



**“The Return of the King:
Thankfulness, Forgiveness,
and Restoration ”
-2 Samuel 19-**

**by Pastor Tim Dodson
at JF Believers Church
in Menomonie, Wisc
on January 16, 2019**

***“Don’t rejoice when your enemies fall;
don’t be happy when they stumble.
For the LORD will be displeased with you
and will turn his anger away from them.”
Proverbs 24:17-18***

David continues to brood over Absalom's death alone in his chamber, while the army—ashamed and embarrassed, despite their big win—returns to the city.

Joab comes into David and tells him to man up. Absalom hated him and was a rebel, and it's demoralizing to see David broken up over the death of an enemy,

while his soldiers, who've just won a victory, feel like he hates them.

Joab says David needs to go out and speak kindly to his soldiers, or else they'll all abandon him. So, David puts himself together, heeds Joab's advice, and sits before his soldiers at the city gates. David didn't *feel* like doing this. His *feelings* told him to stay locked into his excessive mourning. Yet David let his understanding of what was *right* be bigger than what he *felt*.

In the aftermath of the battle, Israel is confused about what's going to happen. The majority of people sided with Absalom, so they don't know how David is going to react to being their king again, or what they should do about making him the king again.

David now had a choice to make. He was returning to Jerusalem and returning to the throne. Would he now do so as a vengeful conqueror, or as a humble servant?

Many of us have in one way or another, in some situation or even in some passing occurrence, been presented with this same choice...this same scenario.

David seemed to instinctively understand what was in front of him. Even in his grief he saw more clearly than most of us do in our moments of clarity. David understood that in order to execute his revenge it would cost him *and the country* dearly. David apparently decided that unity in the Israel's people was more important than any petty satisfaction he might gain by "evening the score" against those who threw him under the bus when the chips were down. But David always seemed to be a humble soul...even when he slew the giant...even when the people chanted "*David killed his tens of thousands.*" It seems that humility in a leader is something that people don't forget, and it is something...*someone*...that God can use! David wanted old prejudices and animosities put away. The divisions were deep and long standing. Passions were high, but David chose rather to be a peace-maker rather than a dictator.

David sends out messages telling people not to worry about how they sided against him and not to hesitate in letting him rule them again. He even goes so far as replacing Joab with Amasa—Absalom's commander—as the new head of David's army. In return, Amasa helps win the people's hearts back to David.

When Shimei showed up to beg for forgiveness, I would imagine everyone 'held their breath.' This is a guy who went out of his way to vent his hatred and anger upon David and sought to humiliate him too. This could be David's day of revenge and retribution, but he instead forgave Shimei. No one would argue that Shimei deserved death in this matter. His actions against the king were "unforgiveable"...or at least as far as the world is concerned. But as verse 22 reflects, David didn't need to 'throw down' in order to garner respect and prove who was in charge. He states clearly that he was the king! Apparently he felt he didn't need to prove it.

The thing about such scenarios is that generally speaking there is always "another day" to fight if the need arises once again. And at least at that point one can declare that patience and forgiveness was given and yet the subject flaunted such restoration. Such is the case herein, for despite this public display of forgiveness in Shimei, this man must have went on to 're-offend' or perhaps his apology and repentance was not sincere but rather given to just get him out of a bad situation? For in 2 Kings 2:8-9, on his deathbed David essentially passes a sentence of death upon Shimei!

With Mephibosheth, his situation was that he was the victim also, along with David. Zibah had lied to David about Mephibosheth in order to garner favor and material gain. He sought nothing here from David other than a reestablishment of relationship and favor with David. Such spoke highly concerning Mephibosheth, and David practiced some "forgive and forget," but he went so far as to do the same for Zibah.

The issue of forgiveness is a funny thing. For we generally believe that *we* deserve forgiveness while those who have sinned against us...even those who have just wronged us or slighted us, *well they deserve the full wrath of judgement.* Yet the irony of such thinking amongst confessed Christians is not lost! For we have been forgiven for a mountain of sin...even forgiven for stuff we haven't even done yet! Yet giving it back is a different matter. When pressed, we generally take the self-righteous path...the indignant road, where we perceive that whatever has been done to us...or what we *think* has been done to us, deserves capital punishment. Those who have wronged us are to be led away to the gallows.

So often we fail to forgive and the cancerous effects of holding on to such are upon us and us alone. How often the person we are holding a grudge against doesn't even know or doesn't know the extent of our angst. Sometimes we need to let go of such a heart for our *own* benefit as well as the good of the person we believe has hurt us. But always we need to let go because God called us to do so.

“Then Peter came to Him and said, ‘Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? Up to seven times?’ Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.’”
Matthew 18:21-22.

“For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” *Matthew 6:14-15.*

Forgiving others who have wronged you, whether for a relatively small thing, or for a seriously damaging act against you, can sometimes seem like an insurmountably difficult thing to do. In some cases it's a process that really takes time. Yet, the Bible is crystal clear on the necessity of it. And there are no caveats such as “unless,” “if,” or “but.”

Does forgiving negate the pain you have suffered? Does it reverse the things that have happened to you? Does it mean the person who wronged you doesn't have to take responsibility for his/her actions? No, but you will be free from the thoughts of hatred and bitterness and the burden they are. Forgiveness is not only done for the sake of the one you are forgiving, but for your own sake, so that you don't have to live with the burden. It is important to note that forgiveness is not a feeling, it is a choice.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- 1) What ideas or concepts impressed upon you from this passage and subject today?**
- 2) Do you think David was overly consumed by his grief and passion concerning the loss of his son?**
- 3) How other-centered am I when it comes to my emotion or moods? What lesson can we learn about the need to consider the effect on others of excessive or inappropriately expressed emotion?**
- 4) How is the divided loyalty that David faced similar to what often transpires in our local churches today?**
- 5) Why is unity so important in a church body?**
- 6) Amasa had been Absalom's general whose assignment had been to search for David and kill him. Yet now David was appointing him head over his army. Was this a bad idea? Why would David take such an apparent risk?**
- 7) How did David know who was and wasn't trustworthy? (*He didn't really...but he trusted his God to intervene on his behalf and God's 'track-record' told David that he could indeed put his faith in him. It wasn't that David was a fatalist, he was using his brain, but he was also using his heart and his relationship with God.*)**
- 8) What causes men and women to want to be right or at least perceived as right above all else?**
Pride...
- 9) What part or aspect does 'thankfulness' play in our ability and practice of forgiveness?**
- 10) Did such play into David's seemingly corporate forgiveness toward everyone involved?**