

King David

Crisis

2 Samuel 15-17

July 21, 2019 am

HDBC

King David enjoyed some great victories.

He killed Goliath.

He was chosen by God to be the king of Israel.

He survived repeated attempts on his life by Saul.

However, David also made some serious mistakes. His early life was characterized by faith in God and a desire to please God. But it seems that he became spiritually lazy. I think his success as a leader dulled his senses and he allowed sin into his heart and life. Though he was forgiven by God he suffered the consequences of his sin. For David, like many of us, it would take **a crisis** to show us the benefit of absolute surrender to the will of God.

Pride never surrenders voluntarily. It yields grudgingly, only when forced to do so by a determined humility. It fiercely battles to stay in control using deception. The only way pride can be vanquished is through total humility and absolute determination. David was hurting but had not hit rock bottom. That would come in 2 Samuel 15-17.

It would take a CRISIS for David to finally reach the end of himself and realize the full depth of his sin against God. In years of pastoral ministry I've seen this same thing happen over and over. God often uses a crisis to open our eyes, get our attention and call us to trust him absolutely. For David, the crisis came in the form of betrayal and rebellion. And, it came through one whom he loved passionately, his son, Absalom.

It was a personal crisis for David and a national crisis for Israel. David would be driven from the throne. Absalom would rule for a season. People would take sides. Armies would go to war. Absalom would ultimately be killed, and David restored as king. That's the big picture. Within that big picture there are some details that God wants us to know.

1. The Betrayal of Absalom (15:1-12)

Absalom killed his brother, Amnon, who had assaulted his sister. For three years he lived in exile, until finally being invited back to Jerusalem by his father. Even then, he was not invited to see David for two more years. By the time that happened, the seeds of rebellion were sprouting in his heart.

Read 2 Samuel 15:1-6. He strategically positioned himself to intercept those going to his father for justice and intentionally turned their support from David to him. This was a bold, brazen act of betrayal to his father and king. Regardless of how he felt about his father, this is inexcusable behavior.

There is no pain like that of betrayal. Betrayal, by its very nature, can only happen between friends or loved ones. You can't betray an enemy, only one who is supposed to love you, support you, defend you. Absalom was to David what Judas was to Jesus.

It worked. He has laid the foundation. Then, in a brazen act of betrayal, he asked the king for permission to go to Hebron, claiming that he needed to fulfill a vow to God. David's response, **Go in peace**. In reality this was the plan to take the throne. Absalom had sent messengers throughout the land telling the people to listen for the blowing of trumpets that would announce his Absalom is king. That's what happened. Absalom declared himself to be king and had the support of a large number of the people. **The final betrayal** was evident when Absalom persuaded David's trusted counselor, Ahithophel to switch sides and join him. **Note verse 12.**

2. The Retreat of David

This is one of the more surprising aspects of this event. David retreating. I'm not surprised by the action of Absalom. We saw that coming. But David's response is a little surprising. He just packs it up and heads for the hills. He offers absolutely no resistance at all. He just concedes and leaves town. What does that say about David? I think this marked a change in David. It got his attention. This crisis was the thing that God used to wake him up.

For several years David seemed to just be going through the motions. As we saw last week, one of the dominant characteristics of David was passivity. He seemed unwilling or unable to act. With the crisis of Absalom's betrayal

we see evidence that something has changed in David. No longer is he sitting back passively watching. Now, he begins to pay attention to detail, act with a purpose and to think beyond himself. I want to mention 5 things that David did in response to this crisis that I think point to a change of heart.

1) He sacrificed to protect Jerusalem (15:13-14)

He loved his city and its people. He knew that if he opposed Absalom at that point Jerusalem would be the epicenter of the battle. Innocent people would be killed. The city would be decimated. He made a sacrificial decision to leave the city in order to protect it.

2) He received help from others (17-20)

David is staggering under the burden of the betrayal of his son. His heart was broken as he led his family out of the city to an unknown future. Not everyone had jumped onto the Absalom bandwagon. One of the things that David quickly learned was that there were some who were fiercely devoted to him. **This is important when you experience a crisis!**

Most of their names are not known to you and me, simply because they are not major characters in the overall Bible story. But they were important to David. There are ten mentioned here.

Ittai – Pledged to be with David in life or death

As David was leaving the city he stopped at the last house. There he watched the procession of his family and supporters move quickly out of the city. Included in those who stopped there were 600 men who had followed him to Jerusalem from Gath. These men had pledged their support to David and were loyal to him. Notice what he tells one of them, a man named Ittai. Read 19-20

He encourages him to stay in the city. It will be hard in the wilderness. I'll be fine without you. Feel free to stay where you will be safe. This reminds me of **Naomi telling Ruth** that she is free to go back to her people. Life was about to get hard for Naomi and she wanted Ruth to have the freedom to go home. David does the same for his friend, Ittai. David is thinking more about others than himself. Something has changed.

I love Ittai's response (15:21). Like Ruth's response to Naomi, Ittai pledges his loyalty to David. So, David responds in kind (15:22)

Hushai – became a spy for David in Jerusalem. (15:31-37)

David soon learned that his trusted friend and counselor, Ahithophel had defected and joined Absalom. This certainly must have broken David's heart. But he refused to dwell on it. I love David's response when he heard about the treachery of Ahithophel. Look at his prayer in verse 31. He prayed that his counsel would be foolishness. That's the right place to start. But David did not stop there.

Note that he also sent Hushai back into the city to be his eyes and ears for what was happening there. David established his own CIA. **It would pay off later.** David would learn about the movements of Absalom and his troops and it would save David's life.

Zadok and Abiathar – priests who were loyal to David

These guys were part of the spy ring that helped get word to David concerning the plans and movements of Absalom. They were men who risked their lives for their friend and king.

Jonathan and Ahimaaz – Sons of Zadok and Abiathar. Camped at En-rogel to help with the communication to David. When they received information, they would pass it along to David.

Unnamed Maidservant – unknown female who lived in Jerusalem but would take information from there to the men at En-rogel. She was risking her life to help David.

Shobi, Machir, Barzillai – Brought food & supplies to David. (17:27-29)

One of the real benefits of a humble spirit is the realization that you cannot do it alone. David graciously received what others could offer. Don't underestimate the importance of friends when going through a crisis. Let them help! Humble yourself and receive their help.

3) **He trusted the sovereignty of God** (15:23-26)

While watching the people march by, a couple of priests come along carrying the ark of the covenant. These men were loyal to David and believed the ark belonged with the king. This was an incredible act of courage and loyalty on their part. But notice what David does. **(23-26)**

David instructed them to return the ark to Jerusalem. That tells me David fully expected to return to Jerusalem. I think he felt that this exodus would be short-lived. But it also tells me he trusted God's plan. Note his words in **verses 25-26**. My future is in God's hands. Whatever He chooses, I will accept. **That is where** David needed to be. It's where we all need to be.

4) **He expressed his brokenness** (15:30)

As David ascended the mount of Olives on his way out of the city, he expressed his sorrow over his own sin and over the pain and destruction that it was causing the city and nation. He dressed in mourners clothing and wept as he walked.

I can't help but think of Jesus who wept in this same area. David wept for the pain that his sin was causing the people. Jesus wept over the eternal lostness of the people of his day because of their own sin.

There is a time and place to weep over our sin and sins of our people. There is a time to express the brokenness of our lives. This is another sign that David has truly humbled himself, for he is unconcerned about what the people think about his weeping.

5) **He offered grace to others** (16:5-14)

As he traveled outside the city, David and his people came by the house of a man who was related to Saul. He was still upset that David had become king rather than someone in Saul's family. He was bitter and angry over it.

When he saw the defeated David, he took advantage of the opportunity to spew his poisonous venom at David and his family. **(16:6-8)**. He cursed David and threw stones at him. David refused to defend himself

or to respond. But, his men did. Note their attitude. **(16:9)** David would have none of it. He showed grace to the man. **(16:11-14)**
What an incredible display of grace.

Something has changed in David. **Before he was . . .**

Selfish – did what he wanted to do. Took what he wanted to take.

Sinful – he acted only to satisfy his lusts and his personal desires.

Passive – he refused to take responsibility as a leader.

Now he is . . .

Humble – He is acting on behalf of others. He is willing to receive the help and support of others. He knows he cannot do it alone.

Surrendered – more than once the text speaks of David's seeking God in prayer and trusting God for his future. He is yielded to God.

Broken – weeping before God and others.

Gracious – he has received grace and now is offering it to others.

God used a major crisis to show David the benefits of full surrender to His will.

You don't have to go looking for a crisis. But when one comes your way, be assured that God plans to use it for your good and His glory.