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2 Samuel / 2 Samuel 20

[Rebellion remains even after the king's return, but the Lord preserves his kingdom and restores peace through the removal of the rebel.]

The Return of the King

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Introduction

As we come to 2 Samuel 20, it would be easy to assume that the crisis is finally over. Absalom is dead. The rebellion has been crushed. David is crossing back over the Jordan and being returned to Jerusalem. The king will be restored to his throne.

By the end of chapter 19, we might expect the story to be winding down. But chapter 19 does not end with a celebration. It ends with an argument.

The men of Judah and the men of Israel begin disputing with one another over David's return. What should have been a moment of unity becomes a moment of division. Everyone agrees that David belongs on the throne, but instead of rejoicing together, they begin arguing over who deserves the greater honor for bringing him back.

That is a dangerous shift. Their attention moves away from the king and toward themselves.

The question isn't, "How can we honor God's king?" The question becomes, "Why aren't we receiving the honor we deserve?"

And that is where chapter 20 begins. The final verses of chapter 19 remind us how quickly pride can turn a victory into a conflict. The kingdom had survived Absalom's rebellion, but it had not escaped the sinful hearts of the people within it. The king had returned, but peace had not.

And that leaves us with an important question as we begin chapter 20.

Can a kingdom filled with pride, division, and sinful hearts continue to stand?

As we work through Chapter 20, we will get to see that the deepest problem facing David's kingdom was never merely an external rebel. The deepest problem was the rebellion that remained within the hearts of the people.

And in that way, this chapter points us beyond David to a greater King. David returned to Jerusalem, but rebellion remained. One day the greater Son of David will return, and what David's return could not accomplish, Christ's return most certainly will.

Sermon Text: 2 Samuel 20

Call: *“The grass withers and the flower fades,”*

Response: *“But the word of the Lord endures forever.”*

1. Rebellion (v1-2)

1.1 A Worthless Man (v1)

Chapter 20 opens right up by introducing us to a new character. But before the text tells us what this man does, he tells us what this man is. **Verse 1** says, Sheba was a worthless man.

The Holy Spirit does not leave us guessing about Sheba. He immediately gives us God's assessment of him. Sheba is a worthless man. Literally, the Hebrew says he is a "man of Belial" and throughout the Old Testament, this language is used for those who oppose God's order and reject rightful authority.

Then right after telling us what this man is where get told what this man does. He blows a trumpet and cries out, "We have no portion in David, and we have no inheritance in the son of Jesse. Every man to his tents, O Israel!"

Here we are again, right back into the rebellion that was simmering at the end of chapter 19, as it now erupts into the open... again.

Look at how Sheba speaks about David though. He does not call him King David. He calls

him "the son of Jesse." This is a deliberate attempt to strip David of his royal dignity and reduce him to an ordinary man. He isn't the king, he is the son of a farmer.

We need to remember, as we see this happening, that Sheba's problem is not ultimately with David. David is God's anointed king. To reject God's king is to reject God's authority.

This is why the Holy Spirit introduces Sheba the way he does. The issue is not primarily kingdom politics. The issue is rebellion against God.

Awakening Church, rebellion rarely begins with a trumpet. Way before Sheba sounded his trumpet, he had already rejected the authority of the king in his heart.

The same is true for us. Every sin is, at its root, an act of rebellion against God's rightful rule. Every act of disobedience says, "I will rule myself."

This truth points us forward to Christ, because the rebellious heart of Sheba did not disappear when the Old Testament ended. The crowds that rejected Christ were saying the same thing in different words.

In John 19:15 "They cried out, "Away with him, away with him, crucify him!" Pilate said to them, "Shall I crucify your King?" The chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar.""

They did not want God's King to rule over them, and in verse 1, Sheba is just another reminder that the deepest problem in every generation is not political. It is the rebellion of the human heart.

1.2 A Divided People (v2)

Sheba's rebellious speech is only one verse long, but it has an immediate effect.

Verse 2 says, "So all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But the men of Judah followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem."

The division that Chapter 19 was hinting at has now come out into the open. We should notice that the text does not stay focused on Sheba either... the people follow him.

Absalom's rebellion had only recently been crushed. The nation had barely survived a civil

war. David had been restored to his throne. But almost immediately, many of the people are ready to abandon the king all over again. This lets us know for sure that Sheba was not the deepest problem. The deeper problem was the heart of the people.

A rebel can only lead if others are willing to follow.

This is one of the dangers of division. When bitterness and discontent are allowed to grow, people become vulnerable to voices that promise an alternative to God's appointed authority.

But notice that not everyone follows Sheba. The men of Judah remained steadfast with their king so that even in the middle of division and rebellion, God preserved David and the kingdom he promised to establish through him.

I want to point this out to us, Awakening Church. We often measure the grace of God by our circumstances. If life is peaceful, we assume God is being gracious. If life is difficult, we begin to wonder where His grace has gone. But the Bible repeatedly corrects that way of thinking. One of the greatest evidences of God's grace is not that his people never face division, trials, or hardship. It is that God faithfully preserves them through those things. If we were left to ourselves, we would all wander, we would all follow the voice of rebellion. But God keeps his people.

The measure of God's grace is not the absence of trouble, but the certainty of his presence and preservation in the midst of it. Our joy is not found in the promise that we will never face difficulty. Our joy is found in the promise that God will never abandon his people through it.

Before the Holy Spirit continues the story of Sheba's rebellion, He draws our attention back to David. The king has returned to Jerusalem, but chapter 20 reminds us that returning to the throne is not the same thing as escaping the consequences of sin.

2. Return (v3)

2.1 A King Comes Home (v3)

As the rebellion begins to spread throughout Israel, the Holy Spirit briefly pauses the story and brings our attention back to Jerusalem. In **Verse 3** it simply says, "And David came to his house at Jerusalem."

**** Read verse 3 ****

At first glance, that may not seem very significant. But after everything David has endured, these words should carry some weight. The exile is over and the flight from Absalom has ended. The king has crossed back over the Jordan, and he has been restored to his throne.

Everything in the story has been moving toward this moment.

But the Holy Spirit immediately shows us that returning home is not the same thing as returning to life as it used to be. David returns to Jerusalem, but he does not return to the same Jerusalem he left.

He does not return to the same household, and he can't return to the same life because the consequences of his sin are waiting for him at the door. The very women he left behind to care for his house now stand before him as a living reminder that forgiven sin can still leave painful scars.

The text highlights a detail that would be easy to overlook. David provided for these women, but he did not go into them. David accepts the painful consequences of his past sins and seeks to care for those who have been affected by them.

That does not erase the tragedy of the situation. These women will spend the remainder of their lives living with the consequences of sins they did not commit. David sinned. Absalom sinned. Yet these women bear the scars of both. Sin rarely limits its damage to the person committing it. It leaves wounds in the lives of others.

Yet David's response is different than the David we met earlier in this book. Chapter 20 presents a David who no longer seeks to reclaim these women for himself, but instead accepts God's discipline. And for the rest of David's life, we never read again of him multiplying wives or taking more concubines. And David does not just turn away from reclaiming them, he does everything that would be proper to provide and care for those affected by his sin.

Awakening Church, God does not just call us to acknowledge our sin, it's more than that. He calls us to abandon it. True repentance is not simply grieving over what we have done. It is

turning away from it. The discipline of God is designed to produce holiness in his children. So what we see in David is the king responding to the consequences of his sin with humble submission rather than self-indulgence.

Even as David demonstrates the fruit of God's discipline in his own life, the kingdom around him continues to unravel. Sheba's rebellion is growing, and Joab is about to remind us (again) that he remains one of the most dangerous men in Israel.

3. Rivalry (v4-13)

3.1 A Delayed Commander (v4-6)

Before we move into the heart of this chapter, it might be helpful to remind ourselves who these men are and why they are standing where they are in this story.

Joab had served for years as David's commander and had been one of David's most effective military leaders. But, he was also one of David's greatest frustrations. Over and over again, Joab ignored David's wishes and took matters into his own hands. Most recently, David had commanded that Absalom be spared, and Joab killed him anyway.

Amasa was Absalom's commander during the rebellion. After the recent civil war ended, David made a surprising decision. He appointed Amasa over the army in Joab's place. What David was doing was partly a rebuke to Joab for his continued disobedience, but it was also a wise political move. When David elevated the former commander of Absalom's forces, what he was doing was extending an olive branch to those who had followed the rebellion and encouraging the kingdom to reunite. David's little combination move there of punishment and politics.

The last reminder we need is about Abishai, who was Joab's brother and one of David's most loyal warriors. So, when things start to fall apart, David temporarily turns to Abishai to lead the army.

So as we head into this section, David has replaced Joab with Amasa, but Joab is still

standing nearby, and that combination is about to create a deadly rivalry.

In **verses 4-6**, David gives orders to Amasa to gather the men of Judah and prepare them for battle. David gives him a straightforward assignment and a clear deadline. I can relate to this kind of leadership!

**** Read verses 4-6 ****

The text does not tell us why Amasa was delayed. It just tells us that he was, and what matters is that his delay creates a big problem.

It might have been an easy option to punish Joab, and it might have brought some political benefits along with it, but Amasa was an extremely poor choice to lead David's army. This was the same guy who had just failed to defeat David for Absalom, and now he moves directly into failing for David. So while Amasa is doing... whatever, Sheba and his rebellion are gaining time, and every moment that passes gives the rebellion another opportunity to strengthen itself.

That is why David becomes so concerned in verse 6. He knows that if action is not taken quickly, Sheba might become an even greater threat than Absalom ever was.

So we get another opportunity to lean into a biblical lesson. Many kingdom problems are not created by active rebellion. Some are created by neglecting responsibility. The text gives no indication that Amasa was plotting against David. He wasn't blowing a trumpet for rebellion. But his failure to carry out the responsibility given to him created an opportunity for trouble.

So here is the point I want us to pull from the text. The king gave Amasa a responsibility, and Amasa failed to carry it out. The problem was not a lack of authority. The problem was a lack of faithfulness.

And that's a danger for all of us.

Every kingdom problem is not created by open rebellion. They are often created when God's people neglect the responsibilities he has entrusted to them.

The husband who neglects his family. The mother who neglects his children. The elder who neglects the flock. The church member who neglects the means of grace. Most people don't

walk around intending to create a crisis. They simply fail to do what God has called them to do. The same things we see happening in David's kingdom work the same way in our lives, our families, and our churches. We don't wake up and decide to destroy a marriage, abandon our children, or walk away from the faith. More often than not, the trouble begins with neglected responsibilities. Failing to attend to the means of grace. Failing to pray. Failing to open the Scriptures with your family. Failing to call your children to devotion and obedience. Failing to deal with sin while it is still small.

The truth of the matter is that the crisis usually arrives long after the faithfulness has disappeared.

For us, I'm not referring to the faithfulness of leading an army. It doesn't have to be the big flashy kind. Faithfulness often looks ordinary. It rarely gets attention. But the absence of faithfulness can create enormous problems. In the text, Amasa was not blowing a trumpet against the king. He was simply failing to do what the king had commanded. But even that failure created an opportunity for rebellion to grow stronger.

So, as the rebellion is spreading, Amasa is nowhere to be found, and what appears at first to be a simple delay is quickly becoming a threat to the kingdom itself.

3.2 A Treacherous Kiss (v7-10)

As we come to **verses 7-10**, the rebellion is not the only threat to David's kingdom. Here is the quick situation, David has appointed Amasa over the army, but he was way late. So Abishai has now been ordered to pursue Sheba, all the while Joab is still present, and Joab is not the kind of man who quietly accepts being replaced.

**** Read verses 7-10 ****

So Abishai leads out the army, and as the men meet near the great stone at Gibeon, Amasa finally arrives. The first thing we see is that Joab approaches him and asks, "Is it well with you, my brother?" Then he reaches out as though he is greeting a friend, but it's all a lie.

Joab takes Amasa by the beard as though he intends to kiss him, and instead, he drives a sword into his stomach and kills him where he stands.

Psalm 55:20–21 “My companion stretched out his hand against his friends; he violated his covenant. His speech was smooth as butter, yet war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords.”

This is a shocking scene, but not for the reason we might think it is. What most grabs my attention is that by this point in the story, this is exactly what we have come to expect from Joab. This is not the first time Joab has done something like this. When Abner stood in his way, Joab killed him. When David commanded mercy for Absalom, Joab ignored him and killed him. Now David has appointed Amasa over the army, and Joab removes him as well.

That is the real issue here, we can't miss it. Joab might remain near the king, but he refuses to submit to the king.

On the outside, Joab appears loyal. He never joins Absalom's rebellion. He never follows Sheba's rebellion. In fact, he never openly rebels against David's throne. But again and again, he refuses David's authority whenever it conflicts with his own desires.

Awakening Church, there is a danger here that we need to see.

Some people are like Sheba, and they openly reject God's King. They are easy to identify, we just follow the sound of their trumpeting.

Others are like Joab, and they are often harder to identify. They remain near the King, they speak the right language, they stay among God's people, and they appear loyal on the outside. But when Christ's authority confronts their desires, they choose themselves.

That kind of rebellion is often harder to recognize because it wears the clothing of loyalty. Joab is a bright neon sign of warning for us that it's possible to be close to the kingdom while at the same time, remaining far from submission. Whether Joab possessed genuine faith is not the question before us. The warning is that outward association with God's kingdom is not the same thing as submission to God's authority.

So for each of us, as we daily examine our faith, the question is not whether we associate with the King. The question is whether we obey Him.

Matthew 7:21 ““Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”

In this text, Joab's kiss looked like affection, but it concealed rebellion. And sometimes the most dangerous rebellion is not the rebellion that announces itself with a trumpet. It is the rebellion that hides behind a kiss.

Matthew 26:48–50 “Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; seize him.” And he came up to Jesus at once and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” And he kissed him. Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him.”

3.3 A Pursuit Continues (v11-13)

After Joab murders Amasa, one of the most surprising things in the text is that the story simply keeps moving. In **verses 11-13** hardly any kind of deal is made over this at all.

**** Read verses 11-13 ****

The most visible reminder of Joab's crime is that Amasa's body still lies in the middle of the road.

One of Joab's men stands over Amasa's body and calls the army to follow Joab in pursuit of Sheba. But there is a problem. Verse 12 tells us that Amasa lay wallowing in his blood in the middle of the highway, and the people stopped when they came to him. That makes perfect sense. The army is staring at the lifeless body of the man David appointed to lead them. The murder is public. The betrayal is obvious. The whole pursuit comes to a standstill.

So Amasa's body is moved off the road and covered with a garment. Once the obstacle is removed, the men continue after Joab in pursuit of Sheba.

At first glance, these verses may seem like little more than narrative details. But there is something important happening here. Joab has committed another terrible sin. He has once again ignored David's authority, and has once again shed innocent blood.

Here, I think we get a big reminder from this text that, despite Joab's wickedness, the work of the kingdom continues.

The purposes of God are never dependent upon the righteousness of men. If they were, God's kingdom would have failed long ago.

In these verses, the body is covered and dragged off the road, but the account is still open before God. All the while, the kingdom purpose of the Lord marches on.

Not Joab. Not Sheba. Not Absalom. Not even David himself has been able to overthrow God's plan.

Men sin. Men fail. Men rebel. Yet God continues to accomplish His purposes.

Psalm 33:10–11 “The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing; he frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the plans of his heart to all generations.”

That is exactly what we are seeing in this chapter. Sheba is plotting rebellion, and Joab is scheming for power, all while the kingdom is divided. But God's covenant promises to David remain secure.

The kingdom continues ultimately because God is faithful, even when many of the men within it are not.

And that is still true today. Churches are not preserved because pastors are perfect. Families are not preserved because fathers never fail. Christians do not persevere because they are strong enough to hold onto God.

We persevere because God holds onto us. The reason the pursuit continues is that God has determined that his kingdom will continue. And we can trust that what was true for David's kingdom is infinitely more true for Christ's kingdom.

Hebrews 12:28 “Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe,”

No rebellion, no betrayal, and no failure of man can overturn the purposes of our King.

4. Resolution (v14-22)

4.1 A Rebel Behind the Wall (v14-15)

By the time we reach **verses 14-15**, the rebellion that began with a trumpet blast has been reduced to an individual fugitive hiding behind a city wall.

**** Read verses 14-15 ****

Sheba has passed through the tribes of Israel and finally taken refuge in Abel Beth Maacah. When Joab and the army arrive, they immediately begin laying siege to the city. The text tells us they cast up a mound against the city and began battering the wall.

What strikes me here is how quickly the rebellion has shrunk. The point of the text is not the siege warfare but the one being besieged. At the beginning of the chapter, Sheba appeared powerful enough to divide the kingdom. Now he is trapped behind a wall while the kingdom closes in around him.

This is almost always the same lie that we are told by sin itself. Sin often presents itself as freedom, but it eventually always leads to bondage. Rebellion promises independence, but it eventually leaves you trapped by the very thing you thought was liberating. The truth about sin is that the refuge offered by rebellion is always temporary. There is no wall strong enough to protect Sheba from the king, and along that same vein, no sinner can ultimately hide from the authority of God's King.

We are watching the kingdom of David surround the rebels, and because of this, the question is no longer whether the rebellion will be stopped. The only question is how.

And the answer arrives from a very unexpected place.

4.2 A Wise Woman Speaks (v16-21)

Just when it appears that an entire city is about to be destroyed, a wise woman calls out from the wall. I love the way the text introduces her. We are not told her name. We are not told her family. We are not told her position. We are simply told she is wise.

**** Read verses 16-21 ****

So “wisdom” wants to talk to Joab and immediately begins asking questions. Why are you destroying a city in Israel? Why would you swallow up an inheritance of the Lord?

And Joab responds that he has no real desire to destroy the city. He only wants one man. Sheba.

The woman quickly understands the situation. The city is not under judgment because of its own rebellion. The city is in danger because it is sheltering a rebel. And in this chapter, as far as wisdom goes, this woman arrives at a critical truth immediately.

Here is the big point, so if you missed it in the text, don't miss it in the sermon. Peace is not maintained by protecting rebellion. Peace is maintained by removing it.

Awakening Church, wisdom does not ignore sin. Wisdom deals with it.

One of the great lies of our modern age is that peace comes through tolerance of evil when Scripture repeatedly teaches the opposite. Real peace is found when sin is confronted and removed.

I laughed when I was thinking through this portion of the text because I was so amused that the army never got Sheba, wisdom did. God preserves the kingdom and ends the rebellion, not through Joab's violence, but through this woman's wisdom.

Once again, the Lord uses unexpected means to accomplish His purposes.

4.3 A Rebel Cast Out (v22)

The wise woman returns to the people of the city and presents the matter before them, and the decision is swift. **Verse 22** says, And they cut off the head of Sheba the son of Bichri and threw it out to Joab."

Just like that, the rebellion is over.

At the beginning of the chapter, Israel cast out David. Now, at the end of the chapter, the city casts out Sheba. The people finally recognize where the real danger lies, so the city is preserved when the rebel is removed.

That principle applies in our own lives as well. We don't overcome sin by negotiating with it, and we don't gain victory by accommodating it. Sin must be mortified. It must be put to death.

In case we miss this huge theological point, the chapter closes out with a vivid picture. The head of the rebel is thrown over the wall, the trumpet sounds, and every man returns home.

Peace comes to the city when the rebel is removed, and that is where this passage begins to press itself upon our own hearts.

By nature, every one of us is more like Sheba than we would like to admit. We were born in rebellion against God's King. We wanted our own way, we wanted our own authority, and we wanted to rule ourselves.

But God, in his mercy, did not leave us there.

Romans 6 tells us that those who belong to Christ have been united to him in his death and in His resurrection. The old man is crucified with Christ so that we might walk in newness of life. The rebel that once ruled our hearts must die.

That is why the Christian life is a continual work of mortification. As John Owen famously said, "Be killing sin, or it will be killing you."

The city found peace when the rebel was cast out. The Christian finds peace as we are by the Spirit of God, putting sin to death within us, and being conformed to Christ.

And one day, Awakening Church, that work will be complete. The greater Son of David will return. Every unrepentant rebel will be removed from his kingdom, and every trace of sin will

be forever gone.

The kingdom is preserved because rebellion is dealt with. The gospel tells us that Christ has already begun that work in His people, and one day he will finish it completely.

5. Restoration (v23-26)

The chapter closes in **verses 23-26** with what might seem like a strange list of names and offices. But this is not filler, the Holy Spirit is showing us the result of Sheba's defeat.

The rebellion has been crushed. The kingdom has been preserved. The king remains on his throne.

So once again, we find that the officers of David's kingdom are carrying out their responsibilities and the government is functioning as it should.

What a chapter, after all the division, treachery, murder, and rebellion, the final picture is one of restoration and order. The kingdom is back where it belongs, under the rule of God's appointed king.

This is the perfect reminder of what God has been doing throughout this entire chapter. Despite the failures of men, despite the schemes of rebels, and despite the consequences of sin, the Lord has faithfully preserved His kingdom and His king.

6. Application And Call To Christ

As we come to the end of our time this morning, consider what we have seen in chapter 20. The chapter begins with rebellion. A worthless man sounds a trumpet, calls God's people away from God's king, and the kingdom is thrown into turmoil. But as we followed the story, we discovered that Sheba was not the only rebel.

Joab remained near the king while refusing to submit to the king.

Amasa neglected the responsibility entrusted to him.

Everywhere we looked, we found the same problem.

The deepest problem in David's kingdom was not political but spiritual. The kingdom was filled with sinful people. And if we are honest, the same is true of us.

Every one of us can find ourselves somewhere in this chapter.

We have all been Sheba, rejecting God's authority.

We have all been Amasa, neglecting what God has entrusted to us.

We have all been Joab, professing loyalty while stubbornly insisting on our own way.

The problem of chapter 20 is ultimately the problem of the human heart. But thanks be to God, the chapter does not end with rebellion. It ends with restoration. The rebel is removed, the kingdom is preserved, and the king remains on his throne. And all of it points us to a greater King than David.

David returned to Jerusalem, but rebellion remained. Christ will return, and rebellion will be no more.

David's kingdom survived because God preserved it. Christ's kingdom can never fail because Christ Himself upholds it.

David's kingdom was threatened from within and without. Christ's kingdom stands secure forever.

Even today, the greater Son of David is advancing His kingdom. The rebellion of this world still rages, but it is a defeated rebellion. By his perfect life, atoning death, and victorious resurrection, Christ has already secured the victory. The gospel advances. His church advances. The gates of hell will not prevail.

Sheba's head went over the wall because David's kingdom had to prevail. But Christ's kingdom prevails in a far more glorious way. Every one of us was born a rebel against the King. But Christ came to save rebels. He took upon himself the judgment his people deserved, and now not one of His sheep will ever be handed over as an enemy of the kingdom. The gates of hell cannot keep Him out. Death cannot hold his people. Satan cannot retain a single soul the Father has given Him. Christ will build his church, and he will lose none of His own.

So the question before us is simple, Will you continue in Sheba's rebellion, or will you heed the voice of the greater King? For those who come to Christ, there is no head thrown over the wall, no condemnation, and no fear of being cast out. There is only mercy for rebels and victory for the kingdom of God.

That's good news of the gospel! Christ receives rebels! You do not have to hide behind the walls of a doomed rebellion. The King we have offended is also the Savior who died for sinners.

He lived the life we failed to live.

He died the death we deserved to die.

He rose again in victory over sin and death.

And now His trumpet call goes out to all people everywhere, repent and believe.

In the New Covenant, Christ is the Divine Warrior, not Joab, or Amasa, or even David.

He enters Satan's domain.

He binds the strong man.

He plunders his house.

He raises the dead.

He calls His sheep by name.

And not one of them fails to come.

At the end of this chapter, there are only two responses. The people of Abel listened to wisdom and submitted to the king's cause. Sheba persisted in rebellion and perished. Will you heed wisdom and bow before Christ, or continue resisting the King whom God has enthroned?

Awakening Church, one day he will return. Every rebel who refuses his mercy will be judged. Every trace of sin will be removed. Every enemy will be defeated. The last walls of rebellion will fall, and perfect peace will fill His kingdom forever.

Until the day our King returns, let us take up our cross and follow him into the fight. Let us wage war against our sin, proclaim the gospel without fear, and labor alongside Christ as he gathers his people from every tribe and tongue. The gates of hell cannot keep him out, and they cannot hold those whom he has come to save. Therefore, let us press on in faith, knowing that he who began a good work in us will surely bring it to completion.

7. Questions for Reflection and Discipleship

Please be encouraged to use these questions for reflection throughout the week and Awakening discipleship group discussions.

1. In what ways do you see yourself in the characters of this chapter? Sheba openly rejected the king. Joab remained near the king while refusing to submit to him. Amasa neglected the responsibilities entrusted to him. Which of these dangers are you most prone to, and why?
2. What are the clear responsibilities that God has entrusted to you? Which of these requires greater faithfulness in your life? What is something you can do this week to correct a lack of faithfulness in some area? How do you see the neglected responsibilities in your life, family, and church creating opportunities for future spiritual problems?

3. What sins are you currently tempted to tolerate rather than mortify? The wise woman understood that peace would not come by protecting rebellion but only by removing it. What sins are you accommodating or living with, instead of putting to death?
4. Joab's sin appeared to be pushed aside when Amasa's body was removed from the road. How does this chapter teach us to trust God's justice even when wickedness seems to go unpunished? Is Joab's sin ever dealt with?
5. How does this chapter strengthen your confidence in Christ's kingdom? What encouragement do you find in the truth that God's purposes continued despite the failures of David, Joab, Amasa, and the people? How should that shape your confidence in Christ and His church today?

Questions for small children during family devotion:

Please be encouraged to use these questions in family devotion throughout the week, especially for young minds learning about Christ.

1. Who was Sheba, and what did he tell the people to do?

Parent guided answer: Sheba was a rebel who told the people to stop following King David.

2. What happened when Amasa did not do the job the king gave him?

Parent guided answer: Amasa was supposed to gather the army, but he was delayed. This gave the rebellion more time to grow.

3. Why was Joab's kiss so evil?

Parent guided answer: Joab pretended to be Amasa's friend, but he was really planning to hurt him.

4. How did the wise woman help save her city?

Parent guided answer: The wise woman listened carefully, understood the problem, and helped the people remove the rebel from the city.

5. How is Jesus a better King than David?

Parent guided answer: David was God's chosen king, but he was still a sinner who made many mistakes. Jesus is the perfect King who never sinned. Jesus came to save rebels like us by dying on the cross and rising again so that everyone who trusts in him can have peace with God.