

The Return of the King

Text: 2 Samuel 19

Introduction: On the weekend prior to His arrest, crucifixion, and resurrection, Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the back of a donkey.

He entered Jerusalem with a king's welcome. People spread their cloaks on the road. Others cut palm branches and laid them down before Him. The crowds shouted, "Hosanna to the SON OF DAVID! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!"

Their King had come.

But just a few days later, everything changed. Jesus was arrested. He was put on trial. And when Pilate asked whether he should release Jesus or the hardened criminal Barabas, the people cried out for Barabas. And when Pilate asked what he should do with Jesus, they shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Now, hold that scene in your mind, and come with me to 2 Samuel 19 where we find another king returning to Jerusalem. Of course, I'm talking about King David.

He was driven out by rebellion. His own son, Absalom, had tried to take the throne. But now, Absalom is dead, the rebellion is over, and David is coming home.

We might expect this to be a moment of celebration. We might think that David would receive a hero's welcome. But that's not what happens. Instead, we find brokenness. A broken heart. Broken trust. Broken relationships. And a broken kingdom.

We're in 2 Samuel 19. Go ahead and turn there in your Bible if you haven't already. 2 Samuel 19. It begins on page 252 in the black pew Bible in front of you. If you don't own a Bible, we invite you to take the pew Bible with you when you leave.

(Read 2 Samuel 19...Pray)

What we find in 2 Samuel 19 is that **King David returns to a broken kingdom.** But we're going to see this morning that **when King Jesus returns, He will restore all things.**

Now, remember where we left off last week in the narrative of 2 Samuel. David's army went into battle against the army of David's rebellious son Absalom. At stake was the kingdom. Would Absalom be Israel's new king, or would David be restored as king? To the winner would go the spoils. Namely, the kingdom of Israel.

We saw in chapter 17 that because of Absalom's rebellion, the Lord "ordained to...bring harm upon Absalom." And that's just what happened. Joab, the commander of David's army, found Absalom and killed him. At that moment, the battle was essentially over. David had won. But when David found out, he cried, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

And here at the beginning of chapter 19, we find that David's grief continues as...

I. David returns with a broken heart (2 Samuel 19:1-8a).

A. In a very real sense, this should have been a day of great rejoicing for David and his men.

1. As Ahimaaz said in chapter 18, the Lord had delivered David from the hand of his enemies.
2. But David didn't see it that way. His son was dead, and he was overcome with grief.
3. And the text tells us that Joab received a report of David's "weeping and mourning for Absalom" (vs. 1).
4. In fact, not only was David "weeping and mourning," the text says that "the victory that day was turned into mourning for all the people" (vs. 2). David was their king. And David's grief was their grief.
5. David's men had risked their lives for David, they had been successful in battle, and now, because David was grieving the death of his son, they were left to feel shame. They had acted in David's best interests, but

they were made to feel as if they had acted against him. They should have received a hero's welcome back to the city, but instead, they returned with their heads down in shame (vs. 3).

6. Again, we hear the cry of David, "O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!" (vs. 4).

B. But Joab isn't having any of it. In fact, it's clear from verse 5 that he's quite upset with David.

1. Look at what he says. (Read vs. 5b-7).
2. These are harsh words, aren't they? Joab accuses David of mistreating his servants terribly. They had risked their lives for David, and instead of praise and thanks, all they got was weeping and mourning.
3. Joab says that David "love[s] those who hate [him] and hate[s] those who love [him]" (vs. 6). Of course, there's a grain of truth in this accusation, isn't there? Absalom DID HATE David. David DID LOVE Absalom. David's servants DID LOVE David. But it's probably not fair to say that David HATED them. Even if it may have felt that way in the moment.

C. Whatever you make of Joab's rebuke of David, it did lead to some modicum of reconciliation between David and his men.

1. Look at verse 8. (Read vs. 8)
2. We can debate whether David was right to grieve as he did or whether Joab was right to rebuke David as he did. With a little bit of empathy, we can probably see things from both perspectives to some extent.
3. But the thing that I want to draw your attention to here is the brokenness of the situation. No matter how you slice it, this is tragic. There should have never been a battle between the kingdom of David and the kingdom of Absalom. Because there never should have been a rebellion on the part of Absalom. Of course, Absalom's rebellion was a result of the breakdown of David's household. And the breakdown of David's household

can be traced back to 2 Samuel 11 where David took Bathsheba as his own and murdered her husband Uriah. All that has transpired in the narrative of 2 Samuel since chapters 11 and 12 has been the consequence of David's sin. David's sin has taken him farther than he wanted to go. It has kept him longer than he wanted to stay. And it has cost him far more than he wanted to pay.

4. Let this be a warning to all of us. The same is true in our lives as well. We're not exempt. Sin always leads to brokenness. In our own lives. And the lives of those closest to us. That was certainly true for David.

It's why David returns with a broken heart. Next, we see that...

II. David returns amid broken trust (2 Samuel 19:8b-15).

A. Now our attention shifts to the northern tribes whose hearts had gone after Absalom (vs. 8b-10).

1. Verse 8 says, "Now Israel had fled every man to his own house." They had followed after Absalom. Absalom is now dead. So, they return to their homes.
2. But the question still remains: "Where do they go from here?" And apparently, there was no immediate consensus because the text says "the people were arguing throughout all the tribes of Israel" (vs. 9).
3. Eventually it was suggested that maybe they should bring David back as their king. This, of course, is an interesting proposition. Not only had Absalom rebelled against David, but the people who followed after Absalom had as well.
4. Trust can't be strong on either side. But still, bringing David back as king appears to be their best option.

B. But what about Judah (vs. 11-12)?

1. David sent a message to the priests Zadok and Abiathar. The northern tribes of Israel had indicated their desire to bring David back as king. What about Judah?

2. After all, David said, “You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?” (vs. 12).
- C. You can imagine that there may have been some fear among some of the people that David may seek retribution against those who had betrayed him.

1. But we know that wasn't David's style. David had plenty of faults as a man and as a leader. But he was not bloodthirsty. He was not one for vengeance.
2. And to show it, look at verse 13. (Read vs. 13) David was willing to make the commander of Absalom's army the commander of his own army. Perhaps this was in part because he and Joab were on the outs after Joab killed Absalom. It's hard to say. Either way, it showed to Amasa and all Israel and Judah that reconciliation was possible amidst the broken trust that resulted from their following after Absalom.
3. And look at the result. (Read vs. 14-15) They sent word to David asking him to return as king. So, David made his way back to Jerusalem.

D. We ought not think that all is well now, but this is a step in the right direction.

1. David was the rightful king over all Israel. It was right for him to return to Jerusalem and to the throne.
2. We might note some parallel here between the Israelites' situation with respect to David and the sinner's relationship with God. Just as Israel had rebelled against David, we have rebelled against God. And just as Israel needed a way for their relationship with David to be restored, we need a way for our relationship to God to be restored. And just as David, in his mercy, provided a way for Israel to be reconciled to him, God, in His mercy has made a way through His Son for us to be reconciled to Him.

David returns to Jerusalem with a broken heart amid broken trust. Next, we see that...

III. David returns despite broken relationships (2 Samuel 19:16-40).

David's return to Jerusalem is like a mirror image of his departure. Everything is reversed. And along the way, David meets again some of the people he met as he fled.

A. First was Shimei (vs. 16-23).

1. If you were with us for our sermon on chapter 16, you may remember Shimei. He is the one who cursed David and threw stones and dirt at him. Abishai wanted to take off his head in response. He asked, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king?”
2. At that time, David was in a position of vulnerability. He had been forced to flee Jerusalem due to the rebellion of Absalom. Casting your lot with David wasn't the popular thing to do.
3. But now, Absalom is dead, David is returning to Jerusalem, and Shimei's posture toward David is completely different. Shimei “fell down before the king,” and verse 19 records him as saying, “Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart. For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king” (vs. 19-20).
4. That wasn't good enough for Abishai. He still wanted to take out Shimei.
5. But David said to Abishai, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?” (vs. 22).
6. Isn't that a remarkable response from David? He demonstrates true leadership here. His interest is not himself and personal vendettas. His interest is the nation and what is right for the people. Like his greater Son, Jesus, many years later, “When he was reviled, he

did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly” (1 Pet. 2:23).

7. Look at David’s words to Shimei in verse 23: “You shall not die” (vs. 23).
8. That’s what God has said to you too, dear Christian: “You shall not die.” Like Shimei, you deserve death because of your sin. But God has reconciled you to Himself by the shed blood of His Son Jesus.
9. There’s a temptation here to want to make a judgment concerning Shimei’s motives. When David was on the outs, Shimei cursed him. Now that David is returning to the throne, Shimei speaks kindly to him and seeks his forgiveness. It seems that perhaps Shimei’s change of heart here is driven more by self-interest than genuine repentance. So, I understand the suspicion. But notice that David doesn’t judge his motives. He simply extends forgiveness.
10. I can’t help but think about our own reconciliation with God. Is there no self-interest in our own receiving of the gospel? If repentance depended on pure motives, repentance would never be effective. In fact, I think the Bible actually encourages some degree of self-interest as motivation for initially receiving the gospel. In Christ, we are promised deliverance from hell and the punishment we deserve for our sin. And we are assured eternal life with God in heaven. I think most people who come to Christ first come to Him out of some degree of self-interest. But then as we mature in Christ, our love for Christ grows. Our passion for the glory of God increases. And our understanding of the gospel message and what God has done for us in Christ grows beyond mere self-interest.
11. So, let’s be careful about being too hard on Shimei here. We also should be careful not to be like Abishai when responding to the repentance of others in our lives. Our hearts toward sinners should be like the heart of David toward Shimei. We ought not be suspicious of sinners who repent. We should rejoice with them.

B. The next people David interacts with are Ziba and Mephibosheth (vs. 24-30).

1. You remember Ziba. We were first introduced to him back in chapter 9. He was a servant of the house of Saul.
2. Then there was Mephibosheth. He was the son of Jonathan. He was made lame when he was dropped by his nurse as she fled after receiving word of the death of Saul and Jonathan. In chapter 9, Ziba brought Mephibosheth to David and David showed him kindness for Jonathan’s sake. David gave Mephibosheth all that belonged to Saul and invited him to eat at the king’s table always.
3. Then in chapter 16, as David was fleeing Jerusalem, Ziba showed up again. He brought provisions to David. But he also told David that Mephibosheth had deserted him in hopes that he might become Israel’s king. David responded by giving Ziba all that belonged to Mephibosheth.
4. Now we find that Mephibosheth’s story of what happened then is completely different from Ziba’s. Look at what Mephibosheth says to David. (Read vs. 26-28)
5. We don’t know whether Ziba or Mephibosheth is telling the truth. It seems that David may not have known either because he took the land and divided it evenly between Ziba and Mephibosheth (vs. 29). It’s certainly possible that neither Ziba nor Mephibosheth was telling the full story of what had happened. I know that’s often how it works at my house when two of my kids are giving opposing accounts of something that happened. Neither story is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. It’s often a slanted version of the truth at best.
6. But where King David couldn’t discern the truth between Ziba and Mephibosheth, we know that we have a King who always knows the truth and always does what is right in response. King Jesus is not bound by the same limitations as David in His judgments.

7. Notice also Mephibosheth's response to David in verse 30. (Read vs. 30) We might expect Mephibosheth to be upset that David didn't restore to him everything that had been his. Instead, he sees it all as grace. Isn't that true for us as well? Everything we receive from the Lord is grace. None of it is really ours. We don't deserve anything from the Lord. It's all grace.

C. Now we turn our attention to Barzillai the Gileadite.

1. Barzillai was the wealthy man in Mahanaim who met David's need for provisions for him and those who were with him while he was in exile at the end of chapter 17.
2. Now, David wants to repay him by providing for him in Jerusalem. But Barzillai isn't interested. He's 80 years old. He can't see. He can't taste. He can't hear. He just wants to go home, live out the rest of his days in peace, die in his own city, and be buried in the family cemetery. He has had a good life, and he's not interested in palace life.
3. So, instead of Barzillai himself being the recipient of David's kindness, his servant Chimham would go and receive David's kindness to Barzillai.
4. Perhaps this reminds us of what we have received in Christ. Like Chimham, we do not ourselves deserve God's kindness to us. But we are recipients of the kindness of God toward Jesus. Just as Barzillai's righteousness was credited to Chimham's account, the righteousness of the Lord Jesus has been credited to our account.

We've seen that David returns to Jerusalem with a broken heart amid broken trust and broken relationships. Finally, we see that...

IV. David returns to a broken kingdom (2 Samuel 19:41-43).

- A. David returns to Jerusalem as king of all Israel and Judah, but the kingdom is clearly not united.**

1. The chapter ends with the northern tribes of Israel at odds with the southern tribe of Judah.
2. Rather than rejoicing in the return of the king, the people argued over their involvement in the return. Sadly, that doesn't sound too unlike some Christians today.
3. The men of Judah asserted some degree of superiority over the tribes of Israel by pointing out that David was of the tribe of Judah (vs. 42).
4. The men of Israel responded that they had ten tribes while Judah was only one tribe (vs. 43).
5. It all seems a bit ridiculous, but the narrator gives his judgment between the two when he writes, "The words of the men of Judah were fiercer (or 'more weighty') than the words of the men of Israel" (vs. 43b).

B. The point is that things are not as they should be.

1. The kingdom is technically united under the rule and reign of David, but in reality, the kingdom is divided.
2. Things are broken. There are broken hearts. There is broken trust. Broken relationships. And the result is a broken kingdom.
3. I think that we in our day can relate to the brokenness of Israel in that day. We look around us, and it's not hard to see that things are broken. Things are not as they should be. Things are not as God created them to be. We live in a broken world. A world of broken hearts. Broken trust. Broken relationships. We live in a broken nation. There's so much brokenness all around us.
4. That's what sin does. Sin causes brokenness. In our individual lives. In our relationships with other people. And in the world at large.

Conclusion: All this brokenness leaves us longing for something, doesn't it?

As Christians, it should leave us longing for the return of our King. King David returned to a broken kingdom, but when King Jesus returns, He will restore all things.

We read of His return in Revelation 19 where the Apostle John writes, “Then I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse! The one sitting on it is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he judges and makes war” (Rev. 19:11).

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday on the back of a donkey. But in the book of Revelation, He returns riding on a white horse. As King of kings and Lord of lords. King Jesus will return to establish His kingdom forever. He will return in righteousness. Yes, to bring judgment on sin. But also to bring restoration to a broken world.

We read of this restored world in Revelation 21 where John writes, “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”

See, Christian, our ultimate hope is not in this broken world. And our ultimate hope is not in those who promise to bring the restoration we desire in this life. Our hope is in Jesus. He is our King. He is the one who will return and make all things right.