

A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART
A study in I and II Samuel and the Psalms of David
AMEN Bible Study 2014-2015

David and Shimei: Royal Forgiveness

II Samuel 19:8b-43

April 2, 2015

19:8b-43 I. Shrewd Leaders

:8b-10 A. Exploit vacuums as opportunities

⁸Now Israel had fled every man to his own home. ⁹And all the people were arguing throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled out of the land from Absalom. ¹⁰But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?"

:11-12 B. Manipulate their relatives

¹¹And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests: "Say to the elders of Judah, 'Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to the king?' ¹²You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?"

:13 C. Coopt their former enemies

¹³And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not commander of my army from now on in place of Joab.'

cf. Proverbs 13:20; 28:12; 29:2

:14-15 D. Legitimize themselves via formal ceremonies

¹⁴And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent word to the king, "Return, both you and all your servants." ¹⁵So the king came back to the Jordan, and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan.

:16-40 II. Calculating Politicians

:16-23 A. (Mis)handle king-cursors

¹⁶And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahurim, hurried to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David. ¹⁷And with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. And Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king, ¹⁸and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household and to do his pleasure. And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, ¹⁹and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart. ²⁰For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my

lord the king.” ²¹Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, “Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD’s anointed?” ²²But David said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?” ²³And the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” And the king gave him his oath.

cf. Proverbs 16:12

:24-30 B. Reluctantly rectify injustices

²⁴And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king. He had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety. ²⁵And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, “Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?” ²⁶He answered, “My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, ‘I will saddle a donkey for myself,^[u] that I may ride on it and go with the king.’ For your servant is lame.” ²⁷He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you. ²⁸For all my father’s house were but men doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?” ²⁹And the king said to him, “Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land.” ³⁰And Mephibosheth said to the king, “Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home.”

cf. Proverbs 16:19; 18:5; 18:17; 28:6; 29:26

:31-40a C. Pay debts with patronage

³¹Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the Jordan. ³²Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. ³³And the king said to Barzillai, “Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem.” ³⁴But Barzillai said to the king, “How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem?” ³⁵I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? ³⁶Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? ³⁷Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you.” ³⁸And the king answered, “Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you, and all that you desire of me I will do for you.” ³⁹Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home. ⁴⁰The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him.

cf. Proverbs 19:4

:40b D. Usually win

All the people of Judah, and also half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way.

:41-43III. Shrewd, Calculating Leadership Divides the People

⁴¹ Then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, “Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David’s men with him?” ⁴² All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, “Because the king is our close relative. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king’s expense? Or has he given us any gift?” ⁴³ And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, “We have ten shares in the king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?” But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel.

cf. Proverbs 25:26

What must we learn from this text?

- 1. David was not perfect and neither are you!**
- 2. Unrepentant sin cascades, escalates, divides, and destroys.**
cf. Proverbs 14:11; 21:21
- 3. God uses (even our intentional) evil to accomplish His good purposes.**
- 4. God keeps His promises to us: David reigns forever.**
cf. Proverbs 19:21
- 5. God promises an Anointed One to come who will faithfully shepherd His people.**