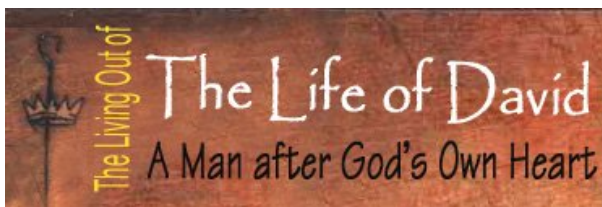




2 Samuel 18-19:8

First Love? Sun, Feb 18th 2007



Doing away with the death penalty?

- On Monday The New Mexico House of Representatives passed a bill that would abolish the state death penalty
- Though NM only carried out one execution since 1976
- Don't worry, not going to talk politics today

Made me think—what if we applied OT capital punishment?

- Open Bibles to **Deut 21:18-21**
- Imagine....death penalty for a rebellious child
- Understand – not a one time trouble, but life
- Kids – understand how serious rebellion is
 - Undercuts main lesson need–honor, obedience
- Parents – understand how vital this is...yet hard
 - God, righteousness, nation—above parenting
 - Imagine how hard would be as a parent?

Some are thinking – glad that is OT...not for us in NT

- True...or is it. O not in practice...but heart
- Turn to **Matt 10:34-39**
- God – our love for God – is to take precedence over all other loves...God is to be our first love

Think about this a little more – turn to **Matt 6:22-24**

- Jesus gives us clear insight into our makeup
- **We can only have one master – only serve one**
 - Enjoy many things...serve only one
- **When that is right, God – clear sight – light**
- **When that is wrong, anything else - darkness**
 - Miserable, confusing, wrong decisions

That is what we are going to see today...in David

- Open Bibles now to **2 Sam 18**

Background

- Studying David – man after God's heart
- Yet – real man...faults and all...as we all are
- 55-60 yrs old in this chapter – king for 25-30 yrs
- Season of reaping – consequences of own sin
- Season of reaping–poor parenting–indulgent dad
- Absalom–his son, staged coup–driven David out
- David is on run with loyal men...Absalom is mounting an army to kill David...

I. Preparing for the War

1. See David – part of the humility makes him great

a. Willing to go to war – right place, right heart

- i) Has not always been here – **2 Sam 11**
- ii) But not asking others to do what he won't

b. Willing to listen to his men, wisdom, guidance

- i) David is not autocrat who is always right
- ii) Listens to his men, their wisdom and counsel
- iii) Right heart in a leader...even pastor

c. Divides into three companies

- i) Not new addition – Ittai...recent loyal man

d. Sends them out – standing at the gate

- i) Josephus, a Jewish historian (not bible) – tells us he encouraged and prayed with men
- ii) He adds David had 4,000 men...interesting

2. See David...inordinate love for son

a. Commands leaders to deal gently with Absalom

b. Without elaborating – we are way past that

- i) For good of nation, God – Absalom needs dealt with.
But David never has

c. Can see, perhaps – heart as dad is in 1st place

- i) Again, can only have one master...serve one
- ii) Here David's heart as dad...moves above God,
moves above God's kingdom...serving God
- iii) When wrong master – dark, see poorly...

II. The Battle

1. Picture scene.


- a. If Josephus right – 4,000 at tens of thousands

2. David's men – win the battle

3. More than skill – God is with them

- a. More killed by land than sword. Lets us see God at work – fighting for David in unusual ways
- b. Important note – settles a question
 - i) In those days–debate–is God done with David?
 - ii) God answers...soundly – no, still plan for, still God's man...wrong to drive him out

4. Absalom caught in a tree

- a. Saw in past – his hair was a sign of his pride
- b. Pride goes before a fall – **Pro 16:18** 
- c. Absalom is poster child for ...imagine – caught by
- d. Spiritual pic – Terbinth tree in Bible, foreshadows Cross
 - i) Those that humble self before it – saved
 - ii) Those arrogant against–caught by it **1Co 1:18, 22-24**

5. Reported to Joab...questions David's words have stopped

6. Joab kills Absalom....should he have? yes & no

- a. Wrong to disobeyYet David was wrong to ask
- b. Joab serves nation, God in so doing
- c. Personally believe is why God delivered to Joab

7. Joab puts an end to the war...it is over

8. See the contrasting monuments

- a. What Absalom wanted – set self up
- b. God provided...judgment – duet 21 – rocks
- c. Which monument is right? God's

III. David hears of war...Absalom

1. Two runners...kind of an odd story

- a. Interesting spiritual pictures—but for David—two messengers

2. 1st report to David – Ahimaaz

- a. So excited - All is well – feels it – in Kingdom
- b. Day to bless God... God has rescued
- c. Thinks it will be received w/joy ...should have
- d. Wasn't - David one question – Absalom?
 - i) David not thinking as King, not of God - self
- e. Ahimaaz lies (know this from v.20)

3. 2nd messenger – Chushite - same message

- a. Absalom? Good answer—he is an enemy...God defeated

4. David crushed by...moves into mourning

- a. Crushed over his death over his eternal destiny
- b. What parent can't identify with David
- c. But David is wrong....love for kids – exceeded God, exceeding serving God
 - i) 20,000 died because of Absalom...doesn't see
- d. David's wrong heart – effects people

Scottish pastor Andrew Bonar“Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle.” It's possible to win the battle but lose the victory, which is what happened to David after Joab defeated Absalom and his army. What should have been a day of celebration for David's army at Mahanaim became a confused time of embarrassment and shame as the people¹ stole back into the city as if they had been humiliated by defeat. They had risked their lives for king and country, and were now treated like criminals!

5. Joab rebukes – rightly

6. David heeds – sits in gate – as king

Conclusion

To me...this is one of main lessons

- David is a good man...but his heart gets off here
- Puts Absalom above God....but God corrects
- Love for God – serving God – comes first
- Thankfully, David does respond, get it – **Ps 69** 📖

Hard lesson – hard when we get off

- Can happen with money – Matt 6
- Can happen with self, pleasure – 1 Tim 3
- Can happen with serving God – Rev 2
- Can and does happen with families
 - Wonder if in this generation is not common
 - So many focused on family – correcting a lack of focus before...going too far

David is not the only Dad who had to deal with this

- Think of sons of Aaron...Aaron's response
 - Stand w/God...even against kids **Lev 10:3** 📖
- Think of Abraham and Isaac – Gen 22
 - Test...proof, cure – God is first in his life

More-Jesus calls us to this – honest about – Luke 10 📖

- Love His honestly...amazed at the call
- If you want to follow – everything else is 2nd
- Can only have one master...it is true

Some here – not yet saved...won't surrender

- Why? Love of family before God
- Afraid of hurting them. Perhaps they died outside Christ...and for you to accept...too hard
 - True of parents, true of kids

Some here reject God's call, authority – for family

- Bible is clear about sin...homosexuality
- But to embrace it...is to condemn one you love – and you put them before God
- Confusion, pain are your lot because of this

Call you today...to the first love, your first love-Rev 2

- When God is first....everything else falls in place
- When light is right – whole body blessed **Mat 6:19**
- Funny thing – even love for others grows...right
- **Story of explaining to kids – love Him, love them better**

Can I remind you of this....that is what God did for you

- God so loved the world...gave His Son
- Embraced kingdom, you – longing for
- Whosoever believes in Him...not perish
- Today...if have not received – call you to
- Jesus is honest...count cost...but see benefits too