

## 2 Samuel 15

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[ 0 : 0 0 ]     After this, Absalom got himself a chariot and horses, and fifty men to run before him. And Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way of the gate.

And when any man had a dispute to come before the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, From what city are you? And when he would say, Your servant is from such and such a tribe in Israel, Absalom would say to him, See, your claims are good and right, but there is no man designated by the king to hear you.

Then Absalom would say, Oh, that there were a judge in the land, then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice. And whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

Thus Absalom did to all who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. At the end of four years, Absalom said to the king, Please let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed to the Lord in Hebron.

For your servant vowed a vow while I lived at Geshur in Aram, saying, If the Lord will indeed bring me back to Jerusalem, then I will offer worship to the Lord. The king said to him, Go in peace.

[ 1 : 1 0 ]     So he arose and went to Hebron. And Absalom sent secret messengers throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then say, Absalom is king at Hebron.

With Absalom went two hundred men from Jerusalem who were invited guests, and they went in their innocence and knew nothing. And while Absalom was offering his sacrifices, he sent for Ahithopel the Gileonite, David's counselor, from the city Gileo.

And the conspiracy grew strong, and the people with Absalom kept increasing. And a messenger came to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel have gone after Absalom.

Then David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, Arise and let us flee, or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom. Go quickly, lest he overtake us quickly, and bring down ruin on us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword.

And the king's servants said to the king, Behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord the king decides. So the king went out, and all his household after him.

[ 2 : 1 1 ]     And the king left ten concubines to keep the house. And the king went out, and all the people after him. And they halted at the last house. And all his servants passed by him, and the Ketherites, and all the Pelethites, and all the six hundred Gittites who had followed him from Gath, passed on before the king.

Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, Why do you also go with us? Go back and stay with the king, for you are a foreigner and also an exile from your home.

You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander about with us, since I go I know not where? Go back and take your brothers with you, and may the Lord show steadfast love and faithfulness to you.

But Ittai answered the king, As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king shall be, whether for death or for life, there also will your servant be. And David said to Ittai, Go then, pass on.

So Ittai the Gittite passed on with all his men, and all the little ones who were with him. And all the land wept aloud, as all the people passed by. And the king crossed before the brook Kidron, And the people passed on toward the wilderness.

[ 3 : 24 ] And Abiathar came up, and behold, Zadok also came up with all the Levites, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God until the people had all passed out of the city.

Then the king said to Zadok, Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back, and let me see both it and his dwelling place. But if he says, I have no pleasure in you, Behold, here I am.

Let him do to me what seems good to him. The king also said to Zadok the priest, Are you not a seer? Go back to the city in peace with your two sons, Ahima as your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar.

See, I will wait at the fords of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me. So Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem, and they remained there. But David went up the ascent to the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered.

And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went. And it was told David, Ahithapel is among the conspirators with Absalom.

[ 4 : 31 ] And David said, Oh Lord, please turn the counsel of Ahithapel into foolishness. While David was coming to the summit where God was worshipped, behold, Hushai the archite came to meet him with his coat torn and dirt on his head.

David said to him, If you go on with me, you will be a burden to me. But if you return to the king and say to Absalom, I will be your servant, O king, as I have been your father's servant in times past, so now I'll be your servant, then you will defeat for me the counsel of Ahithapel.

Are not Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? So whatever you hear from the king's house, tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. Behold, their two sons are with them there, Ahimaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son.

And by them you shall send to me everything you hear. So Hushai, David's friend, came into the city just as Absalom was entering Jerusalem. The Lord, thanks be to God.

Shall we pray? Heavenly Father, thank you for this morning and your presence with us. May your name continue to be glorified through the proclamation of your word is our prayer in Jesus' name.

[ 5 : 47 ] Amen. Since the announcement of Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge's pregnancy last year, and the subsequent birth of George Alexander Lewis last month, the royal family of England has been very much in the news.

Making of headlines, of course, is not new for the royal family or otherwise politically connected families. Whether the news is good or bad or salacious news indeed.

Indeed, the chapters leading to our text today reveal the deeds of the royal family, David's family. They are very much in the light.

And the deeds that we see are not good deeds at all. The family is feeling the repercussions of David's miscues, his sins, if you will.

But not only is the family feeling the effects and the impact of that, the entire nation is feeling it. Think of it.

- [ 7 : 04 ] The household that was spoken of so loftily in 2 Samuel chapter 7, the family that, the house that God would make a dynasty.
- The one, the family with the promises. Yeah. That's the one that's in disarray. That's the family that has fallen apart.
- And by the time that we get to 2 Samuel chapter 15, the things that have been predicted by Nathan are coming to pass. They're in full bloom.
- You remember Nathan's prophecy from last week's text? Now, therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.
- Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house. Grave consequences were the result of David's misdeeds.
- [ 8 : 14 ] Did you know that family disintegration just does not happen? There are some cause-effect kind of relationships between disintegration and wholeness.
- David has colored outside the lines of God's design for marriage and family. By the time we get to chapter 15, David's sexual sin and his murder have been reprised by his own family.
- Look at chapter 13. You see there? There was sexual misconduct in the family. You recall David's daughter Tamar, the sister of Absalom, was raped by Amnon, David's firstborn son.
- This was the heir to the throne. This ugly misdeed, his ugly misdeeds are recorded for us in 2 Samuel chapter 13 verses 1 through 22.
- And what we find out at the end, now we see that David was angry about this. I believe it's verse 21. But anger without proper correction and without proper action can come back to haunt us.
- [ 9 : 36 ] When we don't do anything about the deeds, the actions, or even the words that cause anger in us.
- Anger, but no real corrective action can really come back to bite us like a trap. Not only was there sexual sin or sexual misconduct in the family, but there was murder in the family.
- There was the taking of a life in the family. Chapter 13 verses 23 to 33. Absalom avenged the rape of his sister with the death of his brother.
- One shameful deed followed another and compounded the stain that was on the royal family.
- What happened to Absalom? He fled to the land of his father-in-law, stayed there for three years, and David was deprived of two sons.
- [ 10 : 47 ] One by murder, the other by flight. Based on the cunning and the appeal of Joab, Absalom was finally returned to the foe, returned home, and eventually restored to the royal foe.
- You see that in chapter 14. That brings us to our text today. And the narrator here places before us two very distinct scenes, two very distinct pictures.
- The first one you see in chapter 15, verses 1 through 12. That features Absalom. And Absalom here, we see him, he is the rival king on the rise.
- That's what we see him as in those verses. He's the rival king, but he's the king on the rise. In verses 13 through 37, David is then central.
- What you have there, you've got the rightful king, but the rightful king is on the run. So you have a king on the rise, but he's the wrong guy. And you've got a king on the run, but he's the right guy.

[ 12 : 00 ] Take a look at it in chapter 15. Amnon's dead. And though Absalom is the third-born son of David, there is a second-born, Keliab, or otherwise known as Nathan, and we don't hear anything about him.

Several reasons. He could have died young, or it could be that because David took Abigail, the wife of Uriah, there could have been this leverant relationship where this child really would continue the seed of the one that we know as Nabal.

One way or another, we don't know what happened to Nathan, also known as Keliab. So that said, Absalom, David's third-born son, was then next in line to the throne.

Take a look at chapter 14 and verses 25 and 26, and there we get some interesting information about Absalom.

A little biographic information here. Look what it says about him. Now in all Israel, there was not one so much as to be praised for his handsome appearance as Absalom.

[ 13 : 27 ] From the sole of his foot to the crown of his head, there was no blemish in him. And when he cut the hair of his head, for at the end of the year, every year he used to cut it, when it was heavy upon him, he cut it.

He weighed the hair of his head 200 shekels by the king's weight. Absalom. He's the popular prince.

He's just right for the cover of People magazine or GQ or Esquire. The man is royalty, and he wants everybody to know that he is royalty.

Here he is. He's politically ambitious. The brother is smooth. He's charming, clever, winsome, handsome, and he is smart.

Look at him. Check him out as he dismounts his chariot. He looks at the lay of the land, thinks about the opportunities that the day is going to bring him.

[ 14 : 31 ] He's up early. Look at him in verse 2. He used to rise early and sit beside the way. He's in conversation with those who are in the city square. He's asking the right questions and he is giving the right answers.

Verse 4, he makes his ambition known. Then Absalom would say, Oh, that I were judge in the land. So that was one of the responsibilities of the king. Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me and I would give him justice.

Huh? Here he is. He's on the L platform. He makes his rounds to the schools and other strategic venues. He appears on radio and television programs.

He passes out these sleek brochures. He shakes hands. He doesn't miss an opportunity for a photo op. He is the man, if you will. He's confident.

And think about this. He has looks. He has charm. He has charisma. He's charisma. He's ambitious. But guess what?

[ 15 : 35 ] If you've got bad motives, that's a deadly combination. I mean, you've got it. You've really got it going on. I mean, you can tell it in your walk.

You can tell it in the clothes that you have on. But you've got all of these things going for you. But if underneath all of that, bad motives and those very things can be very, very dangerous, not only for you, but for everybody because everybody likes it.

We like a good face, don't we? We like those who are nice dresses. We look at the shoes that they wear or the shirts that they wear. I mean, we like those kind of things.

He's warm and affectionate. Look at verse 5. Whenever a man came near to pay homage to him, he would take out his hand and take hold of him and he'd kiss him. You remember what Isaiah Thomas and Irving Magic Johnson used to do on the court?

Just look at a little kiss on the cheek. He reaches out. He's warm. He's affectionate. He's patient. He waits for four years according to verse 7 and then he makes his move.

[ 16 : 50 ] Think about it, friends. Here is the rival king and rather than exercising his gifts, his position, his power in just and righteous and healthy ways, he exploited these things for self-serving purposes.

Is there not a warning here for us? How are you using what has been given to you? How are you using the gifts?

How are you you got a great personality? How are you using it? How are you using your position? We must understand that whatever that has been given to us has been given to us as a sacred trust.

Paul puts it well in 1 Corinthians 4. What is it that you have that you did not receive? Huh? It didn't originate with you.

If you are a receiver, why do you boast as if you did not receive it? Huh? Under the guise of keeping his vow to the Lord, Absalom then received permission to go to Hebron.

[ 18 : 09 ] And there he gathered men to himself and was declared king. Huh? Same place where his father had been anointed many years before.

His plan was effective. He won the allegiance of some of the most, even of David's most trusted counselor, Ahithophel. That's interesting about Ahithophel.

You got to know something about this guy. From best we can understand, this was Bathsheba's grandfather. Huh? It's actually certain other passages of scripture.

So he may have had some underlying motivation himself for wanting to bring down David because of the incident with his granddaughter.

Huh? The conspiracy was strong. Look at verse 12. Huh? And the people with Absalom kept increasing.

[ 19 : 09 ] Huh? Rival king on the rise. Picture number one. But opposite of that, and I love the way the narrator does this. I mean, he gives us these portraits, but then he puts places something else right alongside of what he's shown us about one person, and then he shows us some.

We see this second picture, and we got David, the rightful king. He's on the run. Huh? Oh, I love the way the repetition.

We see that David is the rightful king 16 times. We hear the word the king, the king, the king, repeated and again and again in verses 13 through 37.

And if you know, follow the narrative of David, you know that three times, beginning with the anointing of Samuel back in 1 Samuel chapter 16, David has been anointed king.

But even though even here in 2 Samuel chapter 15, though he is despised and rejected by the nation, still, David is the rightful king.

[ 20 : 24 ] David on the run is not new either, is it? Many years, it's been a decade on the run from Saul, the son of Kish of the tribe of Benjamin. But this time it's different.

His own son is now his chief rival. Notice the words in verse 14 where David's concerned for his house in the city.

Listen to what he said. David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, arise, let us flee or else there will be no escape from Absalom. Go quickly lest he overtake us quickly and bring down ruin on us and strike the city with the edge of the sword.

And the king's servant said to the king, behold, your servants are ready to do whatever my lord notice the king decides.

Oh, oh, this is one of those passages of scripture where there is a pale of darkness really that hangs over it. The household with the promise of an eternal dynasty is in disarray.

[ 21 : 28 ] but even friends in the midst of this crisis, David is not alone. We've seen David's foes, at least some of them and more of them will rise in the subsequent chapters, but we've seen those beginning with his son in verses 1 through 12.

But the narrator sort of shows us something else. Not only does David have foes, David's got some friends, huh? King's servants and mercenary services are on board.

We see that in chapter 5, verses 15 through 23. They are prepared to do whatever my lord the king has decided. And this included Ittai. We hear his words in verse 21.

Look at them there. Ittai answered the king, as the lord lives and as my lord the king lives, whatever my lord, here it is again, the king shall be whatever, whether for death or life, there also will your servant be.

Huh? So you've got his mercenary servants there, his mercenary forces, which included the Kerithites and the Pelethites in verse 18 and the Gittites.

[ 22 : 38 ] They're on board. They're on board with the king. If you look on down verses 24 through 29, you see the priests are with him in this Zadok and Abiathar and their sons were on board as a concern tending the ark and providing the intelligence from within the city.

They were on board. Verses 32 through 37, you see Hushai, the archite, was David's friend in an official sense as a royal counselor and we see that he was an answer to David's prayer.

You see it right there? You see it in verse 31 where David prays, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. David said, oh lord, please turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness and notice what happens, verse 32.

The writer wants us to see this. God is answering this prayer. While David was coming to the summit where God was worshipped, behold, Hushai, the archite, came to meet him with his coat torn and dirt on his head.

He was the answer to David's prayers. David's friends indeed were a needed source of light in a very long dark day and providing a measure of relief for the king.

[ 23 : 52 ] in his pain. Did you notice also that the rightful king, though, is a chastened king? So rightly so, the atmosphere is very somber.

There's weeping and there's mourning and there's tears. He's reeling from the consequences of his deeds. He's an exiled king. He's an opposed king.

He's a weeping king. Oh, but listen to this friends, because I think this is something that we need to hear. The discipline of God did not mean the abandonment of God.

He was under the hand of God's discipline, but God had not abandoned him. Isn't that good to know? when we're going through trials and challenges and some because of our own misdeeds, that God's discipline does not mean his abandonment.

Oh, but look at the scene that we see here. The king is leaving. He is on his way out of Jerusalem. And one cannot help but think of the contrast with what we see here and with what we see in 2 Samuel chapter 6.

[ 25 : 12 ] You remember that was when the ark was coming into the city. David was entering the city with great joy and dancing. Huh? He returned with great joy to bless his household.

But here the joy is gone. Weeping and mourning are here present. Why the mourning? Because the household that David went home to bless in chapter 6 was no longer enjoying the covenantal blessing.

Life and fertility had been replaced with death because of the consequences of violating the covenant. The household is hurting.

Huh? Ever been a part of a hurting household? Ever had pain in your household? Oh, household pain is painful pain, if you will.

Huh? It's excruciating pain. Huh? It's a pain with a severe ache to it. Huh? David's experiencing that.

[ 26 : 21 ] Huh? Did you notice also look in in verse 30, David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives weeping as he went. Did you notice where they are geographically?

this vicinity is the same place where centuries later another anointed one would weep near the ascent of the Mount of Olives.

Luke 19 41 says this, and when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it. Here was a city on the cusp of discipline because they were about to reject their king.

Huh? And the king himself wept over it. Huh? Furthermore, as we look in this whole story, there are other things that either remind us by contrast or comparison with not the rival king or the rightful king, but the real king.

Huh? Absalom, the rival king, contrasts with the real king. How so, Pastor Jay? He dishonors and opposes his father, and that is something that the real king would never do.

[ 27 : 38 ] Matter of fact, John, Jesus said this about himself in John chapter 8 verse 29, and he that sent me is with me. The father is with me, has never left me alone, for I always do those things that please him.

That's Jesus. Then, John chapter 4, my food, my energy, my energy source, is to do the will of him who sent me, and to finish his work.

Absalom was a rebel son. Jesus was a beloved son, if you will. But David, the rightful king, in him, we see glimpses or shadows of the righteous king, the ultimate king, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Like David, Jesus was a rejected king. he was forsaken by the nation and its leaders. And like the leaders in 2 Samuel 15, they too chose a rebel Barabbas.

Listen to Isaiah, he put it well. He was despised and rejected by men. A man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, and is one from whom men hide their faces.

[ 28 : 52 ] He was despised, and we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. Oh, isn't that sort of David?

Smitten by God, afflicted, but in a greater sense, isn't it Jesus? He was wounded, David was wounded because of his own transgression.

Jesus was wounded because of your transgressions and mine. He was crushed for our iniquities. upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace.

Oh, you see David on the one hand, but you see the greater son of David on the other. Here it is, friends, opposed by foes.

The Lord had used real friends along the way as his instruments, and I really want us to hear this, as his instruments of support. The grace of God was greater than David's sin and greater than David's foes.

[ 29 : 56 ] By the time we get to chapter 20, after you go through this whole series, we see David has a reconstituted kingdom. Absalom is dead. Other enemies have been put to flight or silence, and the kingdom is restored to David.

So what's in this text for us? How can it help us? Here we see that individuals and households in the muck and mire.

That's what he was in. That's what he was in. Ever been in the muck and the mire? Muck and the mire of life because of misdeeds that are known or unknown, seen or unseen.

But you know when you're in the muck and the mire? You know when life is crashed in on you? You know what that feels like? You know what that looks like? Those kind of people are candidates for the help of God.

Candidates for the help of God. Here we are reminded that the Lord helps individuals and he helps homes that are in shambles. Turn with me to Psalm 3.

[ 31 : 03 ] It's already been read but I really want us to see that. In that God uses this cadre of David's friends to help him and to support him in his time and need.

They are indications or tokens of God's grace to him and helping him along the way in a very tough time very tough season in his life.

Look at Psalm 3 verse Oh Lord how many are my foes? Notice the repetition of many. Many are rising against me. Many are saying to my soul.

There's no salvation for him in God. It's helpless for him. Ever feel that way? And again notice this was written pen in view of this incident that we're talking about today.

But notice on the one hand I'm noticing those who are against me but now I'm seeing the one who is for me but you are Lord are a shield.

[ 32 : 08 ] You are a covering about me. My glory my ultimate source and the lifter of my head. So he cries aloud in the midst of this and he's answered.

He answers from heavenly headquarters if you will from his holy hill and notice what he does. I lay down and slept. How refreshing sleep can be.

And he says then I woke again. It's real. Sometimes you can't sleep at all folks. Because the same problems that we go to sleep with are the ones that we wake up to but it could be nice to be a little more fresh than dealing with them.

I woke again. Why did I wake? Because the Lord sustained me. The Lord is my help. On and on. David cried out to the Lord in the midst of his troubles and acknowledged the reality of his opposition.

Acknowledged that the Lord was the source of his protection. God has amazing ways of helping us, doesn't he? And from his dwelling the Lord answered. He strengthened him.

[ 33 : 22 ] He sustained him. In the midst of the challenges that he faced. Aren't you glad too that the Lord has given us a ceremony.

To help sustain us. To strengthen us and to refresh us along life's journey. Regardless of where we find ourselves.

Some of you here this morning. You may think that you're in the valley of the shadow of death or your tour in the presence of one's enemies. The Lord has prepared a table before you.

God is helping us. And ultimately what this represents is his ultimate source of help in and through the gospel. For the bread represents his body that was given for us.

The drink represents his blood that was shared for us. What this picture is is that God is helping us at the greatest point of our need. our souls need.

[ 34 : 33 ] Oh but there as we we think about this think about Romans chapter 8 verse 32. God who spared not his son shall he not with him also freely give us all things.

Again the argument is from the greater to the lesser. Just think about God who has given us the best that he had. shall he not sustain you in other ways that are fitting and just right for you in your life regardless of where you find yourself in.

So come to the table today child of God come to the table today those who are wearied in life.

Finding yourself a little hopeless and helpless and wondering next step be strengthened through the table because it is for you weary traveler.

It's for your well-being. It is for your refreshment. It is for your restoration. Hear now the words of institution.



[ 35 : 53 ] Institution.