

“Lessons from the Life of David” – Pastor Jim Ruddy

Study # 46 – GRIEVING OVER A REBELLIOUS SON – 2 Sam. 18:9 - 19:8

I. ABSALOM’S REMOVAL 18:9-32 (Review)

A. JOAB INSURES ABSALOM’S DEATH 18:9-18

- In contrast to David’s great concern for Absalom, Joab totally disregards and defies the King’s command by ruthlessly and unnecessarily slaying Absalom. cf. 18:5

B. DAVID INFORMED OF ABSALOM’S DEATH 18:19-32

- When Cushai arrived, he announced that David’s enemies had been defeated, and when the inevitable question concerning Absalom was raised, he bluntly replied, *“May the enemies of my lord the king, and all who rise against you to do harm, be like that young man!”* – Dead!

II. DAVID’S REMORSE 18:33

A. HIS DISPOSITION

- David is plunged into a season of intense and inordinate grief.
- *“deeply moved”* - lit. “shaken” cf. 1 Sam. 14:15; 2 Sam. 22:8
- Whatever joy David might have known for having gained a victory was circumvented by his despair at having lost a son.
- Whatever satisfaction and victory he had gained as a King was overtaken by the loss he had sustained as a father.
 - Although Absalom was a traitor, he was also a son.

B. HIS ISOLATION

- Seeking a place to weep alone, David retired to his chamber over the city gate. cf. Lam. 3:28; Mt. 14:10-13

C. HIS DECLARATION

- David, who had spoken eloquently at the death of others, can only stammer in grief, his mind numbed by the news of Absalom’s death. cf. 1:17-27; 3:32-34
- His anguish and sorrow are accentuated by the 5-fold use of *“Absalom”* and the 8-fold use of *“my son!”* cf. 18:33, 19:4
- David has wept over the deaths of others, but never to this extent. cf. Saul & Jonathan 1:11-12; Abner 3:32; Amnon 13:33-36
- Contrast also David’s grief over the death of Bathsheba’s son in 2 Sam. 12:15-23 to that of Absalom in 2 Sam. 18:33 & 19:4.

III. JOAB’S REBUKE 19:1-7

A. THE INFORMATION v1-2

- The rumor of the King’s discomfort spreads throughout the camp, dampening the spirits of both officers and troops.
- Being more a father than he is a King, David cannot rejoice in the news of victory but can only lament the death of his son.

B. THE REPERCUSSION v2-3

- What should have been cause for great rejoicing – the fact that the LORD had granted such a great victory – turned into a reason for mourning, as first Joab, and then all of the people, learn of David’s reaction.
- Instead of being welcomed back into Mahanaim with public joy, David’s men slink back into town as those who have been shamed in defeat. cf. Gen. 31:27
- “*stole back into the city*” - lit. “steal in” – the motions of thieves, as if they had been *victims* rather than *victors* in battle. cf. 15:6

C. THE EXAGGERATION v4

- David’s expresses his excessive grief by covering his face and crying aloud for his son. cf. 2 Sam 13:19, 36; 15:30; Is. 25:7
- David’s inordinate, public grief was unwise and unworthy, and if not abated, could end up costing him the kingdom!

D. THE CONFRONTATION v5-6

- Joab sternly rebukes the King because his grief over the loss of his rebellious son so-greatly-outweighed his gratitude to his loyal troops for the victory they had won.
- Instead of appreciating his troops for their selfless service to him, David is upbraided for having publicly disgraced and humiliated those who were willing to risk their lives for his life.
- Joab further charges David with the indiscreet management of his emotions, revealed in the fact that the King seemed more interested in his enemies than in his faithful followers.
- This open and frank rebuke will cost Joab, at least temporarily, his leadership role, and will surface again in David’s final instructions to Solomon. cf. 2 Sam. 19:13; 1 Ki. 2:1-6

E. THE ULTIMATUM v7

- Joab’s concluding ultimatum begins and ends with a call to action *now*, demanding that the King appear before the troops to encourage them; lit. – “speak to the heart.” cf. 2 Chr. 32:6
- Joab warns David that he must salvage what little morale still remained, lest he further alienate those who would help him regain the Jerusalem throne.

IV. DAVID’S RESPONSE 19:8

- Prodded into action by Joab’s scathing and convicting words, David formally (*and reluctantly?*) takes his place at the city gate to fulfill his royal duty of reviewing his troops. cf. 18:1-7
- This closing “gate-scene” calls to mind the initial “gate-scene” with which this entire episode began. cf. 15:2-6
- There was no fear of attack, for Israel, (the adherents of Absalom), “*For everyone of Israel had fled to his tent.*”