2 Samuel 18

Absalom's Defeat and Death

18 And David numbered the people who *were* with him, and set captains of thousands and captains of hundreds over them. **2** Then David sent out one third of the people under the hand of Joab, one third under the hand of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab's brother, and one third under the hand of Ittai the Gittite. And the king said to the people, "I also will surely go out with you myself."

Clearly, David was a master strategist when it came to battle.

He knew just what to do in organizing his army. He set them up into three divisions under the leadership of Joab. Abishai and Ittai the Gittite and then he says, "*I also will surely go out with you myself.*"

David's heart and experience shows through, *this time* he would be in the battle, *unlike his unwise decision back in (2 Samuel 11) remember*, when he decided to stay back from the battle and noticed a young woman named Bathsheba

He certainly didn't want to make that mistake again!

But listen to what happens next….

3 But the people answered, "You shall not go out! For if we flee away, they will not care about us; nor if half of us die, will they care about us. But *you are* worth ten thousand of us now. For you are now more help to us in the city."

Well, the people surrounding David were insistent in saying, *there's no way we're going to let you go out to battle with the rest of the army*. Why?…

Perhaps for three very good reasons.

- His life was more valuable than anyone else was. (They said, **you're worth ten thousand of us**).

- They also understood that he could bring weapons and reserves if needed (when they said, David **you're now more help to us in the city**).

- I think they also understood that it would be incredibly hard for David to fight against his own son Absalom.

Well listen to David's response….

4 Then the king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood beside the gate, and all the people went out by hundreds and by thousands.

Here we have a man that was given more authority than anyone in the known world and yet, *he was not stubborn*.

He knew how to be *in true submission* to the good advice of others. He didn't give up his leadership, *he practiced good leadership* by listening to the wise advice of the people around him.

Church, after 25 years of having the privilege of being in ministry alongside Pastor Brent, *I can attest to the fact*, that he is a Godly Leader who, like David, shows *true submission* to the wise counsel of those around him.

Church, please understand the importance of keeping the leadership of this fellowship in your prayers. Pray that we will ***'Stand Strong'*** on God's Word and ***'Stay the Course'*** as we see the day quickly approaching, because if you're paying attention, it's seems the tachometer of the end times events, are really starting to rev up!

5 Now the king had commanded Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, saying, "*Deal* gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave all the captains orders concerning Absalom.

So he orders them, "*Now look you guys, deal gently with Absalom.*" David was making it very clear that Absalom was to be captured alive and unharmed.

Yes, it's true that Absalom was a terrible son and strongly rebelled against his father. He did unthinkable things to try and hurt him, ***yet he was still his son*** and it's clear, that David still had a great love for his son Absalom and rightly so.

David was very serious about not harming Absalom **and he gave this commandment in the presence of all the people**, *so that the captains would feel greater pressure to do what David commanded.*

6 So the people went out into the field of battle against Israel. And the battle was in the woods of Ephraim. **7** The people of Israel were overthrown there before the servants of David, and a great slaughter of twenty thousand took place there that day.

So this battle takes place outside of Mahanaim in the forest of Ephraim on the eastern side of the Jordan River.

King David knew to avoid the open plain, where David's men could be overpowered by the sheer number of the men of Israel, so the battle took place in a heavily wooded area which was very well suited to David's troops, who were far better warriors.

(Baldwin) Stated, "David had arranged that the battle should take place in this terrain, where the experience and courage of each individual soldier counted more than sheer numbers."

You can see the hand of God working through this battle when you read verse 8, which says,

8 For the battle there was scattered over the face of the whole countryside, and the woods devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.

This verse implies, or perhaps clearly states, ***that God fought for David*** in unusual ways. Soldiers loyal to Absalom *seemed to be "swallowed up" by the woods*.

The great Spurgeon said, "Perishing not only by the sword, but among the thick oaks and tangled briers of the wood, which concealed fearful precipices and great caverns, into which the rebels plunged in their wild fright when the rout set in."

Church, does God have the ability to control what happens in a battle, *as an example*, could He have guided Absalom's men and have them fall to their death into deep caverns, or have the wild beasts only devour those of Absalom's men?
I believe, based on Scripture, that He can and does and this was what was happening in this battle.

Okay, so these next few verses say a lot about Absalom's ability as a military leader, ***really, he should have stayed home.***

9 Then Absalom met the servants of David. Absalom rode on a mule. The mule went under the thick boughs of a great terebinth tree, and his head caught in the terebinth; so he was left hanging between heaven and earth. And the mule which *was* under him went on.

Now remember it was Absalom's vanity that put him in this battle *against the wise counsel of Ahithophel*. Absalom also chose to go into this battle as a king proudly riding a mule, *not like a great general, riding a powerful stallion..*

So Absalom, *the mule riding wannabe king*, is now facing David's mighty men.

I'm sure, *in shear panic,* he decides it's best that he turns and flees, *because he's clearly losing the battle and he desperately wants to save his own skin.*

I'll share what one Bible commentator wrote: Riding furiously under the thick boughs of a great oak, which hung low and had never been cropped, either the twisted branches, or some low forked bough of the tree, caught him by the neck, or possibly by the loops into which his long hair had been pinned, which had been so much his pride and was now justly made a halter for him.

Now, to be clear, we don't know exactly how Absalom was caught up in that tree, *but he is unable to free himself* and yet, *he wasn't being strangled by the branches*.

(Trapp) said, Adam Clarke is careful to point out that the text does not say that Absalom was caught by his hair — we assume that. It may be that he was caught by his neck. Nevertheless, the image remains of Absalom hanging in the tree: "So he hung between heaven and earth, as rejected of both." (Trapp)

10 Now a certain man saw *it* and told Joab, and said, "I just saw Absalom hanging in a terebinth tree!"**11** So Joab said to the man who told him, "You just saw *him!* And why did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have given you ten *shekels* of silver and a belt."**12** But the man said to Joab, "Though I were to receive a thousand *shekels* of silver in my hand, I would not raise my hand against the king's son. For in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, saying,'Beware lest anyone *touch* the young man Absalom!' **13** Otherwise I would have dealt falsely against my own life. For there is nothing hidden from the king, and you yourself would have set yourself against *me.*"

When this was reported to Joab, *that this soldier saw Absalom alive and hanging from a tree, he couldn't fathom why this man didn't take the opportunity to kill Absalom*, in fact he says he would have given him a generous reward of a years pay in silver and a heroes belt if he had killed him.

For Joab, this was a tactical no brainer.

Absalom needed to die…

But this *was a man of integrity and he was smart*. He said to Joab, *it was out of obedience and loyalty to king David that I didn't kill Absalom*.

And then he shares with Joab another important truth.

He basically says, "*Hey, do you think I'm crazy? I know King David and nothing's hidden from him. He doesn't want his son Absalom touched and If I had killed him, you yourself, without hesitation. would put the blame on me".*

14 Then Joab said, “I cannot linger with you.” And he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through Absalom’s heart, while he was *still* alive in the midst of the terebinth tree.

Joab didn’t hesitate to strike Absalom, even though he knew David commanded him not to.
Joab was convinced that it was in David’s best interest and in Israel’s best interest *to show Absalom justice, not mercy*.

(Morgan) says, Absalom only received what he deserved. He was a murderer, a traitor, and a rapist. Joab knew that David was generally indulgent towards his children and would never punish Absalom. “He had seen David’s action toward his sons characterized by lack of discipline. In the highest interests of the kingdom his hand was raised to slay Absalom.”

Now, I had to pause when I first read that Joab had thrust three spears into Absalom’s heart, *yet he was still alive*…

How’s that possible?

But then I learned that the word used for ‘*heart*,’ can refer to the chest, *not necessarily the internal organ*, which to me makes more sense. *But either way*, Joab has gone against the command of King David and in (1 Kings Chapter 20) he will have to answer for it..

15 And ten young men who bore Joab’s armour, surrounded Absalom, and struck and killed him.

It’s also interesting, that it was ten men who surrounded Absalom and killed him.

Now this is my personal observation and I can’t prove it, but I wonder if those 10 men finished him, off by stoning him.

Keep that in mind…

(Trapp) had this interesting observation…

"As he had defiled his father's ten concubines, so by these ten youngsters he hath that little breath that was left in him beaten out of his body."

Proverbs 21:15 says, When justice is done, it is a joy to the righteous, but terror to evildoers.

Perhaps this was the last lesson Absalom would learn before his death.

16 So Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel. For Joab held back the people. **17** And they took Absalom and cast him into a large pit in the woods, and laid a very large heap of stones over him. Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent.

Joab wanted to guarantee that Absalom's body was not memorialized as an inspiration to other followers, or future rebels, *so he buries him in a large pit and covers him in a heap of stones*.

Let me read you a quote from Jon Courson:
Absalom ends up in a pit. And whenever you or I attempt to rebel or manipulate, whenever we seek our own kingdom rather than the kingdom of God, the result will always be the same. We'll always end up in a pit. ***Always.*** David was a man who learned this lesson. "I will not touch the Lord's anointed," he said, "be it Saul or Shimei." Oh, that we would learn the lesson of letting *God* work.

Oh, how I pray that we can all learn that lesson!

So verse 16 ends, *Then all Israel fled, everyone to his tent.*
Absalom's army was now in full retreat and David's forces had won the battle and the enemies of David headed for home.

18 Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up a pillar for himself, which *is* in the King's Valley. For he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He called the pillar after his own name. And to this day it is called Absalom's Monument.

I guess this is what you'd expect from a self-centered, self-promoting, vengeful and narcissistic man, like Absalom.

To memorialize himself.

One interesting side note, Absalom said that he had no son to keep his name in remembrance and yet, in (2 Samuel 14:27) it says that he had three sons?

This could mean, that either he built the monument before he had a son, or, that those three sons had somehow died before he did, *but I guess we'll never know for sure*.

Either way, Absalom built a huge monument of stones to bring attention to himself, *little knowing at the time*, that a day would come when Joab would cover his dead body with a pile of stones, so that no one would remember him.

In Deuteronomy 21: it says, (that rebellious sons were to be stoned to death) and possibly that is how Absalom was killed.

David Hears of Absalom's Death

19 Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run now and take the news to the king, how the Lord has avenged him of his enemies." **20** And Joab said to him, "You shall not take the news this day, for you shall take the news another day. But today you shall take no news, because the king's son is dead." **21** Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." So the Cushite bowed himself to Joab and ran.

Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok the priest, wanted to take David the news of Israel's victory and Absalom's death. But Joab wanted to spare Ahimaaz the son of Zadok, the burden of being the messenger of bad news.

Why?

Well, remember when David got the message concerning Saul's death, the messenger thought he had brought good news… *but remember David had him killed*. (2 Samuel 1:13-15)

The same thing happened when Ishbosheth was murdered. That messenger was also killed. (2 Samuel 4:12).

Joab, knowing that he would be putting Ahimaaz at the same risk of death, denied the request of Ahimaaz and sent the Cushite to run and tell David.

I guess he didn't care as much for the Cushite runner.

But check out these next verses…

22 And Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite." So Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, since you have no news ready?" **23** "But whatever happens," *he said,* "let me run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz ran by way of the plain, and outran the Cushite.

Now as it turns out, Ahimaaz was a faster runner than Cushi the Cushite and he got to David first and now listen to what happens.

24 Now David was sitting between the two gates. And the watchman went up to the roof over the gate, to the wall, lifted his eyes and looked, and there was a man, running alone. **25** Then the watchman cried out and told the king. And the king said, "If he *is* alone, *there is* news in his mouth." And he came rapidly and drew near. **26** Then the watchman saw *another* man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, "There is *another* man, running alone!"And the king said, "He also brings news." **27** So the watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz the son of Zadok."

And the king said, "He *is* a good man, and comes with good news." **28** So Ahimaaz called out and said to the king, "All is well!" Then he bowed down with his face to the earth before the king, and said, "Blessed *be* the Lord your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king!"

29 The king said, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" Ahimaaz answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant and *me* your servant, I saw a great

tumult, but I did not know what *it was about.*" **30** And the king said, "Turn aside *and* stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

So here we have king David on the lookout for news from the battle. They didn't have Fox News or CNN, they had runners. Young men that could run for miles at full speed and they would have watchmen who would report when they saw a runner coming. The watchman saw one runner approaching and then another.

When David heard that the first runner resembled a Ahimaaz *he prepared himself for good news*, because this guy has always brought welcome messages.

As he was drawing near to David, *he proudly proclaimed that the Lord had smitten the rebel army*.

But when David asked about Absalom, *his courage failed* and he gave a vague answer about seeing a great tumult, or large commotion, but he really didn't know any details.

So as much as Ahimaaz was a better runner, he was a lousy messenger, because he didn't know his message.

Church a message can be delivered beautifully, *but the messenger's first responsibility*' **is to get the message right.**

I hope and have prayed, that tonight, I'm doing just that, of course without all the running.

I like what Chuck Smith had to say regarding those who are eager to run and to be used in ministry and to share a message about God and His Word,

We say, "I want to run. I want to serve the Lord. Oh, I want to go out and serve the Lord. I've been saved for two weeks now." We go out prematurely before we really have something to share. But so anxious we are to run that we get involved in areas where we are not really qualified. I see it over and over again, people coming and saying, "Let me run. I want to go. I want to go out and preach. I want to go out and share."It doesn't

matter how well you might run, it's important that you have a message when you get there, that you have something worthwhile to share. That is why so often we say, "No, just sit and learn. Sit and prepare yourself, sit and grow in your knowledge, so that when you do go out, you'll have a message to share."

That's a good word from a man this greatly missed.

Unlike Ahimaaz, Cushi the runner, *as we'll see in the next few verses*, knew the correct message, *but communicated it to David, without saying it directly.*

31 Just then the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, "There is good news, my lord the king! For the Lord has avenged you this day of all those who rose against you." **32** And the king said to the Cushite, "Is the young man Absalom safe?" So the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like *that* young man!"

Without hearing it directly, David hears the answer he didn't want to hear.

Church, sadly this was really David's only concern. *Is the young man Absalom safe,* and this is a problem, because as king, *he should have been more concerned for Israel as a nation*, *than for his traitor son*.

At the same time, David's question is an example of the great bond of love between parent and child, and between **God our Father** and His children.

(Spurgeon) said it well, "He might have said, 'Is the young man Absalom dead? For if he is out of the way there will be peace to my realm, and rest to my troubled life.' But no, he is a father, and he must love his own offspring. It is a father that speaks, and a father's love can survive the enmity of a son."

David's Mourning for Absalom

33 Then the king was deeply moved, and went up to the chamber over the gate, and wept. And as he went, he said thus: “O my son Absalom—my son, my son Absalom—if only I had died in your place! O Absalom my son, my son!”

I think it’s important to understand just how deeply this affected David. The Hebrew idea of *deeply moved, implies a violent trembling of the body*. David felt completely undone at hearing the news of Absalom’s death.

This is the level of grief that came upon him. Why? Because David recognized his own failure and negligence as a parent. He had allowed tension, resentment and estrangement to fester.

For years he refused to see or speak to Absalom, *because of previous family tragedies* and he knew he had played a large roll in driving his own son down a destructive path.

David knew that his own sin with Bathsheba and Uriah was the main cause of the trouble that came upon his family.
It says, in (2 Samuel 12) Thus says the Lord: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house;

I think this grief comes from David blaming himself and taking responsibility for Absalom’s rebellion *and not just rebellion to him, but also to God*.

It’s interesting that when David’s son, *born out of sin with Bathsheba,* died after seven days, he didn’t weep. He simply said, He cannot be with me, but I will one day be with him.” *Which has been a great encouragement to many who have lost a young child.*

But this was not the case with Absalom. David continuously wept and grieved with a very different understanding regarding the death of his son Absalom.

He knew that he was largely responsible for Absalom being a rebellious, unregenerate man, *filled with pride and evil intentions* and David knew that his sin, played a large role in that.

And now that he was dead, *he understood that his son, whom he loved,* ***was now lost for eternity.***

He would never see Absalom again.

And that broke his heart…

(Morgan) says it well…
David's sorrow shows us that it isn't enough that parents train their children to be godly; they must first train *themselves* in godliness. "We cannot stand in the presence of that suffering without learning the solemn lessons of parental responsibility it has to teach, not merely in training our children, but in that earlier training of ourselves for their sakes."

2 Samuel 19

David Returns to Jerusalem

Keep in mind, at this time David is still in Mahanaim.

19 And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." **2** So the victory that day was *turned* into mourning for all the people. For the people heard it said that day, "The king is grieved for his son." **3** And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

King David is still grieving over the death of Absalom, in fact *it's excessive* and it's having a negative affect on the people and he needs to man up and remember, *that he has been called by God to be a leader* and to lead, *regardless of his emotions*.

It's been said, God is not *against* feelings — not at all. Many Christians lack deep and profound feeling and experience in their walk with God. At the same time, feelings were never meant to master over us.

Church… I heard this quote a short while back and I think it helps us to understand the place emotions play in our lives.

It says, *regarding our emotions and life decisions. Think of it like a train. Truth is the engine of the train and emotions are the caboose.*

To make this work, we must be in the Word - daily.

4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, “O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!” **5** Then Joab came into the house to the king, and said, “Today you have disgraced all your servants who today have saved your life, the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines, **6** in that you love your enemies and hate your friends. For you have declared today that you regard neither princes nor servants; for today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well. **7** Now therefore, arise, go out and speak comfort to your servants. For I swear by the Lord, if you do not go out, not one will stay with you this night. And that will be worse for you than all the evil that has befallen you from your youth until now.”

So in comes Joab, the very man who defied David’s order and without conscience, murdered his son and says,“David, *your excessive mourning is selfish*. *It isn’t all about you.*

These loyal, sacrificial supporters of yours, deserve to feel good about their victory and you’re making them feel terrible. ***David… Snap out of it.”***

Church, do you remember in Leviticus 6 what our Lord, *through Moses,* said to Aaron when his son’s were killed… “Others may mourn, but you cannot, for you are anointed and you have a job to do.

David is so caught up in what he knew about Absalom’s death and his role in it, *that he forgot,* ***that God is still in control and there is work to be done.***

So Joab continues to try and get David to come out of this emotional mess he’s in, by telling him what a great victory had been won and that David now had many loyal supporters and God had showed him great grace and mercy.

David needed to *snap out of it* and do what a king needs to do and that is go to the people and speak comfort to them and encourage them, *or he warns*, you're going to lose most of them.

8 Then the king arose and sat in the gate. And they told all the people, saying, "There is the king, sitting in the gate." So all the people came before the king. For everyone of Israel had fled to his tent.

It seems David has finally realized, that he has a responsibility to God and to the people he's been called to lead and has allowed his understanding of what was *right, to outweigh* what he *felt*.

This is what the people needed to see, David sitting in the gate as king in his rightful place of authority. This confirmed with the people, that their sacrifice was worth it, that it was appreciated and that David would continue to reign as their king.

Joab's rebuke worked, because Joab cared enough to say it and David was wise enough to receive it.

As God's children we have the responsibility to get up each morning and choose to see burdens or blessings, bad things or good things and the choice we make affects everyone around us.

9 Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king saved us from the hand of our enemies, he delivered us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled from the land because of Absalom. **10** But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?"

So the rebellion appears over and David has survived Absalom's attempt to overthrow him, but things were still unsettled and David's kingdom wasn't restored yet.

The tribes of Israel realized what David had done for them in delivering them from the Philistines, *but they also understood that they had rejected him as their king and wrongly chose to embrace Absalom.*

(Quick Note: How were they wrong? *Scripture says, whom we anointed over us, not whom God anointed* (they ignored God's choice and chose for themselves a leader and their decision failed.)

But regardless, Absalom was now dead, which leaves the people of Israel **thinking, so now what?**

They only seemed to want David back after their false king Absalom failed. They looked for someone who they thought was a better leader, *ignoring the fact that God Himself had anointed David King.*

Throughout history, man has always been so fickle, *like the Israelites,* we often only decide to bring back King Jesus when the other things, *or people who* we choose to make kings in our lives, fail us.

(Redpath) said, "The folly of their allegiance to Absalom was clear — it had brought only misery and confusion. They were on the wrong side; they had rejected their true king, and therefore the situation was full of unrest."

11 So King David sent to Zadok and Abiathar the priests, saying, "Speak to the elders of Judah, saying, 'Why are you the last to bring the king back to his house, since the words of all Israel have come to the king, to his *very* house? **12** You *are* my brethren, you *are* my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' **13** 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 the army before me continually in place of Joab.' " **14** So he swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah, just as *the heart of* one man, so that they sent *this word* to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!"

It's interesting that David wasn't willing to *force* his reign on Israel. He would only come back, if, the tribes who rejected him for Absalom, *agreed to bring him back.*

So David decides to send Zadok and Abiathar with the question. "Why are you the last ones to reinstate the king?

I've heard that all Israel is ready and it's only you 'elders of Judah' who are on the fence. *Why is it taking so long for you to call David back as king?*"

It seems clear to me that the 'elders of Judah' were unwilling to speak openly and were hesitant to invite David to return because of the part they had played in Absalom's insurrection and knowing that if David is reestablished as King, there could be serious repercussions.

So what does David do, he tells Zadok and Abiathar to appeal to Amasa, ***the very man who was captain of Absalom's army***, to be commander of his army in place of Joab.

Now, I don't know that I would be willing to have the very guy who fought against me, be the guy who is now protecting me, but I'm no King David.

I'm sure this was a two-fold strategy of putting Joab in his place for what he had done to Absalom *and to give some reassurance to the elders of Judah.*

David would not force his reign on the people and would not come back, until welcomed by the ***hearts of all*** and that could not be *forced* — he knew their hearts had to be ***swayed*** and it worked, the efforts of Zadok and Abiathar succeeded.

15 Then the king returned and came to the Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan.
16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, who *was* from Bahurim, hurried and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.
17 *There were* a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over the Jordan before the king. **18** Then a ferryboat went across to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good.

David left Israel like a desperate fugitive on the run. He was rejected by the nation of Israel and hunted by his son Absalom.

Now, ***because God is in control***, He has come back under the conditions that he made known and that was to be welcomed back *and is escorted by thousands of enthusiastic supporters.*

Now also notice, Shimei, the son of Gera, who, as you may remember, was the rock throwing, dust kicking, cursing and mocking crazy man, who harassed David and his men, while they were fleeing, is one of the first to greet David.

David's Mercy to Shimei

Now Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan. **19** Then he said to the king, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take *it* to heart. **20** For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king."

Shimei wasn't stupid, he knew he had to get ahead of things and make it right with the king. He fell down before David and gave a remarkably humble, contrite confession. He knew he had sinned greatly against David and this required that he repented greatly before him, so that he didn't lose his head.

He pleaded with David to not impute iniquity to him, knowing David had every right to do just that and he pleaded for mercy.

(Spurgeon) said,
Perhaps you have been like Shimei, who cursed king David, and you are afraid that Jesus will never forgive you. But David forgave Shimei, and Jesus is ready to forgive you. He delighteth in mercy. I do believe that the harps of heaven never give to Christ such happiness as he has when he forgives the ungodly, and saith, 'Thy sins are forgiven; go in peace.'"

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?" **22** And David said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you

should be adversaries to me today? Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I *am* king over Israel?”
23 Therefore the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” And the king swore to him.

Once again, Abishai was determined to take care of Shimei once and for all and asked permission to kill him.

And once again, David denied his request.

David and Mephibosheth Meet

24 Now Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. And he had not cared for his feet, nor trimmed his mustache, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he returned in peace. **25** So it was, when he had come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said to him, “Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?”
26 And he answered, “My lord, O king, my servant deceived me. For your servant said, ‘I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go to the king,’ because your servant *is* lame. **27** And he has slandered your servant to my lord the king, but my lord the king *is* like the angel of God. Therefore do *what is* good in your eyes. **28** For all my father’s house were but dead men before my lord the king. Yet you set your servant among those who eat at your own table. Therefore what right have I still to cry out anymore to the king?”

David came right out and asked Mephibosheth, Why didn't you go with me when I went into exile? Mephibosheth replied, “*I wanted to go with you*, *I even saddled a donkey so that I could go with you*, but Ziba lied when he told you I wanted to rebel against you.

But nothing could be further from the truth, *for I owe my very life to you.*

29 So the king said to him, “Why do you speak anymore of your matters? I have said, ‘You and Ziba divide the land.’ ”

As you may remember from our last time together, Ziba had lied and told David that Mephibosheth had abandoned him and in response, David gave Ziba all that Mephibosheth had. Now after hearing from Mephibosheth, David decides to have them divide the land.

David was being wise like Solomon when he said, “You and Ziba divide the land.” *Like me*, maybe your first thought was, *that’s not fair*, Ziba lied and deceived, why should he get anything?

But think of it this way. David was testing Mephibosheth, much like when Solomon told the two women claiming each to be the babies mother, *to divide the baby and you may each have half.*

Solomon quickly discovered who the real mother was and it was much the same way with Mephibosheth.

30 Then Mephibosheth said to the king, “Rather, let him take it all, inasmuch as my lord the king has come back in peace to his own house.”

It’s interesting to me that Mephibosheth was slandered before David, yet he didn’t feel the need to defend himself or demand a hearing before David to get back what was taken.

He knew David had already given him more than he deserved, so if David were to now take it all away, he would still be ahead.

Mephibosheth didn’t care about getting his property back… he only cared about getting his King back.

Church, we need to be like him, we need to stop, look and listen to this great man as he models for us what it means to die to self and make our King, King Jesus our focus.

(Morgan) said, “For his own enrichment this man cared nothing at all. It was everything to him that his king should come into the possession of his kingdom in peace... It is to be feared that too often we are more concerned about our rights than about His. **(Jesus)** It is a great and glorious thing when our loyalty and love make us far more concerned

about the victories of our Lord, than about our own unquestioned rights. Yet that should be the normal attitude of all who sit at the King's Table."

David's Kindness to Barzillai

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king, to escort him across the Jordan. **32** Now Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. And he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he *was* a very rich man.

Barzillai, who had supplied pretty much everything David and his men would need to sustain them, including beds when he was fleeing the army of Absalom, now comes to meet David upon his return to Jerusalem.

33 And the king said to Barzillai, "Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem."

A very grateful David, offered Barzillai the opportunity to feast at the king's table for as long as he was in Jerusalem.

Church, it's been said, What an impact we Christians would have for good in this world if we tried to get even with those who have been kind to us. Instead of taking for granted the blessings God brings to you through other people, seek a way to return that kindness with kindness. ***That's the kind of vengeance God approves of.***
Have you been blessed today? Then get even. And if you can't get even with the one who blessed you, pass the blessing on to someone else. (Back to the Bible)

Church, get even with someone today - God's way!

Now notice this response…

34 But Barzillai said to the king, "How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? **35** I *am* today eighty years old. Can I discern between the good and bad? Can your servant taste what I eat or

what I drink? Can I hear any longer the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be a further burden to my lord the king? **36** Your servant will go a little way across the Jordan with the king. And why should the king repay me *with* such a reward? **37** Please let your servant turn back again, that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother. But here is your servant Chimham; let him cross over with my lord the king, and do for him what seems good to you."

Barzillai was 80 years old, *I'm not there yet. but I'm beginning to understand more and more what life will be like should the rapture take longer than I'm hoping for.*

He goes on to tell David that his mind is slowing, his desire for the finer things life is gone. His hearing is fading and he would only be a burden to David.

He was too old, either to enjoy the pleasures of a court, or to be of any further service to the king and he is content to live out his life and has a simple request.

Please let your servant turn back again that I may die in my own city, near the grave of my father and mother.

But as he respectfully declines David's offer, he accepts it on behalf of Chimham (*possibly his son*)

38 And the king answered, "Chimham shall cross over with me, and I will do for him what seems good to you. Now whatever you request of me, I will do for you." **39** Then all the people went over the Jordan. And when the king had crossed over, the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own place.

Okay… let's wrap this up

The Quarrel About the King

40 Now the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him. And all the people of Judah escorted the king, and also half the people of Israel. **41** Just then all the men of Israel came to the king, and said to the king, “Why have our brethren, the men of Judah, stolen you away and brought the king, his household, and all David’s men with him across the Jordan?” **42** So all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king *is* a close relative of ours. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we ever eaten at the king’s *expense?* Or has he given us any gift?” **43** And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, “We have ten shares in the king; therefore we also have more *right* to David than you. Why then do you despise us—were we not the first to advise bringing back our king?” Yet the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

I guess people will always be people, Here we have the 10 northern tribes asking the tribe of Judah, “*So, Why do you get to escort David across the Jordan?*

The elders of Judah replied, because, dummies, he’s our relative.

Yeah! *Well, big deal, we were the first to want him back* said the 10 of the northern tribes of Israel.

Isn’t this just like people, only a few weeks earlier, they were fighting against David and now, here they’re fighting who gets to escort him back to Jerusalem.

Sadly this competitive attitude between Judah and the ten northern tribes, *set the stage for civil war in David’s day and the eventual division of the nation into two*.

Church, I want to close with this quote from Jon Courson.

Church when you're serving Jesus, administering to people, know this: The same people who one week cried “Hosanna” the next week cried “Crucify Him!”

Unfortunately, we all have these tendencies because the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked (Jeremiah 17:9). That is why Paul said it

was the love of Christ that constrained, or motivated him (2 Corinthians 5:14).

If you're in ministry for the love of people, you won't last… because people change their minds. If you're in ministry for the love of the lost, *what will happen is*, like Jeremiah, you preach and teach and witness for 30 years to your friends and neighbours and not one person gets saved?

The only true motivation for ministry, must be your love for Jesus, regardless of people's response and reaction.