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Takeaways From Tough Times
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"Takeaways" is a popular phrase used in business meetings and boardrooms to identify the action items or things that should have been learned as a result of the meeting. This term can also be used in our lives as well. Tough times teach us what pleasant times never will.

When we consider the life of David from the 13th chapter to chapter 21 of 1 Samuel, it is clear that he experienced tough times and based on the text for today, there are at least two takeaways we can glean.

1. Life Has Seasons and Cycles

The seasons and cycles of the weather give us a poignant reality that everything in life changes. We cannot expect tomorrow to be the same as today. Spring comes after winter, summer comes after spring, fall comes after summer, and winter comes after fall. And while the seasons of weather come and go on an ongoing basis, they are not a perfect example of life's seasons.

In life, although things do change, we cannot expect them to be constant. Things change in our lives in ways we cannot plan for or anticipate. We think things should be the way we planned or plotted them to be. When we look for a zig, we end up with a zag. When we dress for cold weather, it is hot, and when we plan for sunny days, it rains; all because the seasons and cycles of life are never constant and are very unpredictable.

Think about the seasons and cycles David and Saul's life. In 1 Samuel 10, Samuel anoints Saul as the first king. When we get to chapter 13, Saul makes an unlawful sacrifice, which disrespected the command of God. In chapter 15, Saul again disrespects the command of God and allows Agag, king of the Amalekites to live causing God to reject him as king. In chapter 16, Samuel anoints David but Saul is still king. In chapter 17, David defeats Goliath the giant Philistine warrior giving him honor among his fellow warriors. In chapter 18, Saul appoints David over his army; Israel fights the Philistines under David's leadership and wins. After the victory, the women of Israel sang, Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands. This caused Saul to resent David as Saul begrudgingly gives his daughter Michal's hand to David in marriage. In chapter 19, Saul's jealousy gets the best of him and he begins to persecute David and tried to kill him with his spear. In chapter 20, Jonathan pledges his loyalty to David and because of Saul's anger, he tries to kill David again with his spear.

Once we get to chapter 21, David becomes a fugitive on the run. In many ways, our lives are just like David's. The seasons and cycles of life do not seem to cooperate with our plans. The drama, negative situations, and stress that David was dealing with were the result of somebody else's problems (Saul). Saul was not self-secure and it played out in David's life without David's permission. But then, we too can be the ones who make life

hard for others, all we need to do is look back over our lives and see how our actions have caused trauma and pressure on others.

Throughout all of the seasons and cycles of life, David had **ONE** constant. That constant can be found in 1 Samuel 16:18; 18:12; 18:14; and 18:28 and it says, "The Lord Was With David." Throughout all the seasons and cycles in your life, if the Lord is with you, you can overcome your situation. No matter what the seasons and cycles may bring, the Lord is still the same. Sometimes you've got to talk to yourself about those things in the Word that confirm that the Lord is with you.

- Sometimes you've got to say:
- I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.
- Touch not thought anointed and do their prophet no harm.
- Your latter days will be greater than your former days.
- No weapon formed against you shall prosper.
- I once was young but now I'm old and I have not seen my seed suffer or begging for bread.
- What the devil meant for evil, God meant it for good.

2. Out of Our Problems and Pain, God Can Produce Praise

Although David is a fugitive on the run, he has to go to unlikely places and he has to do unpopular things in order to survive. As a fugitive, he finds himself in Nob seeking refuge, food, and a weapon. David is desperate, turns to desperate measures, and flees to Gath, the hometown of Goliath where the people of Gath recognize him. When the people recognized David as the person who stayed Goliath, he begins to act like a madman in order to save his life once again. Sometimes when you find yourself in a crazy situation, you've got to act crazy yourself in order to be protected. When the king found out that David was acting like a madman, he stopped worrying and made sure that madman David came nowhere near his home. As a result of the seasons and cycles in the text, David writes Psalm 34 to assist people in times of trial that God can move you from problems and pressure to praise.

Conclusion: No matter where you find yourself and no matter how difficult the situation may be, takeaways from these difficult times are 1) Life has seasons and cycles and 2) Out of your problems and pain, God can produce praise. May God bless you as you meditate on his life saving and transforming Word during the week.