

2 Samuel 14-16:14 • Absalom's Treachery

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2 Samuel chapter 14. In the last chapter that we looked at, we saw family drama at its absolute worst. But David we've seen has been a pretty, pretty bad father for the most part. And has not restrained his sons and not taken care of his daughters. And we saw that it came to tragedy when his son Amnon began to desire to be with his half-sister Tamar and finally ended up raping her. And then afterwards hated her. And Absalom, the whole the full brother of Tamar, then after 2 years took vengeance against his half-brother Amnon, murdered him.

And in all of this, we don't really hear of David doing much at all. He didn't respond when Amnon raped his sister. He didn't respond when Absalom even murdered his brother.

And we talked last week about the paralysis that can sometime come into our own lives when we ourselves have committed sin and we've done things that we knew were wrong. And then we find that somebody close to us does something wrong. And we find that there's a paralysis to really do something to stand for the righteousness of God in the midst of that situation.

If you missed out on that message and didn't hear that exhortation, then you can check that one out online. But it just goes from bad to worse so we better pray first as we get into this.

Heavenly Father, open our hearts. This is stuff that You've given us in Your Word and we want to hear it, but be more than hearers. We want to be doers of the Word. We want to see something in the Word tonight that's going to challenge our hearts to live for You in a deeper and more dynamic way.

Lord so we ask that You would just speak to our hearts this evening. We ask that You would communicate to us through your Holy Spirit and just enlarge our understanding. Enable us to really lay hold of the things that are given us here in 2 Samuel for the purpose of our growth and understanding.

Use this Father God. It sometimes seems so unfair to, almost like we're taking advantage of the tragedy and drama of one family so that we might learn but I

thank You that you've preserved these things for us in the Word that they might be for us great words of wisdom and warning and encouragement. Use this time, Father, God, touch Your children's hearts. We ask it in Jesus' name, amen.

After Absalom murdered his half-brother, Amnon, he basically subjected himself to leaving to the kingdom, to being banished from the kingdom. He wasn't banished by his father, but he had, it was a self-banishment. He left, he went to go live with his mother's family. They were not Jews by the way, but it's been a period of time now.

And it starts off in 2 Samuel 14 by telling us that, *"...Joab the son of Zeruiah knew that the king's heart went out to Absalom."* (ESV)

Now it starts off here talking to us about Joab and you'll remember that Joab is the commander of David's armed forces. And Joab is an interesting case study in just people. He's a very, very loyal man but he's not a terribly moral man in many respects. And he's one of these kind of guys who will do what he needs to do to kind of get the job done. And we're going to see that in this chapter because nowhere else is it probably seen in this chapter what he is willing to do.

But it says he realizes that the heart of the David was going out to his son, Absalom. And so it says in verse 2 that, *"And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman and said to her, 'Pretend to be a mourner and put on mourning garments. Do not anoint yourself with oil, but behave like a woman who has been mourning many days for the dead.' ³ Go to the king and speak thus to him."* So Joab put the words in her mouth."

Now this is Joab. This is the kind of guy he is what he willing to do. Obviously Joab felt like there was something that would help the kingdom. And I really believe he had probably good intentions as it relates to this thing that he's doing, that he wants or believes that to get David and Joab to some. Excuse me. David and Absalom to some place of reconciliation is going to better the kingdom somehow, but the way he goes about things, I mean, Joab, this is just who he is.

I mean, the ends justify the means in his mind. And so he gets this woman and he says, I want you to pretend to be in mourning. And I want you to go before the king and I'm going to put, I'm going to tell you what I want you to say to him.

And what he's basically going to do here in this chapter, and I'll just tell you ahead of time, he's going to trap him. He's going to bring this woman before David in such a way as to entrap him in his words, so that he will be willing

then to bring Absalom home because he knows that he already wants to. Joab knows that David already wants to bring his son home. He just really can't find the justifiable means. And he's going to give him those means.

And so it's a fairly lengthy kind of a thing, but in verse 4 it says, *“When the woman of Tekoa came to the king, she fell on her face to the ground (she's a great actress, probably could have won an academy for this) and paid homage and said, “Save me, O king.”⁵ And the king said to her, “What is your trouble?” She answered, “Alas, I am a widow; my husband is dead.⁶ And your servant had two sons, and they quarreled with one another in the field. There was no one to separate them, and one struck the other and killed him.⁷ And now the whole clan has risen against your servant, and they say, ‘Give up the man who struck his brother, that we may put him to death for the life of his brother whom he killed.’ And so they would destroy the heir also. Thus they would quench my coal that is left and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant on the face of the earth.”*”

You see what's going on? So she's a woman. She says, I'm a widow. I have two sons. My only ability to maintain the husband, my husband's name and to take care of me in my old age. And my boys went out into the field one day and they got into a quarrel, but there wasn't anybody who witnessed it. We don't know what happened. We don't know.

What she's presenting to David is a situation where he really can't know what's happening for sure. Was this manslaughter? I mean, which is an accidental death or was this premeditated murder? We don't know. She doesn't know. She says there are no witnesses and she presents it that way to David to say, in essence, we don't know what happened here, but I'll tell you one thing we do know. And again, this is a made up story that all the people of my clan are crying out for justice against my only remaining son. And they want to take him and they want to put him to death for this, believing that he is at fault. And so I'm coming to you king because I need your help in this situation. And so there you go.

“Then the king said to the woman, (verse 8) “Go to your house, and I will give orders concerning you.”⁹ And the woman of Tekoa said to the king, “On me be the guilt, my lord the king, and on my father's house; let the king and his throne be guiltless.”¹⁰ The king said, “If anyone says anything to you, bring him to me, and he shall never touch you again.” (and)¹¹ Then she said, “Please let the king invoke the LORD your God, that the avenger of blood kill no more, and my son be not destroyed.” He said, “As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground.”

Now this is, what she's done is she has, and David was a very passionate man who cared very much for people. But sometimes when we allow our compassion to overwhelm our better sense of justice, we can make decisions like David is making right now. Again, he's being trapped into it. But he's basically making the determination that he's going to rule in this case without really knowing what happened.

Now, justice would have said, ma'am, there's no way to really know what happened in the field between your two boys. I suggest we get the high priest involved, that we go before the Lord and that's what the law told them to do. And there were prescribed ways of making a determination in a situation where there were no witnesses to see the alleged crime and so forth.

But David is just kind of skipping all beyond that. And he says, *"not one hair of your son (is) ...fall to the ground."* Don't worry. And he's basically pardoning the one son who we don't even know if he exists. But he's doing it, again, being tricked into it.

This has to be hitting pretty close to home because he's had the same thing happen. Although in his case, he knows that it was premeditated murder, when Absalom killed Amnon.

And *"Then the woman said, (verse 12) 'Please let your servant speak a word to my lord the king.' He said, 'Speak.'"*¹³ *And the woman said, 'Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in giving this decision the king convicts himself, inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again.'"*

In other words what she's saying to him is you've done for me, what you won't even do for your own family. So why is that? And she's essentially trying to catch him in kind of a two faced almost thing where she's saying, you're willing to do this for me, but you're not willing to do this in your own family situation.

She goes on. She's going to, she's quite an orator here. She says, *"¹⁴ We must all die; we are like water spilled on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again. But God will not take away life, and he devises means so that the banished one will not remain an outcast."*¹⁵ *Now I have come to say this to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid, and your servant thought, 'I will speak to the king; it may be that the king will perform the request of his servant.'*¹⁶ *For the king will hear and deliver his servant from the hand of the man who would destroy me and my son together from the heritage of God.'*¹⁷ *And your servant thought, 'The word of my lord the king will set me*

at rest, ' for my lord the king is like the angel of God to discern good and evil. The LORD your God be with you! "

Boy, she's laying it on thick, isn't she? *"¹⁸ Then the king answered the woman, "Do not hide from me anything I ask you." And the woman said, "Let my lord the king speak." ¹⁹ The king said, "Is the hand of Joab with you in all this?" The woman answered and said, "As surely as you live, my lord the king, one cannot turn to the right hand or to the left from anything that my lord the king has said. It was your servant Joab who commanded me; it was he who put all these words in the mouth of your servant. ²⁰ In order to change the course of things your servant Joab did this. But my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God to know all things that are on the earth. " "* Okay, wow. Talk about buttering your bread on both sides, right?

"²¹ Then the king said to (obviously told) Joab, (to come in, he says) "Behold now, I grant this; go, bring back the young man Absalom." ²² And Joab fell on his face to the ground and paid homage and blessed the king. And Joab said, "Today your servant knows that I have found favor in your sight, my lord the king, in that the king has granted the request of his servant. " "

But between the lines you hear what Joab is saying. He's saying, phew! I'm really glad that when you realized that I was deceiving you through this woman, you didn't decide to punish me. But instead, in fact, you saw what we were trying to accomplish, and now you're going to give in. And you're going to extend a pardon also to your son, whom we tricked you into pardoning, thinking that you are in fact doing it for someone else. It's like, phew! Sure glad that didn't backfire on me. That's what's really coming out of Joab's mouth here. He's relieved.

And *"²³ So Joab arose and went to Geshur and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. ²⁴ And the king said, "Let him dwell apart in his own house; he is not to come into my presence." So Absalom lived apart in his own house and did not come into the king's presence. "*

And so basically what David did is he pardons him. He lets him come back and live in his home and live like really nothing ever happened. I guess you really didn't kill your brother after all. And can live in your home and everything's going to be just hunky dory. The only thing, the only prohibition he's placed on Absalom, is he can't see my face. It's not a real reconciliation, is it? He's allowed him to come back, live in his own home and stuff, but we're really not going to be reconciled.

This is taking a step and really David took the worst step in this whole thing because certainly other people are going to know that Absalom has come back. There's no punishment that has taken place. There's no justice that has been meted out related to this crime of killing his brother but David just let him come back, right? Where exactly does justice sit in this country that we live in? This is, you can see this is just not a good situation any way you slice it.

Now we're going to talk a little bit about Absalom because this is a young man, of course, who we've already been introduced to. A man who's willing to take vengeance and murder into his own hands but it gets worse than that.

Verse 25 says, *“Now in all Israel there was no one so much to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom. From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no blemish in him.”*

Now, this is Absalom's claim to fame for the most part. I mean yeah, he's the son of David. And in essence, now, he would be considered by maybe some of the people to be the crown prince. But, the big thing that the Bible makes reference about him is he was a good looking guy.

Now because he was a good looking guy, Absalom has really everything he needs to win over the people of Israel. And that's what he's going to attempt to do. But it's essentially by smooching people and just making them feel special and stuff like that. Because he's an attractive person. It's interesting, attractive people can make, can have inroads into life in ways that the rest of us can't. It's just the way it is. We think here in the United States of America, we came up with the idea of attractive, good looking people or something like that. We've got the, we've got the corner on that market. No, it's been going on for a long time. Attractive people are people who can get others attention. It says, *“there was no blemish in him.”*

And then look at verse 26. What do you make of this? And it says, *“And when he cut the hair of his head (for at the end of every year he used to cut it; (once a year, he got a haircut) when it was heavy on him, he cut it), (it says) he weighed the hair of his head, ...”* Now, there's got to be a little arrogance, don't you suppose?

He's like, hey, don't throw that away, bring it back here. We want to weigh that hair and see how much that weighs. It's no small thing to carry around that much hair for a year. And it goes on to say that it weighed, *“...two hundred shekels by the king's weight.”* And if you do some math, you come up with about 5 and a half pounds of hair, which is a lot of hair. Of course it took him a

year to grow it, but still he'd cut it off and then he'd be all and he'd brag about it. He'd weigh it. Hey, put that on the scale. Let's see how much it is. Funny, I never thought, ever once about weighing my hair. It's a little strange to see it fall to the ground and be so white. That's a little weird. I'll grant you that.

But anyway, it says in verse 27 that, *"There were born to Absalom three sons, and one daughter (and the daughter's) ...name was Tamar. She was a beautiful woman."* This is, Absalom named his daughter after his sister who had been violated by his half-brother, Amnon. And you can see, boy, he's a good looking guy. He's got beautiful children. And he, what a gracious man. He names his daughter after his defiled sister, just out of blessing to her. He's just looking like a real good, he's got the package, right?

"²⁸ So Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, without coming into the king's presence. ²⁹ Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but Joab would not come to him. And he sent a second time, but Joab would not come."

Joab knew the rule. He heard David say it. David said, hey, he can come and live in Jerusalem, but he can't come, he can't see my face. Joab knew what the answer was going to be. When Absalom sent a message, he said, hey, I need you to come and talk to me. I want to go appear before my father. Joab didn't even bother to respond.

Absalom does it a second time and Joab didn't bother to respond that time either. And *"³⁰ Then he said to his servants, 'See, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there; (tell you what) go and set it on fire.' So Absalom's servants set the field on fire. (and that Joab's attention) ³¹ Then Joab arose and went to Absalom at his house and said to him, 'Why have your servants set my field on fire?' ³² Absalom answered Joab, 'Behold, I sent word to you, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to ask, 'Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still.' Now therefore let me go into the presence of the king, and if there is guilt in me, let him put me to death.'"*

All right, stop there, because this is a snapshot of Absalom that I really want you to see tonight. First of all, you can see that this is a man who has been raised with really no moral center and he wants something. He's been pardoned already, but that's not enough. He wants to see the king's face so he sends word to Joab, doesn't get a response. Sends word again, doesn't get a response.

So he's the kind of person who rather than thinking, is this wrong? He asks himself this question, will it get results for me? That's all he's concerned about. Tell you what, he's got a barley field right next to mine. Let's just set it on fire.

Who cares if it damages Joab's income or something like that. It doesn't matter. I want to get his attention and this will do it. That's the kind of man Absalom is.

And then, when Joab comes to talk to him, notice the words that come out of his mouth. Well, why'd you set my field on fire? Because you wouldn't respond to me. He says, I want you to go, and I want you to tell my dad, I want to go, I want to at least see your face. I want to have that audience with you. Listen, it would have been better for me not to come back to Jerusalem.

And then he has the audacity to say this thing. If there's any guilt in me, let him put me to death. If? Are you joking? If there's any guilt in me? The man murdered his half-brother in cold blood. If there's any guilt?

This is, you can tell what's going on in Absalom's heart and mind. He feels completely justified in what he did. He does not see the error of his ways. He is not repentant in any way, shape, or form.

He's not saying, I want to go talk to my dad because I want to repent. I want to express my great sorrow and shame over what I did. He doesn't say I'm going to go before him with sackcloth and ashes. He doesn't say, I'm going to go before him with my garments rent or torn. He doesn't say anything.

He just says, I want to go see dad. Let me do it. And if I've done anything wrong, fine, let him put me to death. He knows that his dad isn't going to do anything so he demands that audience with the king. Crazy. I mean that's what's in this man's heart.

And *“³³ Then Joab... ”* Look at this and then it, it's just, it gets more discouraging. *“³³ Then Joab went to the king and told him, and he summoned Absalom. So he came to the king and bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king, and the king kissed Absalom.”*

And that, you and I, it's maybe just a kiss on the cheek, but it's more than that. It's a symbolic way for Absalom to get exactly what he wants. And that is the public approval.

Now, his father has not just failed to act as it relates to Absalom's actions. He has embraced his actions. And that's. I mean, the first error was serious which is the error of not doing something. But now, to actually embrace. This is one of the most difficult lessons for parents to learn, frankly. When does a parent put their foot down? When does a parent put their foot down?

Well, that's tough because we love our kids, right? We love them. We adore them. We want the best for them. And then they do something incredibly stupid.

And in case you're asking, you're wondering when I'm going, if I'm going to tell you when you put your foot down? I'm not, I believe there's a point where you have to stand. I'm not sure what point that is, honestly.

I think we have to be led by the Spirit. I think we have to really pray through the situation, but I'll tell you one thing that we do have to be very careful of. And that is just not embracing the error in such a way that we're in complicity with it because there is a point where we are complicit. Meaning that we are in the same boat with them. We have embraced this thing. We have invited it into our lives as well as, it's been in their life. But now we've invited into ours.

And for anybody who's looking that they look at your Christian witness and they look at you and they think, I guess maybe that's okay. I guess it's okay to do that. Now it might be a situation where you've got a child who has grown up and they're living out of wedlock with someone. And you're like not happy about it. And then suddenly they lose their place where they live and now you invite them into your home to live in sin. It's one thing for them to take, make the decision to say, I'm going to do this. But it's yet another thing for you to embrace the situation. And who wants to see their kid on the street? I sure don't. None of us do.

But there's one thing that I learned a number of years ago, because it says that in the Bible. The way of the transgressor is hard. (Proverbs 13:15) Okay. That's a biblical truth. The way of the transgressor is hard.

Here's the problem. We try to make it easy. It's raining and storming out there in that life of sin. And there's a bitter cold wind. And it's hard and it's difficult. And it's stressful. And we run out, out of love and compassion. And we build a little shelter over our children, and then we're going to insulate it. Oh let me put an air conditioner in there for those hot days. And let me put a heater in there so you won't get cold on those cold nights. We're going to make things good for you so that you can live in your sin and really not feel the consequences of your actions.

We do it. We do it. You know why we do it? We do it for love. But it's misguided love. It's misguided affection. It's misguided compassion because we're making it easy. We have a word for that today and in psychological terms, it's called an enabler. And you guys know that, you've heard that term before.

Someone who makes it easy for somebody to go ahead and do something that's destructive.

Well, this has been going on for a long time. David is an enabler here. Instead of standing for righteousness when Amnon raped his sister, David should have taken swift and decisive action then. And he probably could have kept Absalom from going so rogue in these years that followed, because I believe that Absalom became just very embittered toward his father's inaction related to this whole thing. And so here, David, just falls into this destructive sort of a situation.

And we can do the same thing. We can relate. Sometimes it isn't family. Sometimes it's just friends. We just love them. We love them. And so we want the best for them. Will it will advise them things that are unbiblical because we want the best for them.

They're having trouble in their marriage or they're having trouble in this situation or in that situation. We give them advice to ease the pain rather than to do what's right. What does the Bible say? What does God's Word say about this thing?

I'll tell you something. When it comes to like disciplining my children, back in the days when we disciplined our children. They're all too old to do that now obviously. Just last Saturday, Tim turned 18. Been a lot, he's been taller than me for a long time, but back in those, I hated it. I've told you guys, I hated disciplining my children. Just absolutely hated it. I think sometimes after I disciplined them, I cried more than they did because it was just so unfun. Oh, I hated doing it.

There was only one thing that, that moved me to do it. I knew it was the right thing to do, but I fought with God. Maybe it's not that bad. Maybe what they're doing here isn't that bad. It was that bad and they had to learn. Oh, it's so difficult, isn't it? We've made mistakes as parents, haven't we? I mean, sometimes we've made some serious mistakes, and there's a point where we have to stop enabling.

Now, again, you have to pray through and I wouldn't encourage anybody to make quick decisions on that particular score. Get counsel before you make a quick decision on enabling or going the other way, get some counsel. Talk to people you trust. Get some good, solid biblical counsel on what to do.

2, Samuel 15. Well, after this, now Absalom, he's just been invited back into the fold. Now it says, *"After this Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him."* Why would you do that? Why would you get a chariot and horses? And then hire 50 men to run in front of you? Well, it's to look like a big shot.

That's all you're going to find out something about Absalom. And this guy, I mean, he would have been an amazing politician today because he's got the whole package. He's good looking. He's charismatic. He's loved by the people and he knows how to look important. And that's important to us. We like people who look important because we think that they have a lot on the ball. And we're attracted to attractive people and we're attracted to powerful people. And we're attracted to people who look important.

And we want to be around those people because they're important and it makes us feel important. Right. And when they treat us nice, we're just really, oh, that's cool. That's what he, that's what he would do. It was all about image. Doesn't that sound like modern day politicians to you? It's all about image.

"² And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate. (which is the way people would come in to the city) And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, (hey, hey, where are you from) "...what city are you (from)?" And when he said, "Your servant is of such and such a tribe in Israel," ³ Absalom would say to him, "See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you." ⁴ Then Absalom would say, "Oh that I were judge in the land! (and) Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice." ⁵ And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him. ⁶ Thus Absalom did to all of Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel."

Why are people coming to the king? Remember I told you he's the judge of the land. He was like the Supreme court. And if someone had a case between them self and another individual, and it wasn't satisfactorily resolved, perhaps at a local level. He would go to the king and he would get a decision from the king. But Absalom is playing on the fact it's probably tough to get in and see the king. I mean, he's just one man. And so it probably takes some time to get in and see him. So Absalom is playing on this.

First of all, he's good looking. He's got a chariot. He's got 50 men to run in front of him. So he looks all important. He's attractive. We're attracted to him

naturally. And so he calls out to them, hey, friend! Where are you from? Oh, I'm from so and so. Well, let me, tell me about what's going on. What brings you to Jerusalem? So they tell him the thing. And to everyone who says that, Absalom says, well, you have a point on you. I can see you, your case is rock solid. He's blowing smoke right in their face. Oh yeah. Yeah. Oh, I can see that this is an open and shut case for you, my friend.

But here's the problem. I don't know when you're going to be able to get in to see the king because it's just not an easy thing. Now, if I were in charge, I would make sure, I would make sure that your situation gets taken care of. And the people would begin to pay homage to him. And he'd grab them and lift them back up. No. No. And give him a big kiss and a hug and just, and it says he stole their hearts. He *“stole the hearts of the men of Israel.”* But he cares nothing about the people of Israel.

He's just causing trouble for his dad because he wants his dad's throne. That's the bottom line. He doesn't care about these people. They're pawns. They're nothing. Get them away from me. He probably had to go home and bathe after he was done. That's the kind of guy Absalom is. He doesn't care.

He couldn't possibly care less for these people. They're nothing, but I'll, say what I have to say to win them over. Because, and again, the reason is to cause division. Paul says in the Book of Romans to stay away from those who cause division. (Romans 16:17) Oh aren't they good at saying what they say to make you feel like you're just being, and like they care about you so much.

And that person that they're trying to make trouble for, he doesn't care or she doesn't care about you at all, but I do. And I'm only telling you this because I care about you. I really care about how you're feeling and it just grieves my heart to see you going through these terrible trials. And I'm sorry you're being treated this way by this person. If I had my way, man, I'd tell you, I would make sure that your situation gets prompt attention. This is just a tragedy. We need to get on the telephone and we need to let people know what's going on here. This is terrible.

And so they start to just do what they do the best. And it's nothing more than an Absalom. An Absalom going out and using people to feel important and to get what they want.

Verse 7. *“And at the end of four years Absalom said to the king, “Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the LORD, in Hebron.”⁸ For your servant vowed a vow while I lived at Geshur in Aram, saying, ‘If the LORD will*

indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the LORD.’” (that’s a bald-faced lie) ⁹ *The king said to him, “Go in peace.” So he arose and went to Hebron.*” But he’s going there for a very important, very specific reason.

“¹⁰ But Absalom sent secret messengers...” That’s the way these people operate. It’s not out in the light, they go, they get under in the dark. He *“...sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, (listen) “As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, ‘Absalom is king at Hebron!’”* ¹¹ *With Absalom went two hundred men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their innocence and (they) knew nothing.* ¹² *And while Absalom was offering the sacrifices, he sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David’s counselor, from his city Giloh. And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing.”*

Why is it? Why did How is it? I ask you, how is it that someone like Absalom can gain such a following? This man who is a murderer? How is it that he can gain such a following? Well, again, it’s not something that’s so tremendously odd. He’s again, he’s good looking. He knows how to present himself. The whole presentation of the package is I’m important. I’m good looking. I’m charismatic. I can appeal to people and I know just how to reach them emotionally.

And there are people in this world who lack discernment and they don’t have the ability to look and to say, I don’t care how cute of a guy he is, he’s a murderer. Can’t you tell? Can’t you tell he’s just smooching you? Can’t you tell? Can’t you see what’s happening here? Can’t you see he’s out for the throne? No! Are you kidding? He’s a great guy! He cares about the people. He’s a wonderful man.

Listen, I think he made some mistakes in life. And we can find our way to justify the whole thing. That Amnon guy that he killed. You know what he did to his sister. What he did to Absalom’s sister, don’t you? He raped her. I’d have done the same. Yeah. No, I think that Absalom guy, he’s a guy to support. I think he’s one of us. He’s one of the, he’s one of the people. Every morning I saw him out there by the city gate calling out to people and encouraging them. Yeah, he’s encouraging them to put their support behind him. So the crowds are increasing.

Verse 13 says, *“And a messenger came to David, saying, “The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom.”* ¹⁴ *Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, “Arise, and let us flee, or else there will be no*

escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword. ””

Now stop there for just a moment. I can't read any further without just commenting on this because I struggle with David's response here. I really do. He basically took all of his people, his court, and he said, we need to run. We need to get out of here.

Now, God is going to bless this in the end, but there's nothing that says that David sought the advice of the Lord or that it was in fact the Lord's direction. David is again responding out of that heart of compassion.

Now David genuinely loves the people. He is a true king of the people and he wants to leave Jerusalem. You know why? He cares about the city? He cares about the innocent people who are going to be caught in the crossfire. And he believes that if he stays in Jerusalem, that the city is going to be liable to attack when Absalom puts together whatever army he can, and comes against the city.

And David is concerned. And he says, I don't want to do that to these people. And so he gets up and runs. And in my heart of hearts, I understand his decision, but I question it because the Lord is able to support.

One of the things that David was so good at in his early days was leaving things up to God and he hasn't lost that completely, but he was so good at leaving things up to God.

And when people tried to advance the agenda that would otherwise be David's by their own means, David stopped them and said, no, we're not going to do it that way. If God wants me to be king, I'll be king. I am not going to push. I'm not going to shove. I'm not going to make it happen on my own. Fine. That's wonderful. We loved that about David. We saw that in him over and over and over again. He trusted the Lord.

So why isn't he trusting God here? Guilt, largely, guilt. Nathan said to him when he pronounced that judgment from the Lord, he said, the sword will never leave your home. I'm sure those words probably rang in David's ears and now he's seeing it happen, even in his own family.

Absalom has risen up against him and out of fear and guilt, David's going to run for his life. But there's a point people where you got to stop running and you just got to say, God... I mean, David could have sent the people he was really concerned about away. If he was really genuinely just concerned solely about,

he could have just said, hey, listen, you guys pack up and just get yourself away from here because I think a battle's coming down the pike. And he could have just surrounded himself with all of his soldiers and mighty men and said, we're going to stay here. We're going to hold the fortress and we're going to come what may. Stand against Absalom and against whoever he's gotten on his side.

And if the Lord wants me here, in this position as king, we will defeat them. And if not, they will defeat us. And that will be the will of the Lord. We'll know the will of the Lord, right? He could have done that. This whole thing of running, just, I don't know. It just doesn't sit right.

In verse 15 it says, *“And the king's servants said to the king, ‘Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king decides.’”*¹⁶ *So the king went out, and all his household after him. And the king left ten concubines to keep the house. (and that, of course, is going to play right into Absalom)*¹⁷ *And the king went out, and all the people after him. And they halted at the last house.”* Meaning, as they got to the edge of the city, they stopped.

“¹⁸ And all his servants passed by him, and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the six hundred Gittites who had followed him from Gath, passed on before the king. ¹⁹ Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, ‘Why do you also go with us? Go back and stay with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile from your home. ²⁰ You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander about with us, since I go I know not where? Go back and take your brothers with you, and may the LORD show steadfast love and faithfulness to you.’”

Look at this response, you got to love this. *“²¹ But Ittai answered the king, ‘As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be.’”* David knew right then, no sending this guy back.

“²² And David said to Ittai, ‘Go then, pass on.’” So Ittai the Gittite passed on with all his men and all the little ones who were with him. ²³ *And all the land wept aloud as all the people passed by, and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people passed on toward the wilderness.*

²⁴ *And Abiathar came up, and behold, Zadok came also with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God until the people had all passed out of the city. ²⁵ Then the king said to Zadok, ‘Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me back and let me see both it and his dwelling place. ²⁶ But if he says, ‘I have no pleasure in you,’ behold, here I am, let him do to me what*

seems good to him.”²⁷ The king also said to Zadok the priest, “Are you not a seer? Go back to the city in peace, with your two sons, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.²⁸ See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me.”²⁹ So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem, and they remained there.” That's a tough assignment for these guys. They wanted very much to go with David.

“³⁰ But David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went.³¹ And it was told David, “Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.” And David said, “O LORD, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.””

Ahithophel was one of David's faithful counselors. Can you imagine what that's like? Not just to have your son come out against you and want you dead, but then to have a faithful friend to hear through the grapevine, no less. By the way, Ahithophel is with Absalom. I mean, it's just, it's a sock in the gut. David prays, Lord, may his counsel be turned to foolishness.

“³² While David was coming to the summit, (the summit of the Mount of Olives) where God was worshiped, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat torn and dirt on his head.³³ David said to him, “If you go on with me, you will be a burden to me. (obviously he was an old man)³⁴ But if you return to the city and say to Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, O king; as I have been your father's servant in time past, so now I will be your servant,’ then you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahithophel.³⁵ Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So whatever you hear from the king's house, tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.³⁶ Behold, their two sons are with them there, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son, and by them you shall send to me everything you hear.”³⁷ So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city, just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem.

(and) When David had passed a little beyond the summit, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of donkeys saddled, bearing two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred of summer fruits, and a skin of wine.”

Do you remember? You remember Ziba? We met Ziba a little earlier on in our study. He was the servant of the house of Saul who David consulted to ask, are there any descendants of Saul remaining alive that I may show them grace and mercy? And Ziba said, yeah, there's a son of Jonathan. He's crippled, but he's alive. And so David said, send for him, bring him here.

And Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, the grandson of Saul, came and appeared before David. And David gave him all of his grandfather's property. He said, I'm giving it all to you and Ziba and his sons will work the land for you so that you'll have a living. And you can eat from my table for the rest of your life. He said that to Mephibosheth. Now this is Ziba, who comes to David with all these donkeys loaded with food.

"² And the king said to Ziba, "Why have you brought these?" Ziba answered, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who faint in the wilderness to drink."³ And the king said, "And where is your master's son?" (speaking of Mephibosheth) Ziba said to the king, "Behold, he remains in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father.'"⁴ Then the king said to Ziba, "Behold, all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now yours." And Ziba said, "I pay homage; let me ever find favor in your sight, my lord the king.""

What's going on here? I think what's going on here is deceit is what's happening. That's what I think. But Ziba is playing upon the situation and he's accusing Mephibosheth, who is basically, he says, according to Ziba, well, he figures you guys will probably kill each other. And then the kingdom will revert back to his family. And since he's the only living heir of Saul, he figures this is a shoo in. He'll just let you guys just battle it out. He's probably praying that you'll just kill each other. Yeah, that's all he cares.

And upon hearing this, David gives everything he had previously given to Mephibosheth to Ziba. He says, everything I gave to Mephibosheth, it's now yours. And again, David's making a snap decision here to disinherit this man without hearing both sides. And that's, he should know better. He's been a judge in the land for many years by now.

David should have said, well, I hear what you say. We'll give Mephibosheth an opportunity to speak into this situation as well. Meanwhile, thank you for the donkeys. Thank you for the provisions. God bless you. Thanks for your kindness. We'll see what happens. We'll wait this thing out, see how this thing plays out.

People, do you know that cool heads truly prevail? And when we get built up emotionally, and we start making determinations based on only partial information, we almost always make mistakes. There's a proverb in the Old Testament that says, one man's story, and I'm paraphrasing, sounds completely realistic until the next man stands up and gives his side. (Proverbs 18:17)

And that was one of the rules in Israel. Let no matter be established apart from two or three witnesses. (Deuteronomy 19:15) God knew that the people of Israel needed witnesses to corroborate a story before they make a decision. I have foolishly made decisions based on one story in the past. And I regret it big time. I'm willing to bet some of you have too.

We talked about that division that Absalom was doing earlier when he is worming his way into the hearts and minds of the people. That's one of those common ways that somebody will come and begin to just very gently slander, somebody who's in leadership, somebody who's in charge. Just gently... They won't even necessarily have to say much about them, but you can tell it's all between the lines. It's very subtle, but there's a slander going on and we just are all too ready to believe it, aren't we? We will.

Somebody tells you something rotten about somebody. What do we do? People hear things in the news. They'll hear one side of the story in the news. They want to kill the person. They want, lynch him, get a rope. They deserve to die for what they did. It's incredible. You see things, they'll say it online, get on some kind of an online social forum. That person should die for what they did.

And I want to say, were you there? Do you know the whole story? Yeah. Do you have the ability to make that judgment? Oh, we do, we think. Absolutely, I do. How arrogant is that? To say, I know what's going on. I know exactly... You hear about those stories about, this, and that, and the other thing. Oh, phew. It's just, it's crazy.

⁵ When King David came to Bahurim, there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, (oh boy, here we go) the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed (not just for a while, it says) continually. ⁶ And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. ⁷ And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man! ⁸ The LORD has avenged on you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned, and the LORD has given the kingdom into the hand of your son Absalom. See, your evil is on you, for you are a man of blood.""

Now, it's really interesting. When the accuser of the brethren gets to work. And that's what Satan is called, the accuser of the brethren. He likes to mingle truth with slanderous accusation. Did you notice the last thing he said here was, "...you are a man of blood."

Do you know what? David heard that from God. David heard that from God. That statement right there. When he wanted to build the temple, remember? God said, no. You're not the one to build it. You know why? You're a man of blood. And what He was referring to was that David was a warrior. He's a man who'd gone to battle. He said, no, it's going to be your son who's going to build it because he's going to be a man of peace. Right?

But David heard that and those things stay with you. And then the enemy comes along and he sows this wild accusation and then couples it with this truth just to thrust it in there a little bit harder and with a little more force. And by the way, you're a man of blood. Yeah. I'm busted.

David wasn't guilty of the blood of Saul's household. He loved Saul to the very end. He loved Jonathan, and he looked for ways to bless them after they were gone. But you know what? When you're being accused by the devil...

And ⁹ *Then Abishai (you got to bless his heart, he's just a big, dumb soldier) the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Let me go over and take off his head." "* And these guys could have done it, I mean, just like that. These guys were mighty men. They could hit a fly with their sling and it wouldn't have been a big deal at all. And who wouldn't have wanted all that cursing and rock throwing and dirt clods coming at them to end.

¹⁰ *But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? If he is cursing because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David,' who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?' "* (what an attitude. He says, look what he says) ¹¹ *And David said to Abishai and to all his servants, (look at you guys) "Behold, my own son seeks my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite! Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. "* ¹² *It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today. "* ¹³ *So David and his men went on the road, while Shimei went along on the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went and threw stones at him and flung dust. "* ¹⁴ *And the king, and all the people who were with him, arrived weary at the Jordan. And there he refreshed himself. "*

Can you imagine what that would have been like for David to, and all of his people? Have you ever been pelted with dirt clods? Terrible thing. Gets down your clothes. It's just, it's awful. Not only that, you can be hurt.

But I don't think that was even half of the pain that David felt related to what this man was doing. But his attitude just blows me away. How quickly you and

I are to rise up in some self-righteous response and say, I don't deserve this. And that's basically what Abishai was saying to him. You don't deserve this, David. Let me go kill him. I can put this thing to an end right now. Absolutely no problem.

And David comes back with this just amazing attitude. He says, you know what? Could be that the Lord has called him to do that. He doesn't know. You and I know. We want to say, David, no! Do something about it. David doesn't know at this point. He says, you know what? Let him curse. Let him curse. If God has told him to curse, there's no getting around it anyway. And I'm not going to try and justify myself and I'm not going to try to defend myself.

And you know what? If this man is in the wrong, God will see to it. And you know what? God did see to it. We'll get to it later on when we find out about this.

But anyway, I just, I'm blown away by the attitude of David. I really am. I mean, when, and when somebody is saying something awful about you, by the way, we're going to stop right there for tonight. We'll pick it up in the middle of that chapter next time.

But when somebody is saying something about you, or maybe even about somebody that you love. Oh, doesn't it just raise the hair on the back of your neck. And the first thing we want to do is we want to just cry out in defense, No!

And we're living in this culture today that every time we turn around, there's something that says we're deserving. We deserve better. You deserve. You deserve. You deserve. You deserve. And we believe it. And so when we get some bad things going on in our lives, we assume immediately, I don't deserve this. And people will even say, what did I do to deserve this? What did I do?

David was the kind of guy who was just more like, God's going to do what He's going to do. And if this is the Lord who is disciplining me as His son, then I'm going to receive that discipline. If this isn't the Lord disciplining me and this is the work of a madman. Well, you know what? God can take care of that too.

What an attitude. I want that attitude. I want to be like David when I grow up. I really do. I want to have that kind of humility.