

2 Samuel 15-16

Good evening and thank you for joining us. Would you please turn in your bibles to 2 Samuel 15?

We've spent the last few months now between 1 and 2 Samuel studying the life of this incredible man named David. We've seen him battle giants, flee from wicked king Saul, become king and unite the nation of Israel. But it hasn't always been good has it? David also committed horrendous sins, and God through the prophet Nathan told David that the sword would never depart from his house.

It's important to keep that in mind as we study these chapters. Last week we saw David's son Absalom murder his own brother who had an incestuous relationship with their sister. Absalom was then exiled from his dad king David-do you remember us going through all of that?

Tonight we see the seeds of discord that were sown in Absalom's heart fully bloom. And it's important to remember that ambition is not a bad thing. But ambition that is not yielded to the providence of God and His sovereignty is a dangerous thing. Absalom is gonna lead a rebellion, including treason, and shatter his dad's heart and thrust David into new depths of grief that he has never experienced before...

Remember, if Absalom had just waited, the throne would've been his. But because Absalom is angry and ambitious, and he plows ahead with his own plans.

These chapters are so much more than a history lesson, because these verses shout from the rooftops how we all need to beware the root of bitterness. **Hebrews 12:14 Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord: 15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;**

See we rarely see the outward fruit of bitterness initially. But in time, as it smolders, if we allow it to grow, the bible says many become defiled. This is what happens to Absalom
We're gonna study chapters 15 and ½ of chapter 16, and the title of tonight's message is LETTING GO
Let's pray

1 After this it happened that Absalom provided himself with chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. Absalom didn't want the chariots for speed, but to make an impressive procession. It's the royal limo.

2 Now Absalom would rise early and stand beside the way to the gate. So it was, whenever anyone who had a lawsuit came to the king for a decision, that Absalom would call to him and say, "What city are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant is from such and such a tribe of Israel." 3 Then Absalom would say to him, "Look, your case is good and right; but there is no deputy of the king to hear you." Absalom displays the same patient scheming and relentless determination he had shown when he set out to avenge the rape of his sister. At least he had some excuse for his

hatred of Amnon, but now it becomes clear that Absalom hated his dad too.

So Absalom waits outside the gate and complains-'your case is good-you're 100% right, but the king is too busy to hear your case. You can't get justice.' And whose fault would that be? The king's of course.

4 Moreover Absalom would say, "Oh, that I were made judge in the land, and everyone who has any suit or cause would come to me; then I would give him justice." 'If I were king, it would all be different – justice would be served.'

5 And so it was, whenever anyone came near to bow down to him, that he would put out his hand and take him and kiss him. Absalom wouldn't let others bow down to him but would lift them up, shake their hand, and embrace them. He's a man of the people after all.

6 In this manner Absalom acted toward all Israel who came to the king for judgment. So Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel. David had won the hearts of the people through self-sacrifice and service to the nation. But Absalom wins their hearts the modern way—by manufacturing an image of himself that the people couldn't resist. David was a legitimate hero; Absalom was a celebrity. There's a big difference between the two.

7-9

7 Now it came to pass after forty[fn] years that Absalom said to the king, "Please, let me go to Hebron and pay the vow which I

made to the LORD. 8 For your servant took a vow while I dwelt at Geshur in Syria, saying, 'If the LORD indeed brings me back to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.' "Perhaps Absalom chose Hebron as the place to announce his rebellion because that was his birthplace, and his support was probably strongest there. On top of that some in Hebron may have resented David's moving his capital from there to Jerusalem

9 And the king said to him, "Go in peace." So he arose and went to Hebron.

These are the last words Absalom ever hears from his dad. 'Go in peace'. How ironic.

Divisive people almost never see themselves as divisive. They see themselves as crusaders for God's righteous cause and often believe or hope God's hand is upon them. This is of course a big problem because most people only believe a person is divisive if they admit they are divisive.

10 Then Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpet, then you shall say, 'Absalom reigns in Hebron!'" It's interesting, before David reigned in Jerusalem over all Israel, he was king over Judah in Hebron. He ruled 7½ years in Hebron. Absalom is returning to his father's first throne to initiate his revolt.

11 And with Absalom went two hundred men invited from Jerusalem, and they went along innocently and did not know anything. Absalom knew that he needed others to endorse — or at least to appear to endorse — his kingship. He counted on

these two hundred men who were unsuspecting to at least be silent and therefore give the impression that they were for Absalom.

When the innocent and unknowing are among the divisive, their silence is always viewed as agreement.

12 Then Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counselor, from his city—from Giloh—while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy grew strong, for the people with Absalom continually increased in number. Wounds that hurt most are those inflicted by a supposed friend.

Ahithophel was wise and skillful... and like Absalom... bitter. His family tree reveals why he betrayed David. Piece together 2 Samuel 11 and 23 you discover Ahithophel was Bathsheba's grandpa.

Evidently, Ahithophel and Absalom had their deep rooted bitterness towards David in common, and they never got over it. Bitterness always seeks friends-and Ahithophel joins the revolt.

David refers to the agony of Ahithophel's betrayal in **Psalm 41:9**,
Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted,
Who ate my bread,
Has lifted up his heel against me.

and **Psalm 55:12-14** For it is not an enemy who reproaches me;
Then I could bear it.
Nor is it one who hates me who has exalted himself against me;
Then I could hide from him.

13 But it was you, a man my equal,
My companion and my acquaintance.
14 We took sweet counsel together,
And walked to the house of God in the throng.

Notice once some people started defecting to Absalom's side, it encouraged more and more to come. Momentum for division builds, because others are doing it.

13 Now a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

14 So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword." David knows Absalom's revolt has momentum. So David flees Jerusalem, and regroups in the Judean wilderness. Ironically, he's back in the wilderness where he used to hide while he was on the run from the madman, King Saul.

Why would David flee? Why not fight against this movement? David knew that Absalom was popular with the people. Evidently he fled Jerusalem both to save his own life, to spare the capital from destruction, and the people from war.

Listen, there are things that are more important than being right. David could've used force and held onto the kingdom, but at what cost? The blood would've been everywhere.

How many people, in a quest to make sure everyone else knows they are right, leave a trail of blood in their destructive wake.

Make no mistake, David's not a pushover, he will rely upon the Lord and strategize, but he's not willing to sacrifice others for his quest.

15-18

15 And the king's servants said to the king, "We are your servants, ready to do whatever my lord the king commands." 16 Then the king went out with all his household after him. But the king left ten women, concubines, to keep the house. 17 And the king went out with all the people after him, and stopped at the outskirts. 18 Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king. These were men who were faithful to David before he became successful, and they also stuck with him when his success seemed to fade away.

But notice-during this monumental moment, as hebrews, fellow Jews flock to Absalom, foreigners rallied around David.

As these people passed by...Psalm 55:4-8

Psalm 3:1-6

Psalm 41, 61-63 were also written during this time.

At these low moments, the Lord provides encouragement
19-20

19 Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, “Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. 20 In fact, you came only yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. **Mercy and truth be with you.**” As David watched the procession of his faithful supporters, Ittai the Gittite caught his eye. David couldn’t understand why this newly arrived foreigner took the risk of such open loyalty to David.

In calling Absalom the king, David showed that he would not cling to the throne. At that moment it seemed that Absalom would succeed, so David called him the king and left it unto the LORD.

How we often cling to so much less significant

21 But Ittai answered the king and said, “As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your **servant will be.**” Shocking loyalty. I think no doubt God gave Ittai to David at this moment to bolster his spirits.

22 So David said to Ittai, “Go, and cross over.” Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who were with him crossed over. 23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness. **SHOW PIC** The Brook Kidron is the ravine separating the Temple Mount and Mount of Olives. Imagine David near the top of the Mount of Olives – looking down on the capitol

that he conquered - but is now being forced to abandon. He doesn't know when or if he'll ever return. Immeasurable heartbreak. **CLOSE PIC**

24 There was Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city. The priests were loyal to David, even though it probably meant death for them if Absalom fully succeeded. Praise God the priests had the discernment to NOT follow the crowd! So they bring the ark with them, and look what David says...

25 Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. 26 But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him." David trusted in God, not in the ark of the covenant. He was willing to let the ark go back to Jerusalem and to put his fate in God's hands.

27-29

27 The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Are you not a seer? Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. 28 See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." 29 Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem. And they remained there. David recognized that Zadok was a prophet. A man of supernatural insight would be a valuable source of information for David.

Again pause on the gravity of this scene. David wasn't humiliated at the hands of great Philistine kings or outstanding monarchs from Egypt. No it comes from his own son whom he had restored to royal favor.

30 So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. There's several similarities here to the events of Jesus' departure from Jerusalem after being rejected by the religious establishment aren't there?

The gospels tell us from the top of the Mount of Olives Jesus wept over the city. Perhaps both David and the son of David wept at the same spot. Remember too, the Garden of Gethsemane is on the Mount of Olives. It's possible David wept over his betrayal by Absalom at the same spot Jesus wept just hours before his betrayal by Judas.

Of course there is one eternal difference. Both David and Jesus suffered for sin, but Jesus suffered for our sins and David suffered for his own.

31 Then someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!" Another immeasurable dose of pain is now leveled upon David.

Psalm 3

32 Now it happened when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God Pause here. The kingdom is disintegrating from before his eyes, his sin is ever before him, the depths of betrayal so intense, and David worships.

What do you do when one of your closest confidants betray you? We need to do what David did—pray and you worship

...32-34 —there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head.

33 David said to him, “If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. 34 But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, ‘I will be your servant, O king; as I was your father’s servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,’ then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. David sent Hushai to Jerusalem as a “double agent,” both to send word of Absalom’s plans and to counter the wise advice Absalom was sure to receive from Ahithophel.

35-37

35 And do you not have Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be that whatever you hear from the king’s house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abiathar the priests. 36 Indeed they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok’s son, and Jonathan, Abiathar’s son; and by them you shall send me everything you hear.”

37 So Hushai, David’s friend, went into the city. And Absalom came into Jerusalem. Absalom comes into Jerusalem as a cunning, wicked rebel. David came into Jerusalem as a brave, noble conqueror back in chapter 5.

Jesus came into Jerusalem as a servant-king on that Palm Sunday—we'll talk more about that this Sunday.

CHAPTER 16 we're only going to study verses 1-14

1 When David was a little past the top of the mountain, there was Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth, who met him with a couple of saddled donkeys, and on them two hundred loaves of bread, one hundred clusters of raisins, one hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine. Ziba was the servant of Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan to whom David showed great kindness back in chapter 9.

2 And the king said to Ziba, "What do you mean to do with these?"

So Ziba said, "The donkeys are for the king's household to ride on, the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat, and the wine for those who are faint in the wilderness to drink." A wonderful gift when David is at a low point! But there's more than meets the eye here...

3 Then the king said, "And where is your master's son?"

And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he is staying in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will restore the kingdom of my father to me.'" These are lies that Ziba told David, and this will be revealed in 2 Samuel 19. Actually Ziba left Mephibosheth behind to make it look as if Mephibosheth did not support David.

In this time of crisis, although it's not true, David hears was that another friend had turned against him.

4 So the king said to Ziba, "Here, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours." And Ziba said, "I humbly bow before you, that I may find favor in your sight, my lord, O king! David —

acting on the only information he had assumed that Ziba told the truth. Therefore, he rewarded Ziba's loyalty and punished Mephibosheth's reported disloyalty. When we're experiencing all the emotions of grief because of betrayal, it's easy to let our guard down and just believe every word that we hear. Wisdom says to pray for discernment.

The challenges continue for David...5-8

5 Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. 6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. 7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! 8 The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!" This self-proclaimed prophet has the audacity to hurl stones and curse at David.

Shimei declared that David's pain was the price for overthrowing Saul. But there's only 1 problem. David didn't overthrow Saul. In fact, time and time again, when he had the opportunity to annihilate Saul, David spared his life.

David is being slandered and falsely accused. **John 8:7 So when they continued asking Him, He raised Himself up[fn] and said to**

them, “He who is without sin among you, let him throw a stone at her first.”

Jesus alone had the right to throw stones. But He never did. Instead, He carried a Cross.

9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, “Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!” As Peter would do centuries later in the Garden of Gethsemane, Abishai was determined to defend his king with a sword. But David knew better.

10-12

10 But the king said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David.’ Who then shall say, ‘Why have you done so?’ ”

11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, “See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. 12 It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction,^[fn] and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day.” David didn’t try to shut up Shimei. In true humility, David was willing to hear what God might say to him through a cursing critic.

13 And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust. David could take Shimei’s life in a mere moment, yet David said, ‘Let him alone. Let him curse.’

CH Spurgeon said this “And this makes a splendid example. If you can revenge yourself, DON’T. If you could do it as easily as open your hand, keep it shut. If one bitter word could end the argument, ask for grace to spare that bitter word.”

14 Now the king and all the people who were with him became weary; so they refreshed themselves there. This is a powerful illustration of the deep and inward peace given to any person who is struggling, yet living in fellowship with God. In the midst of this great hurt, there is refreshment to be found.