

Life of David
Week 11
Les Sillars/Jesse Bridges
II Sam 17-20 Absalom's Rebellion II

I. Intro

Kum is a Cambodian word for a particularly Cambodian mentality of revenge—to be precise, a long-standing grudge leading to revenge much more damaging than the original injury. If I hit you with my fist and you wait five years and then shoot me in the back one dark night, that is kum . . . Cambodians know all about kum. It is the infection that grows on our national soul.

—Haing Ngor, *A Cambodian Odyssey*

Lamech said to his wives: “Adah and Zillah, hear my voice; you wives of Lamech, listen to what I say: I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for striking me. If Cain’s revenge is sevenfold, then Lamech’s is seventy-sevenfold.”

Gen. 4:23-24

II. The Turning of the Tide

Ch 17 the advice of Hushai and Ahithophel

Contrast David’s situation at start and end of chapter; Absalom at the start and end

Compare and contrast Ahithophel and Hushai

What changes people’s situations?

III. Crushing the Rebellion

Ch 18 the death of Absalom

How does David change over this chapter? Is there anything Christ-like about his behavior?

What do Joab’s choices reveal about him? How should we respond to people like Joab in our congregations?

What do we learn about David from this long section on the news delivered to David?

Who else had children who deserved death yet chose to die in their place?

IV. David Restored to the Kingship

Ch 19

The appeal to the elders of Judah

What does David’s treatment of Shimei, Mephibosheth, and Ziba reveal about him?

Why is forgiveness so hard? What is appealing about revenge?

Ch 20

Who is the central character in the story of Sheba’s rebellion?

The listing of the cabinet marks the end of a section

We have seen how David’s weaknesses led to his troubles; how does his character contribute to his restoration?

We all need restoration in various ways; what encouragement do you take from David’s story?

This section is a remarkable testimony to the power of forgiveness (cf. Matt. 6:12, 14-15; 18:21-22; Luke 7:47; 17:3). David had not really forgiven Absalom, and perhaps the consequences of his lack of forgiveness encouraged him to take a different approach with his subjects after Absalom's death. We see in David's dealings with Amasa (vv. 11-15) that forgiveness wins over former enemies. We see in his dealings with Shimei (vv. 16-23) that forgiveness gives time for people to change. We see in his treatment of Mephibosheth and Ziba (vv. 24-30) that forgiveness placates irreconcilable adversaries. We see in the section revealing the final reactions of the Israelites and the Judahites (vv. 40-43) that forgiveness lays a strong foundation for the future.

Jesus suffers rejection from his own, leaves the city in disgrace, but will one day return to reclaim his own.