



TROUBLE AT HOME • God Continues Judgement on David's House

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

2 Samuel 14:1-33

Our lesson continues from our last study after Absalom fled from Jerusalem and away from David. Joab, one of David's commanders, notices that David's heart is breaking for Absalom and he senses an opportunity to bring him back home to David. Joab sends a woman to David and she tells him a story that will help him figure out what to do with Absalom (very similar to chapter 12 when Nathan convicts David with a story).

David sends Joab to get Absalom and Absalom comes home, but he stays away from the presence of the king for two years. At the chapter's end, it appears as if Absalom is repenting of his sin, but in reality, he is setting himself up to rebel against his father and pursue the throne of Israel. There is much evil in this passage, but don't be fooled, God is working through it all. God is using Joab's scheming, Absalom's impetuosity and David's weak leadership to move toward the fulfillment of His word in 2 Samuel 12:10. Continue to communicate God's sovereignty in all things and man's responsibility in his evil choices and actions.

The Wise Woman from Tekoa (14:1-20)

As Joab discerns David's heart for Absalom, he takes advantage of the situation to bring Absalom back into David's favor. He calls for a wise woman from Tekoa to pretend to be a mourner who has just lost a son (v. 2-6). She proceeds to tell David that the people want to harm the life of the son who lives, but she does not desire that, for if that happened she would be childless. This is an allusion to David's situation with Absalom. David promises the woman, "As the LORD lives, not one hair of your son shall fall to the ground" (v. 11). Theologian R.C. Sproul comments, "The woman requests and secures an oath from David in the name of the LORD...As was the case in Nathan's parable (12:1-6), a judgement is elicited from David's own mouth that will then be used to judge him (v. 13)."

Right now, it doesn't seem as if David is walking with the Lord. It's safe to say he's definitely in the spiritual doldrums. He detects that Joab is behind this plot and so asks him to go find Absalom and bring him home. David should be outraged at his son for murder, but because he is not seeking God's wisdom, he is acting passively, foolishly and wickedly. You and your group should also be outraged at the evil that so often creeps into our own hearts. When we are not passionate about God's holiness and when we don't seek His wisdom, fellowship with God is broken and our lives seem to come undone.

David Sends Joab after Absalom (14:21-33)

What's the Big Idea?

In 2 Samuel 14, God continues to fulfill His word that evil and the sword wouldn't depart from David's house by positioning Absalom to rebel against David. God works through Joab's scheming, Absalom's impetuosity and David's weak leadership to move toward the fulfillment of His promise in 2 Samuel 12:10. This passage shows us that God can use evil to cause His will to come about.

What's the Problem?

Our sinful disposition is to want to rule our own lives instead of submitting to God.



In the last part of our chapter, things start getting a little sticky as Absalom comes home. Actually, you could easily argue that David, Joab and Absalom act a bit childish. Joab brings Absalom back to Jerusalem and David commands Absalom to live in his own house, away from the king's presence. The significance of this is debatable, but what we conclude is that David is still leading poorly. Instead of moving on, pursuing God and protecting his people, he seems to play games with his son. Absalom notices and gets frustrated: "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me to be there still" (v. 32).

Absalom lived in Jerusalem for two years before seeing David. In those two years, Joab ignored Absalom's request to see David twice. Joab did not let Absalom see the king until Absalom, out of sheer anger, burned Joab's field! How sinful (and pitiful)! As Absalom approached his father David, he bowed himself on the ground, and David kissed Absalom. This is pure soap opera material, if you ask me. Absalom comes home, stays away from dad, yet wants to see him. Joab refuses Absalom access to the king, so Absalom burns his fields. Absalom comes to David and poses as a good son, and David falls for the trickery.

Conclusion

God seems to be absent in this chapter, but don't be fooled. He is there. Like chapter 13, this passage's goal is to show how foolish and sinful Absalom, Joab and David really are. Sometimes God seems absent when he is actually just the silent orchestrator, working all things for His glory. All three men want to make themselves their own king and rule this tough situation. Your group's response should be to turn to God's faithfulness and trust that His Son Jesus is our King. Jesus is the only one who can vindicate any wrongs and give us comfort in stressful times.

What's Our Response?

We should seek to rest in God's faithfulness and hope in the ultimate kingship of His Son Jesus.

What Are the Questions?

2 Samuel 14:1-33

LAUNCH

Share an example of God at work, accomplishing His purposes in spite of lacking a cast of human characters.

EXPLORE

Read 2 Samuel 14:1-20.

1. Put the setting of this chapter into your own words?
2. Summarize the words Joab puts into the woman's mouth in verses 4-7?
3. How does David initially respond to her story in verses 8-11?
4. Put into your own words what the woman says in verses 12-17 once David offers her protection?
5. How does David respond to the woman in verses 18-19?
6. In what way does the woman commend David when he exposes her?
7. How do verses 25-27 describe Absalom?
8. How does Absalom handle things after living in Jerusalem two years without seeing his father David?
9. What is Absalom's ultimatum to David?
10. How does David respond to Absalom's ultimatum?
11. In what way do you see yourself in Joab's scheming, the woman's willingness to go along with Joab's scheme, Absalom's impetuosity and/or David's weak leadership?
12. How would you assess David's leadership as described in this chapter?

Read 2 Samuel 14:21-33.

7. How does David respond to the woman's story when he speaks with Joab in verses 21-24?

APPLY

14. How are the woman's confrontation with David and Nathan's confrontation with David in 2 Samuel 12 similar and different?
15. Read 2 Samuel 12:10. How do the events of this chapter move toward the fulfillment of God's word in 2 Samuel 12:10?
16. What's a situation you're facing in which you need to hold on to the hope that God is still at work to fulfill His word and accomplish His purposes?
17. Read Psalm 72. In what way does this psalm give you hope as you consider the perfection of kingship in Jesus' kingdom?

What Are the Answers?

1. Joab senses an opportunity to bring Absalom back into favor with David and takes it.
2. She has two sons who got in a fight that resulted in one killing the other. So the family has come to her demanding the life of the other son. The woman mourns this possibility because this would leave her childless.
3. He offers her protection from anyone who demands the life of her son.
4. She suggests that he handle the situation with Absalom the same way he's handling the situation with her.
5. He asks her if Joab is scheming with her in this.
6. She commends his wisdom.
7. He allows Absalom to return to Jerusalem, but he refuses to see him.
8. He's incomparably handsome, highly praised in Israel, has gorgeous hair and has four children, including a beautiful daughter named after his violated sister.
9. He calls for Joab to represent him before David. When Joab doesn't respond to his calls, he has his servants set his field on fire.
10. He calls on him to either find no guilt in him or put him to death.
11. He essentially acquits him, expressed by kissing him.
12. Allow the group to discuss.
13. He's externally attractive, but his character is lacking.
14. The confrontations are similar in that they both involve a story and a "You are the man" punch line. They're different in that Nathan's confrontation exposes David's sin while the woman's confrontation is a sentimental plea to ignore the justice that is due to Absalom.
15. They put Absalom in a position where he can do harm to David, fulfilling God's word that He would raise up evil against him from his own household.
16. Allow the group to discuss.
17. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

Why then have you planned such a thing against the people of God? For in giving this decision the king convicts himself, inasmuch as the king does not bring his banished one home again.

2 Samuel 14:13