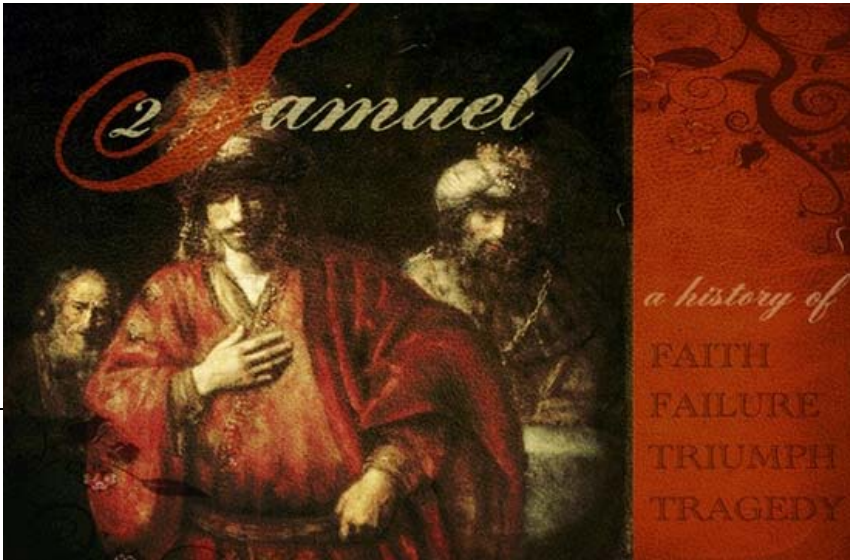

2 Samuel 18:33

Related Topics: David; Absalom; Joab; Absalom's Death; Messengers; Grief; Excessive Sorrow; Shame; Rebuke; Sowing and Reaping;

REVIEW



9And Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great terebinth, 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. 10And a certain man saw it and told Joab, "Behold, I saw Absalom hanging in an oak." 11Joab 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." 12But 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.' 13On 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." 14Joab 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.

CRUCIAL OBSERVATION

One man was absolutely set on obeying the clear command of David while Joab was not! Why was that? The one man said –

"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.'

Don't miss this. There was a very real sense in which David lost a big part of Joab's heart. He lost Joab when he sent orders to Joab commanding him to arrange it so that Uriah the Hittite (Bathsheba's husband) would die in the heat of the battle, and he sent those orders to Joab literally by the very hand of Uriah!

Remember the themes of this 2nd Book of Samuel

1. FAITH and FAILURE
2. TRIUMPH and TRAGEDY

David's failures lead to David's tragedies!

15And 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. 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 to this day.

Absalom ended up in a pit

When we try to seek our own kingdom, the result is that you always end up in the pit. Much better to have a godly legacy when you die than to build monuments to yourself in life and then be thrown in a pit, so-to-speak, and remembered no more when you die.

19Then Ahimaaz the son of Zadok said, "Let me run and carry news to the king that the Lord has delivered him from the hand of his enemies." 20And Joab said to him, "You are not to carry news today. You may carry news another day, but today you shall carry no news, because the king's son is dead." 21Then Joab said to the Cushite, "Go, tell the king what you have seen." The Cushite bowed before Joab, and ran. 22Then Ahimaaz (akh-ee-mah'-ats) the son of Zadok said again to Joab, "Come what may, let me also run after the Cushite." And Joab said, "Why will you run, my son, seeing that you will have no reward for the news?" 23"Come what may," he said, "I will run." So he said to him, "Run." Then Ahimaaz (akh-ee-mah'-ats) ran by the way of the plain, and outran the Cushite. 24Now David was sitting between the two gates, and the watchman went up to the roof of the gate by the wall, and when he lifted up his eyes and looked, he saw a man running alone. 25The watchman called out and told the king. And the king said, "If he is alone, there is news in his mouth." And he drew nearer and nearer. 26The watchman saw another man running. And the watchman called to the gate and said, "See, another man running alone!" The king said, "He also brings news." 27The watchman said, "I think the running of the first is like the running of Ahimaaz (akh-ee-mah'-ats) the son of Zadok." And the king said, "He is a good man and comes with good news."

Since the messenger was someone David knew (akh-ee-mah'-ats) – he assumed it was good news. He is a good man, and comes with good news.

28Then Ahimaaz cried out to the king, "All is well." And he bowed before the king with his face to the earth and said, "Blessed be the Lord your God, who has delivered up the men who raised their hand against my lord the king." 29And the king said, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" Ahimaaz (akh-ee-mah'-ats) answered, "When Joab sent the king's servant, your servant, I saw a great commotion, but I do not know what it was." 30And the king said, "Turn aside and stand here." So he turned aside and stood still.

Interesting, Ahimaaz (akh-ee-mah'-ats) was a better runner than the Cushite, but running fast didn't make him a better messenger! In reality, he was a worse messenger because he didn't know his message. Here's the picture: A message can be delivered beautifully, but the messenger's first responsibility is to get the message straight.

Some guys are great at coming up with clever sermon titles or coming up with catchy names for a series of studies. Some guys are the masters of alliteration. Alliteration is when you use the same letter or sound at

the beginning of a series of adjacent words or to use the same suffix at the end of a series of adjacent words.

A great example is Warren Wiersbe.

TITLE – Numbers 8-10 Dedication and Celebration

POINTS – Caring for the lamps - Dedicating the Levites - Following God's guidance

Wiersbe is brilliant at branding a chapter with a title and then using alliteration to help you remember the major parts of a chapter; and then he delivers a clear message. In keeping with the 2 messengers of our text Wiersbe would be like a FAST messenger with a CLEAR message.

Personally, I'm horrible at Titles. They ask me for a title on Monday night and all I can say is 2 Samuel 18-19. There are other guys who have the clever title and four point sermons perfectly alliterated. But they don't have the message straight!

Sadly, we live in a world that values style over substance. We should want to be great at communicating truth, but we must always remember the form or style or the medium must never trump content. Because those things can come and go and change over time.

EXAMPLE

Music of the 80's. There was a very specific musical form and a very specific style (look). In talking about the weakness of U2, Bono said there were bands that had everything going on in regards to style and presentation, but they didn't have "IT". U2 had NOTHING going on in style and presentation – but we had "IT." If you look back on virtually all of those bands now (Flock of Seagulls) nearly thirty years later they are gone— they were empty containers. U2 is still incredibly relevant because their musical form and their whole graphically and theatrically are the containers of the message they want to communicate (not an endorsement of everything they say or do).

We should not dismiss form or style or a medium of communicating (audio/graphics/spoken word/word to music). We should want to use and master those things as means consecrated to carrying the message!

For Paul the apostle, style never trumped content. He saw himself first as a man entrusted with a message.

1 Cor. 4:1-2

*1This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.
2Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.*

He never wanted style to influence his listeners.

1 Cor. 2:1-5

1And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom... 3And I was with you in weakness and in fear and much trembling, 4and my speech and my message were not in plausible words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.

Each of us are sent into the world as messengers. Don't think you can't deliver the message because you aren't very articulate. You have heard me quote Charles Spurgeon on countless occasions. Let me read

Spurgeon's own words on how he came to Christ.

"I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair now, had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm one Sunday morning, when I was going to a place of worship. When I could go no further, I turned down a court and came to a little Primitive Methodist Chapel. In that chapel there might be a dozen or fifteen people. The minister did not come that morning: snowed up, I suppose. A poor man, a shoemaker, a tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had nothing else to say. The text was, 'Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth.' He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. He began thus: 'My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, "Look." Now that does not take a deal of effort. It ain't lifting your foot or your finger; it is just "look." Well, a man need not go to college to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man need not be worth a thousand a year to look. Anyone can look; a child can look. But this is what the text says. Then it says, "Look unto Me." 'Ay,' said he, in broad Essex, 'many of ye are looking to yourselves. No use looking there. You'll never find comfort in yourselves.' Then the good man followed up his text in this way: 'Look unto Me: I am sweating great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hanging on the Cross. Look: I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend; I am sitting at the Father's right hand. O, look to Me! Look to Me!'

When he had got about that length, and managed to spin out ten minutes, he was at the length of his tether. "Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. He then said, 'Young man, you look very miserable.' Well, I did; but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made on my personal appearance from the pulpit before. However, it was a good blow struck. He continued: 'And you will always be miserable – miserable in life and miserable in death – if you do not obey my text. But if you obey now, this moment, you will be saved.'

Amazing. The man who is now man known as the "Prince of Preachers" was led to faith by a man who was lacking in style but not in substance!

On another level, there are many believers like Ahimaaz.....Ready to serve – Zealous. Ready to get going. But once they get going they don't know WHERE they are going, WHY they are going, or WHAT they are supposed to do when they get there.

Zeal without knowledge can cause a lot of problems. That is why Paul said to Timothy in

2 Tim. 2:15 Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

We do not want people in a hurry to get in to ministry. We do want people in a hurry to be equipped for the ministry that God has for them.

WHAT is your message – WHAT is your task.

HOW are you to do it – WHY are you to do it.

WHERE are you to do it?

Fits perfectly w/ this weeks Servants Class – vision and mission.

31And behold, the Cushite came, and the Cushite said, "Good news for my lord the king! For the Lord has delivered you this day from the hand of all who rose up against you." 32The king said to the Cushite, "Is it well with the young man Absalom?" And the Cushite answered, "May the enemies of my lord the king and all who rise up against you for evil be like that young man." And the king was deeply moved

Deeply moved implies a violent trembling of the body. Think of some movie where a man is buckled by tragedy and sobs convulsively. On multiple levels David is completely undone at hearing the news of Absalom's death. There is the sheer shock and gut wrenching agony of a dad hearing news of his son's death. Then, without doubt, David is shaken because he knows that in a very real way he had supplied the soil from which this tragedy had grown.

Again, this is not Judgment, it is sowing and reaping. David had provided the soil for this tragedy in his indulgent parenting. (Amnon and Tamar and Absalom). David had provided the soil for this tragedy in his sin with Bathsheba and murder of Uriah; after which God promised David:

2 Samuel 12:10-11

10Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' 11Thus says the Lord, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.

QUOTE: G. Campbell Morgan

"We cannot stand in the presence of that suffering without learning the solemn lessons of parental responsibility it has to teach, not merely in training our children, but in that earlier training of ourselves for their sakes."

32 and went up to the chamber over the gate and wept. And as he went, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Morgan points out that everything in the story leads up to, and culminates in, this wail of anguish over his dead boy . . .

CRUCIAL OBSERVATION:

Five Times he repeats the words MY SON

QUOTE: G. Campbell Morgan

"This surely had a deeper note in it than that of the merely half-conscious repetition of words occasioned by personal grief. The father recognized how much he was responsible for the son. It is as though he had said: He is indeed my son – his weaknesses are my weaknesses, his passions are my passions, his sins are my sins."

David saw his own sins - his own weaknesses, his own rebellion - exaggerated in Absalom. Would I had died instead of you, O Absalom, my son, my son!"

There is so much pathos here. This is not a line in a script of a screenplay based on a novel! This is the Holy Spirit's record of real life.

QUOTE: Spurgeon

"Our children may plunge into the worst of sins, but they are our children still. They may scoff at our God;

they may tear our heart to pieces with their wickedness; we cannot take complacency in them, but at the same time we cannot unchild them, nor erase their image from our hearts.” (Spurgeon)

There is in David an echo of the heart of God. A faint image of the Covenant love of God for mankind. Haven't you just ached as we have followed this drama? Haven't you been moved at the very thought of the pain inflicted upon David by Absalom's utter and treacherous betrayal?

On an infinitely greater scale, God has only and always know rejection and betrayal at the hands of man. And beyond any of our capacity to comprehend, God has been unfailing in his love for us.

Mankind (that includes you and me) has plunged into the worst of sins (Hitler, Mussolin, Manson, Dommer), but mankind was still the object of His love. Mankind (you and I) has scoffed at God. Torn HIS heart to pieces with our wickedness, but HE never erased us from HIS hearts.” (Spurgeon)

From *Genesis 3* forward God has sought to restore and reconcile mankind to Himself. We are going to follow this amazing record of Covenant love in our next meeting of OPEN on Sept. 27

This is huge! Especially on a communion night!

David wanted to die in the place of his rebellious son. What David could not do, God did by dying in the place of His rebellious sons and daughters! In the cry of David, we actually hear the cry of God for His lost children. His desire to restore, His desire to forgive.”

Do you know that before God each of us are traitors and rebels in His universe?

Isaiah 53:4-6

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

