

Session 26 Experiencing Grace in Divine Discipline (2 Sam. 15-16)

I. DAVID FLED FROM JERUSALEM (15:13-37) OR (15:13-16:14)

- A. The story of David leaving and returning to Jerusalem is very dramatic. It was the most dangerous season in David's 40-year reign, one in which both his life and throne were threatened. In this season he experienced both *adversity* from his enemies and *blessing* from friends—some old and some new. The second half of 2 Samuel 15 gives us a picture of friendship as seen in *Ittai* (15:19-23), *Zadok*, *Abiathar* (15:24-29), *Hushai* (15:30-37), and more. In times of distress we can imagine that our enemies are more numerous and friends fewer than they actually are.
- B. The second half of 2 Samuel 15 sets forth the combination of sorrow and blessing while being under God's hand of discipline. In David's youth, he modeled how to endure difficulty related to righteousness, and now we see how he endured difficulty related to being disciplined for his sin.
- C. David saw God's hand of discipline in some of his adversity; thus he yielded to the Lord with godly sorrow, humility, and gratitude for the mercy that he received. Here in the most difficult hour of David's kingship, we see his humility, kindness, and gratitude as he still entrusted or committed himself to whatever the Lord wanted, just as he did in his youth when being afflicted by King Saul (1 Sam. 24:12, 15; 26:9-11, 23-24; 2 Sam. 2:1; 15:25; 16:11-12; 1 Chr. 12:17; 19:13; Ps. 31:5, 15).
²³ ***...who, when He [Jesus] was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously... (1 Pet. 2:23)***
- D. The crisis created by Absalom's rebellion caused the hearts of many to be openly revealed. Many responded to David with a loyal heart unmoved by Absalom's charms and manipulation. People with a heart of loyalty can easily discern the manipulation of ambitious men like Absalom!
¹⁹ ***There must be factions among you, that those who are approved may be recognized among you. (1 Cor. 11:19)***
- E. David fled from Jerusalem to spare the city from destruction by Absalom's attack (15:13-15).
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." (2 Sam. 15:13-14)***
- F. David acted quickly, leaving Jerusalem to save both the royal family and royal city (15:16-18). The first group to commit to stand with David was the *Cherethites and Pelethites* (his bodyguard) along with *Ittai* and his 600 *Gittite* soldiers who joined David when he was in Gath.
¹⁶ ***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...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...*** ²² ***Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men...crossed over.*** ²³ ***And all the country wept with a loud voice...The king himself also crossed over the Brook Kidron...***
(2 Sam. 15:16-23)

- G. The second group to commit to David was Zadok, Abiathar, and all of the Levites (15:24-26). David had confidence in them to be his informants—telling them where he intended to go (15:28). If they betrayed him, it would be his death. How blessed to have trusted friends in a time of trouble!

²⁴*There was Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God...*

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..."²⁶But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."²⁷The king also said to Zadok the priest, "...Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan..."²⁸See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." (2 Sam. 15:24-28)*

- H. **Carry the ark back:** David was aware that there was much more to Absalom's rebellion than what was happening in his family and political conflicts—he recognized God's discipline in his life. He refused to "use" the ark, knowing having it would have strengthened his support from the people.
- I. David entrusted himself to God's favor, not to man's support. He committed the outcome of his cause to God's sovereign will, trusting in His goodness. The more we can see and trust in God's kindness and intervening hand in the midst of our trouble, the more at peace we will be.
- J. David ascended out of the Kidron Valley to the top of the Mount of Olives when he stopped to worship and pray (15:30-32). Mt. Olivet was only a few hundred yards from the City of David. There he received bad news that Ahithophel, his most valued counselor, had joined the conspiracy. Ahithophel was one of the most influential men in David's government. The report that Ahithophel joined Absalom's conspiracy was devastating—he gave the rebellion sanction and legitimacy. While in worship, David looked up to see Hushai, another influential leader, come to support him.
- 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...*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!"³²...When David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God—there was Hushai coming to meet him... (2 Sam. 15:30-32)*

²³*Now the advice of Ahithophel...was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the advice of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom. (2 Sam. 16:23)*

II. DAVID PRAYED WITH ANGUISH YET WITH CONFIDENCE IN GOD (PS. 41 AND PS. 55)

- A. Psalm 41 and 55 are commonly understood to have been written in context of Ahithophel's betrayal of David. Ahithophel's betrayal was a prophetic picture of Judas' betrayal (Mt. 26:50; Jn. 13:18; Acts 1:16-17). Both were close friends of their master, but in a time of crisis they were disloyal in hope of personal gain, and both hung themselves after seeing that they miscalculated the situation.
- ¹⁸*"...Scripture may be fulfilled, "He who eats bread with Me has lifted up his heel against Me." (Jn. 13:18)*
- B. Betrayal is usually not a spontaneous act, but it is a habit of life that is exposed by a crisis. It is not easy to detect because it starts as an "innocent" desire for something good to happen in our lives, then someone (parent, child, spouse, associate, pastor, or boss) disappoints us and starts the process.

- C. David cried to the Lord for mercy in the face of a most painful betrayal by Ahithophel (Ps. 41).
⁴I said, “LORD, be merciful to me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against You.”...⁷All who hate me whisper together against me; against me they devise my hurt. ⁸“An evil disease,” they say, “clings to him...”⁹Even my own familiar friend [Ahithophel/Judas] in whom I trusted, who ate my bread, has lifted up his heel against me. ¹⁰But You, O LORD, be merciful to me...¹¹By this I know that You are well pleased with me, because my enemy does not triumph over me. ¹²As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, and set me before Your face forever. (Ps. 41:4-12)
- D. David expressed the pain of Ahithophel’s betrayal, yet he put his confidence in God (Ps. 55).
⁴My heart is severely pained within me...⁵Fearfulness and trembling have come upon me, and horror has overwhelmed me. ⁶So I said, “Oh, that I had wings like a dove! I would fly away and be at rest. ⁷Indeed, I would wander far off, and remain in the wilderness...”⁹Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues...¹²For it is not an enemy who reproaches me; then I could bear it...¹³But it was you [Ahithophel/Judas]...my companion [friend]...¹⁴We took sweet counsel together, and walked to the house of God in the throng...¹⁷Evening and morning and at noon I will pray, and cry aloud, and He shall hear my voice. ¹⁸He has redeemed my soul in peace from the battle that was against me...²⁰He [Ahithophel] has put forth his hands against those who were at peace with him; he has broken his covenant. ²¹The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart; his words were softer than oil, yet they were drawn swords. ²²Cast your burden on the LORD, and He shall sustain you...²³I will trust in You. (Ps. 55:4-23)

III. DAVID ENCOUNTERED TWO MEN: KINDNESS AND CURSING (2 SAM. 16:1-14)

- A. David spoke to two men from the house of Saul—Ziba (16:1-4) and Shimei (16:5-14). Ziba brought necessary provisions to David, while Shimei cursed David—yet David treated both kindly.
- B. Walking a short distance from the top of the Mount of Olives, David met Ziba (16:1-4).
¹When 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. (2 Sam. 16:1)
- C. Shimei cursed David verbally and physically. He threw stones as if symbolically killing David for killing God’s anointed—Saul, Jonathan, and Ishbosheth (16:5-8). Shimei was from the royal house of Saul. Bahurim was a Benjamite village only 2 miles from Jerusalem (19:16; 1 Kgs. 2:8).
⁵Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei...He came out, cursing continuously as he came. ⁶And he threw stones at David...All the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. ⁷Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: “Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! ⁸The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul...the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil...” (2 Sam. 16:5-8)
- D. It looked as if David’s kingdom was falling apart and would soon be over. Shimei prematurely misinterpreted the events as God bringing David’s reign to an end. This kind of prophecy is popular today; there are many contemporary “Shimei-prophets,” announcing God’s judgment on others.

E. David restrained Abishai in his desire to kill Shimei for cursing David (16:9-12).

⁹Then 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!” ¹⁰But the king said, “...So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David.’... ¹²It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day.” (2 Sam. 16:9-12)

1. Abishai only saw what was happening outwardly without seeing God’s hand at work. Abishai wanted a quick solution to the Shimei problem—“Let me take off his head.”
2. David restrained Abishai and allowed Shimei to continue his outrageous conduct. David was listening for the voice of God even in Shimei’s harsh words against him. David looked for God’s hand even in circumstances causing him pain.
3. David reasoned that the Lord might have sent Shimei to curse David (16:10). If it were from the Lord, then the Lord would bless David as he responded in humility in the face of cursing.
4. David’s refusal to stand against Shimei or Absalom was not due to David’s weakness, but rather his spiritual strength and confidence in God.

IV. DAVID WAS IMPACTED BY TWO MEN: LOYALTY AND BETRAYAL (2 SAM. 16:15-23)

A. David was impacted by two men from his court—*Hushai* (16:15-19) and *Ahithophel* (16:20-23).

B. Absalom arrived in Jerusalem just as David was leaving on his way to the Jordan River (16:15-19). Absalom sought the advice of Ahithophel and Hushai as the two most influential voices in his new war council. Hushai’s advice was significant in David escaping from Absalom.

¹⁵Meanwhile Absalom...came to Jerusalem... ¹⁶And so it was...that Hushai said to Absalom, “Long live the king...” ²⁰Absalom said to Ahithophel, “Give advice as to what we should do.”

²¹And Ahithophel said to Absalom, “Go in to your father’s concubines...all Israel will hear that you are abhorred by your father. Then the hands of all who are with you will be strong.”

²²So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the top of the house, and Absalom went in to his father’s concubines in the sight of all Israel. ²³Now the advice of Ahithophel...was as if one had inquired at the oracle of God. So was all the advice of Ahithophel both with David and with Absalom. (2 Sam. 16:15-23)

C. Ahithophel counseled Absalom to pitch at tent and have sex with David’s concubines at David’s house—the place where David committed adultery with Ahithophel’s granddaughter, Bathsheba.

¹¹Thus says the LORD: ‘Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. ¹²For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel...’” (2 Sam. 12:11-12)

⁷Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. (Gal. 6:7)