

MAY 30

2 Samuel 15:23-16:23

2 Samuel 15:23-37

Vs. 23-29 It had been a moment of great personal joy when David brought the ark into the city. Now, it must have broken his heart to see these well meaning priests taking it out of the city with him. David's heart is rightly humbled. David knew he had brought this situation on himself and was willing to submit himself to God's will and judgment. He sent the ark back into the city, hoping that the Lord would bring him back.

What comes from this is that both priests had sons who could bring him information.

Vs. 30-37 Jesus would one day weep on the Mount of Olives, but for a very different reason. He would be entering Jerusalem to die for sin. These people, with David, were leaving Jerusalem because of sin. I wonder why they were weeping. I wonder if anyone was thinking in the back of their mind that this was the result of what David did to Bathsheba and Uriah.

David's heart falls when he learns that Ahithophel was in league with Absalom. At that moment, it seems God sent David the answer to his prayer. Hushai would become the secret weapon against Ahithophel. Isn't it interesting that up until now, we've never heard the name of Ahithophel. Now we're afraid of him. If this guy was such a great counselor and such a wise guy, why did he turn against David and side with a foolish man like Absalom? What would cause a wise man like Ahithophel to oppose David and God and do something so irrational? Did you figure it out?

2 Samuel 16

Vs. 1-4 So here is Ziba, bearing gifts. I know he wasn't Greek, but the old adage applied to him too. Maybe this was just "old world" kindness. Maybe he knew the story of how Abigail's gift had touched David's heart. Of course, hindsight is always 20/20, but no one sees this yet as we will understand it in chapter 19.

Look at v. 3. All I want to say here is this, both in the law and in dealing with elders in the NT, God says, *Do not admit a charge against an elder except on the evidence of two or three witnesses*. I know I'm jading you, slanting your thinking a certain way, but I have not read one commentary that catches what is happening here. This is where reading year after year allows the Spirit to give you insight deeper than studying a passage for only a few hours will give you.

So here you have the word of Ziba, that the crippled son of David's best friend, a godly friend, has said, "Good, now I'll become king." Especially knowing that all Israel was following after that handsome, fully functional, "dude's dude," Absalom. Really? A cripple was going to put himself forward as king?

V. 4 To me this ranks as a very sad verse in the Bible. David just broke the law of God by accepting the testimony of one man against another. And look what he did. He gave Ziba everything, and he never even asked Mephibosheth if this was true. I mean, seriously. Obviously, I know what's coming in chapter 19, but suffice it to say that David's judgment was damaged by his sin and his guilt. There is one other little point to observe. According to "old world" custom and cleverness, if you accepted the gift of a man, you were indebted to him.

Vs. 5-14 This guy was wrong and ranted at David for all the wrong reasons. Now, if he had said something about killing Uriah and taking Bathsheba, that would have been true and instructive, especially because, as you will see, God's judgment on David for his actions against Uriah and Bathsheba is being fulfilled here. Back to Shimei. God will judge him for this, but God used him to provide some "mood music" for David's march to the Jordan. David's words give us the idea that he understood that God was motivating Shimei. Interestingly enough, as David dies, he will

give Solomon two assignments: one is to kill Joab and the other is to kill this guy, but of course, to do it legally. Sounds like a mafia movie.

Vs. 15-23 So now we look at the other side of this civil war. Hushai is in place to try to save David, but Absalom looks to Ahithophel for counsel. Ahithophel's first word to Absalom is that he should rape David's ten concubines (servant wives). Verses 20-23 are a summary that he actually did this, probably the next day. Presently however, the meeting isn't over.

Now, who was Ahithophel?

When we first heard about Bathsheba in 2 Samuel 11:3, we learned "Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" This should have made David stop immediately. Why?

If you do a search on the name "Eliam," you'll find it coming up later in 2 Samuel 23. The name is found in the list of David's mighty men. David's mighty men were a select group of outstanding warriors and fighters, who were deeply loyal to David, probably having joined David when he was still serving Saul. David would have been very close to these men. These men were with him through all the ten years of running from Saul. Now as king, some of them would have been David's personal bodyguards. They would have been the men who ate daily with David at his table (as we see Mephibosheth doing). He would have known them and been close to these guys and their families. In putting together a government back then, you went to your family and your friends and their families. You chose men whom you knew and could trust. The world was small, and so you surrounded yourself with your trusted, proven friends and their families.

So, in 2 Samuel 23:34 you'll see that Eliam, one of David's mighty men, was the son of Ahithophel. So if Bathsheba was the daughter of Eliam, she would be the granddaughter of Ahithophel. She was Ahithophel's granddaughter! Look at the end of the list of David's mighty men. The last hero listed is Uriah the Hittite. Uriah was in this select group and known by David. Both Eliam and Uriah were members of an elite group of soldiers, friends and loyalists of David, known as David's "mighty men." Ahithophel was David's most trusted counselor. These men sat at the table with David.

Did David really not know who Bathsheba was? He knew she was the granddaughter of his most trusted counselor, the daughter of one of his closest and most loyal men, and the wife of one of his closest and most loyal men. He also knew they were away from Jerusalem fighting a battle. David wasn't stupid, but what he did was.

What would cause a wise man like Ahithophel to join Absalom to oppose David and God and do something so foolish? Ahithophel saw how David had sexually forced his granddaughter, killed his "grandson-in-law," destroyed his family and violated the trust and loyalty Eliam and Uriah had shown him when he was running from Saul. How sad. Then notice that Ahithophel tells Absalom to rape his father's concubines. I don't think Ahithophel was an evil man. He just wanted justice in kind. David had raped his granddaughter, now David's son raped his wives. Poetic justice, just as God had promised to judge David. And since David had killed Ahithophel's grandson-in-law, now Ahithophel hoped to kill David.

When David says in Psalm 51:4, *Against You, You only, have I sinned...*, I have to respectfully disagree. David should have had long talks with Ahithophel and Eliam and their families and apologized until his voice was hoarse and he couldn't cry another tear. I don't think David did this. Look at how David communicated with his own sons. David wrote songs, but he was a basket case when it came to discussion for restoration.

Ahithophel became a bitter man and will rightfully pay for his bitterness. His new great grandson, Solomon, will become king; but where hearts are bitter, where there is no justice, and where there is no repentance and honest communication, there is seldom forgiveness or peace.

David should have begged for their forgiveness. When that didn't come, Ahithophel needed to have left Jerusalem and his service for the king and gone to God and found solace in Him alone. I don't think he did that.

So, Ahithophel's first word of counsel to Absalom is to go and do publicly to 10 of David's wives, what David had done secretly to Bathsheba. Remember too, that this "just" punishment is exactly what God promised as judgment for what David had done in secret. (2 Samuel 12:11-12) And as if that weren't enough, Absalom did this on the roof top where David had been watching Bathsheba.

David is still a great man of God, but this should be a caution for us to take God's Word seriously. This is a divine testimony to the corrupting power of sin in the soul of a godly man and in the group that was around him. As disciples, not only do we need to be in the Word daily, but we need to live in the fear of the Lord. As a man sows, so shall he reap. And there is no partiality with God.

John 18:25-19:22

John 18:25-40

Vs. 25-27 It is interesting that all four Gospels record that Peter, who was a leader in the church when these accounts were written, had failed Jesus. Isn't it ironic that a relative of the guy whom Peter "van Goghed" was present? God's record of redemption includes a lot of failed men saved by grace. That men like Peter and Paul ended well should be an encouragement to us all. It's odd that we are reading this about Peter, as we are dealing with the fallout of David's hormonal rampage.

Vs. 28-32 Pilate wanted to set Jesus free. He really didn't like the Jewish leaders. In the process of Pilate's journey he will say some immortal words. Almost everything Pilate says is noteworthy.

V. 28 During this time in Israel's history, the Passover meal could be celebrated on two days. Some say it was because of some technicality in the calendar. It might have been because of the large number of people and the large number of lambs that needed to be sacrificed. It might also have been because of the scarcity of rooms in which to celebrate. Jesus and the disciples celebrated on the early day. The Pharisees celebrated on the later day.

Vs. 33-40 Pilate was working to try to let Jesus go. It seems from Pilate's attitude that he didn't take this very seriously, yet.

V. 38 This famous quote comes from an arrogant ruler speaking to a Jewish peasant. Pilate was an embattled, bitter, unpopular ruler. The Jewish lobby in Rome had made his life miserable. *What is truth?* is both the expression of Pilate's bitterness and his mocking of this unfortunate, uneducated Jew. Everything Jesus says to Pilate here will come back on Pilate as the eerie events of this morning unfold. Apparently Pilate hadn't drunk enough coffee yet and gotten his other brain cell going.

John 19

Vs. 1-5 This beating was actually for show and was meant to make Jesus look broken and humiliated. It was not the pre-crucifixion beating. Pilate still wanted to release Jesus and make the Jews feel sorry for Him. Jesus would have been maimed for life by this. *Behold the man* is another one of Pilate's memorable quotes.

Vs. 6-11 Pilate is not very arrogant now. This event is shaping up to be very "spooky" for him. According to the other Gospels, his wife has even told him to distance himself from this. While he wasn't a believer in Jesus, he was a believer in divine forces.

V. 11 Notice that Pilate isn't laughing at Jesus any more.

Vs. 12-16 *Caesar's friend* was a political designation of being in good standing. The Caesar in Rome was mentally imbalanced and Pilate already had several strikes against him. When the Jews threw this statement at Pilate, he knew he had lost. This event would go straight back to Rome. Pilate still could have let Jesus go.

The irony here is bitter. “*Behold your King!*” “*We have no king but Caesar.*” What infamous statements.

V. 16 At this point, Pilate hands Jesus over to his soldiers for the normal pre-crucifixion beating. The effect of both of these beatings, humanly, explains why Jesus couldn't carry His cross and why He died so quickly.

Vs. 19-22 God uses even the evil of men for His purpose. Pilate put the sign above Jesus out of his hate for the Jewish leaders. He wanted to be ironic and irritating. Yet, what was written, regardless of his motive, was exactly true and a statement of judgment.

V. 22 When I was in seminary with a full load and a family and a job, having way too many papers to write, this was my key verse and biblical justification for never writing a second draft of a paper. The first draft had to do the trick.

Psalm 119:113-128

These verses, written by David and the Holy Spirit, are absolutely true, and absolutely sobering. I hope they are as sobering for you as they are for me, knowing that when David was close to God because of adversity and in the Word daily, this is what his heart looked like. This should be a lesson for us all. David’s success and busyness as an executive ruined him, because it took him from the Word and from needing the Lord every day.

Vs. 113-120 If this were written during the time of the civil war with the house of Saul, you could understand David’s frustration with the double-minded. This was like Saul and others who swore to the Lord and promised something and then reneged. God’s Word and God’s promise were sure and steady. David learned to put his hope in God and His Word rather than in the word of men.

Vs. 121-128 David’s oppressors were still on his mind. I identify with vs. 123-125. In all of the troubles the Lord leads us through, we all come to the same place. We learn to find hope and comfort in His Word, which is actually the sure and certain expression of His heart and character. I can falsely imagine a lot of stuff about God because of my fear or emotions, but His Word is the expression of the reality that is true about Him.

Proverbs 16:10-11

Before David fell, his judgments, it is said, were like the words of an angel, meaning He had keen insight. These verses would have been true of him at that point. Sin, guilt, and the consequences of murder changed all that in David. As disciples, we would be wise to learn from what the Lord is showing us from David's life.