I’M MISSING A PEACE

PURSUE AND RECOVER ALL

STUDY GUIDE

1 Samuel 30:1-8 · John 14:27 · 1 Samuel 30:18-19

Series: Open Handed

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VERTICALTAMPA

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide walks back through Sunday's message, "I'm Missing a Peace," so you can dig deeper on your own or with your group. Read each section, sit with the Word Study and Key Definition boxes, and let the questions move you from information to reflection. You do not have to answer every question in one sitting.

A suggested rhythm: read the Opening on day one, then one Movement per day across the next three days. On day five, sit with the Close and say the Declaration out loud before moving forward.

LAST WEEK IN OPEN HANDED

Last week we learned to hold a reason with open hands: a reason to rejoice, a reason to pray, a reason to give thanks, even while we are still waiting on what we need. This week we move forward. Open hands do not only receive. Open hands also recover.

BIG IDEA

Some of what you think you lost was stolen in the in-between, and God has not called you to live without it. He has called you to pursue and recover all.

Pressure makes us call theft "loss," because loss is easier to accept. But David came home to a burned town and taken families, and heaven did not call that loss. Underneath this whole message is one truth: what God gave you is worth going back for.

CENTRAL TENSION

Amalek does not attack your strength. He waits for your tiredness.

1 SAMUEL 30:8, NIV

"Pursue them," he answered. "You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue."

God did not just comfort David in the ashes. He authorized him to go get back what was taken. That is why this message does not end with acceptance. It ends with pursuit. The promise may come while you are still standing in what it cost you.

Not lost. Stolen. Recover all.

REFLECT BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Before you read any further, name one thing you have been calling lost: your peace, your joy, your prayer life, your focus, your family. Write it here, and be honest about when you last remember having it.

OPENING · A BORROWED TOWN CALLED ZIKLAG

David is anointed, but he is not on the throne yet. Samuel anointed him in 1 Samuel 16, but Saul is still king, and Saul's jealousy has turned into a manhunt. David has been running for years. He is faithful, but he is tired, and tired people make survival decisions.

That is how David ends up in Ziklag. Ziklag was given to him by Achish, the Philistine king of Gath, while David was hiding from Saul (1 Samuel 27). The anointed king of Israel is living in a borrowed town, under the protection of an enemy king, waiting on a promise God already spoke. Ziklag is not the destination. Jerusalem is the destination. Ziklag is the in-between.

KEY DEFINITION

Ziklag: a borrowed, in-between place. Anointed but not yet enthroned. A place God allows you to pass through, never a place He called you to settle.

While David and his six hundred men were away, the Amalekites raided Ziklag, burned it to the ground, and carried off everyone in it: wives, sons, daughters. Nobody was killed. Everybody was taken. And notice who did it. Amalek is not a random enemy in Scripture. Amalek is a pattern. The first battle Israel ever fought after the Exodus was against Amalek at Rephidim (Exodus 17), and they attacked a redeemed people who were tired and on the move.

KEY DEFINITION

Amalek: the pattern that attacks God's people after deliverance, when they are weary, worn out, and in between, striking the ones lagging behind. Amalek does not attack your strength. It waits for your tiredness.

1 SAMUEL 30:1-8, NIV

David and his men reached Ziklag on the third day. Now the Amalekites had raided the Negev and Ziklag. They had attacked Ziklag and burned it, and had taken captive the women and everyone else in it, both young and old. They killed none of them, but carried them off as they went on their way. When David and his men reached Ziklag, they found it destroyed by fire and their wives and sons and daughters taken captive. So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep. David's two wives had been captured, Ahinoam of Jezreel and Abigail, the widow of Nabal of Carmel. David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God. Then David said to Abiathar the priest, the son of Ahimelek, "Bring me the ephod." Abiathar brought it to him, 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."

In less than a chapter, Saul will be dead and David's road to the throne will open. Amalek struck at the last stop before the crown. The attack came in the in-between because that is where Amalek always works.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Where is your Ziklag right now: the in-between place between what God promised and where you are living?
2. Why do you think the enemy attacks in seasons of tiredness and transition instead of seasons of strength?
3. What has been taken from you in an in-between season that you have slowly learned to live without?
4. Read Deuteronomy 25:17-18. What does Amalek's method tell you about how to guard your own tired seasons?

MOVEMENT 1 · NAME THE THEFT

JOHN 14:27, NIV

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Jesus speaks this to His disciples the night before the cross, in the middle of their fear about what is coming. He does not say, peace you will feel when life calms down. He says, my peace I give you. Peace was a gift placed in your hands at salvation. If it is missing, do not start by blaming your grip. Ask who took it.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

shalom *"peace"*

Wholeness, completeness, well-being. Nothing missing and nothing broken. God's peace is not the absence of trouble. It is the presence of wholeness in the middle of it. That is the title of this sermon: I am missing a peace, and I am missing a piece. When shalom breaks, you can feel the missing piece.

Some things in your life were not lost. They were stolen. There is a difference. When you misplace something, you shrug and say, I will find it later. When something is stolen from you, it works on you differently, because it was taken, and it was not your fault. A lot of believers have learned to call theft "loss" because loss is easier to accept. You say, I guess I just lost my peace somewhere along the way. But peace is not something you earn back. Peace is something Jesus gave.

2 PETER 1:3, NIV

His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

God is not withholding your peace until you perform better. If it is not in your possession, the question is not whether God gave it. The question is when, where, and how it was taken. And for most of us, it was taken in a Ziklag: in the in-between, while we were tired and waiting.

Peace is not something you earn back. Peace is something Jesus gave.

The first time Amalek appears, the battle turned on tired hands. As long as Moses held up his hands, the Israelites were winning, but whenever he lowered his hands, the Amalekites were winning (Exodus 17:11-12). Tired hands are Amalek's opportunity. The enemy does not need you to quit. He only needs you tired enough to lower your hands.

HEART QUESTION

What have you been calling lost that heaven would call stolen?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between losing your peace and having it stolen? Why does the difference matter?
2. Read John 14:27 again. What changes when you know peace was given to you, not earned by you?
3. Where in your life have your hands dropped from tiredness? Who could help hold them up, the way Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands?
4. What would it look like this week to stop blaming your grip and start naming the theft?

SAY IT

What I am missing was not lost. It was stolen.

MOVEMENT 2 · DO NOT SKIP THE PROCESS

1 SAMUEL 30:4, 6, NIV

So David and his men wept aloud until they had no strength left to weep... But David found strength in the LORD his God.

Before David pursues anything, the text slows down. Watch the order, because the order is the teaching. David wept. Then David strengthened himself. Then David inquired. Then David acted. Weep, strengthen, inquire, act. Most of us want to go straight from the ashes to the action, and that is how we end up fighting in our feelings instead of in faith.

First, David wept. He wept aloud until he had no strength left to weep. Tears are not a lack of faith. Tears are what honesty looks like before faith moves. We do not rush past the grief in this text, because David did not. David, the man after God's own heart, cried until he could not cry anymore, and the Bible records it without shame.

FROM GRATEFUL AND GRIEVING · CHAPTER 1

"Gratitude and grief can exist in the same heart. You do not have to wait until your heart sorts itself out to climb. God is not asking you to deny what it cost you. He is asking you not to camp where it cost you."

That is David at Ziklag. He did not deny what it cost him, and he did not camp in the ashes. He grieved in them, he strengthened himself, and then he got up. Second, David strengthened himself in the LORD his God. His own men, the men who left everything to follow him, were talking about stoning him. Every one of them was bitter over his own sons and daughters. David could not get encouragement from the crowd, because the crowd was grieving too. Sometimes the people around you cannot encourage you, not because they do not love you, but because they are carrying the same loss you are.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

chazaq *"strengthened himself"*

To lay hold of strength, to grip courage, to seize hold and not let go. David did not wait to feel strong. He took hold of God. Strength was not found. It was gripped. The text does not tell us exactly how he did it, and that silence is on purpose, so you cannot copy a method. It has to become personal. Most likely, he remembered: the lion and the bear, Goliath, every time Saul hunted him and God kept him. He preached his own history with God back to his own soul until his hands were steady again.

Third, David inquired. He called for the ephod and asked God two honest questions: Shall I pursue this raiding party? Will I overtake them? He did not assume. He did not react. He asked. And he asked before he had any proof that his family was even alive.

KEY DEFINITION

Inquire: to ask God for direction before you move. Inquiry is what stands between your emotions and your actions. Feelings tell you to react. Inquiry teaches you to respond.

Do not skip the process. Weep honestly. Strengthen yourself in your God. Ask Him before you move. Then act on His word, not on your wounds.

HEART QUESTION

Which step of David's order do you usually skip: the weeping, the strengthening, or the inquiring?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why do you think the Bible records David's tears without shame? What permission does that give you?

2. When the people around you are grieving the same loss, where do you go for strength?
3. What is one specific time God brought you through that you can preach back to your own soul this week?
4. What decision are you facing right now that needs inquiry before action?

SAY IT

I will not skip the process. I will weep, strengthen, inquire, and then act.

MOVEMENT 3 · PURSUE, RECOVER, AND SHARE

1 SAMUEL 30:18-19, NIV

David recovered everything the Amalekites had taken, including his two wives. Nothing was missing: young or old, boy or girl, plunder or anything else they had taken. David brought everything back.

When David asked, God answered with an assignment and a promise in the same breath: Pursue them. You will certainly overtake them and succeed in the rescue. God did not just comfort David in the ashes. He authorized him to go get back what was taken. Some of us have been waiting on God to hand it back while we sit in the ashes. This text says God speaks, and then we pursue.

WORD STUDY · HEBREW

natsal *"recover"*

To snatch away, to pluck out, to deliver. Recovery in this text is not finding something you misplaced. It is taking back something that was taken. God does not tell David to go look for it. He tells him to go rescue it.

And look at how complete the recovery was. Nothing was missing. That is shalom language. The same God who gives peace with nothing missing and nothing broken recovered a whole community with nothing missing. Recovery in God's hands is not partial. He does not bring back most of it. He brings back all of it.

1 SAMUEL 30:23-24, NIV

David replied, "No, my brothers, you must not do that with what the LORD has given us. He has protected us and delivered into our hands the raiding party that came against us. Who will listen to what you say? The share of the man who stayed with the supplies is to be the same as that of him who went down to the battle. All will share alike."

On the way back, David met the two hundred men who were too exhausted to cross the valley and stayed with the supplies. Some of the men who fought wanted to keep everything for themselves and send the exhausted men away with only their families. David refused. The man who stayed with the supplies was too exhausted to fight, and David refused to punish exhaustion. The brother who could not fight this battle still belongs at the table of the victory. What God restores to you is not only for you. Recovery ends with open hands, or it curdles into greed.

Recovered people do not hoard. Somebody who stayed behind is supposed to eat from your recovery.

HEART QUESTION

When God restores what was taken from you, who else is supposed to eat from your recovery?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the difference between waiting on God and pursuing what God told you to pursue?
2. Why does the narrator stress that 'nothing was missing'? What does that say about the peace God wants to restore in you?
3. Why did David insist the exhausted men share equally? What does that teach us about how we treat people who could not fight this season?
4. What is one step of pursuit you can take this week toward what was stolen from you?

SAY IT

I will pursue what God told me to pursue, and I will recover all.

CLOSE · RECOVER ALL

1 SAMUEL 30:6, NIV

David was greatly distressed because the men were talking of stoning him; each one was bitter in spirit because of his sons and daughters. But David found strength in the LORD his God.

David stood in the ashes of the in-between, anointed but not yet enthroned, and he refused to learn how to live without what God gave him. He wept. He strengthened himself in the LORD his God. He inquired. And God said, pursue, and you will recover all.

This is how we live open handed:

- Name the theft. Stop calling stolen things lost.
- Do not skip the process. Weep, strengthen, inquire, act.
- Pursue and recover. Move on God’s word, not on your wounds.
- Share the recovery. Keep your hands open on the way back.

DECLARATION

> **I am missing a peace, but I am not staying missing. What was stolen in my in-between, I am going back to get. Not lost. Stolen. Recover all.**

Final landing. Open your hands, literally, right where you are. Name the thing that was taken: your peace, your joy, your prayer life, your family, your focus. Then pray it plainly: Lord, I will not live without what You gave me. Strengthen me in You. Speak, and I will pursue. And I will recover all.

THIS WEEK

1. Write it down. Name one thing you have been calling lost. Cross out “lost” and write “stolen.” Then pray John 14:27 over it out loud: Lord, You gave me Your peace. I am not living without what You gave.
2. Run David’s order. Before you react to anything hard this week, name the grief out loud, remember one specific time God brought you through and say it out loud, then ask God one clear question and wait for His direction before you act.
3. Take one step of pursuit. Do one concrete thing toward recovering what was taken: restart the prayer time, make the call, open the conversation.
4. Share from your recovery. Encourage one person who was too exhausted to fight this season, and let them eat from what God is restoring in you.

> **My peace was not lost. It was stolen. And I will recover all.**