



“The Second Chance”

-2 Samuel 14-

by Pastor Tim Dodson
at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
on December 12, 2018

In our last visit to 2 Samuel we were looking at the events of chapter 13 and David's developing dysfunctional family. One of his sons, Amnon, had raped his half-sister Tamar, the full-sister of Absalom, and was encouraged in this act by a cousin, Jonadab. Two

years after this event, Absalom, Tamar's brother, finally gets his revenge by arranging for the murder of his half-brother, Amnon. After he successfully pulls this off, Absalom must make a run for it. He flees to Geshur to his grandfather, his mother's father's house, where he would essentially hide out for the next three years.

Now after three years have passed Absalom is still living away in obscurity. Because things haven't changed, we *like mice in the corner* are witness to the continual downward spiral of David and his family. What began with David's sin with Bathsheba, David's adultery and his complicity in the death of Bathsheba's husband...who he essentially had assassinated, the family has now continued to degrade like a cancer. (Like an episode of Jerry Springer show!) The consequences, the ongoing repercussions in David's life and in David's family life, have snowballed. When Amnon abused his sister, what did David do? He did nothing. He did absolutely nothing. And thus these sins continued, because David failed to “pull up.”

“*The king's heart*” verse 1 says “*went out to Absalom.*” In truth, Absalom should have been brought to trial. Yes, he's David's son, he's family, but he's also a murderer. He should have been brought to trial. He should have been brought to justice.

Certainly we all would be in a very difficult place if we were all hauled into court for our sins. There would be a lot of jail time for just those who attend this church on a Sunday morning! But David...despite the ruse to awaken him from his lethargy, suddenly desires to make things right. He wants to forgive Absalom and allow him to come home to Jerusalem. However, while such a decision was perhaps kind and even emotional, there were problems in all of this. The premise was flawed at its root, and time would manifest that fact.

Firstly, we find that David still does not change his M.O...his *Modus operandi*. He still avoided his responsibilities and ducked his obligations. He seemed to be forever dodging the hard stuff...the confrontational aspects of his position, both as king and as a father. He rejected justice and his calling. He passed on fatherhood and both love and discipline for his children. And so he “tweaked” the situation instead of meeting it head-on. He “padded” this developing crisis instead of dealing with it. He avoided the responsibilities that God called

him to, and those for which he essentially “signed up for.” He still wanted to be king, he just didn’t want to deal with life’s ‘hard stuff.’

Secondly, while it appeared that Absalom *wanted* to come home and seemed to desperately *want* to be restored to his former status and position, there was a serious lack of repentance. So, Absalom wanted out of a bad situation, he just didn’t want to repent of his actions and come clean. He didn’t want to make things right, he just wanted to “move on” like nothing had happened. Sounds a lot like his daddy doesn’t it? Certainly Absalom was no “prodigal son.” Not only was he not repentant, but he was actually still quite defiant. Not surprising really, because he did not deal with this cancer immediately, he had 3 years to fester and brood. 3 years to justify his sin and 3 years to conjure up blame for the events to apply to everyone but himself.

So, they’ll be no party for Absalom. There will be no killing of the fatted calf or the giving of a ring to Absalom. Years have gone by and he’s had time to wallow in anger and frustration and bitterness. Clearly, Absalom neither loves nor respects his father, or for that matter anyone else. Rather than doing the right thing David now bows to expediency, and Absalom is controlled by his pride. What could have been a new start for everyone and a healing restoration for all, is instead just more of the same...just continual dysfunction.

What’s ironic in this text, is that this woman says, on two occasions, that David has “the wisdom of an angel.” The wisdom of an angel to discern between what is right and what is wrong. But David’s wisdom here is certainly not the wisdom of God and it’s not the wisdom of an angel. At least if he has such, he is unwilling to act upon it. And that *does* happen in some folks! They know they answer...they know the path to take, but they are simply unwilling to step up and take the hit. It’s the wisdom of expediency. It’s the road of least resistance. It’s the “wisdom” of a man with a bad conscience. He puts himself before principle. He puts his comfort before what is right. Remember what Proverbs says on this matter “*There is a way which seems right to a man, but the end is the ways of death.*”

Now sadly, what perhaps *seemed* to be over now in the wake of this “family reunion”, is in truth far from over. For because both David and Absalom simply glossed over this event instead of cleaning it up, the ‘cancer’ would continue to grow and when it would once again manifest itself, it would be ugly and violent and would literally cause David to run for his life. All of this happened because sin is not static. All because David wanted peace without conflict and confrontation, and Absalom wanted forgiveness and restoration without repentance and without cleaning up his mess. Eventually his pride would be his undoing, and his vanity would be his death.

This chapter on the surface appears to be about grace and redemption. But if you know the beginnings of this story as well as how it ends, you know that it is not about those things but rather about loss and failure. It’s about David’s failure as a father and as a king; *to his children, to his sons, and to his nation*. It’s about Absalom’s wants and desires and selfishness, not about repentance, right and justice. It’s a lesson about forgiveness and restoration without repentance and humbling. It didn’t ultimately work for David and Absalom, and more importantly today, it will not work for us individually either...

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) What is repentance?

Strong's: repentance - a change of mind, as it appears to one who repents, of a purpose he has formed or of something he has done

2) How important is this issue to us a Christians?

Repentance is the stumbling block for so many. It is one thing to say, "believe in Jesus." And in fact, many churches, I think, produce many false Christians and false conversions because all they say to people is "believe in Jesus." They never say "repent." And the two must always go together.

2 Peter 3:9 – *"The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that **all should come to repentance.**"*

Luke 17:3 *"Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him."*

3) Does scripture have a specific definition for righteous repentance in a believer?

(Note 2 Corinthians 7:10...read in NLT if possible)

4) What does repentance look like and act like in the practical realm?

Note Joel 2:12-14: *"That is why the LORD says, "Turn to me now, while there is time. Give me your hearts. Come with fasting, weeping, and mourning. Don't tear your clothing in your grief, but tear your hearts instead." Return to the LORD your God, for he is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. He is eager to relent and not punish."*

Psalms 51:17 *"...the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise."*

5) David failed to be decisive and mature when it came to dealing with life's hard stuff. How important is "stepping up to the plate" for us in relation to this issue? Is such an issue with Him?

Jesus was never afraid to confront, but his confrontation was strategic and specific rather than generalized or nebulous. If anyone had the right to confront, it was he. He was perfect; the world then and now is not, yet despite what we would think, He didn't waste time trying to right every wrong, nor did he white wash over issues that needed attention.

Note Matthew 18:15-20, Galatians 6:1, Galatians 2:11-14, Luke 17:3, etc

6) How do you think David should have handled this situation? How would you assess David's leadership skills as described in this chapter and in this issue?

7) How do you think Absalom should have handled this situation?

8) Describe GRACE. Does grace mean that issues of justice, social laws, and punishment in both the world and the church is no longer viable?