



THE WORD FULFILLED • God Uses Brokenness to Bring About His Promise

What Do I Need to Know About the Passage?

2 Samuel 15:1-19:43

This lesson covers quite a large portion of 2 Samuel. It's important to include these chapters together however, because they all connect to the same story of Absalom's rebellion, his death and David's return to Jerusalem after fleeing. This passage should cause your group to praise the Lord for his faithfulness and grace despite our sin. The same God who promised David the kingdom, life and joy will also give it to us because of His Son Jesus. Examine your life, and ask the group to do the same, to see whether you trust the Lord to be faithful and give grace despite knowing that we are totally sinful.

Absalom Conspires, David Flees (15:1-37)

As our long narrative begins, Absalom acquires horses, chariots and soldiers for himself. He is preparing to take over David's throne. In verse 4 we see Absalom's pride. He says, "Oh that I were judge in the land! Then every man with a dispute or cause might come to me, and I would give him justice." Evidently, David had no secretary of justice to hear when people had been violated or wronged. Absalom thought he was hot stuff and could handle that task. Whether or not this compassion and desire is true and good is hard to tell, but we can probably guess that he is jealous of his father and wants the throne (or some kind of power) for himself. Whatever the case, he "stole the hearts of the men of Israel." Suddenly, Absalom was the big star in Jerusalem. The stage is set for a rebellion.

Once David finds out that all Israel is falling for Absalom's charm, he acts quickly. "Arise, and let us flee, or else there will be no escape for us from Absalom" (v. 14). Imagine a king fleeing his own capital and palace! It seems so strange, but David is used to this by now. We see God's promise in 12:10 being fulfilled again. But, for the first time in quite a while, we see David putting his trust in the Lord despite dire circumstances. David trusts in the Lord's provision and protection instead of trusting in the ark (v. 25). He prays that God would thwart Ahithophel's counsel (v. 31). And he inserts Hushai in Absalom's presence as an expression of his trust that God would answer his prayer (v. 34). David has not been walking with God, but that doesn't deter him from seeking the LORD when the situation is gloomy. We can go to God in the best of times and especially in the worst of times.

David is Lied to and Verbally Cursed (16:1-23)

As David continues to flee, Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, meets him. David asks Ziba where Mephibosheth is and Ziba lies. "Behold, he remains in Jerusalem, for he said, 'Today the house of Israel will give me back the kingdom of my father'" (v. 3). Ziba lied so that David would give over Mephibosheth's inheritance to him. David will reverse this decision when he hears Mephibosheth's side of the story (19:24-30). Soon after, David is cursed by Shimei (who probably looks like

What's the Big Idea?

God continues to fulfill His word to David both to establish his house (2 Samuel 7:11-16) and that the sword and evil would stay in his household (2 Samuel 12:10). This passage should cause us to trust in God's faithful word, that though suffering may come, He will refine us and give grace in spite of our sin.

What's the Problem?

We have the tendency to take matters into our own hands instead of trusting God's faithfulness in our lives to provide grace and bring blessing.



a drunken man stumbling down the street). Abishai wants to kill him, but David, sensing this may be a test from the LORD says not to. “Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to” (v. 11). David expresses great trust in God. Shimei is throwing rocks and kicking dirt at David and his men, yet David turns the other cheek. When David arrives at the Jordan River, he refreshes himself there. Again we see David going to the Lord despite the circumstances. God has never let David down, and David has faith that God never will. The chapter closes-out with Absalom coming back to Jerusalem. Hushai was sent by David to scout out what Absalom is planning (15:32-37). Hushai is the answer to David’s prayer that Ahithophel’s counsel would be turned to foolishness (15:31).

Hushai’s Advice (17:1-29)

Absalom prepares to overtake David, and Ahithophel gives his advice. He wants to pursue David immediately. “I will strike down only the king, and I will bring all the people back to you as a bride comes home to her husband” (v. 2-3). This seems good to Absalom, but then the Lord intervenes and uses Hushai to defeat Ahithophel’s counsel. Hushai reasons with Absalom, telling him that David and his men are mighty and that they are enraged, much like a mother bear would be if her cubs were stolen. Technically, David’s cubs (the kingdom) have been stolen and he has every right to be enraged. Hushai’s advice is to gather a huge number of soldiers from all Israel and take their time, instead of taking quick action with smaller numbers. Absalom likes this idea. Verse 14 gives all the credit to God: “For the LORD had ordained to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, so that the LORD might bring harm upon Absalom.” Help your group see that this is a fulfillment of both God’s promises to protect David as well to not let evil depart from David’s house.

Absalom Dies, David Mourns (18:1-19:43)

In our final two chapters, our dramatic episode comes to a screeching halt. As David begins to send his men out to battle, he tells them that he will come along. But his commanders show their utmost respect and honor for their king. “You shall not go out. For if we flee, they will not care about us. If half of us die, they will not care about us. But you are worth ten thousand of us. Therefore it is better that you send us help from the city” (v. 3). How can David say no to that? “Whatever seems best to you,” David says (v. 4). David has one wish before his men go out: “Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom” (v. 5). David still loves his son and has a strong desire for him to repent and turn to God.

Later, as Absalom rides along, preparing to meet David’s men for battle, his mule goes into a thicket and Absalom’s head gets caught in an oak tree. The man who found him told Joab; Joab and his men disobey David and kill Absalom. David gets word and weeps, “O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!” This displays a great weakness in David – not that he hates the death of the wicked (which God also hates, see Ez. 33:11) – but that he disgraces those who risked their lives to save his. Joab tells David that he makes it clear his servants are nothing to him (v. 6).

Chapter 19 shows a series of pardons on David’s part toward his enemies. You can read about them in your study if you’d like. Make sure your attention is drawn to one in particular. Remember when Ziba told David that lie? He said that Mephibosheth had forsaken his allegiance to David (16:1-4). David decides that Ziba and Mephibosheth shall divide their land instead of Ziba getting it all. But Mephibosheth cries, “Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home.” This should be a great picture of how we should treasure God. Do we desire his blessings or him? The gifts or the Giver? Pray that your group desires Jesus more than anything, just as the hymn so beautifully says, “You can have all this world. Give me Jesus.”

What’s Our Response?

We should turn to God by trusting in His faithfulness to fulfill His word and His grace to bring His blessing in spite of our sin.

What Are the Questions?

2 Samuel 15:1-19:43

LAUNCH

Share a recent example of struggling to hope in God alone.

EXPLORE

Read 2 Samuel 15.

1. What does Absalom do to stage a coup against his father King David?
2. What do the people David encounters in the rest of this chapter do to express friendship and loyalty to him as he flees Jerusalem?
3. How does David express trust in the Lord in this chapter?

Read 2 Samuel 16.

4. What do you make of Ziba's overture to David and David's response?
5. How does David express trust in the Lord in his response to Shimei?
6. How do you see shrewdness in Hushai's interaction with Absalom?

Read 2 Samuel 17.

7. Summarize the two schools of counsel Absalom receives and how God uses them to bring calamity on Absalom (2 Samuel 17:14).

8. How does Ahithophel respond when he discovers that Absalom hasn't followed his counsel, and what does this say about him?

Read 2 Samuel 18.

9. What happens to Absalom in this chapter, and how does David respond to the news?

Read 2 Samuel 19.

10. What does Joab say to reprove David for his disposition in the wake of Absalom's death?
11. What is the people's dilemma, and how does David resolve it?
12. What seems to motivate the people with whom David interacts en route to Jerusalem?
13. What stands out to you about David's responses to these men?

APPLY

14. Read 2 Samuel 7:11-12, 16 and 2 Samuel 12:10-12. How do these words from God dominate the narrative in 2 Samuel 15-19?
15. Look again at 2 Samuel 7:12-16. Since Jesus is the ultimate fulfillment of God's promise to raise up a descendant of David and establish his kingdom forever, how do you see in David both glimmers and shortfalls of the kingdom that would come through Jesus in 2 Samuel 15-19?
16. 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?
17. As you consider the certainty of God fulfilling His word in your life and our world, what aspects of that fulfillment give you hope and what aspects trouble you?
18. Consider David's words in Psalm 62:5-6 and think about something challenging you're dealing with right now. How does this section of David's story lead you to hope in God alone?

What Are the Answers?

1. He sways the people by positioning himself as favorable toward their plights while portraying David as uncaring. Then he positioned spies throughout Israel to proclaim him king upon his trip to Hebron.
2. Ittai promises to serve him in spite of being a foreigner. Zadok, Abiathar and the rest of the priests offer to bring the ark with David as he flees Jerusalem. Hushai offers to go with him but agrees to stay in Jerusalem to thwart the counsel of Ahithophel, Absalom's chief counselor.
3. He trusts in the Lord's provision and protection instead of trusting in the ark. He prays that God would thwart Ahithophel's counsel. And he inserts Hushai in Absalom's presence as an expression of his trust that God would answer his prayer.
4. Ziba seems to be looking for an opportunity to advance himself, and David seems to oblige him if for no other reason than his inability to check out his story.
5. He acknowledges the possibility that the LORD has told him to curse him and entrusts himself to God's grace.
6. He answers Absalom's questions in a way that sounds like he's expressing loyalty to him when in fact he's expressing shrouded loyalty to David.
7. Ahithophel counsels that Absalom should sleep with David's concubines and enlist him to lead 12,000 men to strike David quickly. Hushai counsels that Absalom should wait till he gathers all Israel to attack David and his men. Absalom chooses Hushai's counsel, which leads to his undoing.
8. He kills himself, which shows he put too much stock in his position as a counselor and may also indicate that he saw the writing on the wall concerning his future as David would resume power.
9. Absalom dies at the hands of Joab, and David is grief-stricken.
10. He says he's brought shame upon his people by loving those who hate him and hating those who love him. He says he needs to speak kindly to the people who stood by his side or worse things would befall him.
11. They'd given their allegiance to Absalom, who is now dead, while David had delivered them from the Philistines. As they wonder about restoring David to kingship, David assures them he won't exact revenge upon them and moves their hearts to renew allegiance to him.
12. Expediency for Shimei, loyalty for Mephibosheth and contentment for Barzillai.
13. He extends grace to Shimei, understanding to Mephibosheth and kindness to Barzillai.
14. God faithfully fulfills His promise to establish an enduring kingdom for David against all opposition. But He also faithfully fulfills His promise to raise up evil against him from his own household because of his sin.
15. Glimmers: David entrusts himself to God, extends grace to those who don't deserve it and experiences the inevitability of God's promise to establish His kingdom. Shortfalls: David's sentimentality about Absalom shackles him so that he can't give stronger leadership to his kingdom.
16. 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.
- 17.-18. Allow the group to discuss.

Memorize

Leave him alone, and let him curse, for the LORD has told him to. It may be that the LORD will look on the wrong done to me, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing today.

2 Samuel 16:11b-12

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