

FROM ISOLATION TO TRANSFORMATION

DATE: SUNDAY, 27TH OF SEPTEMBER 2020 | JOSEPH FA'AFIU

TALK
IT OVER

1 SAMUEL 22:1-2

"David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him."

NOTE TO LEADERS:

This Sunday we're back on-site for church services! Booking is essential for each person attending (including children). The 9am service will still be streamed live to YouTube and Facebook, and our CityHill Kids online resources will also be available at www.cityhillchurch.com

START TALKING

1. What was one thing from Sunday's message that challenged you?
2. What has been the biggest change in your life over the lockdown period?

START THINKING

1. Read Hebrews 1:8. On Sunday, Joseph mentioned that, no matter how our circumstances change, God is unchanged. How can knowing this bring us courage in difficult times?
2. In your opinion, how does isolation create an opportunity for God to transform our hearts?

START SHARING

1. The 7 ways that David's followers were transformed were:
 - a. They became people of valour, courageous and bold - brave under fire
 - b. People with a voice - speaking boldly
 - c. People of the Word - they looked at life according to God's word
 - d. Prophetic people - they saw the future, prepared for the future, and became the future
 - e. Well-equipped people - highly skilled, trained up.
 - f. People with authority, under authority
 - g. Even more, people of integrity - because their leader had skilled hands and a heart of integrityWhich of these is most significant to you, and why?
2. Joseph said that God uses our times of isolation to transform and prepare us. In what ways have you seen spiritual transformation or preparation in your own life during this time of lockdown?

3. Can you recall a time when you were called to serve God in a way that, in yourself, you felt was outside of your ability? How did God prepare or equip you for serving Him in that way?

START PRAYING

Is there anyone in the group who is unsure how they can serve God? Pray as a group for clarity of vision and purpose. Is there anyone who feels that they are needing transformation in some area of your heart? Pray a prayer surrendering that area to God, asking for His transformation and submitting yourself to be obedient to Him in the process.

START DOING

Joseph shared that we can allow God to train us spiritually by pressing into Him and into His word. This week, set a time each day that you can spend reading the Bible and praying - and then commit to keeping this time each day.

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

We were privileged to have Joseph Fa'afiu with us on Sunday to share an encouraging message about allowing God to transform us. Joseph joined us from Auckland, New Zealand, where he leads Navigators church along with his wife, Lydia.

Most of us have been affected by Covid-19 this year, and for most, that has meant isolation at some level. What's encouraging is that God does not leave us isolated without reason, but can use moments like this to transform us. Today is an opportunity to ask, "God, what are you teaching me at this time?" Even though our circumstances are constantly changing, God is unchanged, even in this exceptional time. When we go through periods of isolation, we can trust in a God who is infinite and immeasurable to use these moments to transform our lives. We can ask Him, "Asking: God, what are you teaching me so that when I come out of this season, I will be ready and prepared to do more for You?"

"David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam. When his brothers and his father's household heard about it, they went down to him there. All those who were in distress or in debt or discontented gathered around him, and he became their commander. About four hundred men were with him." 1 Samuel 22:1-2.

At this time, Saul was king of Israel, and David was the anointed future king. Saul was jealous of David's success and popularity, so he was attempting to kill David. While David was running for his life, God brought those who were bitter, in debt and in distress, to David, because God does not let situations go by - He uses every situation to form, to create and transform our lives.

*"I cry aloud to the Lord;
I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy.
I pour out before him my complaint;
before him I tell my trouble.*

*When my spirit grows faint within me,
it is you who watch over my way.
In the path where I walk
people have hidden a snare for me.
Look and see, there is no one at my right hand;
no one is concerned for me.
I have no refuge;
no one cares for my life.*

*I cry to you, Lord;
I say, "You are my refuge,
my portion in the land of the living."*

*Listen to my cry,
for I am in desperate need;
rescue me from those who pursue me,
for they are too strong for me.
Set me free from my prison,
that I may praise your name.*

*Then the righteous will gather about me
because of your goodness to me."*
Psalm 142:1-7

In the midst of his isolation, David finds himself being transformed by the Lord. We should ask for the same - we do not want to come out of our isolation the same; we want to be transformed by God. David recognised that he had a desperate need for God, and we need to recognise the same thing. We can't survive on our own wisdom and ways of living; we have to go to God and trust Him, our refuge. We have to surrender ourselves to God to allow Him to transform our hearts. We see this modelled repeatedly in the Bible!

- Jonah was isolated in a big fish for three days and came out with renewed passion and vision
- Moses was isolated on top of a mountain for 40 days and came down with renewed passion and vision, bringing the 10 commandments and going on to change a whole nation
- Jesus Himself goes into isolation in the wilderness and comes back empowered and with renewed passion and vision
- And you - whatever roles you play (teacher, pastor, parent, business owner, leader, police officer community worker) - will you allow God to change your perspective today so that He can bring you out of your isolation transformed?

The people who came to David in the cave of Adullam found themselves transformed in the way they did things and the way they viewed God. The men who came to David ended up being transformed by God into mighty warriors! And we have the opportunity to come out of our isolation, not disconnected or discontent, but transformed into a mighty warrior who represents our King and His Kingdom more fervently and more powerfully.

1 Chronicles 12:22 shows us the transformation:

1. They became people of valour, courageous and bold - brave under fire.
2. People with a voice - speaking boldly.
3. People of the Word - they looked at life according to God's word.
4. Prophetic people - they saw the future, prepared for the future, and became the future.
5. Well-equipped people - highly skilled, trained up. Are you training yourself for what God is bringing you into? We do this training by pressing into Him and His word.
6. People with authority, under authority.
7. Even more, people of integrity - because their leader had skilled hands and a heart of integrity.

Be encouraged today, knowing that God rules over every moment. What have you asked of God in this time? What preparation are you asking for? What work is in store for you? How are you using this moment to create momentum? We pray that you would be encouraged and stirred today to step into the work that God has called you to!