

“Opportunities!”

I. INTRO:

- A. **This Wed Night:** Worship; Communion; and testimonies around the Theme of “Trust In God!”
- B. Upon 1st glance of our chapter I thought **really?** - But then digging into it, listen how relevant it is to our world today.
1. Any **country** in the news today where there is **Civil unrest?** Civil War?
 2. Any **rebel** trying to get people to follow him instead of their present leader?
 3. Any **women** who were **abused** that need *support, care, & healing?*
 4. Any **woman** who has guts enough to stand up for whats right, & speak her mind, in order to help folks in her city?
- C. **Theme:** Opportunities!
1. “Events **create opportunities** & people **use opportunities** in different ways.”
 2. In his autobiography, *Just as I Am*, Billy Graham tells about a conversation he had with John F. Kennedy shortly after his election: “On the way back to the Kennedy house, the president-elect stopped the car and turned to me. ‘Do you believe in the Second Coming of Jesus Christ?’ he asked. ‘I most certainly do.’ ‘Well, does my church believe it?’ ‘They have it in their creeds.’ ‘They don’t preach it,’ he said. ‘They don’t tell us much about it. I’d like to know what you think.’ I explained what the Bible said about Christ coming the first time, dying on the Cross, rising from the dead, and then promising that he would come back again. ‘Only then,’ I said, ‘are we going to have permanent world peace.’ ‘Very interesting,’ he said, looking away. ‘We’ll have to talk more about that someday.’ And he drove on.”
- Several years later, the two met again, at the 1963 National Prayer Breakfast. “I had the flu,” Graham remembers. “After I gave my short talk, and he gave his, we walked out of the hotel to his car together, as was always our custom. At the curb, he turned to me. ‘Billy, could you ride back to the White House with me? I’d like to see you for a minute.’ ‘Mr. President, I’ve got a fever,’ I protested. ‘Not only am I weak, but I don’t want to give you this thing. Couldn’t we wait and talk some other time?’ It was a cold, snowy day, and I was freezing as I stood there without my overcoat. ‘Of course,’ he said graciously.” But the two would never meet again. Later that year, Kennedy was shot dead. Graham comments, “His hesitation at the car door, and his request, haunt me still. What was on his mind? Should I have gone with him? *It was an irrecoverable moment.*” [Opportunities!]

II. **10 RIGHTS MAKE 1 WRONG!** (19:40-43)

- A. **INTERTRIBAL JEALOUSY!**
- B. The 10 Tribes had the opportunity to either demand their rights or die to self!
- C. Israel holds to their *10 shares of Rights*....I demand my Rights! (you king-kidnappers!) (43)
1. Judah held to **their rights** & made the situation worse.

- D. The counsel we need here is found in Rom.12:10 **Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another.**
1. **Story** - (Early 90's went w/Jeff to Russia, Rostov-na-Donu; NE corner of Black Sea) In the summer of 1986, **two ships collided** in the **Black Sea** off the coast of Russia. Hundreds of passengers died as they were hurled into the icy waters below. **News of the disaster was further darkened** when an investigation revealed the cause of the accident. It **wasn't** a technology problem like radar malfunction - or even thick fog. **The cause was human stubbornness.** Each captain was aware of the other ship's presence nearby. Both could have steered clear, but according to news reports, **neither captain wanted to give way to the other.** Each was too proud to yield first. By the time they came to their senses, it was too late.¹
 - a) Peter Marshall said, "*Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change. And when we are right, make us easy to live with.*"

III. **SHEBA'S UPRISING!** (20:1-13)

- A. **SHEBA CEASES HIS OPPORTUNITY!** (1,2)
 - B. Sheba had the opportunity to either promote unity **or** promote himself!
 - C. All it took to *light the fire of conflict* was a little speech from *a would-be leader*.
 - D. Since he was a Benjamite, he hoped to get broad support from Saul's friends **&** Davids enemies
 1. Once again, the people deserted God's chosen king, for an **opportunist**.
 2. **David was rejected again...**you better know your calling for times like this!
- E. **10 WOMEN WHO WERE VICTIMS OF ABUSE!** (3)
 - F. David had the opportunity to either support them **or** disown them!
 - G. Their **needs** would be **properly cared for**, **but** they would have to live the rest of their lives as though they were widows.
 - H. These women had been raped by a rival king (Absalom).
 1. They were deeply *humiliated, abused*, and in need of *special attention*.
 2. Accordingly, David **put them in a house under guard** for protection **and provided for them**.
 3. Nevertheless, because of their previous sexual contact with his son, he prudently decided not to **go in to them**(Lev 18:15), causing them instead to live **till the day of their death ... as widows**.

¹Closer Walk, December, 1991.

Also, <http://www.nytimes.com/1986/09/07/weekinreview/the-world-two-soviet-ships-collide-in-the-night.html>

- I. **Everyday you & I have opportunity** to help out **women** who have been *abused & taken advantage of* or simply just need our care & support.
1. **Generate Hope** - a 17 room home in San Diego that provides safe-housing & long term recovery for victims of **sex trafficking & exploitation**.
 - a) **We started financially helping this year.** Kelly & Paula. Mark & Melissa help.
 2. **Safe Families** - provides a safe alternative to child welfare custody, thus significantly reducing the number of children entering the child welfare system.
 - a) **Our 1st 4 children are about to get placed!** [We have 11 families from CM approved]
 - b) We hosted a lunch this summer for **2 dozen churches** in our Valley giving them opportunity to respond to this need & call from our county.
 3. **Partners** - Steve Gumaer called friday from Norway. **He had emailed me stats, then called to talk w/me about the atrocities against the Shan people** in Burma going on right now.
 - a) About 30,000 people are affected in this 1 area. Forced from their homes, hiding in fields & in the jungle in **Central Shan State**.
 - b) **Problems:** On the 5th August, Burma Army battalion 291 was traveling around Bang Suk district in Mong Kerng Township, Shan State. The Burma Army came across two sisters aged **21** and **18** from Bang Sak village. They forced both sisters to go with them. The soldier's then **gang raped** both girls from 1:00pm until 3:00pm the following day.
 - * **People are unable to farm their rice fields & already 1000's are facing humanitarian crisis.** This area is 100's of miles from any border, thus no NGO's to help & bring aid. Partners is the only one in this area (Stu's team).
 - (1) **Aug. 16 their teams delivered rice, oil, raincoats, clothes and medicine to 2537 people.** The teams await more funding.
 - (2) I asked the present need? **They said they figure they could realistically help 5000 people for 2 months.** Thats with being able to **buy supplies, transport, & deliver.**
 - (3) He figured out \$2500 a month. I said a CM \$5000 check will be sent Monday.

J. **AMASA, WATCH THE LEFT HAND!** (4-13)

K. Amasa had the opportunity to either lead David's army or delay & lose his opp for greatness!

L. Kelly told me the point was "*just another reason guys shouldn't grow facial hair!*"

M. At Gibeon, Amasa assumed his new position (David's old/new commander).

1. And **he was saluted in the most friendly way by Joab.**
2. I agree with **Josephus** the historian when he said, "**the old general allowed his sword to fall out on purpose, that he might have an excuse for approaching Amasa, with a naked sword in his hand.**"

N. Joab seized his opportunity, removed his replacement, won the battle & got his job back.

1. Joab had **murdered** Abner, Absalom, & Amasa; yet David apparently did nothing to discipline him. [at least he wasn't a back stabber?]

IV. SHEBA'S UNDOING! (20:14-22)

A. **A WISE WOMAN!** (14-22)

B. **Abel of Maachah** - Situated in the extreme north of Israel. [30 m. N. of the Sea of Galilee]

C. This wise woman had the opportunity to save her city or not do anything!

1. **Blessed are the peacemakers!** [I like how she uses the *mother-card* also!]
2. Maybe she also is thinking of **Deut.20:10,11** (read)

D. **Wise women** played a role at several points in David's career. [Abigail, wise woman of Tekoa, Michal]

E. She was probably like **Deborah**, & was the cities **judge & governor**.

1. She obviously choose to **do something** which prevented the siege, led to ending the war, & preventing many innocent people from being killed.
2. Andy Stanley in his book *Next Generation Leadership* said, "**Leaders see and seize opportunity. And in most cases, the opportunities take them by surprise.**"
3. Many of the life's **duties** and **responsibilities** might be better appreciated if viewed as **opportunities**.

F. **David Jeremiah** gave 4 observations about *why we don't walk through God's open doors*, in his book *Signs of Life* (pg.150)

1. **First, opportunities are often disguised as Problems.**

- a) The brilliant cartoon philosopher **Pogo** once observed, "Gentlemen, we are surrounded by **insurmountable opportunities.**" :)
- b) Too often what we perceive as **obstacles**: *no money, no machinery, no methodology, no manpower*, are **God's opportunities in disguise!**
- c) Don't miss an opportunity because it's dressed up in **a misleading costume** and is looking like a **problem**.

2. **Second, opportunities are often Time-Sensitive.**

- a) When **Walt Disney** was planning **Disneyland**, he offered a friend the opportunity to buy up the scrubland surrounding the site, land that he knew would dramatically increase in value. The friend said he'd think about it. Because Disney needed an answer **quickly**, his friend lost the opportunity and tremendous wealth besides.
- b) If you fail to seize an opportunity God puts before you, it doesn't necessarily mean God is **finished** with you. **But** it probably means He will **turn to someone else** who will jump at the opportunity.

c) Do you remember what Jesus told the **Jewish leaders** when they failed to grasp that He was their long-awaited messiah? Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be **taken from you and given to a nation** bearing the fruits of it(Mt.21:43).

(1) As a result of **Israel's** reluctance to walk through the door of salvation before them, God turned to the **Gentiles** and offered them the Gospel.

d) *Don't let **hesitation** become **procrastination** that leads to **devastation**.*

3. **Third, opportunities are often tested by Opposition.**

a) Some people have gotten halfway through an open door and turned around when they encountered **opposition**. They thought, "We must not have heard God correctly. This **opposition** can't be from God."

b) If **Paul** anticipated opposition when going through God's open doors, we should too.

(1) Opposition can actually be a sign that **you heard God correctly** and that Satan is doing all he can to **discourage you** and cause you to **turn around**.

c) Paul and Barnabas warned the churches in Asia Minor, "**We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God**"(Acts 14:22).

d) *Don't miss a **blessing-filled** Christian life by trying to have a **problem-free** Christian life.*

4. **Finally, opportunities are usually missed because of Fear.**

a) I can't think of a God-given opportunity I ever received without trembling hands. But let me assure you that I have often **reached out and taken God's steady hand** as I walked through His open door - and so can you.

b) All opportunities and all open doors have 1 thing in common: *they focus on the future*. And when we're looking toward the future, we have **2 choices** - **to walk by faith** or **to walk in fear**.

c) So is there an opportunity in front of you at this very moment that makes you nervous, scared, weak, and faithless? Wonderful! You are right where you need to be to see God hold the door open for you as you walk through. I encourage you not to let **fear** dampen your anticipation of a victorious future.

d) *Wherever there is a **fearful response** on our part, there is a **faithful reassurance** on God's*

G. Application for a beheading?

1. **Every Heart** - is a **walled city**.

2. **Every Sin** - is a **traitor** that lurks w/in its walls.

3. **God calls to us for our sin!**

a) If we love *the head of the traitor* above *the life of our soul*, we also will perish in His vengeance.

b) **We must be willing not just to *turn-in* our sin, but we must demand its **beheading!****

H. **GOVERNMENT JOBS!** (23-26)

l. David's leaders are listed, including his military commanders, the leader of his labor force, his royal historian, his secretary, and his priests.

J. Opportunities will come your way, **how** will you use them?

1. How are you using the opportunities that **have** come your way lately?

a) Opportunity to minister; to heal; to raise your children in the Lord; to be generous; to show Christ's love; to do the right thing; to stand up for an underdog; to serve someone; to tell someone you love them before its too late; opportunity to heal a relationship; opportunity to behead a **sin** in your life, before it beheads you!!!

2. Gal.6:10 **Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all.**