

Session 28 David's Restoration in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 19-20)

I. DAVID'S LEADERSHIP AFTER THE CIVIL WAR (2 SAM. 19)

- A. 2 Samuel 19 emphasizes how David and Israel carried their hearts after the traumatic and tragic events that had occurred related to Absalom's rebellion and death. We see both the right and wrong ways in which people carry their heart in crisis. The highlights here are in seeing how David gave honor and forgiveness to men who did not deserve it and seeing how it moved and unified them.
- B. After Joab returned from the battle, he was told that David was overcome with grief for Absalom (19:1-4). This information quickly spread through the troops returning from battle; it shamed and offended them. Rather than celebrating their victory, they "stole back into the city" with the shame of a soldier who ran from a battle in fear (19:3). As the men passed through the city gate, they saw David covering his face and crying with a loud voice for Absalom (19:4).

¹And Joab was told, "Behold, the king is weeping and mourning for Absalom." ***²So 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."*** ***³And the people stole back into the city that day, as people who are ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.*** ***⁴But the king covered his face, and the king cried out with a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"*** (2 Sam. 19:1-4)

- C. David failed to respond to their extravagant service and risk with appropriate gratitude. He was so preoccupied with his own personal pain that he neglected to give fitting and proper leadership to his men. His response created a new crisis in his army. There is a time and place to express personal grief and as well to a time to minister to the needs of those entrusted to your care by the Lord.
- D. It was right for David to grieve over Absalom's death, but he should have tempered it especially in light of Absalom having just rebelled against God's anointed, God's people, and God's kingdom. He continued his loud crying even longer than the time it took his army to march back to the city.

David's inordinate grief clouded his judgment and consumed all of his energy, causing him to neglect his responsibility in a critical time in the nation's history. He had lost sight of the sacred responsibility that the Lord had entrusted to him as the anointed king of Israel.

David was both a king and father, and he needed to express himself appropriately both ways.

- E. Joab was so upset by David's behavior that he barged into his house to warn him to stop (19:5-8). Joab let David know that he disgraced his soldiers who had risked their life for him and his family. Joab understood the power of disappointment and bitterness and its hindrance to God's purpose. David received Joab's warning so he arose to his leadership responsibilities and comforted his men.

⁵Joab 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..." ***⁶For today I perceive that if Absalom had lived and all of us had died today, then it would have pleased you well...*** ***⁷Arise, 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."*** ***⁸Then the king arose and sat in the gate.*** (2 Sam. 19:5-8)

II. THE DISPUTE IN ISRAEL

- A. The short civil war left the people in a national dispute. After Absalom's army was defeated, they returned to their homes where much debate arose regarding how they should respond to David's leadership as he returned from exile (19:9-10).

⁹Now all the people were in a dispute throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king saved us from the hand of our enemies... ¹⁰But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, has died in battle. Now therefore, why do you say nothing about bringing back the king?" (2 Sam. 19:9-10)

- B. The people had been seduced by Absalom's promises and charisma, leading them to betray David and anoint Absalom as their king in his place. However, after Absalom's death, there were very different views about David circulating around the nation. The "Saul loyalists" and "anti-David" groups had lain low for years while David was in power. Absalom's conspiracy gave occasion for their negative feelings to surface. When it seemed that Absalom's conspiracy would triumph, the groups who favored David laid low. But now all these groups were vying for power and contending against each other for prominence in issues related to the government and its future decisions.

- C. When David learned of his support from the men of Israel, then he sent a message through his two most respected spiritual leaders, Zadok and Abiathar, to the elders of his tribe, Judah, and to Amasa. Many of the elders of Judah had supported Absalom's conspiracy. How would David treat them? He took initiative to assure them that he would forgive and give them honor in his government.

¹¹So 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...? ¹²You are...my bone and my flesh. Why then are you the last to bring back the king?' ¹³And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me...if you are not commander of the army...in place of Joab.' " ¹⁴So he [Amasa] swayed the hearts of all the men of Judah...that they sent this word to the king: "Return, you and all your servants!" ¹⁵...Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to escort the king across the Jordan. (2 Sam. 19:11-15)

***Last to bring back the king:** David wanted to let the elders of Judah know that the tribes of Israel had just made a commitment to support him and his kingship (19:10).*

***Gilgal:** On his journey back to Jerusalem the men of Judah gathered at Gilgal to go escort him over the Jordan River. Gilgal is 5 miles west of the river, 15 miles northeast of Jerusalem*

- D. David also forgave Shimei for cursing him (16:5-13; 19:16-20). Shimei was a leader in the camp of the "Saul loyalists," being from the royal family of Saul. He had been a bold spokesman for the strong anti-David campaign that had been going on when it seemed that Absalom would triumph. By forgiving him David again signaled his desire for all to be accepted and given a new start.

¹⁸...Shimei...fell down before the king when he had crossed the Jordan. ¹⁹Then 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... ²⁰For I, your servant, know that I have sinned."... ²³The king said to Shimei, "You shall not die." And the king swore to him. (2 Sam. 19:18-23)

- E. Barzillai supported David and his army during their stay in Mahanaim (17:27-29). He travelled about 50 miles to celebrate David crossing the Jordan to resume his throne. David invited Barzillai to live in the royal court in Jerusalem to bless him for his extravagant generosity in Mahanaim.

³¹And Barzillai...came down from Rogelim and went across the Jordan with the king...³²Now Barzillai was...eighty years old. And he had provided the king with supplies while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very rich man. ³³And the king said to Barzillai, "Come across with me, and I will provide for you while you are with me in Jerusalem." (2 Sam. 19:31-33)

Every conversation that David had as he was traveling back to Jerusalem was in context to people wanting his favor or forgiveness, but Barzillai wanted nothing from him. Barzillai owed him nothing and wanted nothing from him. He was there simply to express his love.

Barzillai loved with no strings attached. This wealthy elder man pictures true friendship without self-interest. Many become more self-centered as they grow in wealth and age.

- F. As David was traveling back to Jerusalem, the men of Israel demanded that he give an explanation concerning why he had allowed the men of Judah to "steal him away" (19:41).

⁴¹Just 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?" ⁴²So 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 [government's] expense?... " ⁴³And 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. (2 Sam. 19:41-43)

They interpreted David's allowing the men of Judah to help transport the royal household across the Jordan as giving Judah more honor. Before David could respond, the men of Judah answered defensively—claiming their family status as the reason for deserving the honor.

Israel retorted that their larger number was the reason they deserved more honor or had greater claim on David—Israelites had ten shares in the king. Plus the northern tribes were the "first" to promote the idea of bringing David back to Jerusalem as king (19:9-10).

Both missed seeing the big picture—that God was restoring their anointed king to Jerusalem.

- G. There were many unresolved tensions of bitterness and division even after the civil war was over. In the body of Christ today we can see the overly sensitive and easily offended mindset that occurred in Gilgal that day. We all proclaim our desire that Jesus rule over us, but then we yield to fleshly attitudes as different groups or ministries claim to be biggest, best, or first in importance or honor.

¹And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual people but as to carnal, as to babes in Christ. ²I fed you with milk and not with solid food; for until now you were not able to receive it, and even now you are still not able; ³for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? ⁴For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal? (1 Cor. 3:1-4)

III. SHEBA'S REVOLT AGAINST DAVID FAILS (2 SAM. 20)

A. The debate between the men of Israel in the north and the men of Judah in the south escalated into another serious national conflict. The point of the debate was centered on who honored David the most and was thus most deserving of honor from David. It resulted in men deserting David again.

B. Sheba was from Benjamin, the tribe of Saul. He was probably a high-ranking military officer who exploited the strife between the Israel and Judah to start another revolt against David.

¹And there happened to be there a rebel, whose name was Sheba...a Benjamite. And he blew a trumpet, and said: "We have no share in David, nor do we have inheritance in the son of Jesse; every man to his tents, O Israel!"²So every man of Israel deserted David, and followed Sheba... (2 Sam. 20:1-2)

C. Joab pursued Sheba to Abel, a city in northern Israel. Sheba was killed; the revolt came to an end.

¹⁴And he [Sheba] went through all the tribes of Israel to Abel...¹⁵Then they [Joab] came and besieged him in Abel...¹⁶Then a wise woman cried out from the city, "Hear, hear! Please say to Joab, 'Come nearby, that I may speak with you.'"...²²The woman in her wisdom went to all the people. And they cut off the head of Sheba...and threw it out to Joab. (2 Sam. 20:14-22)

D. David as God's anointed king fully was fully restored to Jerusalem, but he was still resisted by many who did not want him in leadership over their nation. We would think that by the last decade of David's reign that the majority would be supporting him.

One of the biggest contributors to burnout in leadership in ministry is disillusionment related to unrealistic expectations. For instance, imagining that by being faithful and diligent in serving people for years one would not be attacked by people in the body of Christ.

Paul and David at the height of their leadership were attacked and resisted by God's people.

Popularity, public opinion, and favor with God's people can change very quickly both for and against God's servants. Therefore it is not wise to place too much confidence in your current popularity or lack thereof.

E. Even in context to David's victories in this hour, troubles continually arose.

²²...strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter [experience more] the kingdom of God." (Acts 14:22)

F. Absalom and Sheba's rebellions and the various responses to them give us insight into the complex dynamics that will occur in the end times when many will be offended and will betray another.

¹⁰And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. (Mt. 24:10)

G. One of the most important truths to learn from David is how to respond to God with confidence and gratitude so that we will respond to people with generosity and humility with much forgiveness.