

JUNE 2

2 Samuel 19:11-20:13

David's mess was far from over and his thinking and judgment were far from clear.

2 Samuel 19:11-43

Vs. 11-15 The problem here is that most of Absalom's strong supporters were of Judah. David urged Judah to invite him back to Jerusalem as the king. As a special political incentive, he told Amasa, Joab's cousin and the leader of Absalom's army, that he would become the commander of his army. I wonder at the wisdom of having someone as your commander who was just trying to kill you. No telling what Joab thought about that, but Joab had disobeyed David and killed Absalom.

Vs. 16-23 It is interesting to me that both Shimei and Ziba are mentioned together here. Again, Ziba is "only" there to serve and win David's heart, right? Shimei gets off easy, for now.

Vs. 24-30 So finally, Mephibosheth (M) shows up. Notice that he hadn't taken care of himself since the king *departed until the day he came back*. What does that mean? Mephibosheth was in mourning for David. Not taking care of yourself was how you mourned and fasted. It wasn't how you went about making yourself king. The text/the Spirit is giving us proof that M was innocent. Read M's explanation of what happened. He was telling the truth and that rat, Ziba, lied about everything. Why? Because Ziba wanted to have Saul's estate for himself, the way it had been before David helped M.

So what was David's response to bring fairness and justice to this situation? How did David show true loyalty to the son of his best friend, the guy who willingly gave David the crown and strengthened him in the Lord?

V. 29 David impatiently cut off Mephibosheth in mid-sentence and told him to shut up. That is the import of his response. David was tired and rude to M. David had been tricked and trapped again. So the compromised, frustrated king got a fantastic idea: He split the property (that was the issue) between Ziba (the liar) and M (the victim).

V. 30 Once again, just as in the case with Uriah, David is shown up by a humbler, more spiritual man. M told David that Ziba could have it all. He was just happy that David had come home safely. I'm just sad when I read this.

Mephibosheth was like Jonathan, a good, honest, spiritual man. He was five years old when his father died, but something good happened in those five years. To think, not only was Jonathan a great man and spiritual leader, but he also turned out to be a better father than David and he only had five years to pull it off.

For me, what David did here to M was a disgrace. David the liar, the murderer, could not bring himself to do the right thing and judge another liar, especially since Ziba had helped him and David had received his gift. Receiving the gift put David under obligation. And then David had rashly believed Ziba and judged M before witnesses and given everything to Ziba. David was a ruined man.

Vs. 31-40 This is a lengthy section of David repaying Barzillai for helping David. David gives Barzillai's son, or grandson, a permanent place at his table. There may have been other favors attached to this.

Vs. 41-43 This is where communication skills could have helped. Apparently David thought everything would go back to normal quickly, but I don't think he realized the depth of his neglect, not speaking to Absalom and letting him (with his 50 men a-running) win the hearts of Israel. God still had more chastening to do to really break David. God allowed some hot-heads to create dissension. Earlier in David's reign he knew how to smooth things.

2 Samuel 20:1-13

Vs. 1-2 Here was yet another Benjaminite causing problems and another mini-civil war. Apparently this happened in David's presence as they were coming up from Gilgal to Jerusalem. Just for trivia, notice where this guy was from (v. 21) and then look at Judges 8:1 & 12:1. What was going on in the hills of Ephraim?

V. 3 Because of the way Absalom had dishonored them, David would no longer be a husband to these women. This would be a permanent, visible reminder and scar. I don't think David suffered, but these women surely did. People were still paying for David's sin. I keep thinking of the line in Psalm 51:4 where David says to God, *Against you, you only, have I sinned*. Hmmm.

Vs. 4-10 David ordered Amasa to call the army of Judah together to keep the rebellion of Sheba from growing. When Amasa didn't have the assembly done by the appointed time, David sent Abishai, Joab's brother. This didn't mean Amasa was a bad guy, but apparently he wasn't a skilled leader.

Vs. 9-13 This was cold-blooded murder. How do we know? Later David will tell Solomon it was murder, and he made Solomon promise to execute Joab in a way that would pay for this murder. The political situation was too fragile (for David's human thinking) to punish Joab. With this "stroke" Joab killed his cousin and kept his position of power as commander of the army. The description is vicious and violent. Obviously, Joab was his own man and did things his way. I think he knew he didn't have anything to fear from the compromised David. Notice that immediately after this murder, Joab assumed his old position as commander of the army.

Vs. 11-13 Amasa had already been given a promise by David and was seen as a loyal man. What happened here, it seems, is that when the men looked at Amasa's body, it brought up thoughts of treachery and double dealing. Maybe, they thought, David was going back on his word. So one of Joab's men dragged the body off of the road and threw a blanket over it. Now everyone was unified again so they could go after the bad guy.

As disciples working in the harvest, there is no room for politics and hypocrisy. It is better to be honest, say our peace and if the situation persists, ask the Lord to put us in a place where we can do honest work for Him. Salary and position are not reasons to stay in a dysfunctional situation. David still could have done all of this the right way, but he didn't. He should have taken care of Joab himself.

John 21

Vs. 1-14 Jesus had commanded them to meet Him in Galilee, and seven of the eleven were there waiting at some appointed place. Wherever it was, it was a lonely place and there were no crowds.

V. 3 Some suggest that Peter had gone back to his trade, but it clearly looks like he was just passing the time, trying to catch breakfast.

V. 4 They didn't recognize Jesus, because he had either changed His appearance or had given them some mental block.

V. 7 John was spiritually perceptive. He didn't recognize the man, but he remembered the situation, and knew that this unidentified man was the Lord. That is pretty big faith.

Vs. 9-14 There is a slight miracle noted here, probably something the Lord did to encourage Peter. Not only did Peter drag the net ashore alone, but it is noted that the net didn't break.

V. 12 It is interesting that Jesus made them have to deny their sight and go with their hearts regarding His identity. I wonder if at some point He went back to the old form they knew.

Vs. 15-19 I think this portion here is the primary reason John and the Spirit included this story. It is all about Jesus' restoration of Peter.

Notice that Peter is brought to confess his love for Jesus three times, just like he denied Jesus three times.

Notice, too, that Peter's love for Jesus was to be expressed in service. He was not to become the executive head of anything. He was to be like Jesus, a servant. In making disciples, the key element is serving people, being with them, teaching them to follow Christ in the harvest. Disciple making is not an executive position.

V. 19 This is a very interesting assurance for Peter and for all of us. As we are following Christ, He actually designs our death so that by it, we will glorify God.

Peter had publicly denied Jesus; Jesus restored him publicly. Loving Christ means following Him, sharing His love to make disciples. Peter had been broken and was now humble enough to lead and make disciples. He followed.

Vs. 20-23 Apparently, this is written here to dispel some false information regarding John never dying. John was probably an old man when he wrote this, possibly 50 or more years after the resurrection.

Vs. 24-25 This Gospel is traditionally thought to be the last of the Gospels, written after the deaths of Peter and Paul and well after the destruction of Jerusalem. John was an old man, possibly the last of the apostles, living in Ephesus as he wrote this, and then in exile on Patmos when he wrote the book of Revelation.

Psalms 120

Psalms 120-134 are called "Songs of Ascents," and were to be sung by the pilgrims coming to Jerusalem one of those three times of the year when all of the men were to appear before the Lord at the feasts. This one is anonymous. Some of them are from David and one is from Solomon. These were probably sung to "tune" the hearts of the worshipers to be longing for God and to be confessing their own sins as they walked to Jerusalem and came before Him.

Vs. 1-2 This is an interesting song to be singing, walking up to Jerusalem to tune your heart to God. But maybe not. Here the psalmist is crying out to God for help.

Vs. 3-7 Maybe this is what it was like for Hannah, Samuel's mother, each year that she went up to worship, being hurt and antagonized by the other wife.

It is hard to worship when you have enemies, so maybe this psalm makes a lot of sense. We are told to forgive, but often it is not a matter of our forgiving, but resisting the enemy's influence. Somehow our love for God and our understanding of Him and this world has to be bigger than our enemy, or the enemy controls us.

On second thought, this is a brilliant song to sing on the way to worship, asking God to free one's heart from these enemies and to receive the peace of God.

Proverbs 16:16-17

I don't think anyone who has lived for Christ in the harvest and seen fruit regrets not being wealthy; in fact, there are other blessings they would value more. Those other blessings are the "riches" that confirm the hand of God on their lives. On the other hand, there are masses of Christians who have forged comfortable lives, with little or no fruit, who would gladly go back and redirect their lives and choose other values to follow.

V. 17 sounds like what Paul warned Timothy about in I Timothy 6:9, *But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.*

Better to be "rich" in the harvest with our Lord.