

2 Samuel 19

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[0 : 0 0] let's turn back to that chapter chapter 19 of 2nd Samuel perhaps you shouldn't have left 2nd Samuel so long because the chances are that perhaps some of us may have forgotten the story i'm confessed that i perhaps i'm overly sensitive to preaching through books because i suspect that people very quickly get tired with one theme and perhaps maybe it's the that's the case that some of us here we do tend to get bogged down in one theme and all i would ask for you as we make our way through the rest of this book is that you stay with me because i promise that we will try and work our way very quickly through the rest of the book and try and tease out of the chapters it is really important to know the narrative of the bible what i mean by that is the story of the bible as it as we work our way through the the history of the old testament it's really there was a day when when you went to sunday school you absolutely had to learn all of these stories you had to learn the names and the places and the times and the and everything about these these issues well i guess that children aren't subjected to the same expectations nowadays as we were but sometimes i think we've lost something in not teaching our children the facts and the figures of the bible and sometimes i think that we've assumed that they're not interested in it because some of these stories are are as fascinating to children as any other story is indeed even more so because this is god's word to us and a chapter like the one we've just read is as much god's word as any other chapter in the bible as preachers we sometimes fall into the trap of just picking our own favorite themes and picking our own favorite chapters and the well-known verses and the well-known themes of the bible and of course the bible is about christ it's about jesus the son of god and coming into the world the miracles the miracles the parables and everything that jesus did his death on the cross is resurrection from the dead and of course that stands at the center of the bible all roads in the bible lead to jesus but that doesn't mean that we ignore the roads that we ignore the chapters even incidental or what appears to be incidental chapters like this one these are all given in their detail because god wants us to have them he wants us to know them and i would have hoped that any thinking christian among us would have an appetite and would want as much as possible to grasp what god is saying to us here and it's only by sitting down with your bible and by giving it decent quality time that we're going to we're never going to get what god has to say to us by just rushing our way through the bible skipping out major bits we're only going to get there by sitting down with our bible so once again like i've said so many times before in this stressful rushed world that we live in please give god the time to sit down and to read his word to you and then you will discover how rich it is and how relevant it is and how much we need more and more to absorb its teaching and you'll find that your life is changed as you absorb that teaching you ignore the bible at your peril and you the more we know it then the richer our christian experience is going to be now what we saw way way back when we stopped this was that one of david's sons had rebelled against him and he had slowly over the years he had won the hearts

of followers of hundreds of followers thousands of followers to himself so when david woke up one morning literally there was a coup and his kingdom had been taken away from him he had to flee the where he was living in jerusalem and he had to be evicted he had to leave jerusalem and he had to make his way eastward across the jordan river into mahanaim and those who were with him there were quite a few people but nothing in comparison with the thousands of people who remained in and around jerusalem and they ostensibly in any case were on the side of absalom absalom seems to have been a real charismatic character seems to have been a magnetic personality that had endeared himself to people especially people with problems and he appeared to be the kind of person that had time for them david didn't have time for them and and so he deceived them and won their support but really what he wanted was the kingdom he wanted power for himself it was pride it wasn't a real genuine love for the people that drove him at all it was pride

in himself he wanted to have what was not rightfully his the privilege of being king belonged to god god had anointed david and that's what absalom had failed to recognize so his rebellion against the king david his own father wasn't just a political episode it was an act of rebellion against god and that's the way that we should read this we must we must understand these things happen all the time coups happen all the time political uprisings happen all the time you read about it you hear about it in the news there's nothing new about any of this except this time israel were god's chosen covenant people he had set a king over them david was the man after his own heart and absalom had risen up against david and those who joined absalom were joining in his rebellion against god no doubt many of them didn't realize the seriousness of what they were doing nevertheless that's what they were doing they had gone along with the crowd and they had gone along with absalom and they had evicted david from his throne and from his place those who had gone along with david on the other hand they were supportive and loyal to him and you remember how we followed david as he slowly made his way out of jerusalem and as he embarked on this very long journey of exile we don't know how many months he was in exile but he lived there with an uncertain future not knowing what was going to happen and those who joined with him they didn't know they were putting their lives on the line in supporting david they didn't know what was going to happen either well you remember how david sent a man called hushai back to absalom to be a spy and to pretend he was on absalom's side he was an advisor to king david as had another man called ahithophel who genuinely had turned his back on david and now genuinely supported absalom so absalom had two close advisors one who was really on his side and the other one who wasn't he was on david's side and he turned to ahithophel first of all and he asked him for a strategic plan and so he gave him his idea for a strategic plan might be which was to do a clinical strike on david and then he turned to hushai who was on david's side and hushai contradicted the advice that ahithophel had given david and he said no no clinical strikes are no use because david's too clever for all of that what you need to do what you want to do is you want to take all your men you lead them and just descend on david and his followers absalom liked the second piece of advice because it elevated him it fed his pride and so he took the advice of hushai ahithophel in an act of despondency committed suicide and hushai had one which meant of course that david's plan was going to become no or rather absalom's plan was going to be communicated to david david was going to be made ready and they were going to be waiting for absalom and his men as they crossed the jordan and as they went into the man mahanayim district the last we heard of course was that absalom somehow got lost by himself on his mule and there lo and behold he met with some of david's men who uh we remember of course the bizarre incident where his hair got caught in the in the tree and where he was left suspended from a tree and one of david's men who was too afraid to kill him joab then took his spear and he finished the job that's where we left it last time you would think that that's it end of story everyone is back to normal that david would just simply make his way back from mahanayim back to jerusalem resume the throne again business as usual but really when you think about it couldn't possibly be like that because we're talking about a rebellion here a national rebellion we're talking about civil war that's what it was those who were on absalom's side and those who were on david's side it wasn't just two men against one another randomly it was two sides against one another one side on absalom's supporting absalom i guess a side who had been discontent with david's rule for one reason or another and the side who that were supportive to david you can't just pretend everything will be okay for the first in the first place david had to sort himself out on a personal basis he was inconsolable when he discovered that his son absalom had been killed we can all those of us who are parents we can all understand that on a personal level of course for any father to lose a son is utterly devastating and you can imagine we can only imagine how david felt at the news that his son absalom had been killed although quite how he expected it to turn out i'm i'm really i really don't know surely he knew that this was an act of war and therefore the chances were that absalom was going to be killed in any case news got to him that absalom had been killed and he spent many days in mourning for absalom we can all understand that but joab the commander of his army saw things from a different perspective and he had to go to david and he had to say to him look i'm not concerned what your personal feelings are understandable although they are on a human level you are the king of israel and if you have any chance of risk of being restored to your throne you have to win the confidence of the people who have supported you and right now you're driving them away because you're blaming them for killing your son it was an act of war you've got to understand that so you can see the two sides besides david is is the covenant king of israel and he had to act

in a responsible and in an appropriate manner in order to lead the people because he still had a civil war on his hands and if he's not going to take control of the situation then he's going to find out that god's people are all killing each other that was the emergency that faced him so he had to put his own personal sorrow to one side and he had to take off the cover that was on his face i know that this sounds so harsh and brutal but we have to try and understand it the way that it was for david he had to put his own personal feelings to one side and in order to prioritize his kingship over israel so that's what happened he listened to joab and he met with his people and he drew those who had followed him joab was accusing him he had accused him of driving away his followers and i think that joab had a point and but then as soon as david met with them he drew them all together again so that they met with him but there's still the crisis still existed because back in jerusalem everyone was at sea israel had fled every man to his own home no doubt there were some amongst absalom's followers who were still resentful of david they didn't know what was going to happen to them now who was going to lead them now that absalom was dead some of them didn't want david no doubt other ones were so filled with embarrassment and shame at what they had done because all of a sudden the true situation was made clear to them as soon as absalom was dead they saw things for what they really were strange isn't it these people had given themselves they had backed we say this they backed the wrong horse they had given their support and the loyalty and their faithfulness to the wrong man just because he was a sweet talker he was a charismatic personality he was a magnetic king somebody who won them over by his own charm and by his own presence and now that he was gone they realized how wrong they all were so they were all filled with shame and then they said this look how clear this is in verse 9 the king david delivered us from the hands of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the philistines now he has fled out of the land of from absalom but absalom whom we anointed over as is dead in battle why do you say nothing about bringing the king back they were they were ashamed at what they had done they realized how utterly foolish and how utterly stupid and treacherous they had been what's more they realized that in the eyes of the law they were guilty of a capital offense and that by right all of those who had backed absalom were guilty were culpable and they the penalty for treason was death so you can imagine how all of those who were on absalom's side felt how insecure and uncertain they felt they hadn't a clue what was going to happen and they started fighting against themselves they were they were arguing verse 9 they were arguing throughout the tribes of israel and you know of course an argument leads to a worse argument and a worse argument leads to a violent argument and violent arguments in those days and when it comes to sinful violent human beings it comes to war and who knows how many people they had shown before in the history of israel if you ever want to discover a violent people read the book of judges and some of the episodes that took place in the old testament and this is not israel against the philistines or the moabites this is israel against each other this was the danger that god's people were going to start killing each other in the aftermath of this dreadful

ill-fated rebellion that absalom had led on the other side of the jordan there's david and he doesn't know whether the people want him back or not so you see the whole that this idea that somehow everything's back to normal that just can't possibly be david has a mammoth task on his hands if he wants to regain control of israel he has to bring israel together again there is a major reconciliation project that he has to take control of and this chapter is a chapter that is full of skill and ability and ability and intuition on the part of david in bringing all of these people back and so he initiates it himself he knows nobody else is going to initiate it for reasons i've just explained he's got to take control so he writes to his own tribe the jew the the people of judah and he asks them why are they not asking him back and so they do and he he he makes some moves the time is going up the the details are absolutely fascinating he establishes amasa who was an absalom side to be the commander instead of joab that was a master stroke in order to win the people of judah back over to himself and then he arranges to meet them at a place called gilgal now if you know your history of the old testament gilgal is a really significant place because that's the place that's the first place right on the side of the jordan where the israelites they met together in the day of moses in the day of joshua to renew the covenant between them and god this was a new beginning this was the threat gilgal marked the threshold between the past life in the wilderness and the future life in the promised land and so gilgal for david was full of history and significance and i don't believe it was for no reason that he met with the people at gilgal because that was the place that signified a new beginning there had to be a new beginning the old scores had to be left behind there had to be a willingness on the part of everyone to put the past behind them as gods because it was the name of

god that was being tarnished and if the children of israel ended up destroying themselves then god's name would be tarnished beyond recognition in the eyes of the nation so david knew how much there was at stake so he brought all of the people to gilgal in order for there to be a new beginning that's because david is reflecting the god of new beginnings that's the story of the bible that is what god is a god who makes all things new a god who even although the world that he created became separated from him because of our sin determined within himself to reconcile that world back to himself by the blood of his son jesus christ so king david as he reflects that jesus who will one day be his son in time to come his descendant

[20 : 24] as he rules over israel his reign is marked by reconciliation and peacemaking and forgiveness and it starts with those who have offended him most deeply and that's why we're going to in the in the next few verses from verse 16 onwards we meet two people in fact we meet three people but two of them were enemies of david or ostensibly they were enemies of david we're not quite sure where they are but as far as david's policy of reconciliation which it clearly was on that occasion uh they they are brought back into favor with the king there's this man shimei on in verse 16 on in verse 16 do you remember him you remember him when david was walking away from the palace and when he was making his way over to uh over to the the across the the uh the mount of olives and as he was fleeing from uh the whole situation was made so much worse partly by this man shimei he was a benjaminite belonged to the house of saul and he followed david mile after mile berating him bad mouthing him cursing him saying all kinds of things against him accusing him of this and that and the next thing and throwing stones at him all the time david's one of david's bodyguards uh abishai he wanted to kill him on the spot but david said no don't kill him let leave him because this man in god's providence has appeared and this is what he's doing here he is again but look at him this time listen to him this time it's quite astonishing isn't it this if this isn't a change of heart then what is it or is it shimei came back there was a thousand men from benjamin with him including ziba the servant of the house of saul with his 15 sons and 20 servants and this is what he has to say let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left jerusalem do not let the king take it to heart for your servant knows that i have sinned therefore behold i have come this day the first of all the house of joseph to come down and meet my lord the king so there's a different man altogether from the man who cursed and swore at david and threw rocks at him the first time what's brought this about this change of heart abishai david's bodyguard once again he wants to put him to death he believes that shimei has cursed david he's committed a capital offense he should be cut to pieces but once again david says to abishai no you will not put him to death i he shall not die and promised him that he would live the question is was shimei for real in his repentance what do you think do you think that shimei just saw that this was just something that he had to do in order to save his own skin or did his repentance was this real repentance see there's a difference between what we might do in order to secure our own future there's something within human beings that that automatically preserves our own lives and our own well-being isn't that we all have the survival instinct in us and if that means taking physical action in order to survive so be it but sometimes it means taking

political action was this some kind of political ploy that zim that shimei was playing in order to preserve his own life or was he truly repentant i actually don't know the answer to that i don't know the answer to that there is no way that david could tell how genuine it was but what it does remind me of is that there is a difference between remorse on the one hand and true inward radical repentance on the other hand reward remorse is when when we realize how stupid we've been and we want to turn back the clock and we want to we want to make things right happens all the time happens in all kinds of different circumstances but repentance is when a person truly sees the horror of what they have done before god and repentance is not just simply saying sorry for the way we've lived our lives repentance is when we turn from our sin inwardly to god it's one of the catechisms that i learned as a child what is repentance unto life it's one of the most vivid detailed catechisms and it speaks so powerfully repentance unto life is a saving grace wherein a sinner out of a true sense of his sin a true listen a true sense of his sin does with grief and hatred of his sin and apprehension of the mercy of god in christ jesus he turns from it to god and therein endeavors after new obedience that's what repentance truly is that's what we mean when we read about repentance in the bible and that's what god demands of us and it's only something that he can do in us it is an act of god's grace when a god touches a person and brings that person to life from being dead in trespasses and sins and brings that person to see that there is no hope away from jesus christ and

god brings that person to faith in jesus he turns that person away from all that is shameful and sinful in that person's life and that person turns to trust in what jesus has done for him or her i look at shimai and i ask myself well i don't know i'm not to judge i don't know what was in this man's heart i don't know what's in your heart you don't know what's in my heart but i do know what god demands of us and that is repentance repentance in which we are made to see we are brought to see the horror of our own darkness and our own sinfulness and the greatness of the mercy of god in jesus christ and then we read then we come across ziba you remember who ziba was he was the servant of mephibosheth remember who mephibosheth was one of the longest names of the bible mephibosheth is hard to pronounce he was a grandson of saul and he was the son of jonathan jonathan was david's best friend when they were younger jonathan had died mephibosheth was crippled in both his legs and david had provided for him a home at his own table and you remember how when david was running away from absalom on the way ziba mephibosheth's servant he came alongside him and he brought provisions for david and he said well actually mephibosheth is on absalom's side because he thinks that absalom will eventually give back the kingdom to him he bad-mouthed his master he bad-mouthed mephibosheth now mephibosheth when david is returning to jerusalem mephibosheth comes out to meet david and he leaves david with a dilemma who's right mephibosheth says look ziba lied my servant lied he told you that i'm on absalom's side that was never the case rather what happened was that ziba my servant he abandoned me to myself and i can't do much for myself and look i've spent all these months and as a sign of not of my faithfulness as a sign of my faithfulness to you david i haven't washed in months i haven't cut my hair in months i haven't cut my beard in months i'm wearing the same clothes as i was months and months ago you can see you can smell you can see the state i'm in who was right who was telling the truth was ziba telling the truth that absalom had actually abandoned david and was on the side of absalom or was a was was was mephibosheth now telling the truth we don't know scholars are divided over it i suspect that ziba actually lied and mephibosheth was actually telling the truth i suspect but david had to act on what was in front of him so what did he do he just divided the proceeds between the two of them mephibosheth said look i'm so glad that you're going to come back to jerusalem i want i don't care about my goods i don't care about money or anything like that i'm just so glad that you're coming so that's why i believe that mephibosheth was telling the truth but then lastly the last person that we meet in this chapter is was one of david's most faithful supporters he was a man called barzillai and we met him before as well in mahanaim where he brought provisions food and other provisions to david in his need in his exile now barzillai was an 80 year old man he was aging and he had provided the king with food so on his way home david said to barzillai look i want you to come and be in my court i want you to come into the palace with me and i want you to remain as one of my servants and one of my advisors but barzillai didn't come from jerusalem he came from from where they were at that time and he said look i would rather you see how old i am what good can i be to you i've done what i could i was there at the right time please just excuse me and allow me to go back to my home and i've got this servant called kim ham he can go instead of me he'll be a far more used to me than i could ever be please use him as my representative so david accepted that and he allowed barzillai to go home and he he went home to wherever it is i can't i can't see it in this in this in the the passage at the moment now what can we glean from barzillai and i say this in closing the time has gone barzillai was an older man there are some characters in the bible and we meet them when they're very young like samuel for example we meet him when he's very young and we follow him all the way through his life like david we meet him when he's very young we follow him all the way through his life some characters there's chapter and chapters and chapters written about them when they're young and they're usually relatively young men and young women but there are other characters like barzillai and we only get a glimpse of them the only time we ever get to meet them is for a very very short space of time and perhaps even just the one thing that they did one episode one event but that's what counts because barzillai was there at the right time for david even although he was an old man god had a plan for him and that plan was only one thing to be with david at that particular time to give to david what barzillai could and that's all that god asked for us if we're his his people tonight that we do what we can god will never ask of you what you can't do but he will ask of you what you can do that might only be one or two things but there will always be something that you can do for the lord just like barzillai there will always be something now there's something really important here and that is because sometimes we compare young people and older people and we compare a young person

favorably to the older person and we very often focus on the young life that is given to the lord and a person who is in their youth they give their lives to the lord and they spend the best years of their lives in the lord's service if that's you if you're a young person then go for it go for it give them the best years of your life don't wait until later on don't think that somehow well i want my youth to be mine because that's when i that's that's to make sure i get all the fun out of life and then later on i'll give the lord my old years no no no that's not the way it works you're assuming that fun equals living outside of god it doesn't it very often leads to misery and emptiness and darkness and shame and guilt when you get involved in all the wrong stuff when you live when you decide to live away from god then you end up trying to please yourself so you go for it give the lord the best years of your life live the rest of your life in god's service god will never ever abandon you but you might be an older person tonight and you've come to christ relatively recently now i don't know what an older person is i'll leave you to work that out for yourself you know what the temptation is the temptation is to wish that you were young because you think that it's only young people that can do anything for the lord you read stories of people who who committed themselves to the lord and they went out on the mission field or they did great things

for the lord and they spent years and years in god's service and you wish that you had your life to live over and over over again can i say this to you stop right now because god does not ask what you could have done for him he asks what you can do for him as a christian just like barzillai and there'll always be something that you can do you cannot turn back the hands of time you can't relive your life much as we'd all love to even those of us who have been christians for years i would love to relive my life again oh the number of things i would put right but you don't have that opportunity it's a waste of time it's futile what's far more important is devoting what we have to the lord and to his service and that way like the woman who anointed the feet of jesus we do what we can that's all god asks of us but the very first step you can never do anything for the lord until you surrender by faith yourself to him and to the lord jesus christ that's the first thing god asks of us so make sure that that's the first priority in your own life tonight to give yourself and then to give what you have and what you can to the lord in service and for his kingdom and for the king as he takes the throne in the world and in the universe both now and forever let's pray our father in heaven we ask that you will bless your word to us now we thank you for it we ask that you will you will apply it to our hearts and that you will bring about that real change within all of us that commits ourselves to the king in all his glory and in all his majesty in jesus name amen well we're going to sing in psalm 32 from sing psalms it's on page 38 we're going to sing from verse 7 to the end of the psalm psalm 32 from verse 7 down to the end you are my hiding place oh lord my true security you keep me safe in troubled days you circle me with joyful praise when you have set me free i will instruct you by my word and guide you in my way my counsel i will give to you my eye will keep your path in view and watch you day by day seven to the end of the psalm of psalm 32 and we'll stand to sing you are my hiding place oh lord my true security you keep me safe in troubled days you circle me with joyful praise when you have set me free i will instruct you by my word and guide you in my way my counsel [40 : 33] will give to you my eye will keep you path in view and watch you day by day do not be like the horse or mule which cannot understand they must be carved and kept in check as bit and bridle turn their neck to go where you you command the wicked will will much increase but those who trust the

Lord his covenant love and mercy will surround you righteous let your joy abound and praise the Lord your God and now may the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with each one of you both now and always Amen