

THOU LOVEST THINE ENEMIES AND HATEST THY FRIENDS

2 SAMUEL 19:1 – 20:26

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~ Our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God has now learned very definitely that David, the man after God's own heart, did not sin with impunity in his life. Even though God forgave David, the result of his disobedience was lifelong suffering through extreme family grief. Even so, underneath the problems he encountered in myriad chastisements, there was a faith that never failed. Well, trouble continues in David's life in this report. In our last report, we concluded when word was brought to David that Absalom was dead; and that was a devastating heartbreak. The last verse from the last chapter is a profound expression of grief not found elsewhere in literature, as thus David said, "... *O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son!*"

David was not sure of Absalom's salvation. Remember, when the son that was born out of adultery with Bathsheba died - and when David knew the boy was dead - David arose and washed his face and sat down at a banquet in rejoicing. David's servants didn't understand that at all, but David made it very clear by saying, "... *I'm going to him someday!*" Well, it will be a great day when we go on to be with our loved ones who have passed on - if we are sure they were saved. It's a tragic day of inconsolable turmoil when a loved one dies but we aren't sure if they ever truly accepted Christ. Attending the funeral of an unsaved person is something I don't care to do. David wasn't sure of Absalom. As we have seen many times before on safari, David was a great king - but a very poor father; Absalom and Amnon are examples of abject parental failure.

Another reason for David's sorrow is he realizes these things are a direct result of the sins he had committed. God said, very explicitly, that strife and sword would never depart from David's house - and it unfolded exactly as God said it would. From this point forward in our safari, you're going to find David is an absolutely broken man. Up to this point, we have seen him as a man of greatness and full of energy and victories - but no more. Another

part of this equation is that David envisioned Absalom succeeding him on the throne of Israel. Those hopes are dashed. David never wanted Solomon to be the next king. We'll see later on that he nearly neglects to even appoint another king to succeed him. Apparently, he had made a promise to Bathsheba he forgot about. The rebellion by Absalom was not going to be tolerated – mainly by David's mighty men; but a succession would have been embraced by David at the proper time. Alright, as we begin reading, even Joab was disturbed by David's grief and feels he must severely rebuke David for mourning for the enemy, a traitor, Absalom....

XIX

1 And it was told Joab, Behold, the king weepeth and mourneth for Absalom.

2 And the victory that day was turned into mourning unto all the people: for the people heard say that day how the king was grieved for his son.

3 And the people gat them by stealth that day into the city, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle.

4 But the king covered his face, and the king cried with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!

~ Here, we see inconsolable torment again in David. This should have been a day of great victory, but the victors are greeted from the battlefield as if they had lost. David's relationship with Absalom was proper in the sense that David loved his son; but Absalom was also attempting to kill him. These men had prevented that from happening. Well, even in this convoluted mess, David still loved Absalom. Joab was responsible for the death of Absalom, you will recall; and I don't think David ever really knew all the facts surrounding what happened under the oak tree. We had messengers with conflicting stories come to David in our last report; so, I think there were many versions of what happened to Absalom. Moreover, I don't think David really wanted to investigate it too thoroughly....

5 And Joab came into the house to the king, and said, Thou hast shamed this day the faces of all thy servants, which this day have saved thy life, and the lives of thy sons and of thy daughters, and the lives of thy wives, and the lives of thy concubines;

6 In that thou lovest thine enemies, and hatest thy friends. For thou hast declared this day, that thou regardest neither princes nor servants: for this day I perceive, that if Absalom had lived, and all we had died this day, then it had pleased thee well.

~ Joab pushes this to the opposite end of the spectrum; but certainly, David would have preferred others to die and Absalom to live. This was quite a tense moment. Joab is angrily rebuking David in an extreme manner. Absalom would have killed David if he could have, and Joab was the one who had prevented it from happening! See, things are in constant strife in the palace; just as the Lord had said they would be. Even in this victory there is defeat for David – and that makes for a very dark life, friends. Be careful with your sins. You may own them for the entirety of your existence down here.

As we read on, the people need clarification of what happened. The state of Israel's affairs is in chaos as the man who led an insurrection is killed but, instead of rewarding those who dashed the rebellion, the king is mourning for the death of the enemy. I thank God David had the good judgment to quickly resume throne business as usual – even though I doubt his heart was ever in it after this. Things do not get any worse than this in the life of a man....

7 Now therefore arise, go forth, and speak comfortably unto thy servants: for I swear by the LORD, if thou go not forth, there will not tarry one with thee this night: and that will be worse unto thee than all the evil that befell thee from thy youth until now.

8 Then the king arose, and sat in the gate. And they told unto all the people, saying, Behold, the king doth sit in the gate. And all the people came before the king: for Israel had fled every man to his tent.

9 And all the people were at strife throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, The king saved us out of the hand of our enemies, and he delivered us out of the hand of the Philistines; and now he is fled out of the land for Absalom.

10 And Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why speak ye not a word of bringing the king back?

11 And King David sent to Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, saying, Speak unto the elders of Judah, saying, Why are ye the last to bring the king back to his house? seeing the speech of all Israel is come to the king, even to his house.

12 Ye are my brethren, ye are my bones and my flesh: wherefore then are ye the last to bring back the king?

13 And say ye to Amasa, Art thou not of my bone, and of my flesh? God do so to me, and more also, if thou be not captain of the host before me continually in the room of Joab.

14 And he bowed the heart of all the men of Judah, even as the heart of one man; so that they sent this word unto the king, Return thou, and all thy servants.

15 So the king returned, and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

16 And Shimei the son of Gera, a Benjamite, which was of Bahurim, hasted and came down with the men of Judah to meet King David.

17 And there were a thousand men of Benjamin with him, and Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, and his fifteen sons and his twenty servants with him; and they went over Jordan before the king.

~ There were men present who had participated in the coup attempt by Absalom; and they aren't sure what to do. They conclude the best thing is to support the king being restored. Apparently, even in the tribe of Judah,

there had been many defectors to Absalom; and David rebukes them for doing so – but doesn't execute them. Well, you remember Shimei had cursed David when David fled Jerusalem. As we read on here, Shimei wants to be the first to congratulate David for the victory and welcome him back home! Shimei offers up quite an apology for the rock throwing incident, too. Shimei should have thanked God that David was a generous man who could forgive. Remember, David prevented his captain from killing Shimei a long time ago. Well, David was the king, and that was enough satisfaction for David. It would have been an embarrassment and bad judgment for David to kill this little man who didn't amount to anything anyways.

There are many Christians today that allow little things and small people to disturb them deeply. We should never allow that because God is richly blessing His children today. Maybe you are a discouraged pastor who is having trouble in your congregation, or problems with the deacons on your board. Why don't you just forget that, and rest assured you are serving God? The Lord is on *OUR* side, and we should live above those types of things. Make sure you are serving the Lord with all your heart, all of your mind and all your soul - and forget about the troublemakers. Live above problems as David did at this time....

18 And there went over a ferry boat to carry over the king's household, and to do what he thought good. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was come over Jordan;

19 And said unto the king, Let not my lord impute iniquity unto me, neither do thou remember that which thy servant did perversely the day that my lord the king went out of Jerusalem, that the king should take it to his heart.

20 For thy servant doth know that I have sinned: therefore, behold, I am come the first this day of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king.

21 But Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered and said, Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD'S anointed?

22 And David said, What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do not I know that I am this day king over Israel?

23 Therefore the king said unto Shimei, Thou shalt not die. And the king sware unto him.

24 And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace.

25 And it came to pass, when he was come to Jerusalem to meet the king, that the king said unto him, Wherefore wentest not thou with me, Mephibosheth?

26 And he answered, My lord, O king, my servant deceived me: for thy servant said, I will saddle me an ass, that I may ride thereon, and go to the king; because thy servant is lame.

27 And he hath slandered thy servant unto my lord the king; but my lord the king is as an angel of God: do therefore what is good in thine eyes.

28 For all of my father's house were but dead men before my lord the king: yet didst thou set thy servant among them that did eat at thine own table. What right therefore have I yet to cry any more unto the king?

~ Mephibosheth had a deep respect and appreciation for David, and he hadn't supported or joined the rebellion by Absalom. During the entire time David was out of Jerusalem, Mephibosheth was faithful to pray for him and to fast. It is wonderful to have friends like Mephibosheth, to be sure. Mephibosheth had been tricked, but he couldn't prove that. So, he just tells David to do whatever seems right....

29 And the king said unto him, Why speakest thou any more of thy matters? I have said, Thou and Ziba divide the land.

30 And Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house.

31 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

32 Now Barzillai was a very aged man, even fourscore years old: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man.

33 And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

34 And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem?

~ A great patriarch from another tribe is gracious and hospitable helping David. He knows his days are numbered, and he preferred to stay behind in his own house. Of course, he could have gone with David and lived out his days in the lap of luxury in the palace - but he didn't. See, Barzillai has reached the age where those trappings didn't tempt him anymore. As we read on, he tells David he is just an old man anyways. He couldn't hear the music or taste the food if he wanted to. And, apparently, he didn't want to be the wet blanket thrown over the enjoyment of a party.

Barzillai only did the things he had done because he had confidence in David's leadership and knew David was God's man. Reciprocating, this demonstrates the generosity of David. It's too bad David hadn't been a little more generous with Absalom when Absalom came back from exile following the murder of Amnon. If David had only forgiven Absalom in a genuine and loving way - like the father received the prodigal son home - then Absalom would still be alive at this point. If it had happened that way, I do not think the rebellion would have ever taken place. I believe these are all things that are very important to note....

35 I am this day fourscore years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women ? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

36 Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

37 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

38 And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.

39 And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

40 Then the king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him: and all the people of Judah conducted the king, and also half the people of Israel.

41 And, behold, all the men of Israel came to the king, and said unto the king, Why have our brethren the men of Judah stolen thee away , and have brought the king, and his household, and all David's men with him, over Jordan?

42 And all the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, Because the king is near of kin to us: wherefore then be ye angry for this matter? have we eaten at all of the king's cost? or hath he given us any gift?

43 And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, and said, We have ten parts in the king, and we have also more right in David than ye: why then did ye despise us, that our advice should not be first had in bringing

back our king? And the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

XX

1 And there happened to be there a man of Belial, whose name was Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite: and he blew a trumpet, and said, We have no part in David, neither have we inheritance in the son of Jesse: every man to his tents, O Israel.

2 So every man of Israel went up from after David, and followed Sheba the son of Bichri: but the men of Judah clave unto their king, from Jordan even to Jerusalem.

3 And David came to his house at Jerusalem; and the king took the ten women his concubines, whom he had left to keep the house, and put them in ward, and fed them, but went not in unto them. So they were shut up unto the day of their death, living in widowhood.

4 Then said the king to Amasa, Assemble me the men of Judah within three days, and be thou here present.

5 So Amasa went to assemble the men of Judah: but he tarried longer than the set time which he had appointed him.

6 And David said to Abishai, Now shall Sheba the son of Bichri do us more harm than did Absalom: take thou thy lord's servants, and pursue after him, lest he get him fenced cities, and escape us.

7 And there went out after him Joab's men, and the Cherethites, and the Pelethites, and all the mighty men: and they went out of Jerusalem, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

8 When they were at the great stone which is in Gibeon, Amasa went before them. And Joab's garment that he had put on was girded unto him, and upon it a girdle with a sword fastened upon his loins in the sheath thereof; and as he went forth it fell out.

9 And Joab said to Amasa, Art thou in health, my brother? And Joab took Amasa by the beard with the right hand to kiss him.

10 But Amasa took no heed to the sword that was in Joab's hand: so he smote him therewith in the fifth rib, and shed out his bowels to the ground, and struck him not again; and he died. So Joab and Abishai his brother pursued after Sheba the son of Bichri.

11 And one of Joab's men stood by him, and said, He that favoureth Joab, and he that is for David, let him go after Joab.

12 And Amasa wallowed in blood in the midst of the highway. And when the man saw that all the people stood still, he removed Amasa out of the highway into the field, and cast a cloth upon him, when he saw that every one that came by him stood still.

13 When he was removed out of the highway, all the people went on after Joab, to pursue after Sheba the son of Bichri.

14 And he went through all the tribes of Israel unto Abel, and to Bethmaachah, and all the Berites: and they were gathered together, and went also after him.

15 And they came and besieged him in Abel of Bethmaachah, and they cast up a bank against the city, and it stood in the trench: and all the people that were with Joab battered the wall, to throw it down.

16 Then cried a wise woman out of the city, Hear, hear; say, I pray you, unto Joab, Come near hither, that I may speak with thee.

17 And when he was come near unto her, the woman said, Art thou Joab? And he answered, I am he. Then she said unto him, Hear the words of thine handmaid. And he answered, I do hear.

18 Then she spake, saying, They were wont to speak in old time, saying, They shall surely ask counsel at Abel: and so they ended the matter.

19 I am one of them that are peaceable and faithful in Israel: thou seekest to destroy a city and a mother in Israel: why wilt thou swallow up the inheritance of the LORD?

20 And Joab answered and said, Far be it, far be it from me, that I should swallow up or destroy.

21 The matter is not so: but a man of mount Ephraim, Sheba the son of Bichri by name, hath lifted up his hand against the king, even against David: deliver him only, and I will depart from the city. And the woman said unto Joab, Behold, his head shall be thrown to thee over the wall.

22 Then the woman went unto all the people in her wisdom. And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri, and cast it out to Joab. And he blew a trumpet, and they retired from the city, every man to his tent. And Joab returned to Jerusalem unto the king.

23 Now Joab was over all the host of Israel: and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada was over the Cherethites and over the Pelethites:

24 And Adoram was over the tribute: and Jehoshaphat the son of Ahilud was recorder:

25 And Sheva was scribe: and Zadok and Abiathar were the priests:

26 And Ira also the Jairite was a chief ruler about David.

~ After all of these events, one would think God would let up on the chastisement of David, the man after His Own heart; but, this last chapter brings another revolt. Joab, once again, puts down this rebellion by Sheba; and Joab slew Amasa, who should have ended it, but didn't. Joab was a bloody and violent man, but he was loyal to David to the end. We're still in a bloody era and trouble is still rampant in the house of David. Interestingly, we don't hear David complaining to the Lord about what is taking place – even though there is not a moment's peace in his life anymore.

It's simply amazing how faithless and unfaithful these men were to David. Sure, it was a crude day back in the dark ages of the dawn of history when man was not developed or civilized; I understand that. The problem is: things are worse today than they were back then! Today, one wrong simple statement can be the end of a man's career. That happens to many of our leaders these days. See, the mob mentality is as fickle as a cat's appetite; and that goes for us as individuals, too.

Well, God knows all of these things, and God knows our heart – and He knows the heart is desperately wicked, deceitful above all things. When God made these statements He wasn't talking about Stalin or Lenin – not Ho Chi Min or Hitler – no, friends, God was talking about *YOUR* heart and *MY* heart! Murder and deceit and disloyalty are inbred in our human hearts. Paul said, *".... I know that within my flesh dwelleth no good thing!"* In the chapter we just read, ten tribes of Israel followed Sheba. Through it all, David was a man after God's own Heart. You and I can be forgiven for the same reason David was forgiven, too; and that reason is because the Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty for our sins by dying on the cross. If you have never accepted forgiveness for your sins by believing and trusting the Lord, I encourage you to do that today. Right now ~