

LESSON 10

David's Kindness Toward Hanun

2 Samuel 10

Be strong! Let's prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God. May the Lord's will be done,
2 Samuel 10:12

Class Overview: 2 Samuel 10 tells the story of kindness misunderstood. When the king of the Ammonites died, David sent servants to comfort Hanun, his son. Instead of accepting the gesture, Hanun suspected treachery. He humiliated David's men and plunged his nation into an unnecessary war. This insult brought the Ammonites into conflict not just with Israel, but also with the powerful Aramean armies. The result was a decisive victory for Joab, Abishai, and Israel — and a clear reminder that rejecting peace often leads to destruction.

The chapter sharply contrasts with the previous one: Mephibosheth gratefully accepted David's kindness, while Hanun foolishly rejected it. One received a blessing, the other faced ruin. Through this story, we learn that suspicion, pride, and bad advice can turn peace into disaster. At the same time, we see the courage and faith of Israel's leaders as they confront overwhelming odds.

Class Objectives:

By the end of this class, you should be able to:

1. Explain why David sent messengers to Hanun.
 2. Describe how Hanun rejected David's kindness and why.
 3. Understand the conflict that followed between Israel, Ammon, and the Arameans.
 4. Recognize the importance of wise counsel, humility, and trust.
 5. Apply lessons about responding to kindness, avoiding suspicion, and seeking peace.
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Introduction

Chapter 10 begins with another act of kindness from David. Nahash, the king of the Ammonites, had died, and David wanted to show sympathy to his son Hanun. David remembered some past loyalty from Nahash, and he aimed to reciprocate that kindness during a time of mourning. This gesture reflects the same generous spirit David demonstrated in the previous chapter toward Mephibosheth.

But where Mephibosheth received kindness with humility, Hanun took it with suspicion. Listening to the worst advice his officials could give, he convinced himself that David's men were spies. Instead of showing respect, he humiliated them. This act of insult quickly escalated into war.

Pride and suspicion always destroy what humility could have saved. Hanun's decision brought in the Aramean armies, escalated the conflict, and led to a battle he could not win. Yet during this crisis, we also see the courage of Joab and Abishai, who fight bravely and trust the Lord with the outcome.

This chapter is a warning. When kindness is met with suspicion and pride, relationships break, peace disappears, and needless conflict grows. But it is also a reminder that God is faithful to those who fight His battles with courage and trust.

David's Kindness Rejected (10:1-5)

When Nahash, king of the Ammonites, died, David saw a chance to show kindness. He remembered a moment of loyalty Nahash had shown in the past, and he wanted to comfort Nahash's son, Hanun, in his grief. This act came from the same heart that moved David to bless Mephibosheth.

David sent a delegation to express sympathy: a peaceful act, a kind act, and a sincere act. But Hanun never saw it that way. His officials convinced him that David's ambassadors were spies. They urged him to assume the worst, saying David was scouting the land to overthrow the kingdom.

Fear and suspicion replaced common sense. Instead of honoring the men, Hanun humiliated them. He shaved off half their beards, a deep insult in Jewish and Middle Eastern cultures, and cut their clothing at the waist, exposing them. This was not only shameful; it was meant to destroy their dignity.

David's men came back humiliated. When David heard, he sent word telling them to stay in Jericho until their beards grew back, a quiet act of mercy and respect. David didn't rush to retaliate. He protected their honor and gave them time to heal.

This moment sets the tone for the rest of the chapter. What started as kindness turned into conflict, not because of David's intentions, but because of Hanun's pride and the foolish counsel he followed. Instead of trusting goodwill, he assumed evil. Instead of receiving comfort, he caused trouble.

The lesson is clear: *suspicion destroys what kindness could have healed*. Listening to unwise voices can turn a peaceful situation into a needless disaster.

The Ammonites Prepare for War (10:6-8)

When Hanun understood how badly he had offended David, fear replaced his arrogance. He knew the insult to David's messengers wouldn't go unanswered. Instead of apologizing, he doubled down on his mistake. Pride often operates this way; instead of admitting wrongdoing, people try to hide it with more wrongdoings.

The Ammonites recruited large reinforcements from the Arameans, soldiers from Beth-rehob, Zobah, Maacah, and Tob. These were skilled fighters with chariots and battle experience. Hanun attempted to fortify his foolish decision.

Meanwhile, David responded with calm determination. He sent Joab, the army's commander, along with all the mighty warriors of Israel. The situation quickly escalated into a two-front conflict. The Ammonites positioned themselves at the city gate, while the Arameans made their stand in the open field. Israel would have to fight on both sides.

From this we learn how quickly sin complicates life.

- A simple act of kindness leads to suspicion.

- Suspicion leads to humiliation.
- Humiliation leads to fear.
- Fear leads to war.

If Hanun had listened to wisdom or humbled himself early, none of this would have happened. But pride always multiplies trouble.

The stage is now set for the heart of the chapter, a battle that will test Joab, challenge Israel, and reveal where courage really comes from.

Courage in the Face of Overwhelming Odds (10:9-14)

When Joab surveyed the battlefield, he saw that Israel was surrounded. The Ammonites were positioned at the city gate behind him, and the Arameans stood ready in the open country before him. It was the worst possible situation: enemies in front and enemies behind.

But Joab did something wise and courageous. He split the army. He took Israel's best soldiers to face the Arameans. The rest he placed under his brother Abishai to fight the Ammonites. Then he spoke words that have echoed through centuries of faith:

"Be strong! Let's prove ourselves strong for our people and for the cities of our God. And may the Lord's will be done."

This is courage rooted in faith.

- They would fight with all their strength.
- They would defend God's people.
- They would trust the outcome entirely to the Lord.

Joab didn't promise victory. He didn't boast or rely on strategy. He placed everything in God's hands: *"May the Lord's will be done."* That is the confidence of a man who knows that battles belong to God.

When the fighting began, the Arameans fled from Joab. Seeing this, the Ammonites lost heart and fled from Abishai. The battle turned quickly because courage and trust stood firm while fear and pride collapsed.

This moment teaches us the kind of faith that stands strong in pressure:

- Do what is right.
- Give your best effort.
- Trust God with the results.

Joab couldn't control the situation, but he could control his response. And God honored his faith.

The Arameans Regroup and are Defeated Again (10:15-19)

Even after their first defeat, the Arameans weren't finished. They regrouped, gathered reinforcements from beyond the Euphrates, and prepared for another battle. What started as a small conflict caused by Hanun's foolish decision had now escalated into a major regional war.

David himself stepped in at this point. He gathered all Israel, crossed the Jordan, and confronted the Arameans in the north. The battle was fierce, but the outcome was clear. The Syrians fled once again. Many chariot drivers were struck down, and the allied kings who had supported Hadadezer were forced into submission.

Verse 19 gives the final word: "They made peace with Israel and became subject to them. And the Arameans were afraid to help the Ammonites anymore."

What began with a foolish insult ended with a decisive victory. The power of the Arameans was broken, and their alliance with Ammon collapsed. The nations realized that standing against the people of God was hopeless.

This closing section underscores two truths:

1. **God defends His people.**
Israel never sought this conflict, but God protected them in it. Even when enemies regrouped, God gave strength and victory.
2. **Pride and suspicion destroy peace.**
Hanun's distrust spiraled into a war he could never win. One wrong decision, fueled by bad counsel, pulled multiple nations into needless destruction.

With chapter 10 complete, the stage is now set for the tragic events of chapter 11. Before David's most remarkable fall, Scripture first shows his strength, his victories, and God's faithful hand on his life.

Practical Application

1. **Kindness must be received with humility, not suspicion.**
David sent comfort; Hanun expected treachery. His pride turned a gentle gesture into a national disaster. Many relationships break the same way, when we assume the worst instead of receiving kindness with a humble heart.
2. **Bad counsel leads to bad decisions.**
Hanun listened to fearful, cynical advisers. Their paranoia became his downfall. Wisdom means surrounding yourself with godly voices, not people who feed fear or stir suspicion.
3. **Pride multiplies problems.**
Instead of admitting he was wrong, Hanun hired an army to look strong. Pride never solves the issue; it only deepens it. Confession and humility would have saved his nation.
4. **Courage comes from trusting the Lord, not the odds.**
Joab stood between two armies. He didn't panic. He committed himself to fight faithfully and left the result to God: "*May the Lord's will be done.*" Faith doesn't mean we control the outcome. It means we obey and trust God to handle what we can't see.

5. **God defends His people even when the enemy regroups.**

The Arameans came back stronger, but God's help remained. His faithfulness doesn't waver when battles return. We face repeated struggles, but God's strength is renewed each time.

6. **Peace requires humility, but destruction follows suspicion.**

Mephibosheth received kindness and found blessing (chapter 9). Hanun rejected kindness and found ruin (chapter 10). The difference wasn't David — it was their response.

Conclusion


2 Samuel 10 demonstrates how a single act of pride can destabilize an entire nation. David showed kindness and comfort to Hanun, but suspicion turned a friendly gesture into a humiliating insult. Instead of humility, Hanun clung to fear. Instead of admitting fault, he made the situation worse. His choices led multiple nations into a pointless war that Israel didn't want but was forced to fight.


Yet amidst all this, God's faithfulness remained constant. Joab and Abishai displayed courage, trusting the Lord instead of fearing the odds. David intervened as the conflict escalated, and the Lord granted victory over every enemy. The nations that once opposed Israel now hesitated to rise against them again.


How we respond to kindness matters. Humility opens the door to peace; suspicion destroys it. God honors the humble, protects the faithful, and stands with those who trust Him in the face of overwhelming pressure. As we read chapter 10, we see the danger of pride — and the quiet strength of courage rooted in faith.


For Discussion

1. Why did Hanun misinterpret David's kindness, and what does this reveal about the danger of suspicion?


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2. How did poor counsel influence Hanun's decisions, and what can we learn about seeking wise advisers?

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3. What stands out to you in Joab's statement, "*Be strong... may the Lord's will be done*"?

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4. How does this chapter contrast with David's kindness to Mephibosheth in chapter 9?

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5. What are some modern examples where pride or suspicion can turn blessing into conflict?

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6. How can Christians today show courage like Joab: fighting faithfully while trusting the Lord with the outcome?

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