

Amnon and Tamar

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[0 : 00] Page 317, 2 Samuel chapter 13.

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And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin. And it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her. But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimea, David's brother.

And Jonadab was a very crafty man. And he said to him, O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me? Amnon said to him, I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister.

And Jonadab said to him, lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat. And prepare the food in my sight so that I may see it and eat from her hand.

[1 : 24] So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight that I may eat from her hand.

Then David sent home to Tamar saying, go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him. So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house where he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes.

And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, send out everyone from me. So everyone went out from him.

Then Amnon said to Tamar, bring the food into the chamber that I may eat from your hand. And Tamar took the cakes she had made and brought them into the chamber to Amnon, her brother. But when she brought them near to eat, he took hold of her and said, come lie with me, my sister.

She answered him, no, my brother, do not violate me for such a thing is not done in Israel. Do not do this outrageous thing. As for me, where could I carry my shame?

[2 : 29] And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. Now, therefore, please speak to the king for he will not withhold me from you. But he would not listen to her. And being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her.

Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred. So that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her.

And Amnon said to her, get up, go. She said to him, no, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me. But he would not listen to her.

He called the young man who served him and said, put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her. Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves, for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed.

So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

[3 : 41] And her brother Absalom said to her, has Amnon, your brother, been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother. Do not take this to heart. So Tamar lived, a desolate woman in her brother Absalom's house.

When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. But Absalom spoke to Amnon, neither good nor bad. For Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

After two full years, Absalom had sheep shearers in Balhazor, which is near Ephraim. And Absalom invited all the king's sons. And Absalom came to the king and said, behold, your servant has sheep shearers.

Please let the king and his servants go with your servant. But the king said to Absalom, no, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you. He pressed him, but he would not go, but gave him his blessing.

Then Absalom said, if not, please let my brother Amnon go with us. And the king said to him, why should he go with you? But Absalom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. Then Absalom commanded his servants, mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine.

[4 : 50] And when I say to you, strike Amnon, then kill him. Do not fear, have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant. So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded.

Then all the king's sons arose and each mounted his mule and fled. While they were on their way, news came to David. Absalom has struck down all the king's sons and not one of them has left. Then the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the earth. And all his servants who were standing by tore their garments. But Jonadab, the son of Shimei, a David's brother, said, Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day he violated his sister Tamar. Now therefore let not my lord the king so take it to heart, As to suppose that all the king's sons are dead, for Amnon alone is dead.

But Absalom fled, and the young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked. And behold, many people were coming from the road behind him by the side of the mountain. And Jonadab said to the king, Behold, the king's sons have come, as your servant said, so it has come about.

[6 : 00] And as soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king's sons came and lifted up their voice and wept. And the king also and all his servants wept very bitterly. But Absalom fled and went to Talmi, the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur.

And David mourned for his son day after day. So Absalom fled and went to Geshur and was there for three years. And the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom because he was comforted about Amnon since he was dead.

Amen. And we pray that God will bless his own word too, as we're going to sing now in the traditional version of Psalms 37. Psalm 37.

And verse 35, that's on page 255 in Sing Psalms. Page 255 and it's verse 35. We're going to sing the last five stanzas.

I saw the wicked great in power spread like a green bay tree. He passed, yea, was not. Him I sought, but found he could not be. Mark thou the perfect and behold the man of uprightness.

[7 : 16] Because that surely of this man, the latter end is peace. The Psalm number 35, sorry, Psalm number 37. That's the traditional version of the Psalm.

It's on page 255, 35. The last five verses of the Psalm we're going to stand to sing. I saw the wicked great in power spread like a green bay tree.

He passed, yea, was not. He was not in my soul, but found he could not be.

Mark thou the perfect and behold the man of uprightness.

Because the jury of this man, the latter end is peace.

[8 : 38] But those men that transgressors are shall be destroyed together.

The latter end of wickedness shall be cut off forever.

But the salvation of the just is from the Lord above.

The Lord above. The Lord above. The Lord above.

He shall then be at the heart. The Lord above. We shall then be a saint. From wicked men he cause in them, Where confidence they have.

[10 : 16] Our second reading this evening comes from the book of Song of Solomon, chapter 2. I am a rose of Sharon, a lily of the valleys.

As a lily among brambles, so is my love among the young women. As an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my beloved among the young men. With great delight I sat in his shadow and his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the banqueting house and his banner over me was love. Sustain me with raisins, refresh me with apples, for I am sick with love.

His left hand is under my head and his right hand embraces me. I adjure you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles or the does of the field, that you do not stir up or awaken love until it

pleases.

The voice of my beloved, behold, he comes, leaping over the mountains, bounding over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag.

[12:04] Behold, there he stands behind our wall, gazing through the windows, looking through the lattice. My beloved speaks and says to me, arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.

For behold, the winter is past. The rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth. The time of singing has come and the voice of the turtle dove is heard in our land.

The fig tree ripens its figs and the vines are in blossom. They give forth fragrance. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away. O my dove, in the clefts of the rock, in the crannies of the cliff, let me see your face.

Let me hear your voice. For your voice is sweet and your face is lovely. Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom.

My beloved is mine, and I am his. He grazes among the lilies until the day breathes and the shadow flee. Turn, my beloved, and be like a gazelle or a young stag on cleft mountains.

[13:18] That is love as it should be. We read before about love as it shouldn't be. And there is no greater comparison than these two chapters.

We're also going to read from the New Testament and from just a very short passage from Ephesians chapter again. Love as it should be. In Ephesians chapter 5, verse 25, very short passage in order to take in the New Testament.

Ephesians chapter 5, verse 25. Five husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies, he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body.

Amen. And we ask that God will bless his own word to us. We're going to join together once again for a short word of prayer. Our Father in heaven, we pray now that you will give us to come to your word in a prayerful, worshipful manner.

[14:50] We ask, Lord, that you will humble us by your word, that you will show us ourselves for what we really are and what we pray for ourselves. We pray for anyone else this evening who's listening to the Bible and to the gospel.

We give thanks that the gospel is the power of God to salvation. And our great longing tonight, once again, is for people to come to a discovery of what Jesus did when he came into the world to lay down his life on the cross.

Our Father, we pray that you will pour out your spirit on this world, in the various places of this world. And, Lord, we think of how small the world has become through easy transportation.

And we think, O Lord, of how much knowledge we have of various parts of the world, the great nations of the world, the great land masses of Africa and Asia and the Americas and North America. Lord, we think of all the people there, the billions of people who live all over the world, made in the image of God, with that consciousness of the reality of God, longing and yearning for to discover the meaning of life, and yet at the same time rebelling against that knowledge that you've given to them, because our sin has overshadowed that knowledge.

[16:10] And only the gospel can set us free from that conflict that there is within us, in which we are overcome by our own pleasures and our own desires, and they are sinful ones.

We ask, Lord, that you will set free this condemned world, and pray for everyone who's gone out to share the gospel this evening. We thank you, Lord, for all those who have gone to various places, and indeed those who have come to us with the gospel.

We thank you that we, in our need, can hear the gospel from people who come from other parts of the world.

We pray, Lord, for everyone who has gone, and we ask, Lord, that you will give us to support the work of missions, wherever it takes place, all over the world, and give us a real passion for that work, and give us a longing and a prayerful longing to see men and women have what we have in Jesus.

So work amongst us then this evening. Pray for those who are confined to their homes this evening. We think of the kind of evening it is that has kept people to their homes. We pray for them where they are.

[17 : 19] Pray for those who are aged, and for those who have become weak in their old age. And we pray that you will bless them where they are. They would long to be here this evening, and they have often been here amongst us, and this has been their home, and it breaks their heart not to be able to come anymore.

We pray for them, Lord, and ask that you will accompany them where they are, and that they may be filled with your Spirit, and that they may be given to see that the Lord is preparing them, and indeed preparing all of us, for that new heaven and the new earth that one day will be revealed to each one of us.

So, Lord, we pray for the world in which we live. Pray that you will bless your word to us now, in Jesus' name. Amen. Let's sing together in Psalm 10. This is the Sing Psalms version.

It's on page 12, and we're going to sing from verse 14 to the end of the psalm. Psalm number 10. And it's Sing Psalms, and it's verse 14.

But you, O God, do see such wrong, and you will bring redress. The victim puts his trust in you. You help the fatherless. Lord, break the wicked person's power, and call him to account for all the evil which he thought would never be found out.

[18 : 39] Psalm number 10 and verse 14. To the end of the psalm, we're going to stand to sing. Psalm number 10.

You help the fatherless. Lord, break the wicked person's power, and call him to account.

For all the evil which he thought would never be found out.

The Lord will ever reign as king. His throne will always stand.

The heathen nations of the world will perish from his hand.

[20 : 28] O Lord, the need he once desired. You answered from all night.

You give encouragement to them, And listen to their pride.

For you, O God, do not know. For you, O God, do not know. The Lord, O God, do not know. The Lord, O God, do not know.

O God, O Christ. So that from fear, O mortal man, The helpless man, O God, do not know.

Let's turn to 2 Samuel chapter 13. We're continuing our studies in 2 Samuel, And the life of David.

[21 : 50] And we're going to look at the whole of this chapter. Verse 19. 2 Samuel 13, 19. And Tamar put ashes on her head, And tore the long robe that she wore, And she laid her hand on her head, And went away, crying aloud as she went.

1969 is a year I actually remember reasonably well.

I was 12 years old, And it was the year I went to secondary school, Which is probably the reason it's a red letter year in my own life.

I think everybody remembers the year they went to secondary. It was also the year in which the Queen did something that she had never done before. She allowed cameras into Buckingham Palace, To make a documentary about the royal family.

It was the year that of the investiture of Prince Charles, As the Prince of Wales at Carnarvon Castle. Some of you will remember that grand ceremony.

[23 : 10] But in order to allow the world to see how normal the royal family was, These cameras were allowed in to make a documentary of family life within the palace.

They tell me that this documentary was shown once, And it was never shown again. I guess other documentaries have been made, But this one wasn't.

I guess so that we don't become too familiar, With the day to day life. The ordinary life, if there is such a thing, Of the Queen and her family. And her family.

But whatever else that program showed, It was edited. And so that what the world saw, Was what her majesty wanted us to see.

And it was a marvelous documentary. I remember watching it. As a teenager. And I remember being amazed at how ordinary life was in the family.

[24 : 28] And yet, it was edited. If you were going to have cameras coming into your house, And making a documentary, A reality TV. It's all the rage nowadays, isn't it?

Reality TV. Then I reckon that you would not want, All the bad stuff to be seen, By others. This chapter is a glimpse into the life, Of David's family.

But it's not edited. We get a chance to see, How human, David's family were.
 But all the wrong stuff, Is written down for us. And written down for all time.
 This is a story in which we are given a glimpse, Into the personal life, Of King David. And we're made to see that despite all of David's wealth, And his success, His home, Was not a happy one.
 [25 : 42] It was a house that was divided, And where there were not only tensions, And not only bickerings. Every home has their tensions, And bickerings, And arguments.

This home, Was a home of serious division. Misery. Abuse. Deceit. And even death.
 Part of that, Of course, Was the completely unsatisfactory, Domestic arrangements, In which men could have, Two or more wives, As they did, In the Old Testament.
 Not only that, If you were a king, In the Old Testament, You didn't just have your wives, But you had your concubines, As well. Who were, Kind of, Waves plus, If you like.
 Servants plus. Servants who had, A personal relationship, With the king. Women who literally did, What the king, Wanted them to do.
 [26 : 43] And although they were, Exclusively his, He could add to the harem, If he wanted, If he so wished. And while God, Allowed this, And this is important, By the way, Because many times, People ask this question, While God allowed, Polygamy, Which is, Having more than one wife, He allowed for it, In the Old Testament.

That did not mean, That he approved of it. God's pattern, For a man and a woman, Is taken only, From Genesis chapter 2.
 Therefore shall a man, Leave his father and mother, And be united to his wife. That is the only pattern, That there is. That's how God intended, The relationship between man, And woman to exist, As husband, And wife.
 And I say that, Because, It's a timely reminder, In a world, Where, Where, That truth is, Universally rejected.
 And where everyone does, What is right, In their own eyes. Well, If we want to live God's way, That's God's way. And, It's made very clear to us, God, Allowed for, What our professor, In college used to call, The rudeness, Of his people.
 [28 : 03] He made, A provision for that, But that does not mean, That God approved, Of a man having, Two, Three, Four, Five, In Solomon's case, Hundreds of wives.

That was the most outrageous, Arrangement, That you could ever think about. And it was completely opposed, To what God, Had commanded, And what God, Had designed, For men, And women.
 And from time to time, In the Old Testament, You get a picture, Of what polygamy, The kind of misery, That polygamy, Caused. Like in Genesis, For example, When Jacob married Leah, And her sister Rachel, Remember that household, And that household, Where there seemed to be, No end of tension, Between the two sisters.
 Where they bargained, And where they vied, And traded as to, Who was going to be intimate, With her husband. There was all kinds, Of tension caused, By an arrangement, Which was never, God's ultimate plan, For our homes.
 Well here's another problem. What about when, The child of one wife, Takes a shine, To the child of another wife.
 [29 : 23] Same father, But different mothers. Brought up in the same, Compound. I'm not sure, What the living arrangements were. I'm quite sure, They were large living arrangements, They would have to be, For a king.

But what happens, When the male son, The male child, Of one wife, Becomes obsessed, With lust, For, His half sister.
 Amnon was, Tamar's half brother. The same father, But because of that, According to God's law, In Israel, If you read, The book of Deuteronomy, And chapter 27, And 20, Verse 22, This is what it says, Cursed be anyone, Who lies with his sister, Whither the daughter of his father, Or the daughter of his mother, And all the people shall say, Amen.
 God's law made absolutely clear, That even if you didn't have the same mother, You were not allowed to have an intimate relationship, With your half sister. Half sister.
 So, Tamar was forbidden. Absolutely clear by God's law. Now, here's the point of decision that Amnon had to face.

[30 : 42] When you're faced with a strong attraction like that, And when you're faced at the same time with the fact that God says no, The person who listens to God has to put his own interests aside.

Indeed, he has to destroy these desires. He has to be subject to God's word. But perhaps you're saying, Well, it says he loved her, doesn't it? I mean, at the beginning of the chapter, It says that, After a time, David's son, Amnon David's son, He loved her.

Well, surely, Love covers everything. Surely, if his love for his half sister was genuine, Then, surely that makes it all legitimate. Well, it doesn't. Besides, When you follow closely what the chapter says about Amnon's actions, It becomes clear that it wasn't love at all.

It was lust. What the Bible calls lust. It was nothing but sexual desire, Which was not love and which must never be confused with love.

For one thing, If he, love reaches out to the whole person. Not just, In order to gain an objective.

[32 : 06] Love is a person's deep and passionate interest in the other person. The other person's interest. The other person's character. When two people become soul mates. In their conversation and in their being.

And as they're attracted to one another. In their personalities. As they are on the outside. And it's perfectly clear from this chapter that that didn't have a look in. There was only one objective.

And that's not love. It's not love as the Bible defines it. And secondly, love is giving. Husbands, love your wives, says the New Testament.

As Christ loved the church. And it goes on. As Christ loved the church. And gave himself for her.

The taste of true love is the person who gives, first of all. Not who takes.

But all of the language in this chapter is taking. He wants her. He will do anything in his power to get her. For himself. It's me first.

[33 : 07] It's selfish. It's me serving my own interests and my own desires. And I don't care what God has to say about it.

Here's a man. And you know, it's really quite scary, isn't it? Because a few weeks ago we read about how David, who was a man who trusted in the Lord. And who loved the Lord.

And even he fell. He fell prey to his own lusts and his own wrong desires. And he had an affair with someone else. But it's all the indications are that Amnon has no interest whatsoever in what God says.

All he's interested in is satisfying himself. That's not love at all. That is sinful self-centeredness.

Well, enter Jonadab.

Because Amnon has allowed himself to become so overcome and so obsessed with his own fantasies. And with his own desire. That he has made himself sick.

[34 : 13] Made himself ill. Enter Jonadab into the equation. Jonadab was Amnon's cousin. He was the son of Shimea, David's brother. So he was close to the royal family.

He's lurking around in the background. And he comes into the scene in verse 3. How influential can people in the background be? There's all kinds of people in the Old Testament in the background.

It's quite a strange, it's quite an interesting study of how people who you never get to hear. They're not center stage, but they're there whispering awake, scheming and conniving. And this man, Jonathan, seems to have been one of those people.

He also seems to have been close to Jonadab. And verse 3 tells us that Jonadab was a very crafty man. Just stop for a moment.

He's a crafty man. That word crafty can either be a good thing or a bad thing. The Bible uses the word in two ways. It means the kind of person who has the skill to be able to work out a way of doing something.

[35 : 21] He looks around him and he susses things out and he comes up with a plan of achieving his objective. And that's, of course, what he did. Now, that can be a good thing.

Or it can be a bad thing. If you've got that skill, then please make sure that you use it for the glory of God. Because you can do that or you can do it for the wrong reasons.

You can have all the wrong motives. This week, I was reminded of this. This week, I was thinking about this chapter. I was in conversation with a university professor in Glasgow.

And the conversation, by the way, was not very academic. We were having a cup of coffee together. We were chatting. And he was telling me, it was absolutely fascinating. The subject of the conversation was the ways in which modern students cheat in their exams.

I was absolutely fascinated. I was riveted by what he was telling me. All the different ways. In fact, one of the biggest problems universities have is keeping up with the ways in which the modern technological student can cheat in their exams so that they don't get away with it.

[36 : 31] It's becoming almost impossible to catch students cheating. One of the ways he was telling me was, I don't want to spend too much time. If you want to know how to cheat in your exams, you go to Starbucks. And you get one of these cups.

Apparently, they've got these cups in Starbucks where they've got writing on the cups. The cup's full all over the outside. The cup is covered with writing, which looks like handwriting. So what you do is you go to Starbucks, get one of these cups.

You take it home and you write your notes in between the lines. You take it into your exam, Mashiah, with a cup of coffee in your exam. And you put it down on your desk. And the invigilator doesn't know because he can't tell that there's writing in it.

You know, I'm thinking, how clever is that? That's genius. He was telling me other ways as well that really require genius. And you know the thought that struck me?

If I was clever enough to do that, why don't you just study for your exams? Why don't you just spend the time that you take devising? Because if you're so clever and so astute, why don't you use it properly, your skill?

[37 : 34] And it's the same with his craftiness. Same with Jonadab. Here's a man who's highly skilled. He knows what's going on. He's sussing everything out.

And he's working out all the time. Now he's got a choice. Either he can work things out for good, doing what is right in the eyes of God, putting God first.

Or he can do what is sinful. And that's what he chose to do. The heart of man is deceitful and desperately wicked. So he's on Amnon's side.

I'm not sure what was in it for him. I don't know what. Amnon was the heir to the throne, by the way. So perhaps this was his way of getting into favour with Amnon. So that when Amnon would come to the throne, then he could get a good place.

So he decided to give assistance and devise a way in which Amnon could achieve his goal with his half-sister.

[38 : 37] And the rest, of course, as they say, is history. There is no point in going into the details.

We've read it. Her pleas were in vain. This was the moment Amnon had dreamed about and worked towards.

And nothing was going to stop him now. All the pleading. And it appears to me as if this woman is more than just a beautiful woman. She was that. But it appears to me as if she was motivated by the right things.

And possibly even had the Lord in her heart. Any remaining compassion that may have been in Amnon was overcome by sheer animal instinct.

And she being the weaker of the two became a helpless victim. As if things couldn't be worse. As if things couldn't be worse. They were. We read something that is truly horrific.

[39 : 53] After he had attacked her in verse 15. Amnon hated her. With very great hatred. So that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her.

And Amnon said to her, get up and go. She tried to plead with him. No, my brother, for this wrong and sending me away is greater than the other that you did for me. She tried to limit the damage by pleading with him that perhaps we could work something out.

In which David could give me in some way to be your wife. Well, actually, David couldn't do that. I'm not sure whether he would have been able to do that. Because according to the law of God, that wasn't possible.

But then again, God's law had been compromised anyway by David. So maybe he was prepared to negotiate on that one in order to limit the damage. But as far as he was concerned, his emotions had completely transformed.

And whatever love, inverted commas, he had had for this woman, for this poor woman, had converted into sheer hatred. And you know the Hebrew word in verse 17 is not put this woman out of my presence, but put this thing out of my presence.

[41 : 11] It's horrific, isn't it? That's why I was so reluctant. Because it's just so full of darkness and deceit.

It's humankind at its very worst. And you're asking all kinds of questions.

You can't help but be so passionately sympathetic towards Tamar. She's the innocent victim in all of this. She goes away completely desolate.

She's consigned to a life, we're told, of isolation and shame. And there's a stigma which will remain upon her for the rest of her life, even years ahead.

You would like to think that she was able to move on. But I doubt it. Because people have good memories for this kind of thing. And people would remember what had happened. And the fact that she had nothing to do with it, that she was the innocent victim.

[42 : 16] Perhaps people wouldn't believe that. She would have to live with this for the rest of her life. And any potential husband that she might have would have to know what had happened.

What are we to make of all this? Well, we're to make of this that, first of all, that, like I say, that there are not only people who commit this kind of atrocity.

But there are people who are victims. People who suffer. Tamar represents to me millions of people, millions of women in every age who are abused.

And men. We hear about it from time to time on the news. Outrageous stories of people abused in their youth at the very prime of their life. Taken advantage of by people more powerful than themselves.

And sometimes in the very last places where you would expect that to happen. In the place where you expect them to be the safest and the most secure. Like their school or their home.

[43 : 37] Or a place where they're supposed to be learning. You can't help but feel a sense of how sorry you are.

That we live in a world in which there is such suffering. And over the last few years, story after story has come out.

And the law, of course, has tightened up in this regard. And the law has become more and more outraged against people. Against people who commit this kind of crime against other people.

And quite rightly so. Zero tolerance against abuse. We agree with that. The Bible agrees with that. God agrees with that. The problem with the world is, of course, that they have a zero tolerance attitude to some selective things.

But they don't listen to God in everything. But in this we agree. Zero tolerance. God is zero tolerance against abuse.

[44 : 41] And taking advantage of another person. I think of the New Testament story of an act where Paul talks to Felix and Drusilla.

Drusilla was a very interesting character. A really poor woman who had herself been abused when she was a child. And I often wonder what happened with Drusilla.

We know that Felix rejected the gospel when Paul preached the gospel. But I often wonder what happened to Drusilla. And how perhaps she saw the gospel as a message of hope for her.

Who had a battered and a bruised upbringing. And a past in which she needed to find love as God gives. And not as man takes.

I can't help comparing this story, for example, also to Genesis chapter 1. And how God made Adam and Eve. And how God brought Eve to Adam. And how there was that first marriage.

[45 : 45] And how he put them together in the garden. And how there was nothing but perfection and bliss as God intended in a perfect world. And here we have humankind at its worst.

Where a man uses the advantage of his strength to abuse a woman for his own pleasure. That's not love. That's got no resemblance to love. The love that God created.

I can't help comparing what I read in this chapter to marriage as God intended. Husbands, he says, love your wives. As Christ loved the church.

And gave himself for her. That's love. As God intended. And as exemplified by God. And whilst Absalom.

Comes into the scene. And he speaks to his sister in verse 20. And he asks her, has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace. And he appears to take her into his own house.

[46 : 43] Well, that was all very noble of him. And then he harbors that hatred for his brother. I can't help but wondering what was the motivation behind that hatred.

There's part of me that says, yes, Absalom. We want somebody to come into this story. And to give justice where justice is due. Because here's a woman who has been abused. And she's been consigned to misery and loneliness for the rest of her life.

And Amnon walks free. Well, we know that's not going to happen. And there's part of me that says, yes, Absalom. It's about time someone came into this story and gave him what he deserved. But Absalom's motives were not good ones. Absalom saw his chance. He was second in line to the throne. Do you really believe that it was just because of what he did to his sister that he arranged for Amnon's killing?

Subsequent events tell us that Absalom himself was filled with covetousness and ambition to take the throne from his father.

[47 : 47] And it all started here. So Absalom himself is far from what we would expect someone to be. Besides, what starts off with one sinful desire resulting in a sinful deed ends up with another sinful desire.

Absalom's hatred towards Amnon and it results in another sinful deed. All of which results in a chapter that is utter chaos.

Where everyone is doing what's right in their own eyes. And that's where it becomes a picture of what we really are in ourselves. You know what frightens me so much about a chapter like this? Is that I see humanity as it really is in all its darkness and lostness and sinfulness and utter selfishness. In which some people are the victors at other people's expense and other people are victims.

Being consigned to a life of misery and pain and sorrow. And it happens all over the world tonight. The world tries to dress up itself and tries to pretend that somehow things are not as bad as they are.

[49 : 10] But anyone who really takes an honest look at the state of the world tonight will discover that the world is exactly as described in this chapter. You say I'm not like that.

But sin takes many forms. One form here in this chapter. Two forms here in this chapter. But if you search your own heart. Then you will discover that you are driven by selfishness and self-centeredness.

And you are driven by your own selfish desire. That's what man has become. How he has fallen from how God created him at the beginning. To reflect perfectly his image and his glory.

And now he has fallen on his face to the ground. You can't help feeling anger as you read this chapter.

Do you know who you are more angry with than anybody else? You are angry with King David. Because when he gets to hear about it. He is very angry. Verse 21.

[50 : 14] When King David heard of all these things. He was very angry. And you think. Good. And. And.

And. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing. Somebody needs to vindicate this poor woman. Somebody needs to. That's where it ends. Very angry. Big deal.

What are you going to do about it David? You are the king. You are the king that sits on the throne of judgment. And you are the one who is responsible for making sure. That the innocent are vindicated.

And the guilty are punished. Okay. So you are angry. Right. What are you going to do about it? Nothing. Somebody needs to vindicate this poor woman.

Somebody needs to. To at least. At least. To do something. To. To put into effect. God's law. And this is where you are crying out for justice. You know. There is a natural justice in this.

[51 : 13] That demands to be satisfied. Isn't there? There is a natural justice that God has put in the heart of every one of us. And you read this chapter. And you think. Well. What is going to happen about it?

And nothing happens about it. As far as David is concerned. Well. How could it? How could it? Because David himself. Because David himself. Had taken someone who didn't belong to him. He had spotted a woman who he liked.

And he had taken her and been intimate with her. She had become pregnant. And she had had his son. And he had arranged the death of her husband. And people knew about it.

So how could he. How. Where was the moral authority now. With which he. Could execute justice. On his own son. His own son would just turn around and say to him.

I'm not going to take any lectures from you. But you know what? He was still responsible. Even if he himself.

[52 : 12] Was to act in a manner that was hypocritical. He. Should still. Have made sure that justice was carried out.

For the sake of God's name. And his honor. And his covenant people. And as it is. The chapter ends up in chaos. Can you imagine.

What the world would be like. If it was left to itself. Well here it is. Where someone takes advantage of another person.

And gets them to do what they want. And then another person hates the first person. And they decide to kill him. If the world lived like that. Then. What kind of a world would it be. And that's what sin is.

And that's the kind of world. That Jesus came into. You know. I'll end with this. I close. Where is God in all of this. I wonder.

[53 : 08] I wonder. I wonder. I wonder. There's not a single mention of God in this chapter. I wonder. I wonder. I wonder. I wonder. I wonder.

I wonder. I wonder. I wonder. In fact. They don't reflect the very opposite of the world. Which God created. And the. And the way in which God wants us to live. If you want an example of the very opposite.

To what. How God wants us to live. Here it is. In this chapter. There's no God in this chapter. None whatsoever. But that doesn't mean that God wasn't there. Do you know how I know that God was there.

Because this chapter is written. And it's almost like God is saying. I am writing this in my word.

Because I saw what happened. And while Tamar has to go away.

Broken hearted. Violated. A broken person. A person who's going to have to be consigned. For the rest of our life. To have to live. With the shame.

[54 : 12] Of her half brother. And what he did to her. I know. And he is answerable to me. Don't ever think that there's no justice in the world.

There is a God of justice. To whom we must all. Give an account. Not just the Amnons of this world. But all of us. Must give an account.

There is no God in this chapter. There is a world. There is a world. Where God is absent. Do you know what? That's the world into which Jesus came.

A world full of pride. And selfishness. And violence. And deceit. And conniving. A world full of lust. And a world full of victors and victims. A world where one person took advantage of another. A world where there was tears.

[55 : 17] And desolation and loneliness. You remember the woman at the well. You remember the kind of people who Jesus was surrounded with. People who had themselves lived a life of shame.

Who had become overcome by their own lusts and desires. At root. That's what we're all like. That's what Paul says anyway.

That's what the Apostle Paul says. And the only answer that there is. Is Jesus Christ. That's the world he came into. And he came into that world in order to.

Open up the door. To be reconciled to God. Because only God can save. Sinners. People who are dead in trespasses and sins.

People who. Are consumed by their own selfishness. And their own pride. And their own lust. Their own violence.

[56 : 23] Their own anger. Their own indifference. That's where it starts. It starts. When we leave God out of the picture. That Christ came into the world.

In order to. Bring God. Back into this world. And he did so by removing. The curse. Of sin. In his own death on the cross.

He removed our guilt. He became guilty for us. So that by his death. We could have a new life. A life.

A life that was no longer. Oriented to ourselves. And our own pleasure. But a life. In which. We love God.

With all our heart. And mind. And soul. And strength. And so tonight. In this horrific chapter.

[57 : 21] One of the most horrific chapters. In the whole of the Bible. God is facing us. With what we are. As human beings. He's facing us.

With the reason. Why we need Jesus. Is Jesus in this chapter? He's nowhere in this chapter. But this chapter tells me.

Why I need Jesus. And why it was necessary. For Jesus to come into the world. To seek. And to save. Those.

Who were lost. And that includes you. Because by nature. We're all lost. Until we find. The shepherd. Who has come after.

The lost sheep. Let's bow our heads. In prayer. Father in heaven. We ask now. That you will. Guide us. And through your word. We thank you. For what your word.

[58 : 19] Reveals to us. Sometimes. We are taken aback. By how brutal. The Bible is. And yet. Lord. It is all there. For our instruction. Every word.

Is there. Because it's what you want. Us to know. Father. We pray. That we may know Jesus. And that we may. That we may meet him. And encounter him.

As he gave himself. On the cross. And that we may be his. Because the only safe place. Is in. Having him. As our savior. We ask this.

In Jesus name. Amen. Psalm 62. The traditional version. Of the psalm. Is on page 294. Page 294. Psalm 62. Verse 5. To verse 8. My soul. Wait thou. With patience. Upon thy God alone. On him. Dependeth all my hope. And expectation. He only.

[59 : 21] My salvation is. And my strong rock. Is he. He only. Is my sure defense. And shall not move. To be. Psalm 62. Verse 5. To verse 8. Four verses.

We'll stand to sing. My soul. Wake thou. With patience.

Upon thy God alone. On him. Dependeth all my hope.

And expectation. He only.

My salvation is. And my strong prophet.

[60 : 24] He. He only. He is. My sure defense.

I shall not move. Let thee. In God.

My glory. He places it. My ■■■title.

My book. And my salvation's true. He. For more. My strength.

His most secure. He will place your confidence in Him continually.

[61 : 33] Before Him pour me at your heart, God is a refuge hand.

Thank you.