons, He did so by naming them. And casting them away. We are going to do the same, right now. Maybe this can be your Exodus 17 moment of decisive spiritual breakthrough and victory. Maybe God will give you rest.

I'd like for all of you who find yourselves either under the oppression of Amalek, or maybe even under the control of Amalek, or who find yourselves in the fight against Amalek to come forward. We are going to bind this thing. Defeat this thing. Pray with the authority that Jesus gave us.

And we are going to receive rest.

Father, we come to You in the Name of Jesus.

We remember what He demonstrated and what Your Word tells us . . . even the demons are subject to us in His Name. Father, many of us have felt the battle with Amalek in our souls. Some of us have seen the effects in our lives. We need Your help. Some of us are now or we have been exhausted. We're more than physically tired, O Lord. That can even be good if we have been fruitful. We, O Lord, are talking about something much deeper. Spiritual exhaustion. Defend us, O Lord. Be at war against the spirit of Amalek. Like Moses, like Aaron and Hur, we come to You.

Some of us have been attacked spiritually. We may have thought we were strong. Forgive us, O Lord. Apart from You we are all weak.

Some of us, O Lord, have seen people carried off. For some of us it is very personal. It is our wives or our children, or our husbands. Some of us have been carried off, and we feel a kind of captivity or bondage in our souls. Some of us have passed from being under the oppression of Amalek to, at moments, being under the control or compulsion of Amalek. God forgive us. Deliver us. Break this thing. We humble ourselves before You.

And now, in the Name of Jesus, we take authority over the demonic power of Amalek in our lives. In our families, our church, our nation. In The Church.

We say in those realms in which we have authority, "Be gone! We bind you. We come against you. We say 'Absolutely not. You will not have your way with the people of God.' We break you in Jesus Name. We cast you away. We declare your power and authority null and void. We cancel, in Jesus Name, any way in which you have been welcomed or given authority. We declare over you the great Name of Jesus Christ to whom all the demons must submit and under which they even shudder.

We clean this house. We clean our houses. We clean our own souls. We ask the Holy Spirit to come in and cleanse, refresh, release, and renew.

We claim again, as God's people our rightful inheritance. We claim that the Lord is our Protector and in Christ, and Christ alone, we are strong. We receive and we believe that God's strength is coming back into our lives right now. Like David in 1 Samuel 30, who in the midst of loss and devastation, even when his own followers were picking up stones to kill him because of the ravages of the Amalekites, we find our strength in the Lord our God. We put down our stones and pick up the ephod – the garment of prayer and praise. The Bible says that David found strength in the Lord his God. We do the same and thank You.

Father, being strengthened, we reclaim the harvest which has been stolen. Financial. People. Members of our own family. The harvest of souls promised to this church and The Church.

And we claim our rest, O Lord. We say that the Lord is our Banner. You are the one who fights for us. You are at war with Amalek and so we can be at peace within our souls. Strengthen us with Your rest, O Lord. Release us from the spirit of striving and control. As we pour our requests out to You, we both claim and receive the promise of rest into our souls and spirits.

And we thank You, O Lord. We bless You. We know that as we walk with You – You will teach us to walk out what we have prayed. We can trust You, O God, because the Bible says "Let God arise and His enemies be scattered." Pour out the spirit of hope and peace and joy and strength and forgiveness into our lives. Thank You for doing it. We receive all these things in Jesus Name, and we give You the praise forever and ever.

Amen and Amen.