

## **Don't Let Your Heart Be Stolen From the King**

Background: Absalom, David's son has been restored but David makes an error as a parent. Absalom never truly repents in Chapter 14 and doesn't think he has done anything wrong. He doesn't truly submit to the King, his father but his outward actions are merely a cover up of his true intentions. In this chapter we see the results of David's poor judgment in parenting, we see how God delivers judgment on him for his previous crimes from 2 Samuel Chapter 12, and the danger of pride and false repentance.

### 2 Samuel 15

*15 And it came to pass after this, that Absalom prepared him chariots and horses, and fifty men to run before him. <sup>2</sup> And Absalom rose up early, and stood beside the way of the gate: and it was so, that when any man that had a controversy came to the king for judgment, then Absalom called unto him, and said, Of what city art thou? And he said, Thy servant is of one of the tribes of Israel.*

*<sup>3</sup> And Absalom said unto him, See, thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee. <sup>4</sup> Absalom said moreover, Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice!*

*<sup>5</sup> And it was so, that when any man came nigh to him to do him obeisance, he put forth his hand, and took him, and kissed him. <sup>6</sup> And on this manner did Absalom to all Israel that came to the king for judgment: so Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel.*

Verse 1 – Absalom prepares an entourage. In his pride he begins to set the stage by presenting an image of authority.

Verse 2 – Absalom gets to the gate early where people came to have issues decided. He would speak to people who were coming there to get a decision and justice.

- Important, notice who he is targeting. He is looking for people who are in need or have an issue or have a problem they need a resolution to.
- He wants to get to them before they get to the King. He wants to give them a word and speak to them before they speak to the King.
- He asks them what city they are from. Why? Because he is trying to establish a relationship and appear like he is concerned about them. It is a lie. We know from reading the story that

Absalom is full of pride and primarily cares only about himself. But the people are being fooled by his cunning approach.

Verse 3 – Absalom would hear and agree with the person but tell them there is no one of authority to hear the case in their favor.

- He implies the King won't hear them and he can't help them.
- When you notice that Absalom is trying to convince these people who are in need that they cannot trust the King to resolve their problems, it reminds me of a similar approach in the Bible.

Refer to Matthew Chapter 4 and the temptation of Christ in the wilderness. Notice the similarities between what the devil uses and the approach Absalom is using. Observe:

- Jesus enters the wilderness in need....he has been fasting for 40 days and is hungry. The tempter comes to him when he is in need. Likewise Absalom seeks to tempt those in the kingdom who are in need.
- The devil knows where Jesus is from and he seems concerned about his condition. He makes the suggestion that if he is really the Son of God, why is he suffering like this? It seems that God has forsaken him and rather than continue to trust in God, the devil tempts him to trust in himself instead.
  - Likewise, Absalom is trying to discourage the people from trusting in the King.

Application for today: The same spirit of Absalom is similar to the tactics used by the devil to tempt Christ. Likewise today, the same tactics are used to try and steal us away from God and Christ who is our king. The temptation is still real today and it is designed to keep us from going to and trusting in the King for our needs.

Verse 4 – Absalom tells the people if he were the judge, he would treat them right and hear their case and do them justice....basically, he would do a better job as king. Again, the temptation is to get the people to turn to trusting in Absalom and his words rather than continue to trust in the king. It is the same temptation we all face today, to get us to turn away from trusting in God and seeking His word.

Verse 5 – This continued so that people started to respect Absalom and he started receiving them like he was the king. He was acting like he was concerned about them.

- He shows humility but it is false by shaking hands and kissing them to show he was a man for the people.
- Application for today: Doesn't this sound like a typical politician on the campaign trail pressing the flesh and trying to convince people that his way is better than the current administration. Not everyone who wants your vote is truly concerned about your cause or situation. They may only be deceiving us by appearing to be concerned when in fact they are only concerned about themselves and gaining position and authority.

Verse 6 – The results of Absalom's efforts are people who were once for David, have now been stolen away by his son. Their coming to the King but instead he gets in the way and tells them he is there for them and steals their hearts from the king.

- Again, there is real application for today. People are still being stolen away from trusting in God.
- How can you steal people away today? Using the same tactics as Absalom.
- How can you protect yourself from being deceived and tricked into not trusting in God? By remembering who God is and who you are in Him, standing on His promises, and trusting in the word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit to withstand.
- How can I tell if I'm following the right person? Use the steps of the feasts and see where the person is in their standing with God. If humility is missing...I wouldn't be following them.

Summary of how to steal people away:

- Get a campaign staff and look like a leader.
- Work hard to meet people who have problems.
- Establish a relationship, act concerned and listen to their problems.
- Agree with them on their issues.
- Tell them the current leadership is ineffective and can't help them.
- Tell them what you would do if you were in charge and how it would be better for them.
- Show humility and a servant leader attitude.

*<sup>7</sup>And it came to pass after forty years, that Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. <sup>8</sup>For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD. <sup>9</sup>And the king said unto him, Go in peace. So he arose, and went to Hebron.*

*<sup>10</sup>But Absalom sent spies throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, As soon as ye hear the sound of the trumpet, then ye shall say, Absalom reigneth in Hebron.*

*<sup>11</sup>And with Absalom went two hundred men out of Jerusalem, that were called; and they went in their simplicity, and they knew not anything.*

Verses 7-9 – Commentaries indicate this was probably not really 40 years. Regardless, after a period of time Absalom is ready to fully execute his plan. He asks permission to go to Hebron under the guise that he was serving and keeping a promise to God.

- The original vow (if true) was off because God is worthy of His praise and worship even if He didn't bring him back again to Jerusalem.
- Why Hebron? Commentaries think it was a home place for the tribe of Judah. Also, it was a royal city noted for being the place where his father David began his rule.
- David gives his approval perhaps not knowing that Absalom is not really interested in serving God.
- Why does Absalom feel the need to have people think he is worshipping God? It is probably designed to throw people off and help to hide his true selfish motivation.

- Application for today: We still do this today. People will still show up and attend church for the wrong reasons and wrong motivation. For years I went to church to check a box, or because this girl I really liked went there, or because I was involved in some sin and I wanted to feel good about the wrong I was participating in by showing up at church. I figured if I went to church, people wouldn't think I was a bad guy. So often in my early Christian walk, my going to church was designed to throw people off from what my true motives were.
- If you are going to worship God, you must do it with the right motivation. God looks for people who will worship Him in spirit and in truth!

Verse 10 – Absalom sent spies to fool folks into thinking something that was a lie would be truth. They were agents for the enemy against the King. He tells them what to say...which was a lie to serve his own purpose.

Verse 11 – He took 200 men with him. These men went in their simplicity meaning they were with him and walking with him but didn't realize that just by innocently walking with him, they were supporting a rebellion against the King, etc. Others would see them and believe they were supporting the opposition.

- They were not aware that just by joining in, they gave the perception to others that they were supporting Absalom as the new king. They didn't know what Absalom was planning, they must have just assumed they were going to church.
- Application for today: Be careful that you are not innocently supporting something that is against the Kingdom. As the church faces many influences which are contrary to the spirit and intent of the Gospel, we should be cautious that we don't appear to support these changes. Our perceived support could encourage others to join in with a change which is contrary to the Kingdom.

*<sup>12</sup>And Absalom sent for Ahithophel the Gilonite, David's counsellor, from his city, even from Giloh, while he offered sacrifices. And the conspiracy was strong; for the people increased continually with Absalom.*

*<sup>13</sup>And there came a messenger to David, saying, the hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.*

Verse 12 – Absalom sends for Ahithophel who at one time was David's counsellor. Now the person who used to counsel David is with him. People will see this and believe the lie and go against the Kingdom. All of this planning and execution strengthened the plot....a conspiracy....you don't have to know about it to be a part of it. Know spiritually what you are a part of and what you are against. You might be surprised Might be surprised that unknowingly you could be part of the conspiracy.

- Several commentaries have outlined reasons why David's once trusted advisor has turned on him. Most point out that Ahithophel is the grandfather of Bathsheba so his action could have been based on revenge toward David.

Verse 13 – David gets a warning...the heart of the people are now after the enemy.

*14 And David said unto all his servants that were with him at Jerusalem, Arise, and let us flee; for we shall not else escape from Absalom: make speed to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly, and bring evil upon us, and smite the city with the edge of the sword.*

*15 And the king's servants said unto the king, Behold, thy servants are ready to do whatsoever my lord the king shall appoint.*

*16 And the king went forth, and all his household after him. And the king left ten women, which were concubines, to keep the house.*

Verse 14 – David moves fast to escape and is concerned about the city. A good leader will be more concerned about the things of the city. My observations here are:

- Why didn't David stay and fight? Perhaps because he didn't want to see his son killed. Perhaps because he knew this was part of God's judgment. We see in Chapter 12: 10-12, God tells David in advance and warns him that trouble will befall him through his family.
- David was also more concerned about the people. Staying to fight at this time would have produced innocent casualties. David is concerned about the people, Absalom is not.

Verse 15 – The loyalty of his servants is profound. Regardless of the bad news and circumstances...they stay by his side. Their response....whatever you want us to do...that's what we're ready to do.

- Application for today: Regardless of the attack on the kingdom, will we remain loyal and follow the King of Kings? When we pray for His will to be done, do we mean that when things don't look to be in our favor? I want to be a good servant of the King.

Verse 16 – The King leaves his house but leaves ten in charge. So while he goes for now, leaving the concubines behind was an indication that he was coming back.

*17 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off. 18 And all his servants passed on beside him; and all the Cherethites, and all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men which came after him from Gath, passed on before the king.*

Verse 17 – David goes to a far off place. Some versions state the outskirts of town. Regardless, the intent is to show David is a long way from the palace and comforts he enjoyed just moments ago. He stays for a while along with the people who went after him.

Verse 18 – Notice the some of the people who are still with him, are those that probably knew David before he rose to power when he was on the run from Saul in Gath.

Observation: Often your support may come from an unlikely source. You would expect David to get support and encouragement from his family but it is his own son who is looking to take him down. But notice his support here comes from those who are not family members and not even Jews.

Application for today: Don't be discouraged if those you expected to support you fail to do so. Don't be surprised if instead, your support comes from an unlikely source.

*19 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore goest thou also with us? Return to thy place, and abide with the king: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.*

*20 Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? Seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.*

*21 And Ittai answered the king, and said, As the LORD liveth, and as my lord the king liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be. 22 And David said to Ittai, Go and pass over. And Ittai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him.*

Verse 19 – 22 – A powerful story here! Ittai a Gittite...not a Jew...is with him. David excuses him and tells him you only got here yesterday so go back to the city. David reminds him that he has no special allegiance since he is a visitor or stranger in the land. But Ittai's response is one that I would want to have as a believer. Notice what his reply:

- As sure as the Lord lives, that is how sure you can be that I will wherever David the King is at. No matter where David the King is in life and even in death, that is where he will follow the King. With this response David tells him to pass over. That's how you celebrate Passover. It is trusting alone in the king.
- His people join him as well. He must have thought that as long as he was with the King and serving the king...that was the best thing and place for folks to be. What about us?
- Observation: In reading this, my mind took me back to the story of the repentant thief on the cross. How awesome was his faith when seeing his poor state, he looks to a bruised and suffering Jesus and asks him to remember him when he gets to his kingdom.

- What faith! Indeed it was because looking at the situation in the natural, there is no way that Jesus is supposed to recover from this. His death and the grave is clearly his fate. Yet the thief looks beyond the circumstances and by faith believes that Jesus will cover and rule after this trouble ends.
- Here too, I see Ittai demonstrating the same kind of faith. It may seem that David will never recover from this, but his faith after not even spending much time with David, is strong. The thief only spent a few hours with Jesus, but look at his faith.
- Application for today: What would our answer be? The problem with many believers is in the face of trouble, we sometimes give up following our King who is the King of Kings. His will be done is my response. Where He leads, I want to be able to faithfully and consistently reply, “I will follow”.
- It is better to follow Him even in tough times, then to enjoy the pleasures and comfort of the world without Him. They could have gone back and sought Absalom’s kingdom, but instead they followed after the Kingdom of God represented by David as king (a representation of Christ).

*<sup>23</sup>And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness. <sup>24</sup>And lo Zadok also, and all the Levites were with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God: and they set down the ark of God; and Abiathar went up, until all the people had done passing out of the city. <sup>25</sup>And the king said unto Zadok, Carry back the ark of God into the city: if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, he will bring me again, and shew me both it, and his habitation:*

*<sup>26</sup>But if he thus say, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as seemeth good unto him.*

*<sup>27</sup>The king said also unto Zadok the priest, Art not thou a seer? Return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. <sup>28</sup>See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me. <sup>29</sup>Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God again to Jerusalem: and they tarried there.*

Verse 23 – Some commentaries state David passes over the same brook that Christ crossed before he was crucified. Perhaps. That makes for a good story and spiritual reference. What I do know is that David is heading to the same place where the Messiah will appear. We will see that reference later in

this chapter. Everyone in that part of the country wept. David the king passed over too. Didn't require something that he wouldn't participate in himself. He leads by example.

- Passover, this is always the first step in the recovery process for being in right relationship with God.

Verse 24 – Zadok and the priests with him left with the Ark. The Ark represented the presence of God. So as they make their way in retreat, the people see that the Ark and the symbol of God is with them. When we humbly submit to God, He is with us in the process.

Verse 25 – 29 – David tells Zadok to take the Ark back to the city. David's response is he trusts in God...take the Ark back and if it is God's will and favor...David believes he will be back. Even if He doesn't grant favor for his return...David will still trust Him to do what seems good to Him. He starts planning like he's going to return and tells the priests to let him know when it is safe to return.

Observation: So I was a little confused at this section of the story. Why would David not want to take the Ark with him? Okay, so he wants the priests to spy for him so the Ark would be good cover. That could be one reason. But as I pondered this, I think I see another powerful application.

- With the Ark going back to Jerusalem, that is where it belongs. It was designed to rest in the temple in the City of God. When David orders it to be returned, his focus is on returning to where the presence of God is. I see this as significant.
- In the natural, we all want our stuff back. We want to be restored of everything we lost which the enemy has stolen from us. This can be material things, honor, of your peace of mind. Whatever, the loss, our focus can be too long for that item rather than God. With the Ark going back to Jerusalem, David's focus will be targeted on returning to God's presence.
- His focus will be on the relationship and drawing closer to God rather than merely getting the throne and his house back.
- Application for today: Matthew 6:33, Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things (the stuff, the peace, etc.) will be added unto you.
- This doesn't mean God was not with David and the people in his retreat, instead I see the Ark in this instance as the higher level of relationship (Level 7, Holy of Holies level) where David desires to dwell with God.

*<sup>30</sup>And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.*

*<sup>31</sup>And one told David, saying, Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom. And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.*

Verse 30 – Important verse alert! David is going up to Mt. Olives. He is weeping as he goes and the people with him. He is going up with his bare feet and on the Mount of Olives.



- David is following the process. Step one is Passover; Humble submission and relationship to God.
- Step 2 is repentance (Unleavened Bread), this is mourning and the putting off of the past life. I see that clearly in David's barefoot climb up the mountain.
- It is important to know something about Mt. Olives. In Zechariah Chapter 14, end time prophesy reveals that at the second coming of Christ, he will return on the same mount. His feet will land on the top of Mt. Olives. It is interesting that David who is a representation of Christ as the kingly Messiah is going to this same mountain in a time of trouble.
- David is going up humble...but eventually he will be coming back (Jesus) in power.

Application for today: David is down, but he is still on his way up, both spiritually and logistically. When you are practicing humility and repentance, you may be down but in reality you are on the way up from your condition. When we make the first correct steps toward restoration we are always on the way up. It may not look that way in our circumstances in the natural, but spiritually, you are better off than you were.

Verse 31 – David finds out his old counsellor is with the opposition. Ahithophel didn't start the rebellion but he is with the conspirators because he accepted the invite and now is with them. David prays as soon as he hears this. Instead of getting mad....he prays that the guy who is now against him would be ineffective.

Application for today:

- While Absalom shows the model for how to steal people from the King, David shows a model for how to respond when facing judgment and/or tough times.
- Rather than flip out, David prays that Ahithophel's counsel not be effective. I pray the same manner when I ask God to "lead me not into temptation but to deliver me from evil".
- We don't want to be tempted to sin when we find others working against us, but we also don't want the weapons formed against us to be effective against us.
- Don't be surprised or discouraged if you are making the right moves in your spiritual recovery and still receive more bad news. I can happen, but keep trusting in the process because you are still headed up.
- David didn't let this bad news keep him down; he kept moving up by faith. We, just like David's people with him, must follow the same process and steps.

*<sup>32</sup>And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: <sup>33</sup>Unto whom David said, If thou passest on with me, then thou shalt be a burden unto me: <sup>34</sup>But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. <sup>35</sup>And hast thou not there with thee Zadok and Abiathar the*

*priests? Therefore it shall be, that what thing soever thou shalt hear out of the king's house, thou shalt tell it to Zadok and Abiathar the priests.*

*<sup>36</sup> Behold, they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz Zadok's son, and Jonathan Abiathar's son; and by them ye shall send unto me everything that ye can hear. <sup>37</sup> So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.*

Verse 32 – When he got to the top...he worshipped. Wow....in the middle of his escape...through the tears and disappointment and shame...he worshipped on that mountain. After worship....here comes Hushai to meet him in mourning. This is Step 3 in the process where we can receive hope in our connection and worship.

- After getting bad news on the way up the mountain, he gets refreshing news from his friend. After worship, he get good news. Hushai will play a critical part in answering David's prayer and in the return of the King.

Verse 33- 37 – David tells Hushai if he were to come with him now, he wouldn't be able to support him now....Hushai would be a problem for him there.

- Instead, he asks his friend to go back to the city and say you'll be Absalom's servant. There he could defeat the counsel of Ahithophel. His answer to the problem comes after worship. David didn't have this idea until after Hushai shows up and he didn't show up until after worship.
- Hushai, David's friend is set up to help David return to the city. The King needs more folk like that to prepare the way for His return.