



## 34: Halfway Home? Physically Near. Relationally Distant. (2 Samuel 14)

*Can someone look spiritually "close" on the outside while remaining deeply distant from God on the inside? This week in 2 Samuel 14, we'll uncover the danger of "Halfway Home" faith and discover how Jesus alone can bring real reconciliation, repentance, and restoration.*

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### teachingnotes

\* All Scripture is from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB) unless otherwise noted.

#### 2 Samuel 13:37-38

But Absalom fled and went to Talmai son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son every day. After Absalom had fled to Geshur and had been there three years, King David longed to go to Absalom, for David had finished grieving over Amnon's death.

**Talmai** - the **king of Geshur** was Absalom's grandfather - the father of his mother (cf. [2 Sam 3:3](#); [1 Chr 3:2](#)).  
Absalom had been gone for **3 years** - afraid for his life because King David's judgment.

**King David longed to go to Absalom.** Upon first reading this, it seems that David has a deep desire to go be reconciled to Absalom after grieving for Amnon, but *the context should make us rethink this*, as we're about to see. Instead of a desire to reconcile, it might better to interpret David's desire to **go to Absalom to bring justice on him** for his murder of David's first-born son, Amnon.

#### 2 Samuel 14:1-13

Joab son of Zeruiah [David's nephew] realized that the king's mind was on Absalom. So Joab sent someone to Tekoa to bring a wise woman from there. He told her, "Pretend to be in mourning: dress in mourning clothes and don't put on any oil. Act like a woman who has been mourning for the dead for a long time. Go to the king and speak these words to him." Then Joab told her exactly what to say. When the woman from Tekoa came to the king, she fell facedown to the ground, paid homage, and said, "Help me, Your Majesty!" "What's the matter?" the king asked her. "Sadly, I am a widow; my husband died," she said. "Your servant had **two sons**. They were fighting in the field with no one to separate them, and **one struck the other and killed him**. Now the whole clan has risen up against your servant and said, 'Hand over the one who killed his brother so we may put him to death for the life of the brother he murdered. We will eliminate the heir! They would extinguish my one remaining ember by not preserving my husband's name or posterity on earth.'"

The king told the woman, "Go home. **I will issue a command on your behalf.**" Then the woman of Tekoa said to the king, "My lord the king, may any blame be on me and my father's family, and may the king and his throne be innocent." "Whoever speaks to you," the king said, "bring him to me. He will not trouble you again!"

She replied, "Please, may the king **invoke the LORD your God**, so that the avenger of blood will not increase the loss, and they will not eliminate my son!" "**As the LORD lives,**" he vowed, "not a hair of your son will fall to the ground."

Then the woman said, "Please, may your servant speak a word to my lord the king?" "Speak," he replied. The woman asked, "Why have you devised something similar against the people of God? When the king spoke as he did about this matter, he has pronounced his own guilt. **The king has not brought back his own banished one.**"

- Remember Nathan's story about the man whose 1 sheep was taken and killed by a rich man - the story that was REALLY about David taking Bathsheba and killing her husband?
- **This story** about this woman's 2 sons - 1 killing the other and being banished - **was REALLY about David's 2 sons** - Absalom killing Amnon and being banished from the kingdom.
- David should follow through on doing the same with HIS son - bringing him back instead of bringing justice down on him.

## 2 Samuel 14:14-24

We will certainly die and be like water poured out on the ground, which can't be recovered. But **God** would not take away a life; he **would devise plans so that the one banished from Him does not remain banished.**

This 'mourning momma' notes that God doesn't always banish those who do evil, instead **He would devise plans so that the one banished from him does not remain banished.** Now therefore, I've come to present this matter to my lord the king because the people have made me afraid. Your servant thought: I must speak to the king. Perhaps the king will grant his servant's request. The king will surely listen in order to keep his servant from the grasp of this man who would eliminate both me and my son from God's inheritance. Your servant thought: May the word of my lord the king bring relief, for **my lord the king is able to discern the good and the bad like the angel of God.** May the LORD your God be with you."

Then the king answered the woman, "I'm going to ask you something; don't conceal it from me!"

"Let my lord the king speak," the woman replied. The king asked, "**Did Joab put you up to all this?**"

The woman answered. "As you live, my lord the king, no one can turn to the right or left from all my lord the king says. Yes, your servant Joab is the one who gave orders to me; he told your servant exactly what to say. Joab your servant has done this to address the issue indirectly, but my lord has wisdom like the wisdom of the angel of God, knowing everything on earth."

Then the king said to Joab, "I hereby grant this request. Go, **bring back the young man Absalom.**" Joab fell with his face to the ground in homage and blessed the king. "Today," Joab said, "your servant knows I have found favor with you, my lord the king, because the king has granted the request of your servant." So **Joab** got up, went to Geshur, and **brought Absalom to Jerusalem.** However, the king added, "He may return to his house, but he may not see my face."

So **Absalom returned to his house,** but he did not see the king.

*Absalom was home...sort of...**HALFWAY HOME.** Absalom might have been *geographically* near to his father, but he was a long way from home, *relationally*.*

*This is where some of US might be. We show up to meet with Christian brothers & sisters, but we don't really share who we are, what we are struggling with or rejoicing in. We show up to events where Jesus is honored and the Scriptures are taught, but we don't GROW UP to honor Jesus, know, & obey His Scriptures. Many come close *geographically*, but not *relationally* - to the Father, Son, Spirit - and each other.*

❓ Is it possible that YOU are **HALFWAY HOME?**

## 2 Samuel 14:25-26

**No man in all Israel was as handsome and highly praised as Absalom.** From the sole of his foot to the top of his head, he did not have a single flaw. When he shaved his head—he shaved it at the end of every year because his hair got so heavy for him that he had to shave it off—he would weigh the hair from his head and it would be five pounds according to the royal standard.

*The description of Absalom might remind the reader of King Saul, of whom the Scriptures says, "There was no one more impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone else." (1 Sam 9:2)*

This mention of Absalom's heavy **hair** will be highlighted later in the story of Absalom, and it might remind us of another man known for his hair - **Samson.**

- Overall, being compared to Saul & Sampson might sound like beauty & strength, but both men ended up in a mess because of their PRIDE. This is what awaits Absalom as well.
- Beware finding your purpose, hope, & identity in your outer beauty - it won't stick around. Purpose, hope, & identity is given by your Creator, and finds its home on the INSIDE of you.

## 2 Samuel 14:27-28

Three sons were born to Absalom, and a daughter named **Tamar**, who was **a beautiful woman.** Absalom resided in Jerusalem two years but never saw the king.

Notice what Absalom named his daughter - **Tamar** - after his beautiful sister (2 Sam 13:1). Like her father Absalom, and her aunt, young **Tamar was known for her beauty.**

While Absalom looked good on the outside, he was still banished from the presence of his father - 2 years in the same city, yet he **never saw the king.**

## 2 Samuel 14:29-32

Then Absalom sent for Joab in order to send him to the king, but Joab was unwilling to come to him. So he sent again, a second time, but he still would not come. Then Absalom said to his servants, "See, **Joab has a field** right next to mine, and he has barley there. **Go and set fire to it!**" So Absalom's servants set the field on fire.

Then Joab came to Absalom's house and demanded, "Why did your servants set my field on fire?"

"Look," Absalom explained to Joab, "I sent for you and said, 'Come here. I want to send you to the king to ask: Why have I come back from Geshur? I'd be better off if I were still there.' So now, **let me see the king. If I am guilty, let him kill me.**"

Absalom had been gone in Geshur for 3 years (2 Sam 13:38), and now 2 years in Jerusalem. That's 5 YEARS of not seeing his Dad's face.

❓ **Who was WRONG in this story?** Was it David, unwilling to fully forgive? OR, was it Absalom, unwilling to really repent? It's probably both/and rather than either/or.

- Like many of us, David rather put his broken relationship on the back burner than deal with the past pain they would have to work out. It seems that David was struggling with how to FULLY FORGIVE yet RIGHTEOUSLY JUDGE his son.
- Absalom, on the other hand, was convinced that he was in the right. Yes, he killed Amnon - a punishment he thought was deserved, and a punishment that King David should have carried out.

✗ They might be *physically near*, but they are still *relationally distant* - Only **HALFWAY HOME**.

✓ **True reconciliation needs 2 willing parties:** 1 seeking forgiveness and another extending forgiveness.

### 2 Samuel 14:33

Joab went to the king and told him. So **David summoned Absalom**, who came to the king and paid homage with his face to the ground before him. Then **the king kissed Absalom**.

**Absalom** bowed on his **face** before King David, but this alone is not the proof of his repentance. Instead, this is the act of the usual honor paid to a king. David, on the other hand, **kissed Absalom**. He no longer treated Absalom like an enemy, nor kept Absalom at a distance, but now welcomed Absalom, his son.

But **sadly, this reconciliation wasn't real**, because Absalom's pretty face covered up his ugly heart. Absalom didn't want to repent, he wanted revenge. Absalom approaches with a false humility, a lack of real repentance, and a desperate desire to be in charge. This would be the last time Absalom would bow before his father, because he was plotting to take David's throne in the coming days.

❓ **Have you really come HOME...OR...are you only HALFWAY HOME?**

Do you show up to church gatherings, open your Bible every now and then, but come short of REAL REPENTANCE. Are you HALFWAY HOME, just enough to be physically near, but pushing back enough to be relationally distant?

➤ Being near the kingdom is not the same thing as **being reconciled to the King**.

OR...**Are you more like the Prodigal son who finally came to the end of his sin...EMPTY and ASHAMED**, and finally heads home to his father - a father who runs out to respond to his repentance?

### Luke 15:20

So he got up and went to his father. But while the son was still a long way off, **his father saw him and was filled with compassion**. He ran, threw his arms around his neck, and kissed him.

Unlike David, the One who wants to be your Heavenly Father can both FULLY FORGIVE and still RIGHTEOUSLY JUDGE?

Thankfully, our Heavenly Father sent Jesus to a cross, where He WAS able to fully forgive us, yet righteously judge our sin by placing it on Jesus. At the cross, God's justice and God's mercy met.

### Colossians 1:21-22

Once you were **alienated** and **hostile** in your minds as expressed in your **evil actions**. But now **He has reconciled you by His physical body through his death**, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before Him...

Have turned from your sin and call on Jesus?

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

\* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

\* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Derek & Emily Beaty** (813-763-4421), or **Chris & Caitlin Day** (850-673-7920), **Glen & Margie Peacock** (850-464-1484).

## Discussion questions

These questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your family, friends, or small group.

1. Read 2 Samuel 14:1-11. Why do you think David showed compassion toward the woman's story, yet struggled to deal directly with his own family situation?
2. Read 2 Samuel 14:12-14. What do these verses teach us about God's desire for reconciliation with people who are far from Him?
3. Read 2 Samuel 14:23-28. How can someone be physically present around God's people yet still relationally distant from God?
4. Read 2 Samuel 14:29-33. Do you think Absalom truly repented? Why or why not?
5. Read Luke 15:11-24. Compare Absalom's return to Jerusalem with the prodigal son's return to his father. What differences stand out most?
6. Read Colossians 1:21-22. How does Jesus make reconciliation with God possible while still satisfying God's justice?
7. Where in your life are you tempted to settle for being "halfway home" spiritually instead of fully surrendering to Jesus?