

2 Samuel 17:24-18:18
Richard Cimino
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2 Samuel 17:24-18:18

Related Topics: David; Absalom; Joab;
Loyalty; Shobi; Machir; Barsillai; Absalom's
Death; Sowing and Reaping; Fruit of
Rebellion;

In our last study we closed with the suicide
of Ahithophel. Ahithophel is a LIVING
EXAMPLE of the power of bitterness. He
allowed his bitterness towards David to
GROW over the years – and because it
GREW he became a TROUBLED man.

So TROUBLED that he could become the
chief advisor of David's traitorous son! THAT is a troubled man. And that bitterness had become so great and
powerful that it would CORRUPT many.

Ahithophel was willing to:

- See TEN women abused
- See Absalom grievously sin
- See the kingdom of Israel suffer greatly
- Simply to satisfy his longing for bitter revenge

This guy was also an extraordinarily bright man. He understood that he was co-conspirator in this plot against
the king – and would face certain consequences if they failed. He knew the rebellion could only succeed if
Absalom carried out BOTH parts of his plan.

By the hand of God Absalom had rejected the wise counsel of Ahithophel in favor of a horrible plan presented
by a man named Hushai – one of David's loyal men. When Absalom rejected the second part of his counsel –
Ahithophel KNEW that the coup was doomed.

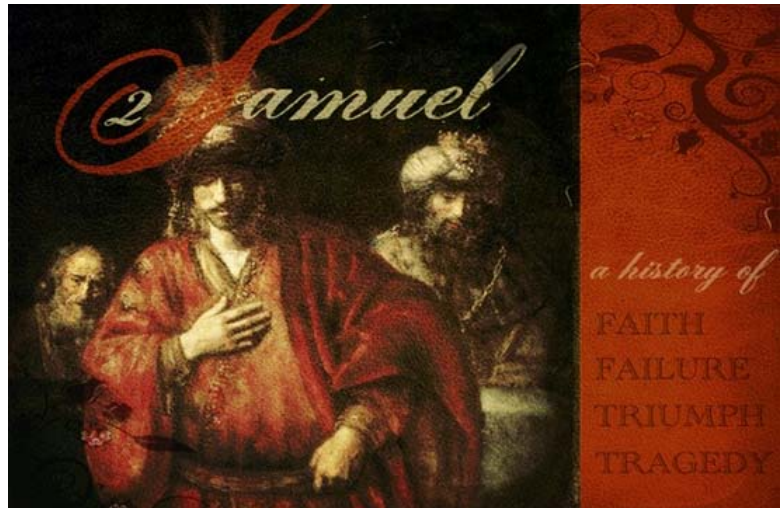
Ahithophel – deeply offended – overwhelmed with resentment – returns to his house.

*2Samuel 17:23He set his house in order and hanged himself, and he died and was buried in the
tomb of his
father.*

Ahithophel was not going to wait for the inevitable reversal and return of David – and the resulting
execution.

QUOTE: Spurgeon –

*Thousands set their houses in order, but destroy their
souls; they look well to their flocks and their herds, but
not to their hearts' best interests. They gather broken
shells with continuous industry, but they throw away*



priceless diamonds.

WE PICK UP IN VERSE 24

2Samuel 17:24-25 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men of Israel. 25Now Absalom had set Amasa over the army instead of Joab. Amasa was the son of a man named Ithra the Ishmaelite, who had married Abigail the daughter of Nahash, sister of Zeruah, Joab's mother.

Amasa is now made the highest ranking soldier in in Absalom's army.

2Samuel 17:26-29 And Israel and Absalom encamped in the land of Gilead.27When David came to Mahanaim, Shobi the son of Nahash from Rabbah of the Ammonites, and Machir the son of Ammiel from Lo-debar, and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, 28brought beds, basins, and earthen vessels, wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans and lentils, 29honey and curds and sheep and cheese from the herd, for David and the people with him to eat, for they said, "The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness."

KEY OBSERVATION:

THREE OBSCURE men came and ministered to — served — David and his men. Each of them are interesting:

- Shobi, the son of Nahash.... of the Ammonites

Back in 2 Samuel 10 David sent messengers to Hanum, the son of Nahash. Hanum cut off 1/2 their beards and cut off their robes. This was a radical disgrace in that culture. When David heard how his messengers were treated he got his men together and made war against the Ammonites

THIS guy SHOBI — is the brother of Hanum.

He could have said — "ME — help DAVID?" He had every reason to take that attitude.

- MAKIR, the son of Ammiel.

In 2 Samuel 9:4 we were told that he was housing and caring for Mephibosheth in a place called Lodebar. He could have said — "Me help David — NOW? I've already done my community service — I took care of a lame guy for years.... Let somebody else carry the load"

One could have said: "I'm MAD"

One could have said: "I'm pooped"

- BARZILLAI

We will see this guy later on. He is 80 years old.

He could have said: "I'm OLD"

One could have said — "I'm MAD"

The other could have said — "I'm spent"

HERE'S THE PICTURE:

These are the SAME three excuses that you hear ALL of the time for NOT serving the Lord. Excuse that I am

capable of making.

- “I’m not going to serve THAT ministry because my friend was so hurt in that church” SHOBI was bigger than that. He realized his brother was a bonehead and that David was God’s man.
- “I’ve paid my dues... I’m not going to help” MACHIR was bigger than that. He had a heart to serve! By the way — If you have labored long — If you have been on the front lines — You have experience and THAT is why you are valuable.
- “I’m too old”. BARZILLAI was bigger than that. Age didn’t diminish his zeal.

2 Samuel 17:29..... for they said, “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.”

There is something very much like the heart of God in these men. Jesus is God incarnate — God become man. There was a day when God incarnate was in the north of Israel in Galilee in a deserted place.

Mark 6:34 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. And he began to teach them many things.

He fed them the Word of God. I believe with all of my heart that this is why the Lord planted Metro!

Roseville, Rocklin, Granite Bay, Folsom — might look like great places to live and work and shop and eat. But when it came to the Word of God — “The people are hungry and weary and thirsty in the wilderness.” After His resurrection Jesus said to Peter — If you love me, feed my sheep, tend my lambs” IF you love Jesus, THEN go to the wilderness where people are hungry and weary and give. THAT is what these three men did.

These three men were not notable warriors. But they had a heart to feed people who were starving in the wilderness. What a GREAT PASSAGE for us to chew on as we are moving towards our once a month home groups.

CHAPTER 18

2 Samuel 18:1 Then David mustered the men who were with him and set over them...

As a result of Absalom buying into the advice of Hushai, David was provided the time to cross over to the East side of the Jordan River. In that same reprieve — a great army of men loyal to David made their way to him in the wilderness.

Josephus — the Jewish historian — puts the numbers in that army at 4,000. We aren’t sure of the exact number — but the text gives us enough to believe it was substantial.

2 Samuel 18:1 — ...commanders of thousands and commanders of hundreds.

v.3 — you are worth ten thousand of us

v.4 — while all the army marched out by hundreds and by thousands

2 Samuel 18:2 And David sent out the army, one third under the command of Joab, one third under the command of Abishai the son of Zeruiah, Joab’s brother, and one third under the command of Ittai the Gittite.

David was a gifted and great leader. Not only a man of character and courage — but he knew war.

FIRST — David was wise enough to choose the battlefield. He engaged Absalom's army in terrain where the experience and courage of each individual soldier counted more than sheer numbers of Absalom's army.

SECOND — David understood the limitations of his army.

Even though his army now numbered in the thousands — David knew it was significantly inferior to the numbers of troops that had gathered to Absalom from Dan to Beersheba — the length and breadth of Israel.

David knew that if he allowed Absalom's army to meet them in one place, the sheer numbers would have swallowed David's smaller force. So — David divided his smaller army into three so that he could meet Absalom's larger army at three different points

POINT:

David looked at the army God had given to him and developed a strategy that fit that God given army.

EXAMPLE:

It Might Get Loud — The Edge on U2

Paraphrase — We understood our limitations as musicians and worked hard within them to make music that expressed what we were passionate about.

If the Edge tried to be Eddie Van Halen the world of music would be poorer.

POINT:

Don't try to be things you're not.

THIRD — He not only understood his divinely appointed limitations — he also understood his divinely appointed assets.

He was able to execute this strategy because he knew he had three valuable and valiant men who were qualified to lead in these three points of attack. These are GOD'S provision for God's king. These men were essential.

Without them — His choice of battle grounds — His strategy that would make the most of his armies limitations — were futile.

APPLICATION for ministry — You don't need to be BIG or MANY in number — but you do need:

- A God ordained leader — who has been provided with the tools to see the nature of the battle / mission.
- Understand God's provision for the mission
- What they are and what they are not
- Then organize and arrange

God provided KEY men in key places. With that kind of a team you can lead an outnumbered army to victory.

2 Samuel 18:2-3And the king said to the men, "I myself will also go out with you." 3But the men said, "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."

The people surrounding David would not hear of him going out to battle with the rest of his army.

They understood that:

- if the enemy troops discovered where David was they would direct all of there forces on that spot!
- if David fell in battle their cause was finished!

- that it would be hard for David to fight against his own son Absalom.

2 Samuel 18:4 The king said to them, "Whatever seems best to you I will do." So the king stood at the side of the gate, while all the army marched out by hundreds and by thousands.

CRUCIAL: David was not stubborn.

He knew how to submit to the good advice of others. This was not a sign of WEAK leadership — It was a sign of STRENGTH. A truly strong leader will LISTEN to the wise advice of the people around him. David was a truly MEEK man!

MEEKNESS does not = WEEKNESS.

Jesus said — Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me for I am MEEK. Jesus is not weak. In Him all things are held together — He holds the universe together by the word of His power.

Meekness is POWER UNDER CONTROL.

Jesus submitted to His heavenly Father.

David Martyn Lloyd-Jones defines meekness as — "The taming of the lion!"

2 Samuel 18:5 And the king ordered Joab and Abishai and Ittai, "Deal gently for my sake with the young man Absalom." And all the people heard when the king gave orders to all the commanders about Absalom.

KEY OBSERVATION:

David wanted it clearly known that Absalom was to be captured alive and not mistreated in any way. David gave this commandment in the presence of all the people so that the captains would feel greater pressure to do what David commanded.

THIS IS RADICAL —

David's command concerning Absalom tells us that David FULLY expects to win! It never occurred to him that Absalom would NOT fall into their hands.

David is as confident that they will win in this battle as he was when he walked down to the face Goliath!

With the eye of FAITH he saw his enemies defeated!

His confidence was not in:

- The courage of his troops
- The battle readiness of his troops.
- The brilliance of his strategy
- The favorable nature of the battle terrain.

His confidence was in the knowledge that plans and purposes of the Living God are always a certainty. His plans might be opposed — but His plans are never thwarted.

2 Samuel 18:6-8 So the army went out into the field against Israel, and the battle was fought in the forest of Ephraim. 7And the men of Israel were defeated there by the servants of David, and the loss there was great on that day, twenty thousand men. 8The battle spread over the face of all the country, and the forest devoured more people

that day than the sword.

REMEMBER – David wisely determined the field of battle to best suit his men.

There in the forest the experience and courage of each individual soldier counted more than the sheer numbers of Absalom's forces. When the tide of the fight was clearly in favor of David's troops, Absalom's army retreated into the woods where they became victims of the terrain and were easy targets for David's men.

2 Samuel 18:9 And Absalom happened to meet the servants of David..

Happened to meet = he came upon them by chance.

2 Samuel 18:9...Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great terebinth...

KEY INSIGHT:

The fact that he was riding a mule tells us something of Absalom's death. Mules were used when the army was on the march, but they were sent to the rear when the fighting began. That he is still on a mule tells us that the LAST thing he expected was for the battle to turn against his huge army.

In his over-confidence he actually got in front of his his army – that was being swallowed up by the forest.

He was LOST in the forest! It was then that he accidently comes upon David's men. Any open terrain was blocked by David's men so he forces his mule through the heavily wooded ground.

2 Samuel 18:9...and his head caught fast in the oak, and he was suspended between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him went on.

Josephus tells us that he got his hair tangled in the trees. Here is the end of the man who had plenty of opportunities to repent. His years in Geshur – living with the reality of having executed his half brother Amnon. The two years back in the palace of David – not seeing his dad because of what he done to Amnon. During those two years he had ZERO remorse or even care to be reconciled. Instead he began his daily routine of turning the hearts of the people from his dad.

ZERO brokenness – ZERO or repentance. Instead his heart was hardened. By the start of this battle he was beyond remedy. In the person of Joab God found a fitting instrument to execute judgment on Absalom.

*2 Samuel 18:10-14 And a certain man saw it and told Joab, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak."
11 Joab said to the man who told him, "What, you saw him! Why then did you not strike him there to the ground? I would have been glad to give you ten pieces of silver and a belt." 12 But the man said to Joab, "Even if I felt in my hand the weight of a thousand pieces of silver, I would not reach out my hand against the king's son, for in our hearing the king commanded you and Abishai and Ittai, 'For my sake protect the young man Absalom.' 13 On the other hand, if I had dealt treacherously against his life (and there is nothing hidden from the king), then you yourself would have stood aloof." 14 Joab said, "I will not waste time like this with you." And he took three javelins in his hand and thrust them into the heart of Absalom while he was still alive in*

the oak.

QUOTE: Adam Clarke —

His life was quadruply forfeited to the law:

- 1.) In having murdered his brother Amnon.*
- 2.) In having excited an insurrection in the state.*
- 3.) In having taken up arms against his own father, Deuteronomy 21:18,21*
- 4.) In having lain with his father's concubines, Leviticus 18:29.*

Long ago he should have died by the hand of justice; and now all his crimes are visited on him in his last act of rebellion. Yet, in the present circumstances, Joab's act was base and disloyal, and a cowardly murder.

2 Samuel 18:15-17 And ten young men, Joab's armor-bearers, surrounded Absalom and struck him and killed him. 16Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the troops came back from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained them. 17And they took Absalom and threw him into a great pit in the forest and raised over him a very great heap of stones.

2 Samuel 18:17-18 ...And all Israel fled every one to his own home. 18Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and set up for himself the pillar that is in the King's Valley, for he said, "I have no son to keep my name in remembrance." He called the pillar after his own name, and it is called Absalom's monument.

Not to be confused with what is called "Absalom's Tomb" that you can see today in the Kidron Valley today.

CLOSE

Absalom ended up in a pit!

APPLICATION:

When we try to seek our own kingdom....The result is that you ALWAYS end up in the pit

David was a man who learned to let God work and God deal and God raise up. For all of his pitfalls, he ended up honored by the Lord, but the man who would exalt himself ended up in the pit.

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