

“After God’s Own Heart” – Message #37

March 21, 2010

Rebellion!

2 Samuel 13 – 19

Context: The Story of David the King (1-2 Samuel)

- A. David’s Rise (1 Samuel 16 – 2 Samuel 5:5)
- B. David’s Reign (2 Samuel 5:6 – 1 Kings 2)
  - 1. Establishing the Kingdom (2 Sam. 5:5 – 8:17)
  - 2. Court History (2 Sam. 9 – 20)
    - a. David’s Kindness to Mephibosheth (9)
    - b. David’s Defeat of the Ammonites (10)
    - c. David’s Sin with Bathsheba (Uriah) (11-12)
    - d. Absalom’s Rebellion Against David (13-19)
    - e. Sheba’s Rebellion Against David (20)
  - 3. Epilogue (2 Sam 21 – 1 Kings 2)

Key Actors in the Story:

Joab: David’s nephew (his mother was Zeruah, David’s half-sister) and chief military commander. He is also Abishai’s brother, and cousin of Amasa. Joab killed Absalom and Amasa.

Abishai: David’s nephew, Joab’s brother, and a commander in David’s army.

Amasa: David’s nephew (his mother was Abigail), cousin of Joab and Abishai, and the chief commander of Absalom’s forces. He was killed by Joab.

Ahithophel: Grandfather of Bathsheba; highly trusted counselor to David who defected to Absalom. He committed suicide.

### 37 Rebellion! blanks

Hushai the Arkite: David's counselor who pretended to defect to Absalom; he gave counterproductive advice to Absalom while sending vital intelligence to David.

Zadok and Abiathar: High priests who remained loyal to David and were part of "eyes and ears" during Absalom's occupation of Jerusalem.

Ahimaaz (son of Zadok) and Jonathan (son of Abiathar): messengers from Hushai and their fathers to David.

## I. Telling the Story

## II. Key Features of the Narrative

### A. Absalom's Character Traits

- . As a royal prince, born to privilege, he was used to getting his own way.
- . He took advantage of his position and imposing appearance to persuade people to follow him.
- . He was arrogant – in following the advice of Ahithophel to take of his father's harem and following the advice of Hushai to lead his troops into battle.
- . He was both calculating and impatient. He could wait a long time for something to happen; but eventually, he took matters into his own hands.
- . He got what he wanted through deceit and manipulation.

### B. How David contributed to his problems:

- . He indulged his sons and did not discipline them (1 Kings 1:6). He turned a blind eye to evidence of subversion on the part of Absalom.
- . David sought the affection of his children without gaining their respect. He failed to shape their character, train them in life, or integrate them into the mission given to him by God.
- . He blurred the spheres of his authority and responsibility as father and king. He didn't respond to Absalom's crime for what it was because Absalom was his son. David's obsession with restoring and maintaining the affection of Absalom bordered on idolatrous.
- . He sought to extend mercy to Absalom without satisfying justice. He sought to restore fellowship (reconciliation) apart from genuine repentance.

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· David let his past failures prevent him from addressing the crimes committed by his sons as adults. He failed to enact justice for others because of his own violation of justice in his sin with Bathsheba. He felt that he had lost his moral authority. He may have felt hampered in his options by the thought that he was experiencing consequences that he had coming to him.  
· His commitment to protect and preserve Absalom at all costs prompted poor decisions with regard to other situations.

### C. What David did right

· He evacuated Jerusalem to avoid bloodshed and buy time.  
· He did not abdicate the throne. He merely vacated it for the time being.  
· Though he was in retreat, he was not passive (as he had been in dealing with Absalom). He established an intelligence network consisting of trusted allies.  
· He organized his army for battle, chose terrain would give an advantage to his army, and prepared to lead his army into the field.  
· He followed the counsel of his army in staying off the battle field.  
· He submitted wholeheartedly to the sovereign purposes of God (like when he was being pursued by Saul). (He does not take the ark as a symbol of God's power on his behalf.)

### D. Factors at play in shaping the events of this episode:

· David's sin with Bathsheba and the outworking of the consequences  
· David's lack of parental engagement with his children during their upbringing  
· The wicked character of Absalom  
· David's appeal to and trust in God to save him (Psalm 3)  
· The interactions with the people who are for and against David  
· The outworking of God's sovereign purposes (for David and against Absalom)  
· The eternal "Davidic covenant" which promised an enduring dynasty for David (2 Sam 7)

## III. Lessons for Life

A. Theme #1: Both Absalom and David were blinded by an \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ for something they could not have. Absalom wanted David's \_\_\_\_\_;  
David wanted Absalom's \_\_\_\_\_. (Neither desire was inherently \_\_\_\_\_.) The  
antidote:  
Matthew 6:33; 1 Tim 6:6.

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B. Theme #2: "God \_\_\_\_\_ the proud, but gives grace to the \_\_\_\_\_"  
(James 4:6, 10; 1 Pet 5:5-6).

### C. How to Respond to a Rebel

- . Take \_\_\_\_\_ of anything you have done to contribute to the breakdown of the relationship. Repent, apologize, change.
- . Be decisive and steadfast in enacting the \_\_\_\_\_ appropriate to the violation of the terms of the relationship (tough love).
- . Do what you can to maintain open channels of \_\_\_\_\_.
- . Do not let your desire for a happy relationship short-circuit the necessity of \_\_\_\_\_ as the basis for reconciliation (restoration to fellowship). Do not extend the benefits of a healthy relationship to one who perpetuates a \_\_\_\_\_-relationship.
- . Be willing to bear the pain of \_\_\_\_\_ for as long as it is necessary (this is what God has done for his "spouse"/ "children").
- . Find consolation and joy in your \_\_\_\_\_ with God and the other human relationships that He provides for your well-being (John 1:11-12)
- . \_\_\_\_\_ for the ultimate restoration of the rebel.
- . Strive to become a person worthy of \_\_\_\_\_. Do not allow your desire for affection to devolve into a "\_\_\_\_\_" that prompts illegitimate \_\_\_\_\_ (on your part) or \_\_\_\_\_ (on the part of the other person).

The positive counterpoint to the story of Absalom and David: the story of \_\_\_\_\_

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