

2 Samuel 10 - Thursday, January 29th, 2015

1 It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. 2 Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me." So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the people of Ammon.

- We begin with David continuing to show kindness as he did in the previous chapter towards Mephibosheth and this time, it's to this Hanun.
- This because, his father, Nahash had shown kindness to David so he responds by sending his servants that he may offer Hanun comfort.
- To me this speaks to a person's quality of character of when they go out of their way to show kindness and even offer comfort to another.

3 And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not rather sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"

- This reminds me of that saying, "no good deed goes unpunished," and such is the case here with these "princes of the people of Ammon."
- I would suggest this is a textbook case of wrongly judging the motive of another man's heart, which is one of the worst things we can do.
- While it is always important to have sound judgment and good discernment, we do err greatly when we judge the motive of one's heart.

- Let me hasten to say, this is not to say that we don't judge the action of others, or the fruit of others, as one said it, we're fruit inspectors.
- We are to judge words and deeds of another, but not the motives or heart of another, such that, we can know them by the fruit on their tree.
- The reason being is, man can only see the outward appearance, but, God is the only one Who can see the heart, or the root of the tree.

- Sadly, when this judging of the motive of David's heart runs its course, it will have cost the lives of some fifty thousand of Hanun's men.
- I point this out because I think we would do well to take heed of the devastation that always ensues when we are given over to doing this.
- In other words, when we wrongly judge the motives of another man's heart, there's always the propensity for many others to also get hurt.

- Before we move on to verse four there's something else I'd like to address and it has to do with the motive of those judging other's motives.
- Let me explain, in my own personal experience over the years, like David, I've been on the receiving end of this wrongly judging the heart.
- Because of the devastation it has always caused, I have sought to discern why it is that people like Hanun's men are motivated to do this.

- As best as I can understand it, people do this usually because they have an agenda and or they want to seek a position for themselves.
- I've seen cases where people have demonized others in order to displace them so they themselves can take over the position of the other.
- If this weren't bad enough, I've seen churches split over this very thing, which I believe greatly grieves the heart of God when it happens.

4 Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. 5 When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."

- At first read, it's difficult to really understand just how unthinkable this would have been to these men. This would have been so shameful.
- The reason being is in the Jewish culture, a man's beard wasn't only a symbol of his manhood, it was a sign of respect and honor as well.

Adam Clarke of this said, "The beard is held in high respect in the East: the possessor considers it his greatest ornament; often swears by it; and, in matters of great importance, pledges it. Nothing can be more secure than a pledge of this kind; its owner will redeem it at the hazard of his life."

- It's interesting to note how that Hanun's men don't stop there, in addition to cutting off half their beards; they also cut off half their garments.
- The humiliation of this could never be understated. It becomes quite clear that they want nothing more than to utterly disgrace David's men.
- Notice also that David has them wait in Jericho until their beards have grown before they come back so they wouldn't be shamed anymore.

- It's important to remember that these men were there to give David's condolences to Hanun and to show kindness because of his father.
- I suppose you could say that this whole thing has gone terribly wrong, and all because Hanun had believed the suspicions of his advisors.
- I would suggest that this is the lesson of the text, namely, we should be ever so careful in our choosing of people who speak into our lives.

6 When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men.

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that at this point, it's actually not too late for them to right their wrong.
- However, it seems that they have no interest in what's right or wrong let alone wanting to right the wrong and instead start recruiting others.
- I can't get over how this could have went in an entirely different direction if they would have simply admitted that what they did was wrong.

- Another reason I find this interesting is because David doesn't react right away. Instead of declaring war on them, he's repulsed by them.
- The reason I find this so interesting is that it seems as if David is giving them some time to come to their senses and humble themselves.
- The problem is, it's very rare for people to do that, and instead, like Hanun's men, will draw other people into it so they will be on their side.

7 Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. 8 Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah were by themselves in the field.

- Here we're told David, upon hearing they're recruiting the paid mercenaries to go to war with them, sends Joab and the mighty men.
- It wasn't that long ago that David's men were a bunch of distressed, discontent and indebted outcasts. Now they're an army of mighty men.
- Actually, not only are they an army of mighty men, some of them are trained killers, who will go on to eliminate many of Israel's enemies.

Of this one commentator said ii. One of these mighty men was Adino the Eznite—famous for killing 800 men at one time (2 Samuel 23:8). Another was Jashobeam who killed 300 men at one time (1 Chronicles 11:11). Another was Benaiah who killed a lion in a pit on a snowy day and killed a huge Egyptian warrior with his own spear (1 Chronicles 11:22–23).

9 When Joab saw that the battle line was against him before and behind, he chose some of Israel's best and put them in battle array against the Syrians. 10 And the rest of the people he put under the command of Abishai his brother, that he might set them in battle array against the people of Ammon.

- Notice Joab chooses his best men and puts them in battle array against the Syrians as opposed to putting them against the Ammonites.
- This begs the question of why? I believe that it's because they are the paid mercenary's and as such pose the greatest threat to his men.
- The reason I point this out is that it speaks to the need to be shrewd when it comes to the spiritual warfare with our adversary the devil.

11 Then he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me; but if the people of Ammon are too strong for you, then I will come and help you. 12 Be of good courage, and let us be strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the LORD do what is good in His sight."

- While Joab is not the most godly men David has to his credit he's submitted to the Lord in that he knows he will do what's good in His sight.
- Moreover, he displays a profound courage himself and instilling courage in his men to be strong even though they are totally surrounded.
- By any standard, this would appear to be a suicide mission for David's mighty men, however, Joab is giving them hope by trusting the Lord.

G. Campbell Morgan - "It is interesting to observe that in his arrangements he made no allowance for the possibility of ultimate defeat in his conflict with Ammon ... it does not seem to have occurred to him that the combination might have been too much for both of them."

13 So Joab and the people who were with him drew near for the battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 14 When the people of Ammon saw that the Syrians were fleeing, they also fled before Abishai, and entered the city. So Joab returned from the people of Ammon and went to Jerusalem.

- I don't know you if noticed this or not, but nowhere are we told that Joab and the army of the Israelites engaged in a battle with the Syrians.
- We're only told that they fled from before the army of the Israelites, and, once the Ammonites saw the Syrians flee, they too also fled Israel.
- The point being is sometimes God will so intervene into our battles that we don't even have to do anything. The victory belongs to the Lord.

15 When the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered together. 16 Then Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the River, and they came to Helam. And Shobach the commander of Hadadezer's army went before them. 17 When it was told David, he gathered all Israel, crossed over the Jordan, and came to Helam. And the Syrians set themselves in battle array against David and fought with him. 18 Then the Syrians fled before Israel; and David killed seven hundred charioteers and forty thousand horsemen of the Syrians, and struck Shobach the commander of their army, who died there. 19 And when all the kings who were servants to Hadadezer saw that they were defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and served them. So the Syrians were afraid to help the people of Ammon anymore.

- So the chapter ends with a decided victory for Israel. However, as we'll see in the next chapter, this will prove to be disastrous for David.
- This because he stays in Jerusalem instead of going back into battle on the heels of this victory, only to commit adultery with Bathsheba.
- That's next week, but as for tonight's study, we'll bring it to an end with what I'll call the anatomy of a split whether it's in a church or family.

- Phase 1: It starts with a false accusation against the one who is innocent and righteous.
- Phase 2: They humiliate, excoriate and even assassinate the character of the righteous.
- Phase 3: They refuse to humble themselves and admit they are wrong because they're too full of pride
- Phase 4: They start recruiting supporters who will take their side against the righteous
- Phase 5: They wage a full on war against the righteous, and invariably it leads to people fleeing
- Phase 6: While God will ultimately give the victory in the end, there are always casualties that ensue