

2nd Samuel Ch 14

We remember that David's life unfolds in 3 basic categories, if one were to sum up the overall layout of David's life it could be done so by the words, #1 Triumph, #2 Tragedy, and #3 Troubles. We've watched David's triumph as he's gone from one triumph to another, his trust and his faith in God has wrought victory after victory in his life from the time he was a boy killing lions and bears that were threatening his flock, to the taking out of Goliath who sought to stand in the face of the God of Israel. We've seen him raised up to sit in the king's court to being as it were leading the life of a refugee as Saul sought to erase him for all those years, but he trusted in the Lord, depended upon the Lord and was triumphant through the Lord. And ultimately God gave David the nation of Israel and made him a King who established Israel like no other; David was a man of triumph.

But we've also not only watched David's triumph, but we've witnessed David's tragedy. How he made provision for his flesh and never really dealt with his passions towards those of the opposite gender. And ultimately through a course of events the enemy would use that very area that David loved to indulge to unravel him and bring tragedy into his life. And one night as he was out overlooking the city on his rooftop terrace (wondering how the war was going of which he should have been in the thick of) he looked out and there was this knockout for a woman taking a bath in full view. You know the story, he inquired of her, decided he had to have her, and regardless of the fact that she was married to one of his military buddies, was the granddaughter of his trusted counselor and advisor David took her and committed adultery. But that adultery led to pregnancy, that pregnancy led ultimately to the murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, and David sought to conceal his sin by taking Bathsheba to be his wife before she began to show so that the pregnancy could be explained even though her husband was out to war doing David's bidding. It was a tragedy indeed.

And that tragedy opened the floodgates of trouble for David for the rest of his life. Sure God forgave Him, revived and restored Him, but the ramifications of that act would plague David the rest of his life. Nathan came to David, exposed the cover up and the sin in David's life (even as God is faithful to do in your life and in my life when we seek to cover our sin rather than deal with our sin.) We have this weird bent about us that would rather appear to be ok in the sight of man rather than actually be ok in the sight of God. The bible says, "*The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.*" Prov 29:25 Jesus said, "*Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*" Matt 10:28 But it's so easy for us to get our priorities reversed and out of line. David did that and God was faithful to take those things that he'd done in the darkness and bring them to the light, to shout from the rooftops that which he'd done in the secret. Why? That David might come to his senses and repent of his sin, see it for the reality of what it was and the destruction that it was causing in the lives of so many. And Nathan told him that because he'd troubled another man's house, his house would be troubled perpetually, because he'd killed a man by the sword, the sword wouldn't depart from his house. And hence we catch up to David in ch 14 in the very midst of these troubles that would mark his life, and be apart of his life, for the rest of his life.

And it seems like I've said this so much, but it's just so relevant in a text such as this, "*Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*" Gal 6:7. And David had sown to the flesh and the harvest of corruption has been upon him in full force.

His 1st born son by Bathsheba has died, Amnon his eldest has raped his ½ sister Tamar, and because he did nothing about it, Absalom (Tamar's brother) took matters into his own hands and had Amnon run through with the sword at a little party that he was throwing. And not knowing how his Dad would respond he basically sentenced himself with a self imposed exile and ran off to his grandpa's place on his mom's side and he's been there now for 3 years. And as we discussed last time David had a real problem administering discipline in his kids lives because of his own shortcomings, he felt like he'd blown life in so many ways, that who was he to now try and uphold some type of righteous standard in the lives of his kids? (If you weren't here you might pick up that study because we took the time to dismantle that mentality because it's a lie from the pit of hell.) But because David refused to administer godly discipline in his children's lives, they got away with murder, literally, David did nothing about the rape, he did nothing about the murder, and he's done nothing about this self-imposed exile of Absalom, whether it be to seek him out and deal with the situation, or reconcile the matter, or whatever, he's just done nothing. And it's going to continue to breed more trouble in David's life, because it's another unresolved issue of sin. The bible says, "*He who spares his rod hates his son, But he who loves him disciplines him promptly.*" Prov 13:24 While it's still relevant, why? Because if you just blow it off then time has this way of just sort of lessening the severity of the issue and we just kinda let bygones be bygones and never truly bring godly resolve to the issue. And so there's been no proper guidance, or direction for the child's life, and the result of that will only breed more ungodliness in their lives. Let's pick it up in vs 38 of ch 13, Amnon has been murdered, David has heard the news and Absalom has taken flight.

Vs 38-1 (Of Ch 14)

So here in vs 1, 3 of the main characters in this ch emerge, we see Joab, the king, and Absalom. Now one thing we need to understand is that it would seem as though Absalom was in line at this point to be the crown prince. Because Amnon (David's oldest) was now dead, and Chileab (David's 2nd) is mentioned in 2nd Samuel Ch 3, but then we don't hear of him again. And because of that people assume that he either somehow died, or was perhaps incapacitated and unable to perform the duties of the role of the king because he's just never in the picture or brought up which leaves then Absalom who was David's 3rd and we'll see that even if he wasn't in line to be king, he sure thought that he should be and was determined to make it so. But it really seems as though that was the case because the bible speaks of his physical characteristics as a man who was good looking, with out blemish physically, and how the people were really interested in him and taken with him, much like they were with Saul. And the reason that's important to us is because now that he's in exile this has the real propensity to send a ripple through the nation and cause people to begin taking sides, because apparently there's a problem between the king, and the king to be.

And as we go through the text we almost get the sense that the longer he was gone, the more curious people became, the more they wanted to see him and find out about him. It's like he was growing in popularity just by the very nature of his ambiguity (a lot like it is today with people who are sort of in the lime light but always keep you guessing and the more vague matters become, the more interested people are.)

And it's quite possible that Joab, who wasn't exactly the most honorable of guys, he wasn't above cutting corners, and bending rules to get the job done, had his fair share of shady happenings in his life. But one thing that he was; was loyal to David, they may've had their differences from time to time, but he was loyal to his king.

And it's quite possible that he was familiar with the pulse of the people, and hearing the buzz around Jerusalem he knew that things were ripe for insurrection, because Absalom is off in Geshur stewing in bitterness, believing in his cause thinking he's done nothing but defend his sister's honor. And David is there in Jerusalem stewing in his bullheadedness refusing to reach out to his son and make things right one way or another, and these things make for a bad combination. Because Absalom is there thinking it's David's responsibility to defend him, make things right with him vindicating his actions, and David is concerned for his son, but he feels that it's Absalom's responsibility to come to him, to confess his wrong and repent of his ways, and so they've locked horns and neither one of them will budge. And so here's Joab, seeing the big picture, this goes way beyond a family squabble, this is the king and the crown prince sitting at odds with one another and the nation of Israel weighing in the balance. And he knows that David wants to see Absalom, and that that needs to take place for the sake of the people, (even if there is no true reconciliation). There's a saying that goes something to the effect of, "Keep your friends close, and your enemies even closer." And it's just not healthy to have Absalom (whom the people adore) out there stewing in bitterness beyond their reach or awareness of what he's up to, but David's just not open to reason. So what does Joab do? He recalls how Nathan came and told a tale, a parable of sorts that cornered David into confession, and how effective that was. And so he takes a similar approach having an elderly woman come and play on the compassion of the king to render a judgment against himself, just like before, notice vs 2.

Vs2-7

So here's the scenario, I'm a widow, my 2 sons were fighting, but there was no one out there to pull them apart, and in the heat of the moment the one killed the other. And now the other family members want to take the only son I have left, and slay him because of the crime that he's committed. But if they do that not only will I lead the rest of my life in certain poverty (because widows were really unable to tend to themselves in that culture, they depended upon their sons or son-in-law's to take care of them) but beyond that they'll snuff out my husband's name and heritage upon the earth.

Now the law was very clear regarding murder, even if it was in a moment of heated passion completely un-meditated. Now if you killed someone by accident, the tree you chop down falls on someone, or your ax head flies off and kills someone, the law would protect you, you could go to a city of refuge, get a fair trial and be saved alive. But if you outright murdered someone, that was a capital offense and it was the next of kin's responsibility to take your life, for the life you took. And that's what she's referencing here in vs 7 about how the family wants justice. Num 35:20-21 says, "*If he pushes him out of hatred or, while lying in wait, hurls something at him so that he dies, or in enmity he strikes him with his hand so that he dies, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death. He is a murderer. The avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.*"

But she's crying out for mercy, and David finds himself in a moral dilemma. "Do I simply stick to God's word even if it means taking this woman's only offspring, ruining her life, and quenching this man's name from the earth, or do I show mercy and give this guy another chance, and allow him to take care of his mom?" I mean, is it justice, or mercy?

Let me just say it's both. And what determines the difference the bible is very clear depends upon what level the issue is being dealt with. And what I mean by that is that upon an interpersonal level it's always mercy, when I violate you, or you violate me we're to show mercy. Blessed are the merciful for they shall receive mercy, with the level of forgiveness that we extend, so that same level will be extended back to us by God.

The problem is that we want to extend the espresso shot glass of mercy towards others, and have God dish out the x-tra grande', big gulp's worth of mercy to us, but it doesn't work that way. God will measure out to us, what we measure out to others (God help us to measure out plenty).

But on a judicial level it's always to be justice. When a case is brought to court, it's the judge's responsibility to mete out or administer justice in a given situation. How long would a judge be on a bench if every time a Ted Bundy type of fella was brought to the bench he just looked at him and said, "What do ya say, mulligan?" (You golfers didn't think I knew that word did ya?) "Do over, all I'm saying is give peace a chance, now get back out there and try again." He wouldn't last, the law demands justice, and the people expect it. So when it comes to you and me personally, it's mercy and forgiveness. But when it's taken to the judicial level, we're to expect justice, now where is she? She's asking the Supreme Court judge to bend the rules.

Vs8

In other words, "I'll take care of this somehow, just go ahead and go home." Now David has heard what she has to say, but remember he's done no research, hasn't investigated the matter, or heard the other side. The bible says, "*The first one to plead his cause seems right, Until his neighbor comes and examines him.*" Prov 18:17. And again, "*He who answers a matter before he hears it, It is folly and shame to him.*" Prov 18:13.

Anytime you hear one side you're prone to side with that person, because according to what they tell you, you can see their point. That's why it's always important to hear the matter from both parties whenever possible, because inevitably there's another side, or other facts that haven't entered the equation, but David doesn't do that.

Vs9-10

So she says, "If you'll just give him another chance, even though it goes against the letter of the law, we'll assume the guilt and you can be innocent." And so David says, "Ok, if anyone harasses you on the matter, you just bring them to me and it'll never happen again."

Vs11

Boom! The hammer falls, that's the answer they've been looking for and now David is once again trapped by a tale, notice."

Vs12-13

You see; she drops the hammer. She says, "I want to say one thing to you." And David says, "Say it." And she says, "You're a hypocrite. Because you've made an excuse for my supposed son, are willing to overlook his crime and pardon him, but your own son is out there in exile and you refuse to forgive him and pardon him. If you're willing to pardon my son, how much more should you pardon your own?" "If you'll protect my son who's a murderer, why won't you protect your son who is a murderer?"

And what she's saying is that, "According to your own judgment, there comes a time when it's acceptable to excuse murder." Now we could point out the differences in what her fabricated story entailed vs what Absalom did, one premeditated the other a crime of passion, one the only remaining heir, the other had several brothers, one a widow woman, the other the family of a king. But really those things are irrelevant, the reason that David is trapped is for one reason only, and take note of it. David is trapped because he gave advise, and offered counsel based upon his own emotion and reasoning, rather than what the word of God said. She played upon the chords of David's compassion, and he diverted his judgment and his counsel from the Word of God, to what seemed to be a reasonable thing to do. But here's the deal, it's never reasonable to offer suggestions or protection, or give advise that goes against the grain of God's Word.

When you give advise to somebody, you do well, I do well to be very careful to stick to the word of God, because if I give them my own reasoning I'll get caught. And I'll find myself ensnared, entrapped and all entangled, because perhaps I'll tell one person one thing, but the next day my mood is different and so I tell someone else something else. And people will say, "Why did you say *this* to that person, but *that* to the other person?" Or do this over here but that over there? And you'll find yourself all tangled up, so when you share, or give advise, or some sort of counsel, the best thing we can do is say, "Well, listen, here's what the scriptures say." And regardless of my mood, I let the scriptures stand on their own and speak for themselves, anything else will get you all tangled up.

And here in vs 13 she's saying that Israel is like the widowed woman, David is like the avenger of blood, and Absalom is like their one remaining son, the one who's going to take care of them, the crown prince, "and David, you need to reconcile the matter and bring him home!"

Vs14-17

Back in vs 14 she even seeks to appeal to the nature of God in His mercy and kindness and how He overlooks transgression and says that David needs to do the same. The Pulpit Commentary says this, "The argument is full of poetry, and touching to the feelings, but is not very sound. For God requires repentance and change of heart; and there was no sign of contrition on Absalom's part." And not only that, something else we need to see is that God doesn't offer reconciliation by *circumventing* justice, but rather by *satisfying* justice. His justice was poured out upon His Son Jesus Christ upon the cross, therefore He's made a way of reconciliation to man not by circumventing justice, but by satisfying it, we are reconciled to God through Christ who bore the just penalty of our sin.

But one thing I will give her is that she sees the need to reconcile a matter while there's still time. She says, "Look, we're all going to die and be like water spilled on the ground." And once water spills on the ground that's it, you can't pick it back up and put it in your cup, it's gone. So she says, "You need to reconcile the matter while there's time." There's no 2nd chances after someone dies to reconcile a matter with them, the bible says, "*It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment.*" Heb 9:27. And we do well to lead our lives with the sense of sobriety concerning that fact, if there's something you need to get right with somebody, now's the time, because once they're gone, they're gone.

Vs18-21

"Alright, I get your point, go get Absalom and bring him back."

Vs22-24

Big mistake, he basically places Absalom on house arrest, extends himself like he's going to forgive his son, but then puts conditions and limits on his forgiveness. "Well, he can come back but..." And that's just not forgiveness, and it's amazing what our stupid pride will do to us, it's like we want to quit fighting, we're sick of being at each other, but I'm not going to say "Sorry" 1st, she's going to have to, or he's going to have to. And because of our stupid pride, the thing we really want to do we won't do, we'd rather be miserable. And so we allow things to go on, to stew and simmer and boil up, just because we refuse to humble ourselves and say, "I'm sorry." (Regardless of whose fault it was.) It takes 2 to tango. So with Absalom this just makes matters worse, "I'm here but I may as well not be because I'm stuck on house arrest." It's been 5 yrs since he's seen his dad (who's now near 60).

Now these next vs prepare us for Absalom's rebellion, inform us as to the fact that Absalom's got everything going for him, everything Israel looks for in a King he's got it going on, just like Saul did.

Vs 25-26

Commentators vary between 4-6lbs. Regardless, that's a lot of hair, and it's a real point of pride for Absalom. And it's that very point of pride that's going to get him all tangled up and left hanging, his pride will be his destruction even as the bible says.

Vs27

And again because they're not named it's assumed that they died young, and later text reveals that Absalom had no heir, so they apparently somehow died.

Vs28-32

You see Absalom feels completely vindicated in what he's done, believes that the murder of his brother was the only honorable thing to do seeing as how he raped his sister. And he's saying, "Even if my dad sees what I did as somehow wrong, if he's never going to forgive me, then let him execute me now, it's been 5 yrs and he's killing me either way because he refuses to reconcile with me." Parents, see this, un-reconciled issues between you and you're child will breed real bitterness in them, if they never sense your approval, or your forgiveness if they've messed up, then, "My parents think I'm a failure I may as well act like one." It's so important that we work things out when there's a breach.

The other day I asked my boy to do something, he told me no, and let me just say, it set me off. And so I duly grounded him that day, now what he did was wrong, and my punishment wasn't wrong, but the way I dealt with it was. And so when I got home I went to him, gave him a hug and said, "What you did was wrong, but the way I handled it was wrong to." And I asked him to forgive me. And if we don't deal with things when they're relevant, the severity of the issue may wax in our minds, but the ramifications will brew on, and bitterness will begin to set in.

Vs33

Which was the sign of forgiveness and restoration, but you know what? It's too late, it's too late, David didn't tend to this in a timely manner, didn't administer any discipline, just sort of reluctantly sweeps it under the carpet. But the damage is already done, over the course of these years Absalom's heart has turned against his dad and for him this is but a technicality that got him off of house arrest that he might get busy about building his own kingdom. And we'll see that next time (Lord willing).

Make things right with your kids, or if there's a matter that needs dealt with in your life. And be careful when someone comes to you for advice that you don't give them your advice, give them the word of God. It's consistent, it's dependable, and it'll keep you out of a trap.