

# 2 Samuel 19 • Kingdom Minded

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2 Samuel chapter 19, but we're going to start as you're turning there by looking at a verse in Matthew chapter 6. And it goes like this, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you."* (Matthew 6:33) *"...seek first the kingdom of God."* It's a verse that we all pretty much have heard before.

I don't know how many of us feel comfortable with explaining it. If somebody came to you and said, I read this verse in the Gospel of Matthew, it says, *"...seek first the kingdom of God."* What exactly does that mean? First of all, what does it mean to seek it first? And what is the kingdom of God?

Hopefully we're going to answer some of those things here tonight in our study. I am nowhere near 2 Samuel so let me do that. 2 Samuel chapter 19. Okay, there we go.

Now, the first, I'll tell you here, the first 9 verses of chapter 19 really belong in the previous chapter where we dealt with the death of Absalom and David's reaction to it. And this really just continues on. This is one of those places where they messed up as it relates to where they put the chapter divisions in. By the way, the chapter and verse divisions are not inspired, okay like the Scripture is. In fact, they didn't come around for a long time after the Word was written.

Anyway, in verse 1, it says, *"It was told Joab, 'Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.'"*<sup>2</sup> *So the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people, for the people heard that day, 'The king is grieving for his son.'*<sup>3</sup> *And the people stole into the city that day as people steal in who are ashamed when they flee in battle."* (ESV)

And this is really something because they've been victorious in battle and yet they're coming back into the city as if they lost.

And it says *"<sup>4</sup> The king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, 'O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!'"* And you remember now, they are not in Jerusalem. David has been on the run from his son. There's been this battle between the forces of Israel that really got behind Absalom. And the men who were loyal to David. And David's men, remember, were victorious.

Absalom was killed. Joab killed him, as a matter of fact. His men finished him off, if that's possible. But David is still gone for lack of a better word.

He's, in fact, he's across the Jordan over in the land of Gilead. He has been just essentially on the run. The battle's over, but now he's in this city and he's just weeping. And everybody is being told, David is just absolutely broken over the death of his son Absalom. And so the whole army came sneaking into the city, and they were, just because the king was so sad.

Well, Joab heard about all this, and it says in verse 5 that, “...*Joab came into the house to the king and said, “You have today covered with shame the faces of all your servants, who have this day saved your life and the lives of your sons and your daughters and the lives of your wives and your concubines, <sup>6</sup> because you love those who hate you and hate those who love you. (a little bit of an exaggeration there, but Joab was trying to make a point) For you have made it clear today that commanders and servants are nothing to you, for today I know that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased. <sup>7</sup> Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants, for I swear by the LORD, if you do not go, not a man will stay with you this night, and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now.”*”

Now we don't know if what Joab is saying is true. We don't know if the people would have left. We don't know if they would have said, you know what David, you're an ingrate. We risked our lives for you and what do you do? You don't even come out and say thank you. We don't know.

But Joab is saying what he's saying to get David's attention, to make the point that he's making. And I think he makes it fairly well, because it says here in verse 8, “*Then the king arose and took his seat in the gate. And the people were all told, “Behold, the king is sitting in the gate.” And all the people came before the king.*” Now, if you'll stop there for just a moment.

As inappropriate as I think it probably was for Joab to be the one to go to the king, and I say that because he's the one that killed Absalom. Still, what he did in rebuking the king was not only brave, but I think well founded, at least from the standpoint that David was in the wrong.

This is one of those situations where David was wallowing. And we can do that from time to time, can't we? We can wallow. And rather than seeing the kingdom, this is what we're talking about. We're going to, you're going to hear

me refer to, “*seek first the kingdom of God*” several times here tonight, Lord willing.

This whole idea of putting the kingdom first, making it the focal point of your concern, is something that even men like David lost sight of from time to time. And God had saved the kingdom from someone like Absalom taking it over, not without cost certainly, but God had restored basically the kingdom to David. They had won the victory and Absalom, man, he was just, he was practically a lost cause. And many, many men had lost their lives on Absalom side.

And yet David is openly, mourning for this loss of his one son. And so David is making this all about Absalom. It's all about him, and all about how he feels. And he feels bad because he lost Absalom. And you can understand that. Anyone who's ever lost a child. This isn't the first child that David's lost, and it's not like we're insensitive to that and the depth of difficulty that goes along with that.

But David is also the king of Israel, and there are kingdom matters to attend to. There are issues that need to be dealt with from that kingdom perspective. And even people like David can become so overwhelmed with their personal grief and their own life, that the kingdom and the matters of the kingdom become a secondary or tertiary or even further down the road sort of a thing in their lives.

Happens to you and I too, doesn't it? We just, we get so focused on our lives, what's going on in my life, that the kingdom ceases to really be of any real functional importance in our lives at all. I just care about what's happening in my life. I care about this relationship that's going on or this new thing I want to buy. Or whether or not we're going to get to go on vacation this year or whatever the thing, might be.

Jesus tells you and I, “*seek first the kingdom of God.*” Make that a first priority in your lives. Set it as a priority in your thinking, in your planning, in your goals and desires. When you hear that verse, do you get as convicted as I do? When you hear Jesus say, “*seek first the kingdom of God,*” do you get this immediate sort of, busted like I do? Because I do. I think most of us do. I think most of us just get caught up, don't we? We get caught up with life. And the pursuit of life. And the pursuit of happiness. And all the other things that the world throws in there and tells us is important. Okay.

Well, David listened to Joab. Good for him. He went out, expressed his gratitude to all the soldiers who were loyal to him, stood by his side. You'll notice that I didn't read quite to the end of the verse.

The rest of verse 8 says, *“Now Israel had fled every man to his own home.”* Now you got to understand what this means when it says Israel. It means basically the forces that were loyal to Absalom or that went over to Absalom's side. All right. Those soldiers realized they'd been beaten by David's men; the men who were loyal to David, and they just ran. They just scattered. They went to their homes, closed the door, shut the drapes. Honey, don't tell anybody I'm home. This is truly for them a time of defeat. This is a time of sorrow. They thought they raised up a new king and guess what? Now he's dead.

And so they're now filled with shame because God has spoken on this matter. God said, David is my king. And they're now living with the reality of the fact that I got behind the wrong man. So they skunked away sort of a thing, but it goes on here and it talks about eventually how the people began to talk amongst themselves about what had transpired.

Look at verse 9. *“And all the people were arguing throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, (David) ‘The king (he) delivered us from the hand of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the Philistines, (I mean, heavens, more than once) and now he has fled out of the land from Absalom. But Absalom, (look what they say in verse 10) whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?’”*

This is the conversation that's going among the people of the land. They're remembering how David had been the one to lead Israel and all her battles and conquests and so forth. But they're also remembering But you know what? We rejected him. I mean, his, good looking, young, upstart of a son came along and declared himself king, and we went along with it. We basically said, yeah, okay.

And what that means, the implications is, they kicked David out, right? Remember, David is not back in Jerusalem and he's not going back anytime soon. Now they've got this issue, the people have this issue. Yeah. David has always been really a faithful king. We kicked him out in favor of his rebellious son, and now his son is dead, so now what are we going to do?

Are we going to, are we going to invite him back? I mean, if we are, then why hasn't somebody done it? You can tell that some days have been passing here. Sometime has been passing. This isn't just a matter of 24 hours. There've been probably days going on because as we're going to see, David is waiting.

And it says in verse 11, *“And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests: ‘Say to the elders of Judah, ‘Why should you be the last to*

*bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to the king?"*

In other words, David is hearing that Israel, and when we say Israel, we're talking about the northern 10 tribes, versus Judah and Simeon, which make up the southern area, which we call Judah. Okay. It's just all called Judah, although it really is 2 tribes.

But the Northern 10 tribes are talking among themselves. Maybe we should bring the king back. I don't know. Gee, he's always been a good guy. Hey, how come we're not doing it? How come you, well, you do it. Well, and then they're having this conversation and David's hearing about this. So he sends a message back to the elders of Judah.

And remember, he's from the tribe of Judah cause he's of the tribe of Benjamin— or excuse me, he's from the tribe of Judah himself. I'm sorry. So he's of that major tribe there. Benjamin was Saul.

And he's saying to basically his own people. Well, why haven't you? I mean, they're at least talking about it. You're my own flesh and blood. Why haven't you invited me back? Why should you be the last one to do so and so forth? An interesting move on David's part. But I want you to see what's going on here. I want you to understand what's happening.

David didn't just assume that the kingdom was his to once again take, even though as it appears, God has already weighed in on the issue. At least from the standpoint of the victory that he had given over Absalom and his forces. But David didn't just say, well, that's that, let's go back to Jerusalem and pack it up guys. We're heading on back. Here we go. Yeah. Sort of a thing.

David's not doing that. He's staying where he is over across the Jordan in the land of Gilead. He's staying put and he's waiting for something. He's waiting for an invitation to come back. He's waiting for an invitation for the relationship to be restored.

David wasn't the kind of a guy who just assumed on things. He wasn't the kind of guy who took things for himself if he thought he deserved them. He was the kind of guy who waited for other people to respond. And in this case, he's waiting for an invitation.

Now, as you think about this whole scenario, let me ask you a question. Can you ever think of a time in your life when you've done what the people of Israel

did? Have you ever kicked out the rightful King and replaced Him with an imposter? With an upstart? Somebody who looked really attractive because that's Absalom all the way. He was attractive from the word go for. It says from the top of his head to the soles of his feet, he was just one good looking, good looking hunk of guy, and everybody thought he was going to make a great king. I can't imagine what kind of a king he really would have made, but they decided on a replacement king.

Have you ever done that? I have. I've kicked the King off the throne and replaced Him with something else. Something else that looked really good. And boy, the things that the world wants you and I to enthrone in our lives, they usually look really good.

It's funny, I—it's interesting, isn't it? When you watch what happens on Facebook. Facebook is such a window into people's lives. We're all a bunch of window peekers. You know that, don't you? It's voyeurism. Let's make no mistake about it, but it's just by invitation. But you look into people's lives and you see a lot of really interesting things.

I have people who are friends of mine on Facebook who are not walking with the Lord and boy, does it look like they're having fun sometimes. And of course, that's often the front that is being shown to the public, that this is nothing but one extended good time. But we know better.

Boy, the things of the world look just like Absalom. They're very attractive. And we will, and some of the people on my Facebook list have even been people who you might even recognize as having been in church, but who are no longer there. No longer walking with the Lord, no longer serving the Lord, and living that life of just that Absalom existence where you know, that you know, that you know, the King, the real King has been kicked off the throne, and an Absalom has been placed on the throne.

Here's what's interesting about all of that. A couple of things I think really. Have you ever noticed? And like I said, I'm not pointing fingers at people saying that they're doing something I haven't done because I have. But you know what's interesting in my own life? I've noticed that I won't stop serving Absalom until he dies or somehow it gets kicked off the throne.

It's like I never really noticed it while he's on the throne. I never really noticed that he's an imposter king or that fake replacement king, because I'm having such a good time. And it all looks pretty good. It looks like, hey, this thing is going. In the early days of Absalom's reign, the people looked at all the those

that were behind him. Remember some of David's men even, left David's side of loyalty and went over to Absalom. And it looked like, wow, this thing is really going somewhere. And it even says in the passage that it gained momentum and strength. And people were like whoa, this is the will of God. And so forth. And it just, that's often the way it isn't it? When we allow some Absalom to reign on the throne of our lives.

And then what happens? Eventually, because it's an Absalom, is it's going to happen. It's going to go the way that this went. Whenever you put an Absalom on the throne, he's going to die. He's not going to be able to reign forever. And he might even take you down with him. At least he'll even, that's the attempt.

But the point is, we don't often really even understand that we've been worshiping in Absalom until Absalom dies. And then there's this conversation, just like the people of Israel had. Well, boy this is interesting. We're in a pickle. We took the real king and kicked him off the throne, and now we've got this guy we put on the throne. He's dead. Now what are we going to do? Right? Now what are we going to do?

Interesting, David's response. Did you notice David waited for an invitation? Did you notice David didn't just belly up to the thing and say, alright, now that Absalom's dead, you got your king back, whether you want him or not. He didn't have that attitude. His response to the people was, he began to woo them.

And that's the work of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit does that in our life. When we've kicked Him off the throne, we've put something or someone else on that throne in his place, the Holy Spirit will begin to woo us back. He'll begin to speak to us about the mistake that we've made and He'll make that open door for us to return.

But you know what? He's not going to bully his way back in. God is not going to bully His way back into your life. He is going to wait for an invitation. He's going to wait for you to say, Lord, I repent. I have enthroned that which is not worthy of sitting on the throne of my heart. And I ask You to forgive me and I invite You back to be ruler and Lord of my life.

God, the Holy Spirit is a wonderful gentleman. He really is. He's a delightful gentleman. So many times people are afraid of what the Holy Spirit is going to do in their lives. I tell you, He has never pushed me in a way that was unbecoming His character. He is always so gentle. Wooing me, back into a place of obedience. Never forcing.

David did not force his way back into the throne. He did not force his way back to Jerusalem. He wooed the people so that they would invite him back. And again, that's the work of the Holy Spirit.

Then David, goes on here. Verse 13, it says, *“And say to Amasa, ‘Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not commander of my army from now on in place of Joab.’”*

And this is a pretty shocking move. Do you guys remember who Amasa is? He was the leader of Absalom's army. He is the defeated general, commander and David is actually demoting Joab and promoting this Amasa guy. It's a very gutsy move, but I'm pretty sure David's doing it to try to unite the two sides. It's an olive branch, if you will, on his part.

And then it goes on in verse 14. It says, *“And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man,* (again, this is like that work of the Holy Spirit. David swayed their hearts, he didn't force their hearts) *so that they sent word to the king, “Return, both you and all your servants.”* Your Bible may say, instead of swayed their hearts, it may say, he won them over or he turned their hearts.

*“<sup>15</sup> So the king came back to the Jordan,* (he's just on his way back but there's that dividing line between the two and a half tribes on the other side of the Jordan to the rest of Israel. So he's just now coming *back to the Jordan*) *and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan.”*

Notice it says just the people of Judah at first came, just the people of the southern area. And along the way David is going to have some issues to settle.

And this begins in verse 16. *“And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahurim, hurried to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David.”* Do you remember Shimei? He's the guy who, when David was running for his life, stood on a precipice or a hillside up above David as they were walking, and he showered him with rocks, and dirt clods, and curses. Right? That's Shimei.

And you'll remember that Joab's brother wanted to cut his head off. David said, No. Maybe the Lord told him to curse. And now, it's all over. The battle is done. David has won. How's he going to respond to this guy? It says in verse 17 by the way, that along with Shimei *“...were a thousand men from Benjamin.”* That's a lot of people.

Now, Benjamin, remember, is a very small tribe in Israel, and a thousand men is a lot of men. But they're all from Benjamin, that's Saul's tribe. This is a good



showing from what would be a part of the northern area of Israel, or at least more northern than Judah.

And it says here in verse 17 that “...Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king, <sup>18</sup> and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household and to do his pleasure. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, <sup>19</sup> and said to the king, “Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart. <sup>20</sup> For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph (and he’s referring to the Northern tribes) to come down to meet my lord the king.””

Stop there for just a moment. This is Shimei, it's very difficult. Have you ever had a situation where somebody did something really nasty and then came back and apologize and you weren't at all sure if they were sincere? It happens. Actually had it come to me in email form as an Q&A not that long ago, somebody asked, what do you do if you've, somebody has said they. It was a little different situation because it was somebody who had offended someone else. And they said that the person said they had forgiven them, but then they just didn't act like they'd forgiven them.

In this situation, Shimei is the one who did the offending and he's coming back and he himself is seeking forgiveness. But it's really difficult to know what's really going on in this man's heart and mind. I mean, it sounds like a pretty good expression of repentance to me. It sounds that way, but you and I both know that can be, deceiving, right? Sure.

And frankly, if we're going to be honest, most of us are going to probably think what Abishai goes on to say in verse 21. Look what, “Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, “Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?”

Don't you love it when other people tell you how you should treat someone who offended you? Everybody wants to weigh in on the thing. Somebody offended you. Somebody did something against you. And somebody else comes along and says, you should hate them. You should never forgive them as long as they live. It's like, wait a minute, isn't this my thing? Didn't they offend me? Right? I mean, why are you weighing in on this situation?

And look what David goes on to say, verse 22, *“But David said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary (or come) to (against) me? (David says) Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?””*

Now, first of all, David is responding to Shimei in a merciful way because the battle has been won, blood has been shed, and David is not anxious for any more to be shed. That's the number one, well, I don't know if it's the number one. It's the first reason that he makes mention of here, essentially. Because he says, shall anyone be in Israel be put to death this day? He doesn't want to see any more bloodshed.

But he goes on to give another reason for, do I not know that I'm the king? Do I need to exercise some form of punishment over this guy just to prove that I really am the king? God has installed me as king and He has established that kingship even though I don't deserve it. And so my response to this individual is, hey, I got nothing to prove as it relates to how I respond to you.

*“And the king said to Shimei, (verse 23) “You shall not die.”* In fact, it says that David even told him that with an oath. David forgave the offense and again, do you know what you would have done?

I mean, when I stop and think about this and I think if I were David, what would I have done? I don't know, Shimei I represents a certain personality that we see in the kingdom of God. And that is the kind of a personality who really doesn't have any loyalty to the kingdom. They really just follow power, or what they think is popular, or in vogue. And you know the type. They go from group to group, whoever they think is like on the top of the pile at the moment.

And they're loyal to whoever is on the top of the pile. But whenever it appears that person is no longer on the top of the pile, they will remove their loyalty very, very quickly. But when the person gets back up onto the top of the pile, then they're going to be right back. They're going, oh yeah, you're the man. Have, I told you lately how much I just really admire you for all your things, on and on and so forth and so on. And that's Shimei. That's just his personality.

I find it very interesting here that David doesn't attempt to judge the situation based on what he thinks because we often do instead. He just says, you know what, I forgive you. I forgive you.

And now, and the next issue that comes up this time, it's Mephibosheth. It says in verse 24. *“And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. He*

*had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety.” You remember Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, grandson of king Saul, whom David sought out to bless. Right?*

And when David was running for his life, Ziba, the servant of Saul, came to David and said, yeah, Mephibosheth. He's hoping you and Absalom kill each other and that he'll be able to take up his place as king of Israel. So he doesn't care about you a snit. That's what Ziba basically said. And you remember how David reacted? It was quite profound in that he reacted quickly and without thought. He just said, all right, everything I previously had given to Mephibosheth is now yours, Ziba. And that meant all the land and goods previously owned by king Saul, he gave them all to Ziba just like that. Just disinherited Mephibosheth without even hearing his side of the story.

Now, here's Mephibosheth sitting in front of him and it says, *“And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, (verse 25) the king said to him, “Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?”* <sup>26</sup> *He answered, “My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, ‘I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go with the king.’ For your servant is lame.”*

Now what Mephibosheth seems to be saying here is that he wanted to saddle his own donkey to accompany David, but Ziba took the donkey, because you remember when Ziba showed up, he came up with donkeys, and he said, here's some donkeys for you to ride. And some other, he brought food too.

Mephibosheth seems to be saying, I went to go saddle, I told him I was going to saddle my own donkey, and then he took them. So I couldn't leave and I'm lame. I couldn't walk like anybody else to follow you.

And that's why Mephibosheth goes on to say, *“<sup>27</sup> He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you. <sup>28</sup> For all my father's house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?”*

Notice what Mephibosheth says. He says, you know what? I was a dead man and you picked me up and you showed me mercy so what right do I have to ask anything of you?

And the king responds here by saying, *“<sup>29</sup> And the king said to him, “Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the*

land.” <sup>30</sup> And Mephibosheth (look at his response because it’s very important) said to the king, “Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home.””

Now, that's an interesting response. He says to David, that's not why I came. That's not why I came to meet with you. It's not what I care about. It's not the goods. It's not the land. It's not the money. It's not what concerns me.

I believe that Mephibosheth is a man who truly cares about the kingdom of God and that the other things in the kingdom that would otherwise draw people into a posture of appearing to be loyal to David, aren't important to him.

Ziba, he looks like a scoundrel to me. Coming and bringing some donkeys, coming and bringing some food. But why? He got rewarded for it. He came in what he appeared to slander Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth doesn't care.

And then we have this Barzillai. You might remember him too. A very old man who met David along the way with all kinds of supplies for his people.

*“<sup>31</sup> Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the Jordan. <sup>32</sup> Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. <sup>33</sup> And the king said to Barzillai, “Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem.””* David wants to respond with gratitude.

But Barzillai said to the king, *“<sup>34</sup> But Barzillai said to the king, “How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? <sup>35</sup> I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? <sup>36</sup> Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? <sup>37</sup> Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But (listen) here is your servant Chimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you.”*

Barzillai is a wonderful example, by the way, of someone who simply wants to see the kingdom of God advance, just like Mephibosheth. And he's willing to do whatever he can to help. He is seeking first the kingdom of God. It's not about what he can get as a reward. He doesn't say, yeah, that'd be great, friends with the king, that'd be wonderful. Getting fun stuff from the king. Sure, sign me up.

Barzillai says, no, that's okay. I don't need it. If you want to bless somebody in my household, here's a servant.

In fact, *“the king answered, (verse 38) “Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you, and all that you desire of me I will do for you.”*<sup>39</sup> *Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home. (and it says)*<sup>40</sup> *The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. All the people of Judah, and also half (notice this) the people of Israel, brought the king on his way.”*

Now just in case you need a little visual Stimulation to figure out again that what's going on in the kingdom, I'm going to put a map up on the screen here for you of the tribal divisions of Israel.



And you'll notice at the very lower left hand corner that mustard colored larger area is all the tribe of Judah. And you'll notice that inside the tribe of Judah is the tribe of Simeon. Okay.

That is referred to in the Bible as Judah. It's all referred to as Judah. It can be very confusing when you hear it referred that way. And of course, by the time we get to the New Testament, it's referred to as Judea. And the northern area of Israel is gone. It has been literally, it's now considered the area of Samaria. It's not even, it's not even part of Israel anymore because Judah or Judea, during the time of Jesus is all that survived that time period. But you can see the northern 10 tribes are everything above and to the right of Judah and Simeon. This is the natural division that took place in Israel during the time of the judges, and it's still continuing on to this day.

Now I don't know if you can see the tribe of Benjamin. It's just right on the very top of Judah. Tiny little tribe. That's where Saul was from, but he was considered part of the northern tribes, whereas Judah is considered part of the southern tribal area. Anyway, hopefully that helps you understand a little bit here.

But it says, <sup>41</sup> *Then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?"* And of course they're not admitting the fact that half of the people of Israel came along.

<sup>42</sup> *All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is our close relative. (that's why) Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?"* (that you're jealous or something) <sup>43</sup> *And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us?"*

The ten shares are the ten tribes, north of Judah. So when they say, *"We have ten shares..."*, it means we have more shares than the king, because we're all part of the kingdom of Israel over which he is the king.

*"Why then did you despise us?" Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?" But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.* Wow, what drama. If I were David, I think I'd say, you know what, you can have the kingdom. I think I'm going to go live a quiet life back taking care of sheep. They don't complain as loudly.

People can be pretty challenging sometimes. And the reason they become challenging, is because their personal wants and desires are put in front of the needs of the kingdom or the concerns of the kingdom. That's what we see in this whole chapter. We see people jockeying for position. We see people who don't really care about the kingdom. What they care about is having more goods or getting favor with the king.

But then we see some other examples like Barzillai, who said, I don't need anything from you. And then we have Mephibosheth who says, when David says, all right, you're going to have half of your stuff back, he goes, I don't want it. Keep it. Give it to Ziba. I don't care. All I care about is that you're safe.

So you see these two conflicting examples. You have some people who truly are seeking first the kingdom and you have some who are not. I'm going to, I'm going to close here tonight by having you turn over with me to Matthew chapter 6 and I want to read in context. The passage that we quoted at the very beginning of the service from that same chapter. Matthew chapter 6, turn there.

And I want you to see the context of Jesus's statement because, we can say all day long, *"seek first the kingdom of God."* *Seek first the kingdom of God."* *Seek first the kingdom of God."* What's the context? What's the context of that statement? Start with me in verse 25.

Matthew 6, skip down to verse 25. *"Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?"* <sup>26</sup> *Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"* <sup>27</sup> *And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life?"* <sup>28</sup> *And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin,* <sup>29</sup> *yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.* <sup>30</sup> *But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"* <sup>31</sup> *Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'"* <sup>32</sup> *For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.* <sup>33</sup> *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

<sup>34</sup> *"Therefore do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

Now, based on just reading that in context. And if I asked you the question, what is the thing that most often gets in the way of people seeking the kingdom of God first, what would you say? It would be anxious thoughts over stuff, right? That's what gets in the way the most.

So when Jesus says to you and I “*seek first the kingdom of God,*” it means stop seeking first all this stuff that is going to go up in flames anyway one day. Or rot, one of the two, because that is the very thing that keeps you from seeking first the kingdom of God.

So what does it mean to seek the kingdom of God? What does it mean to seek first the kingdom of God? Needs to put His priorities ahead of my priorities. God isn't saying don't have priorities. I'm not saying that.

He says, don't become fixated on your priorities to the point where they are your life. The purpose of living. That's what He's saying. Seek first rather My priorities, the matters of the kingdom. Seek first those things, that is your priority. And then, things will be in order.

In fact, and then He makes this wonderful promise. Listen, you put My priorities first, I'll give you everything you thought you had to run after. I'll take care of you. I'll take care of everything that you need if you'll put my priorities ahead of your priorities. Then you know what I'll do? I'll put your priorities at the top of the list.

I'll take care of you and you won't have to worry. You won't have to be anxious. You won't have to be nervous about life because you'll know that I am seeing to your priorities.

So many of the people in this chapter of 2 Samuel are a case study for us of where they fall in this area. So you have to ask yourself the question, who am I? Who do I want to be? Who am I?

Am I more like, Ziba? Am I using politics and deception to get what I want? Am I more like Mephibosheth? I don't care. Am I a cross between the two? Am I like Barzillai?

It's an important thing that we all look at because we are called to seek the kingdom of God as a first priority.