

## Trusting God in Trials

2 Samuel 15:13-32

February 14, 2010

### Intro

Last week as we were studying in chapter 14, we began to see the unfolding of consequences for the sin that David allowed in his life. The adultery with Bathsheba, causing her husband to die at the hands of the Ammonites, and then taking Bathsheba as his wife, were all part of the greatest failure of David's life.

The consequences also began to be lived out in his family. His son, Amnon, had raped his half-sister, Tamar, but David was paralyzed by his own sin and took no action. Finally, Tamar's brother, Absalom, took matters into his own hands and arranged for Amnon's death. Absalom then fled the country and was banished for three years while again David took no action.

Finally, David extended mercy to Absalom and had him brought back to Jerusalem, but would not see his face. For two more years bitterness built up in Absalom's heart. Finally, Absalom pleaded to see David's face and when David agreed to see him, David kissed Absalom's face.

But it was too little, too late. Absalom decided to build a conspiracy against David. He positioned himself at the gate of the city, and began to win the favor of the people of Israel. When the time was ripe, he set up his headquarters in Hebron and prepared to launch a coup.

When David got word of just how deep this conspiracy was, he decided to leave Jerusalem to spare it from the calamity of war. That is where we pick it up in chapter 15.

David was facing the greatest trouble of his life, but here is where we can learn great lessons for ourselves. We may find ourselves going through a time of great trouble, and it may even be the consequences of our own doing, but these are great lessons that we must all receive for ourselves.

### **I. Stay Completely Loyal to God**

- 1 As David fled from Jerusalem, some interesting events unfolded. One of those was an encounter with a man who had only been in Jerusalem for one day. His name was Ittai.
- 2 As there have been so many sovereign appointments for David, we can only conclude that this was one of them.
- 3 What David saw in Ittai could only have encouraged David in his darkest night. But perhaps it also served as an example of what God expected from David.

#### A. God doesn't promise us an easy path

- 4 David stopped at the last house and watched as those who were loyal to him

passed on beside him. That was when he saw Ittai and said to him, "Why will you also go with us? Return and remain with the king."

- 5 Then David said, "Shall I make you wander with us?" In other words, this will not be an easy path, maybe you should return.
- 6 But you have to love Ittai's response. What amazing loyalty, what amazing commitment; for his response shows a powerful strength of character and commitment.
- 7 "As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever the king may be, whether for death over life, there also your servant will be." I love the fact that he calls him king twice, even after David called Absalom king.
- 8 This is the same kind of commitment that the Lord wants to see in our lives as well, yet God does not promise us an easy path either.

**John 16:33, "These things I have spoken to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world."**

**Luke 9:57-58, As they were going along the road, someone said to Him, "I will follow You wherever You go." And Jesus said to him, "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."**

B. This is not the gospel of the wonderful self

- 1 Many people are so typically self focused and what appeals to them is the gospel of self-esteem.

**Illus – Many people believe that they just need to focus more on themselves to improve their lives. To quote from that famous American Philosopher, Bob Wiley, "I feel good, I feel great; I feel wonderful."**

**After all, isn't it all about you?**

**Illus – I was talking with my son about basketball and he said, "I really don't like it when we get really down and things get really difficult. That's when I want to quit."**

**"But," I responded, "that's when you discover what you are inside. That's when you come to know your own character."**

- 2 What Jesus said was actually the opposite of what the world says...

**Matthew 16:24, Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me."**

- 3 We must be willing to say, "no" when the world says, "yes."
- 4 But, having said that, there is also great joy, and peace, and contentment that comes from a total commitment to Jesus Christ, even through all the difficult challenges of life.

**Philippians 4:12-13, I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.**

**Philippians 4:7, And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.**

**Psalms 36:8, They drink their fill of the abundance of Your house; and You give them to drink of the river of Your delights.**

- 1 The pleasures of the world are limited. They only last so long and then they let you down.
- 2 We have a wonderful example when we look at the life of Moses.

**Hebrews 11:24-27 Moses chose God over the world**

- 1 There was a time when many of the people who had been following Christ left Him when He said something difficult to hear, but then He turned to His disciples and they responded well...

**John 6:68-69, Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."**

## **II. You Can Trust in God's Mercy**

- 1 As various men came passing before David on the way out of Jerusalem, Zadok the priest, also came, along with all the Levites with him, carrying the ark of the covenant of God.
- 2 They then set the Ark of the covenant down before David and the king said to Zadok, the priest, "Return the Ark of God to the city. If I find favor in the sight of the Lord, then He will bring me back again."

A. "Here I am, Lord, I trust you"

- 1 Here in these verses, David becomes an example of the heart of repentance. What we see is that David completely trusts that God in his judgment will do what's best and what's right.
- 2 Verse 26, David said, "Behold, here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him."
- 3 David knows that the ark of the covenant is not what he needs, what he needs is the favor of God. He knows he doesn't deserve it, so he laid himself out before God's judgment.
- 4 This is the same heart that we see in the book of Isaiah chapter 40 when Israel had said, "My way is hidden from the Lord..."

**Illus – God always knows the truth. Last winter when we cancelled the service because of the snow, I decided to bring donuts to all our neighbors...**

- 5 What David is saying here, is so powerful. "Even when you're disappointed in me God, I will trust in You to do that which is right and good for my life."

**Illus – Some time later as David was continuing his escape from Jerusalem, someone from the house of Saul named Shimei, came out cursing at David and throwing stones at him.**

**But David would not get angry, nor retaliate.**

**2 Samuel 16:12-13 Perhaps the Lord will return good to me....**

- 6 What David is doing is throwing Himself entirely on God's mercy, but that is a wonderful place to be.

**Lamentations 3:22-23, Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.**

- 7 David has renewed his faith and completely trusts in God's hand in His life at this point. We see this in other places in scripture as well.
- 8 Job made a famous statement of faith when he said...

**Job 13:15, "Though He slay me, yet I will hope in Him."**

B. Pray and then trust His answer

- 9 When David found out that his good friend Ahithophel was among the conspirators with Absalom, it broke his heart, yet he must also have understood,

because Ahithophel was the grandfather of Bathsheba.

- 10 But what David did next is instructive. He prayed, "O Lord, I pray, make the counsel of Ahithophel foolishness."
- 11 David is not telling God what to do, is petitioning God, he's asking, and then trusting that God will do what is best for David, for Israel, and for God's great name."
- 12 In the same way, then, when we pray, we should not tell God what to do. We can certainly tell Him our heart, but we must also know that His ways are higher than ours.

**Illus - Sometimes I have prayed, "God, I ask this because I think it may be best, but I admit that I don't know everything about this. I place this in your care. Your ways are better than mine. I trust that you will do that which is right."**

**Illus – How many times have our children asks for things which aren't good for them? But what we want is for them to trust us. I remember when we were going to Israel and we decided to have someone stay at our house; one of kids didn't like it. "You don't trust me," he said. "No," I responded, "the real issue here is whether you will trust me."**

C. Don't be anxious, rest in God

- 13 It's important for us to look at the psalm that David wrote when he fled from Absalom his son.
- 14 It's in that psalm where we understand that David rested in God...

**Psalm 3:1-8 You are shield about me... I lay down and I slept.**

- 15 There *is* help for us in God. When David was fleeing Jerusalem because of his sin, Jesus had it in his heart that he would come *into* Jerusalem because of David's sins; and all of ours as well.