



HUMAN DISGRACE • God Fulfills His Word through Man's Sin

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

2 Samuel 13:1-39

This chapter already begins to fulfill the word of the LORD that evil will not depart from David's house. We can say that David's house is full of con-artists, misfits and lowlifes. In this one chapter alone there are two violent crimes: a rape and a murder. Absalom, who murders Amnon, runs away from home again and becomes a fugitive. David's house is falling apart and it all goes back to David's sin.

This episode shows how total our depravity is and that though God is gracious and merciful, He is also a just God who demands holiness. David's sin from chapter 11 is paying terrible dividends for his family. This lesson should lead your group members to see their own sin (and hate it!), turn to the Lord Jesus – God's great King – and cast themselves upon the grace of His gospel.

Amnon and Tamar (13:1-22)

Absalom has a beautiful sister named Tamar. Amnon, their half-brother, takes a liking to Tamar and lusts after her. Tamar is a virgin, which stresses Amnon to the max. "It seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her" (v. 2). Amnon had a sneaky friend named Jonadab who told him to pull a trick on Tamar so he could get what he wanted. "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat from her hand'" (v. 5). Amnon does just that and David and Tamar fall right into the trap. Once he is alone with Tamar, he takes hold of her and says, "Come, lie with me, my sister" (v. 11), but Tamar reasons with him saying that this kind of thing should not be done in Israel. She even tells Amnon to ask David for her – then at least it would be legal. Amnon disregards her requests and rapes her. When he is finished, he turns against her and says, "Get up! Go!" This reveals even more of Amnon's wicked heart. Amnon greatly feels the emptiness; Tamar mourns the loss of her virginity and the fact it was taken by her brother.

This shows how wicked the human heart is and that what is brewed in the heart eventually overflows into evil action. Jesus said in Mark 7:21, "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts." And in James 1:14, James says that each person is responsible for their own wickedness because our own desires lure us toward sin. Evil thoughts eventually come to life in evil actions. Pray that your group (and you!) will see the areas in their heart that are evil and have potential to spring forth into external sin.

Absalom Murders Amnon then Flees (13:23-39)

What's the Big Idea?

This passage shows God beginning to fulfill His word to David that evil would not depart from his household (2 Samuel 12:10). Through Amnon's rape of Tamar and the responses of Jonadab, David and Absalom, God somberly shows our need for His salvation.

What's the Problem?

Our depravity is total and we are more inclined to pursue our selfish desires than the grace that God freely offers.



As Tamar's brother, Absalom is outraged at Amnon. Absalom devises a plot to get all of David's sons in one place so that he might kill Amnon. David did not like the idea of all his sons going, but Absalom pressed until David caved in. So Absalom commanded his servants to kill Amnon on his signal. Word gets back to David and he is inaccurately informed that Absalom has killed all of his sons. David "tore his garments and lay on the earth" (v. 31) just as Jonadab says, "Let not my lord supposed that they have killed all the young men the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead" (v. 32).

In fear, Absalom flees – just as Adam and Eve hid from God when they knew they were guilty. Absalom stays away from Jerusalem for three years. All the while, David mourns his absence. Verse 39 says, "The spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom because he was comforted about Amnon, since he was dead." It really is sad that David misses Absalom, the man who took vindication into his own hands and murdered his brother – for that is what David was starkly against in the last part of I Samuel! Notice also that none of David's decisions and mourning involves seeking the Lord. David needs to desperately turn to the Lord, seek mercy and forgiveness and courageously lead his family.

This passage shows the awful nature of the human condition and how much we need God. Let your group see their own brokenness instead of condemning the people they read about. Tell your group of the absolute necessity to turn to the gospel of grace each day as we trust for God's transforming work in our lives.

What's Our Response?

We must cast ourselves upon the grace of the gospel.

What Are the Questions?

2 Samuel 13:1-39

LAUNCH

How does it affect you when you realize that the ugliness you see in other people's lives has the same potential to express itself in your life?

EXPLORE

Read 2 Samuel 13:1-22.

1. What is the setting of this chapter?
2. How would you characterize Jonadab's character and the advice he gives Amnon?
3. How does Tamar respond when Amnon begins to pursue her?
4. How does Amnon respond to Tamar's pleas, and what does this say about him?
5. What is significant about the way Amnon responds once he has raped Tamar?
6. What is significant about David's response to this news?

Read 2 Samuel 13:23-39.

7. How does Absalom plan to resolve his hatred for Amnon for raping Tamar?
8. What happens when the news reaches David?
9. What does Absalom do after Amnon's death?
10. What is going on in David's heart as the chapter closes?
11. In what ways do you see, in your life, Amnon's passion without love, Jonadab's wisdom without principle, David's anger without justice and Absalom's hatred without restraint?

APPLY

12. Read Leviticus 18:9 & 11; 20:17 and Deuteronomy 22:25 & 27:25. How do these passages support Tamar telling Amnon that his actions were such a disgrace?

different category than us, and that we all need the kindness of God our Savior in our lives?
13. Read 2 Samuel 12:10. In what way is God "nowhere" but "everywhere" in 2 Samuel 13?
14. This chapter portrays each male character in a negative light. How would you describe Amnon, Jonadab, David and Absalom in your own words?
15. Read Titus 3:1-7. How do these verses show us that Amnon, Jonadab, David and Absalom are not in a

16. In what specific ways does this passage motivate you to cast yourself upon the grace of the gospel?

17. As you consider the specific things going on in your life right now, how does it both sober and encourage you that God always fulfills His word?

What Are the Answers?

1. Amnon desires his sister, Tamar, but can't have her.
2. Verse 3 describes him as a very shrewd man. Yet he has no principle. His advice expresses his character.
3. She tries to reason with him not to go through with his intentions because it would be a disgrace and because she would never get rid of her reproach. When he insists, she urges him to ask the king.
4. He ignores her, overpowers her and rapes her. His response shows that he just cares about himself and has no regard for her or God.
5. It shows the ugliness, devastation and lack of satisfaction of passion without love.
6. It's fitting that he's angry about it, but it's sad that his anger doesn't lead him to vindicate Tamar or censure Amnon.
7. He plans to invite Amnon to a party, get him drunk, and have his servants kill him.
8. David initially hears the news inaccurately and thinks all his sons are dead. He begins to grieve profusely, then discovers that only Amnon is dead.
9. He goes into exile.
10. His heart is longing for Absalom and is comforted that Amnon is dead.
11. Allow the group to discuss.
12. These passages show clearly that rape and incest go against God's heart for relationships.
13. He's nowhere in the sense that the chapter focuses on the godless actions of Amnon, Jonadab, David and Absalom. He's everywhere in that He's fulfilling His word that the sword would not depart from David's house.
14. Bible scholar Dale Ralph Davis says Amnon has passion without love, Jonadab has wisdom without principle, David has anger without justice and Absalom has hatred without restraint.
15. These verses show that the same evil that was in those men's hearts also resides in ours. Only Jesus' kindness and grace can renew and change us.
16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

But Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day he violated his sister Tamar."

2 Samuel 13:32