

Summer in Samuel – Week 13 – 2 Samuel 18

2 Samuel 18:6-15: *David's army marched out of the city to fight Israel, and the battle took place in the forest of Ephraim. ⁷ There Israel's troops were routed by David's men, and the casualties that day were great—twenty thousand men. ⁸ The battle spread out over the whole countryside, and the forest swallowed up more men that day than the sword.*

⁹ *Now Absalom happened to meet David's men. He was riding his mule, and as the mule went under the thick branches of a large oak, Absalom's hair got caught in the tree. He was left hanging in midair, while the mule he was riding kept on going.*

¹⁰ *When one of the men saw what had happened, he told Joab, "I just saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree."*

¹¹ *Joab said to the man who had told him this, "What! You saw him? Why didn't you strike him to the ground right there? Then I would have had to give you ten shekels of silver and a warrior's belt."*

¹² *But the man replied, "Even if a thousand shekels were weighed out into my hands, I would not lay a hand on the king's son. In our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'Protect the young man Absalom for my sake.' ¹³ And if I had put my life in jeopardy—and nothing is hidden from the king—you would have kept your distance from me."*

¹⁴ *Joab said, "I'm not going to wait like this for you." So he took three javelins in his hand and plunged them into Absalom's heart while Absalom was still alive in the oak tree. ¹⁵ And ten of Joab's armor-bearers surrounded Absalom, struck him and killed him.*

INTRO to Series: "Summer in Samuel" – Throughout Scripture, we see that God uses imperfect people to accomplish His perfect will and purposes for this world. Those who are faithful are set apart because of their trust in Him, whether in successes or failures. Our "Summer in Samuel" study will take us into the books of 1 and 2 Samuel and a few of the Psalms, where time and again God demonstrates His faithfulness. The stories of people like Hannah, Samuel, and David will remind us that no matter the season—in good times and bad—those who put their trust in Him are not put to shame.

INTRO to **2 Samuel 18-19:** Last week, we left David at the moment when he had taken his people and fled Jerusalem because of the threat of his son Absalom and his army. After David left the city, Absalom and his men entered and took over the palace. This week, we will see both Absalom and David face the consequences of their actions and their failure to seek the Lord.

I. Absalom's desire to make his own name great led to disgrace and destruction. (2 Samuel 16-17).

-In **2 Samuel 16** (see below), Absalom followed the advice of David's former advisor Ahithophel and committed the disgraceful act of sleeping with his father David's concubines that had been left in the palace. Absalom did this on the rooftop of the

palace in full view of the people of Israel—with the intent to demonstrate his power over his father and to humiliate David.

-In **2 Samuel 17**, however, the Lord intervened and “frustrated” the advice Absalom was receiving so that he would take the wrong path and ultimately be defeated by David.

-There is never a moment in these stories where Absalom sought the Lord, His Word, or expressed brokenness over his sin. Because he chose to disobey God and disgrace God’s promises to his family, Absalom’s sin led to destruction in his own life and in the lives of others.

-This is what sin does to all of us – when it is full grown, sin gives birth to death. (see **James 1:13-15** below).

II. The Lord brought Absalom’s sinful path to justice and shame. (1 Samuel 18:1-15).

-David and his men eventually turned back to fight and retake Jerusalem, and soon Absalom’s army was routed (**vs. 6-8**).

-As Absalom fled for his own life, he rode his mule to close to a low hanging branch and his head became stuck in a tree. As Absalom hung vulnerable and exposed, Joab thrust three spears into his heart and eventually Absalom was killed (**vs. 9-15**).

-Though Absalom had gained a following in a short time, he did not build a legacy and no one honored him like other kings and princes of the world. He was buried under a pile of rocks, and the only monument in his memory he had built for himself (see **2 Samuel 18:18** below).

-As we’ve seen throughout our “Summer in Samuel”: *Do not be deceived. God cannot be mocked—a person reaps what he or she sows.* (**Galatians 6:7**)

III. David’s leadership floundered because he failed to seek the Lord. (2 Samuel 19:1-8)

2 Samuel 19:1-8: *Joab was told, “The king is weeping and mourning for Absalom.” 2 And for the whole army the victory that day was turned into mourning, because on that day the troops heard it said, “The king is grieving for his son.” 3 The men stole into the city that day as men steal in who are ashamed when they flee from battle. 4 The king covered his face and cried aloud, “O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!” 5 Then Joab went into the house to the king and said, “Today you have humiliated all your men, who have just saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters and the lives of your wives and concubines. 6 You love those who hate you and hate those who love you. You have made it clear today that the commanders and their men mean*

nothing to you. I see that you would be pleased if Absalom were alive today and all of us were dead. 7 Now go out and encourage your men. I swear by the Lord that if you don't go out, not a man will be left with you by nightfall. This will be worse for you than all the calamities that have come on you from your youth till now."

8 So the king got up and took his seat in the gateway. When the men were told, "The king is sitting in the gateway," they all came before him.

-Like Absalom, David appears to have failed to seek the Lord during this difficult time. God's name is almost completely absent in these chapters.

-David grieved for Absalom as a father who loved his son. The first time David refers to Absalom as "my son" is after news of Absalom's death.

-At the same time, he neglected to consider the needs of his own men and the people of Israel. Even though they had been victorious, David's grief and reactions led the men to act as if they had been defeated.

-Once again Joab intervened and convinced David to take his seat in the gateway, signaling to Israel that they could once again be gathered to their King before he retook his throne in Jerusalem.

Other Scriptures Referenced:

2 Samuel 16:20-22: *Absalom said to Ahithophel, "Give us your advice. What should we do?"*

²¹ Ahithophel answered, "Sleep with your father's concubines whom he left to take care of the palace. Then all Israel will hear that you have made yourself obnoxious to your father, and the hands of everyone with you will be more resolute." ²² So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof, and he slept with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

James 1:13-15: *When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.*

2 Samuel 18:18: *During his lifetime Absalom had taken a pillar and erected it in the King's Valley as a monument to himself, for he thought, "I have no son to carry on the memory of my name." He named the pillar after himself, and it is called Absalom's Monument to this day.*