

Session 25 God's Discipline: David's Family Conflicts (2 Sam. 13-15)

I. THE LORD'S DISCIPLINE ON DAVID'S LIFE

- A. For the next 8 chapters (2 Sam. 13-20), we see the consequences of David's great sin (2 Sam. 11). We see the fulfillment of God's discipline on David as pronounced by Nathan (2 Sam. 12:10-12). In 1 & 2 Samuel, the life of David is set forth in 40 chapters (1 Sam. 16 - 2 Sam. 24) with 10 chapters covering his sin and divine discipline (2 Sam. 11-20)—thus 25% of his story focuses on this.

¹⁰*Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me...*

¹¹*I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. (2 Sam. 12:10-11)*

- B. The Lord corrects or disciplines those whom He loves and delights in (Prov. 3:12). His correction is not rejection. He uses correction to train us in godliness (Heb. 12:11). Grace includes God forgiving us, but it does not guarantee that all the circumstances caused by our sin are instantly removed.

¹²*Whom the LORD loves He corrects, just as a father the son in whom he delights. (Prov. 3:12)*

⁶*For whom the LORD loves He chastens...⁷If you endure chastening, God deals with you as with sons...¹¹No chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it. (Heb. 12:5-12)*

- C. Even the Lord's anointed must walk in a spirit of obedience. David's sin affected his leadership in his nation and family, thus as a king and a father. The Lord allowed troubles to arise within David's family and leadership for next 25 years. He learned what a bitter thing it is to disobey the Lord.
- D. David never lost a battle with a foreign nation, but suffered loss in his family and leadership circle.
- E. There are few things more painful than seeing one's own sins reappear in their children. David was father or uncle to eight cousins who were involved in five of their family members being killed in Absalom's and/or Adonijah's rebellion—*Amnon, Jonadab, Absalom, Joab, Abishai, Amasa*; Solomon executed his brother *Adonijah* and then his cousin *Joab* for seeking to usurp the throne.

II. AMNON RAPED HIS SISTER TAMAR (2 SAM. 13:1-2)

- A. Amnon was David's first-born son and heir to the throne—he raped his half-sister Tamar (13:1-2).

¹*After this Absalom...had a lovely sister, whose name was Tamar; and Amnon the son of David loved her. ²Amnon was so distressed over his sister Tamar that he became sick... (2 Sam. 13:1-2)*

- B. Jonadab gave his cousin Amnon a plan related to Tamar (13:3-5). His plan was that Amnon pretend to be sick and ask his father David to send Tamar to his house to prepare food for him.

³*But Amnon had a friend whose name was Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother...*

⁴*Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister."⁵So 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, 'Please let my sister Tamar come and give me food...'" (2 Sam. 13:3-5)*

- C. Amnon asked Tamar to feed him in his bedroom and then asked her to lie with him (13:8-1).
⁸So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house...¹⁰Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the bedroom, that I may eat from your hand."...¹¹Now when she had brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." (2 Sam. 13:8-11)
- D. Tamar refused Amnon, protesting that such a thing would be disgraceful (13:12-13). She urged him to think about the long-term negative consequences for both their lives—she would be put to shame, and his reputation as heir to the throne would be ruined for many would consider him to be a fool.
¹²"No...for no such thing should be done in Israel. Do not do this disgraceful thing! ¹³And I, where could I take my shame? And as for you, you would be like one of the fools in Israel..." (2 Sam. 13:12-13)
- E. Amnon raped his sister Tamar (13:14-16). His feelings of shame and guilt turned his lust to hatred.
¹⁴However, he would not heed her voice...he forced her and lay with her. ¹⁵Then Amnon hated her exceedingly, 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, "Arise, be gone!" (2 Sam. 13:14-156)
- F. David expressed his great anger about Amnon's evil deed done to Tamar, but without giving any consequences to Amnon. Perhaps David hesitated to act due to guilt over his own adultery and murder and because such behavior by the heir to throne would bring shame on the royal family.
²¹But when King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. ²²And Absalom spoke to his brother Amnon neither good nor bad. For Absalom hated Amnon, because he had forced his sister Tamar. (2 Sam. 13:20-22)

III. ABSALOM MURDERED HIS BROTHER AMNON (2 SAM. 13:23-39)

- A. For two years Absalom plotted to kill Amnon. Amnon's rape of Tamar mirrored David's adultery with Bathsheba, while Absalom's murder of Amnon mirrored his murder of Uriah. David knew he had received mercy after his great sin so he had a difficult time administering a penalty to his sons.
²³And it came to pass, after two full years, that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal Hazor... so Absalom invited all the king's sons. (2 Sam. 13:23)
- B. Absalom requested David and his officials join his feast in Baal Hazor (15 miles NE of Jerusalem). Absalom commanded his servants to murder Amnon at the feast (13:28-29).
²⁴Then Absalom came to the king and said, "Kindly note, your servant has sheepshearers; please, let the king and his servants go"...²⁷Absalom urged him; so he let Amnon and all the king's sons go...²⁸Now Absalom had commanded his servants, saying, "Watch now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon!' then kill him..." (2 Sam. 13:24-28)
- C. Absalom fled to his maternal grandfather who ruled the small kingdom of Geshur about 80 miles NE of Jerusalem (13:37-39; cf. 3:3). He stayed there for three years.
³⁷But Absalom fled and went to Talmi...king of Geshur...³⁸Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. ³⁹And King David longed to go to Absalom. (2 Sam. 13:37-39)

IV. JOAB'S PLAN TO BRING ABSALOM BACK TO JERUSALEM FROM EXILE (2 SAM. 14)

- A. Joab devised a plan to move his uncle David to bring his cousin Absalom back from exile. Joab coached a woman on how to dress and act, and what story to say to David. She came before David as a widow in mourning and told a story designed to get David to change his mind about Absalom.
¹Joab...perceived that the king's heart was concerned about Absalom. ²And Joab sent to Tekoa and brought from there a wise woman, and said to her, "Please pretend to be a mourner, and put on mourning apparel...³Go to the king and speak to him in this manner." (2 Sam. 14:1-3)
- B. The woman told David a story that was similar to how Cain killed his brother Abel, yet the Lord spared Cain's life (14:4-7, cf. Gen. 4). Joab knew that David would be familiar with that Scripture.
⁵And she answered, "Indeed I am a widow...⁶your maidservant had two sons; and the two fought...one struck the other and killed him. ⁷And now the whole family has risen up...and they said, 'Deliver him who struck his brother, that we may execute him...' So they would extinguish my ember that is left, and leave to my husband neither name nor remnant..."¹¹And he said, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground." (2 Sam. 14:5-11)
- C. David's decision to spare the son was not based on the legal requirements in the Scripture (Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:12; Lev. 24:17), but on the biblical account of God's merciful dealings with Cain. The Lord had shown a similar mercy to both Cain and David as the precedent for David's decision.
- D. Before leaving David's court, she applied his decision to his own family (14:12-17). She argued that since God in mercy had spared both Cain's life and David's life (for their murders), it would not be wrong for him to show a similar mercy to Absalom. The Lord establishes ways to restore, and David as the Lord's representative in matters of justice should do the same.
¹³For the king speaks this thing as one who is guilty, in that the king does not bring his banished one home... ¹⁴Yet God does not take away a life; but He devises means, so that His banished ones are not expelled from Him." (2 Sam. 14:12-17)
- E. Absalom was permitted to return to Jerusalem, but not to the royal court. Possibly some of David's godly counselors were against Absalom returning to Jerusalem. David seemed to be taking the Lord's dealing with Cain as his model—the Lord spared Cain's life, but Cain complained of being hidden from Lord's face (Gen. 4:14). Absalom's restriction from the royal court meant that as the heir-apparent he had lost his claim to Israel's throne. By killing his brother, Absalom removed himself from the royal succession, as Cain had also removed himself from significant blessings.
*²¹And the king said to Joab, "All right...go therefore, bring back the young man Absalom"...
²³So Joab arose and went to Geshur, and brought Absalom to Jerusalem. ²⁴And the king said, "Let him return to his own house, but do not let him see my face." (2 Sam. 14:21-24)*
- F. Since Absalom could not approach David, he asked Joab to send him to David (14:28-32).
²⁸Absalom dwelt two full years in Jerusalem, but did not see the king's face...³²Absalom answered Joab, "Look, I sent to you...so that I may send you to the king...therefore, let me see the king's face; but if there is iniquity in me, let him execute me."³³So Joab went to the king and told him. And when he had called for Absalom...The king kissed Absalom. (2 Sam. 14:28-33)

V. ABSALOM'S CONSPIRACY TO OVERTHROW DAVID (2 SAM. 15:1-12)

- A. After being restored to the court, Absalom implemented his plan to overthrow David (15:1-6). Notice six things that Absalom did to steal hearts of the people away from David.

¹...Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. ²Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision...³ Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." ⁴Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." ⁵And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. ⁶In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel...So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. (2 Sam. 15:1-6)

1. **Establishing an image of importance (15:1):** With chariots, horses, and runners, he cultivated an image of being an important and powerful leader.
 2. **Positioning (15:2):** The gate was the place "lawsuits" were settled.
 3. **Flattering (15:3):** He assured each person that they were right and their case was good.
 4. **Criticism of leadership (15:3):** He told them David did not provide a deputy to care for them.
 5. **Exaggerated promises:** (15:4): He promised that he would give each one justice.
 6. **Insincere affection (15:5):** He drew each one close enough to kiss.
- B. Absalom worked to steal the hearts of Israel at the city gate for four years (15:7-9). Deceptively, he asked David if he could go to Hebron to fulfill a vow to the Lord. Since Hebron was 20 miles from Jerusalem, it was a safe distance for Absalom to organize his rebellion against David
- ⁷...after forty [four] years that Absalom said to the king, "Please, let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I made to the LORD." ⁸For your servant took a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, saying, 'If the LORD brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.'" (2 Sam. 15:7-9)*
- C. Absalom prepared messengers to go throughout Israel to make a coordinated proclamation that "Absalom is king in Hebron." One element in his plan was to detain 200 valuable leaders in the government at the time when David needed them most to respond to the national emergency.
- ¹⁰Then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'" ¹¹And with Absalom went two hundred men invited from Jerusalem, and they went along innocently and did not know anything. ¹²Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel...David's counselor...And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number. (2 Sam. 15:10-12)*
- D. Ahithophel's counsel was so highly esteemed that it was described, "as if a man inquired at the oracle of God" (16:23). His defection from David greatly strengthened Absalom's conspiracy because of his great influence with the people. Bathsheba was the granddaughter of Ahithophel.