

2 Samuel 18:19 - 19:8

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 November 2023

[0 : 00] 2 Samuel chapter 18, 2 Samuel chapter 18, starting in verse 19. The first part of the 18th chapter is the battle between David's men and the men of Israel following Absalom.

It's the height of Absalom's rebellion. David does not go out to fight the battle. David, by this time, is advanced enough in age that it has been shown in battle.

We'll read that later on in 2 Samuel, I think the 21st chapter. It's not in chronological order, but the events that take place there preceded these events. So there has shown itself that David is not really as fit as he used to be to go out to battle, so his men encourage him to stay behind.

He stays behind his men under the leadership of Joab, go out to fight the battle. David gives a charge to his three commanders. And he asks them to deal kindly with his son Absalom.

You remember, if you were here Sunday evening, you know the battle goes well for the men of David. Absalom is on his royal mule. And as he is fleeing through the forest of Ephraim, his head gets caught in an oak tree.

[1 : 19] Individual finds him but will not touch him, reports it to Joab. Joab and his armor bearers, it tells us, kills Absalom. So Absalom's dead. And that's where we stopped.

And we looked at, really, just the misery of that, that Absalom's life ended in utter disdain for a number of reasons. For one, Scripture tells us in the book of Deuteronomy, cursed is everyone who hangs from a tree.

It also tells us throughout Jewish history and the Jewish culture to have an unmarked grave. It's to be one who's dealt a great curse. And Absalom has an unmarked grave.

As hard as he tried to make a name for himself in the end, really he is forgotten, except for the biblical accounts. And there's nothing that remains of the testimony of his great efforts.

But the king is still in place. The king is imagining the city awaiting. That's where we stopped. So we pick it up in the 19th verse of the 18th chapter.

[2 : 21] We'll read into the 19th chapter, the 8th verse. We'll again kind of end rather abruptly, but it's a good breaking point. It says, Then Ahamez, the son of Zadok, said, Please let me run and bring the king news that the Lord has freed him from the hand of his enemies.

But Joab said to him, You are not the man to carry the news this day, but you shall carry news another day. However, you shall carry no news today, because the king's son is dead. Then Joab said to the Cushite, Go tell the king what you have seen.

So the Cushite bowed to Joab and ran. Now Ahamez, the son of Zadok, said once more to Joab, But whatever happens, please let me also run after the Cushite. And Joab said, Why would you run, my son, since you will have no reward for going?

But whatever happens, he said, I will run. So he said to him, Run. Then Ahamez ran by way of the plane and passed up the Cushite. Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall and raised his eyes and looked, and behold, a man running by himself.

The watchman called and told the king, and the king said, If he is by himself, there is good news in his mouth. And he came nearer and nearer. The watchman saw another man running, and the watchman called to the gatekeeper and said, Behold, another man running by himself.

[3 : 39] And the king said, This one also is bringing good news. The watchman said, I think the running of the first one is like the running of Ahimez, the son of Zadok. And the king said, That is a good man who comes with good news.

Ahimez called and said to the king, All is well. And he prostrated himself before the king with his face to the ground, and he said, Blessed is the Lord your God who has delivered up the men who lifted their hands against my lord the king.

The king said, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And Ahimez answered, When Joab sent the king's servant and your servant, I saw a great tumult, but I did not know what it was.

Then the king said, Turn aside and stand here. So he turned aside and stood still. Behold, the Cushite arrived, and the Cushite said, Let my lord the king receive good news, for the Lord has freed you this day from the hand of all those who rose up against you.

Then the king said to the Cushite, Is it well with the young man Absalom? And the Cushite answered, Let the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be as that young man.

[4 : 43] The king was deeply moved and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And thus he said as he walked, O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom, would I have died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son.

Then it was told Joab, Behold, the king is weeping and mourns for Absalom. The victory that day was turned to mourning for all the people, for the people heard it said that day the king is grieved for his son.

So the people went by stealth into the city that day as people who are humiliated still away when they flee in battle. The king covered his face and cried out with a loud voice, O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son.

Then Joab came into the house to the king and said, Today you have covered with shame the faces of all your servants who today have saved your life and the lives of your sons and daughters, the lives of your wives and the lives of your concubines.

By loving those who hate you and by hating those who love you. For you have shown today that princes and servants are nothing to you. For I know this day that if Absalom were alive and all of us were dead today, then you would be pleased.

[5 : 53] Now therefore arise, go out and speak kindly to your servants for I swear by the Lord, if you do not go out, surely not a man will pass the night with you and this will be worse for you than all the evil that has come upon you from your youth until now.

So the king rose and set in the gate when they told all the people, saying, Behold, the king is sitting in the gate. Then all the people came before the king. Now Israel had fled each to his tents.

2 Samuel 18, verse 19, to 19, verse 8. The latter part of that 8th verse in the 19th chapter really is connected with that which precedes it.

And then it is really in connection with the remainder of Israel, not the people who are with David. We'll get to that later. We'll look at how everything is united later on, which is going to be a long road ahead of them.

But we have now went beyond the pinnacle of Absalom's rebellion and the rebellion is quenched. It's over. It's done. So now we're really in this really instrumental point in the history of the nation and that is the reunification or the reuniting of the nation once again, something that David had been called to do before after Saul's death when Ish-bosheth set up his reign and it opposed the reign of David and Hebron and David united the nation.

[7 : 15] We will see later on how again David is God's man at that time. He does a number of things which are really grand in uniting the nation. But I want you to see this evening a move towards restoration.

There were some things that needed to take place before we could get to a restored nation. There were some matters which had to be addressed. There were some things that really had to be tied up before the nation could move towards that.

May we never forget in reading these accounts and reading the history of what happened that this historical activity is connected to a sinful reality.

Right? That what is taking place in history is directly connected to the fact that David has sinned.

These are the consequences of his sin. These are the things which proceeded as some have said. This is the price paid for forgiven sin. His sin has been forgiven. His sin has found penance before a holy God.

[8 : 25] God has forgiven him his sin. But his consequences will still be paid. Now we know on the other side that we're on this side of the cross but that doesn't mean we sin without consequence.

Right? The wages of sin is death. We know that all sin has consequences connected to it. And we reap the fruit of the seeds we sow. So the events that we see taking place before us are the reaping of the fruit.

If we take David's wording to Nathan literally then David has just reaped the last bit of his harvest. And I say that because when Nathan looked at David before he said you are the man he had told

him a story about a man who went to his neighbor and took his neighbor's sheep.

Remember that story this man was wealthy he had all these sheep but he went and took this one and only sheep that was like a daughter and he offered it as a sacrifice. And David pronounced judgment. As king and judge David said the man should pay back fourfold.

Fourfold. That was his judgment. And then Nathan said you are the man. Since that time the child born to Bathsheba died.

[9 : 39] Tamar was raped. David's oldest one Amon was killed. And now Absalom is dead. It is the full reaping of his sins.

based upon the judgment he declared. But now it's time for restoration. Now it's time to bring the people of God back together.

The nation of the people of God is living in the midst of civil war. Son fighting against father.

Nephew fighting against uncle. Cousin fighting against cousin.

Brothers killing brothers. The greatest of tragedies. But the man that will restore the peace among them is David. David will pass the kingdom on to his son Solomon and Solomon will be one of the few kings of Israel that is a king of peace.

Now his name means peace but I don't think he's the ultimate fulfillment according to scripture when God says that you will have a child or there will be a seed born into you that will be a prince of peace.

[10 : 48] It's not Solomon. It is the prince of peace that we're celebrating this time of year. But David at least hands over a peaceful kingdom a secure kingdom to Solomon.

But it has to be restored. But there's some things that must take place. The first thing we see from the text is that there was a message to deliver. There was a message to deliver. The opposition has been suppressed.

The majority of the nation of Israel had joined Absalom in revolt against King David. David had historically we read from Josephus somewhere around 4,000 men.

We know that he at least had several thousand men because he appointed them rulers of hundreds or leaders of hundreds and leaders of thousands and then he appointed three leaders over them.

So we can ascertain probably between three to four thousand men.

But the majority of the people were following Absalom. We don't know how many people were in Absalom's army. We do know that day that there are thousands and thousands and thousands and thousands of people that die. Most of them are from the men of Israel in opposition and we also know that the forest of Ephraim killed more people than the sword.

[11 : 57] We know that from the text. We understand all of these things. We know that Absalom pays for his own sin. He's not dying because of the sins of his father. He's dying because of his sins. Judgment has come to Absalom as well.

David doesn't know these things yet because again David is not on the battlefield. David's waiting. Now he is a picture and a type of a coming king but he is not an omnipresent king.

He is one still waiting to hear the words. He's not an omniscient king. He's not all knowing so he's waiting. When we go to the battlefield there's a man who wants to deliver the news and that man is Ahimez.

Now Ahimez is the son of one of the priests that David had left behind in Jerusalem when David fled. Ahimez was one of the messengers who brought the plan to David that Ahithophel had said this but they didn't go by that plan so he brought the new plan to David.

He had been a courier of good news. He told David what was going on. He is the one who spoke these things to David before. Ahimez was a man known to be a great messenger, a courier of news and to bring good news and to be a wise man.

[13 : 09] And those couriers were usually amply rewarded. And now Ahimez wants the reward. He wants to go tell David that his enemies are dead. We have to look and see what Joab is doing.

Joab says no you're not going to do that. You're not the man for the job right now. We're going to send the Cushite. Now the Cushite is unnamed. Some translations have Cushite. More than likely it's a Cushite, a man from Cush who is a servant of Joab.

We don't think that that's really his name. When we read it he's just defined by his region. So this unnamed man who more than likely is one of Joab's servants is going to be the man who brings the news. And we ask ourselves why?

Why not Ahimez? Well think back in your biblical history. There have been a number of people who have ran up to David and told him his enemy was dead. David had killed every one of them. Remember the couriers that ran and said that Saul and Jonathan were dead? And David said how do you know they're dead? They said oh well we killed them. David said kill them. They killed them. Remember the couriers that ran up and said that Ish-bosheth was dead?

[14:10] David says how do you know he's dead? Well because we were there. David said kill them. David had not always been very receptive of people coming and telling him his enemies were dead. Joab says well I'm not going to send a him as he's not the man.

I don't want to tell him that his son is dead. I mean if he's done that when his enemies have died how much more when his son. So he sends the Cushite instead. This message needs to be delivered.

The king needs to know what is taking place in the battle. But Ahimehaz won't leave him alone. You read it he's there and he's nagging him and he's nagging him and he's nagging him. He wants the reward of going.

So Joab says okay go. Evidently he's faster. Some translators will tell you the Cushite probably took his time because he like everyone else knew that David didn't receive good news real good. Sometimes David had a way of taking good news and making it bad. So if you're going to be the man who's going to deliver this news and you know that everybody that's ran ahead for you with similar news have died you're going to really think things through before how you tell the king his son is dead.

[15:15] So Cushite takes his time and Ahimehaz goes a longer way around. If you look on a map he goes to the plain rather than going over the mountain taking the direct step but he beats him there. Why? Because he wants the glory of being the man who delivers the news.

He wants that. This message that needs to be delivered. Victory is secure. It's good news right? So he gets there. The problem is the king is not so concerned about how the battle went.

The king is concerned about his son. We can read into it all we want to. I know we read into it sometimes and say well he's pampering his son but we also see a compassionate love of a father right? We know that. While we were yet sinners Christ died for us.

God loved us so much that while we were in open rebellion leading a rebellion against him he loved us and died for us and paid his ultimate price for us. He sent his son to die in our place.

David here declares in the passage I wish that I had died for you. God declares I'm going to send my son to die for you. So we see those loving attributes of the father and we can't judge.

[16:15] I think Charles Spurgeon once said in relation to this passage we dare not judge the man's actions until we've walked in that man's shoes. We don't know. It's easy to sit on this side of history and go oh that's wrong, that's wrong, that's wrong.

But he's expressing genuine love. So when Ahimez gets there he delivers the news peace, the words actually shalom, all is well, all is peace and he says the battle is win, all your enemies are surpassed.

And David asked the one question Ahimez didn't want to answer. How'd he go with my son? Well he lies. He said oh well when I left there was a great tumult going on over there and I don't know. That's everybody knew what had happened. Joab had already killed him, they had already buried him. He didn't want to answer the one thing the king desired to know because he didn't know how. So the king tells him go stand to the side. So he who was so quick to get there stood off to the side when someone else delivered the real news.

[17:17] Cushach's the only man that ever brings any news to David and lives. Why? Because he did it. Truthfully but also sympathetically he didn't just say Absalom's dead.

He said may all those who oppose my lord the king end in the same manner. He reminded him of the opposition and of the death. He reminded him of the battle that was being fought.

Right? David's heart is broken. What do we gain from all this? Listen there are many, many, many, many people who want to deliver the message. Many people want to give good news. But until we're ready to deliver the full message, let's not be so quick to run.

It is the full message that needed to be delivered. It's not just enough to say the battle is won. It is all of it that had to be declared to the king. We need the full counsel.

We bring that even into our own life. It's really easy to stand up and look at scripture and to pick and choose our passages of scripture and declare to people all these wondrous things.

[18:28] Right? It's really easy to say God is love and God is love. But we cannot forget his justice. We cannot forget his truthfulness. We cannot forget his holiness. We have to deliver the full counsel of the message.

We can't pick and choose the parts that sound good and make us popular. That's the reality. We have to do these things as deliverers of the message.

So there was a message to deliver. The second thing that we notice in this passage before we can move towards restoration is mourning to overcome. A mourning season to overcome.

David hears the news. His heart's broken. He turns and walks away from Cushite and Ahimez and he goes to the upper room of the city wall.

He tells us that he covered his head. Historians tell you that he was plucking his hair out. It was really just a dark season. Right? If he had wept over the death of Saul, if he had wept over the death of Jonathan, if he had wept over the death of Ish-bosheth, if he had wept over the death of Abner, and all these he did weep over, then how much more should we expect him to weep and mourn over the death of his son?

[19:45] So he's mourning. And he's crying out, oh my son, oh my son, oh Absalom, my son, I wish that I had died in your place. Listen, mourning is not a bad thing.

The danger comes is when the mourning and the grief began to overcome the calling that God had on David's life. The grief and the mourning and the brokenness that David is experiencing is a natural thing that we should anticipate him to understand.

And more than likely the grief was so deep because David knew the reality that this is a consequence of my sin. These are things which I have done.

And he understood that and that grief is a is a wondrous thing. One Bible commentator made the point that notice that in all of this account we've yet to see where David consulted the Lord.

We've yet to see that. Now there are Psalms that arise from this text and we see that David's heart was definitely soft towards the things of God. We see that that David was crying out to him throughout the Psalms.

[20:58] But the text never tells us that he sought the face of the Lord. He was just overwhelmed with human emotions. He's rightfully and accurately grieved over the loss of his son.

But this mourning becomes sinful because God has a plan. God has a purpose for David. He has a calling on David's life. And the mourning became sinful because it began to overshadow the work and the efforts of others.

And it began to take precedence and it began to exalt the sinner as opposed to praising the victor. And David had to overcome this.

He had to walk through this season. Because at this time he's only looking at physical connections. He's not really looking at spiritual realities. Absalom had, you know, he had plotted and planned for years and killed his brother.

He had plotted and planned for years and revolted against his father. He had taken the multitudes of the people of Israel away from him. All these things had happened. He had never been confronted on his sins.

[22:05] Never been held accountable. And now that day of judgment has come. And David's grieved. Now, the wording of Joab seems very harsh. Right? Joab's going to be replaced in just a few verses, by the way, in the 19th chapter.

He'll be replaced by his cousin, the leader of Israel's army. He's going to replace him more than likely. We have to think that David very quickly finds out how Absalom died.

And so he replaces Joab. But it's also an effort. It's one of the grand things of uniting the people of Israel back with the men of David.

And he bridges that gap. We'll get to that later. But Joab, not a model character by any means. We don't want to ever lift up Joab and say, let's all be a bunch of Joabs, right?

He's kind of like the waves of the seas tossed to and froze. The book of James says he has high points. He has some very low points. And while his wording seems harsh when he confronts David, we have to at least be thankful that there was someone to walk beside David to call him back to it.

[23:13] To David, right now in your mourning and your grief, you're really belittling those who have fought for you. There were men who had chosen to stay faithful to the true king.

There were men who, contrary to the majority of people, didn't get caught up in the excitement and empty promises of Absalom.

There were men who had walked beside David, who had provided for him. There were men who went and fought in his place and put their lives on the line for him.

And Joab was calling David to this reality. Now, it looks like a threat where he says, if you don't do anything, we're going to leave you. Everybody's going to leave and I'm going to take the kingdom out of your hand.

But we have to thank God for the wake-up call that happened in David's life. And it happened through an individual, which leads us to the third and final thing that we notice on this move towards restoration. There are men to acknowledge.

[24 : 17] There are men to acknowledge. No man or woman stands on their own. It took Joab going into the king's presence with the boldness to remind him that there were people out there that needed recognition.

It took Joab to have the boldness to confront a king who was caught up in physical emotions and was forsaking the calling that God had on his life at that moment.

It would be real easy for the grief and the sorrow and the mourning to spiral out of control so much so that the nation of Israel was never restored. But this is God's man. This is who he wants, right? And there's a man Joab beside him. But it also took all these other people from the moment David leaves Jerusalem. We see individual after individual after individual after individual meeting him, right? From the priests that are left behind, from the couriers that bring the message, from the woman who hid the couriers down in a well, from those who brought the food to him, for those who brought beds, all these people and then all these soldiers who went and fought, they were all there standing with the true king.

The majority of Israel had went down the broad path of Absalom's excitement. They had got carried away in all of these things.

[25 : 38] The majority of the people were on the side of the rebellion because it was the new thing. But these, this remnant over here, had stayed faithful. They had left.

They went with him. They had fought for him. And these were men that needed to be acknowledged. Men and women, because women were involved in that as well. We see it throughout the biblical account.

Who needed to know that their efforts did not go unnoticed because the tragedy of David's mourning was that when the victors came back, they had to sneak into the city as if they had lost. And Joab tells them, you're bringing victors' shame. You're making it seem as if what they've done was a bad thing. But they fought for you. And you need to go acknowledge that reality that they've stood in the gap for you, that they've laid down their lives for you.

And David goes, it tells us that he goes down and he sits outside the gate and all the people hear about it and everybody comes before him. And this is really just the king welcoming them into his presence and acknowledging the reality that they stayed true.

[26 : 48] You know, to us, we look at that and we say, well, okay, that's great. David about messed up, but at least he had somebody beside him. With the other side of that, remember the application.

If we carry that theme throughout scripture, we have a king of kings and lord of lords that we know is going to be victorious. He fights his battles. We understand that.

But when we read those letters to the churches in Revelation, I love the ending of every one of those. But to the one who overcomes. But to the one who overcomes.

But to the one who overcomes. We see it each and every time. There are promises connected to those who overcome, who stay faithful, even in days of doubt and discord and disruptions.

Even when everybody else is being caught up and carried away by the latest thing. See, the reality is, is we understand that God is so faithful. It's so amazing.

[27 : 51] Even if we just take it all the way to that last book, we're reading the book of Revelation. It's always caught me as just a striking reality that Satan gives everybody a number and he gives them the same number, right?

The mark of the beast is 666, which is the number of man. But God records a name. And it's an individual's name. And he writes that name down in the Lamb's book of life and he gives a new name.

Why? Because he always recognizes those who stand with him. Does he have to? No. But there is no shame. There is no, listen, we're not sneaking into the heavenly Jerusalem.

When I go to the wedding supper of the Lamb, I'm not going to steal away as if we lost the battle. No, we go in victoriously in triumph and in pomp and in celebration because the king before us has won the battle.

He's won the day. But he knows us by name. He recognizes us. The enemy numbers us and we're cast aside. The king names us and records it so that it's never forgotten.

[28 : 55] He etches it in stone, it tells us. While we read, and I'm like you, and I prayed even this morning in my daily reading, Lord, as I read through this listing of names, help me to, for one, make it through them and help me also to remember them while they're there.

Right? You're reading in the Old Testament and there's all these genealogies and all these names and you're like, why are they there? Because God's people always have a name. They always have names.

Because they're individuals that he recognizes, he acknowledges, and he knows their faithfulness and even knows their failures, but yet he records them. I'm so amazed when I'll read scripture.

One of the grandest, and I know I've preached it and I know I've told you this before, one of my favorite parts of the Christmas season is opening up the book of Matthew and reading the genealogy of Christ.

It astounds me. Because we find the names of men and women. We find the names of people with a story and people with a past.

[29 : 58] We find the names of one woman that's always defined as the harlot. You know, her name's in there. We find the names of people that we don't expect to be there, but we find them connected to one individual and that is Jesus Christ.

We find the name of a man who was told he would never have a descendant upon the throne of David. We found a man named Coniah or Jeconiah, depending on where you're reading it in scripture.

In Matthew, Matthew records his name, Jeconiah, who was a descendant of David, that when they were led to deportation, the Babylonian exile, Jeconiah had been so wicked, God declared that he would never have a descendant sitting upon the throne.

But when you read the book of Matthew, you say, well, it says Jeconiah. Why? Because Matthew was a Jew writing to Jewish people and the names of their men really mattered, right? So the right to the throne legally went through the names.

But spiritually, Jesus had no right to the throne through Jeconiah because God had declared that no descendant of Jeconiah was set upon the throne. But when you open up the book of Luke and you go to Luke chapter three, you read the second genealogy of Christ and that genealogy traces its way through Mary and Jeconiah is not included in that name.

[31 : 03] There's this one name of one of David's son. And it's only mentioned one other time in scripture. Why? Because that name matters. The reason we know he was born when David moved into Jerusalem is because we need to know he's a descendant of David so that when his name pops up in the book of Luke chapter three, as being in the genealogy of Christ, now we know that Jesus has the legal right to the throne, but he also has the spiritual right to the throne.

Why? Because God knows names. He recognizes us. There are men to acknowledge. The enemy could care less.

Right? We don't know the names of all those who oppose. We know Absalom and his name's forgotten throughout history. But God knows names. He sets at the gate and he welcomes them. He acknowledges their faith. There'll be a day where we stand before our savior. We stand before the king of kings and lord of lords. I don't know what heaven's going to be like. I don't really, I know there's a lot of accounts.

People could tell you that. I don't know how it's all going to happen. But I know when I'm gathered around the throne, he's going to know I'm there. He's going to know me. I'm going to know him like I've never known him before.

[32 : 14] Paul says that we will be known as he is known. Right? And we'll cast our crowns at his feet. Why? Because there'll be a day of acknowledgement. He's the king and we're his.

We're gathered around, worshiping, celebrating the victory. That's what David was failing to do here. But that's what we have promised to us that we would do there. And the remnant stays faithful.

No matter what everybody else is doing. No matter where the whims of mankind are taking them. Whatever is popular, whatever is the new thing. Right? Absalom was the new thing. It died. Read church history. There's a lot of new things. They all die. That's the one thing I found. There's a lot of, you read a lot of church history. There's always a new way, a new thing. And it all dies. There's only one consistent thing that I found in church history.

It's the word of God that exhausts the son of God. And calls the people of God to live in utter devotion to him. That's it. Everything else falls.

[33 : 13] Because the king of kings and lord of lords wins the battle in the end. And he recognizes those who stay faithful to him. 2 Samuel 18 verses 19 through 19 or chapter 19 verse 8.

We see this move towards restoration. Thank you, brothers. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.