

Joab Rebukes David

Call to Worship: Psalm 66:1-4

1st Scripture: 2 Samuel 18:19-32

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 18:33 - 19:8

Hymn #286- *We Gather Together*

Hymn Insert- *Every Promise of Your Word*

Hymn - *Be Still My Soul*

Introduction:

David's army has successfully defeated Absalom's army, and Absalom has been barbarically killed by Joab and his young armor bearers. Last week, we saw that the news of this victory, and of Absalom's death, was brought back to David, who waited back at Mahanaim for a report. When David had heard about the death of his son, Absalom, he had begun to loudly mourn, wishing that he had died instead of Absalom.

This morning, news of David's deep and continuous mourning, will get back to his army, breaking their morale, and incurring the stern rebuke of Joab.

I. David Mourn's for Absalom (18:33 - 19:4)

We have considered already, that, the fact that Absalom was David son, and in light of the eternal destiny of the young Absalom, certainly David had warrant to mourn his death. And furthermore, beyond the shadow of any doubt, David knew that his sin with Bathsheba, was also, indirectly, a root cause of Absalom's rebellion and downfall. That said, the extent of David's mourning, or at least, the lack of control he had, in loudly expressing it, lacked consideration for the loyal men, who have stuck by him, and risked their lives to preserve his life and kingdom. And to that end, his mourning took on an unhealthy and careless tone. How might his men have interpreted it? What implicative message was given?:

1) All of the sacrifices they have made; the very significant sacrifices they made in choosing to be loyal to David when he fled Jerusalem, in refusing to allow him to go out to the battle, and in risking their own lives in a war, were vain and empty. They put his life above their own, in so many respects, and yet, here, he is repeatedly stating aloud, "O my son Absalom... if only I had died in your place!" It just doesn't convey concern and appreciation for the cause that his men had upheld, namely, preserving David and his kingdom.

2) Not only did it show a lack of appreciation for the support and sacrifices, which his men had given and made for David, but it also showed a lack of concern for the welfare of the men, themselves. The impression that David gives, which Joab correctly (though sinfully) points out, is that David would have been more relieved and happy, if he had lost the war, including the lives of his men, if it meant that Absalom's life would have been preserved. His men were the complete opposite of Absalom, in that, their loyalty to David was exceptionally noble, even as Absalom's was exceptionally shameful. And their loyalty ought to have been recognized and greatly commended, compelling David to exercise great restraint in his mourning, at least, from the public standpoint.

Now, David clearly cared about and loved his men, and he would not have desired to convey an inconsiderate and careless message like this (obviously his grief for his son, got the best of him), but his lack of restraint, inevitably conveyed the wrong message, and broke the morale of his men, who ought to have been commended and encouraged for their loyalty, bravery and success. And furthermore, again, without self-righteously pounding on David for his actions here (I couldn't imagine being in his shoes), his lack of controlling his emotions publicly, could very well have shed a pour light on God's providential aid, whom everyone knew to be the real Victor in the battle.

And so, when the men hear of David's deep mourning, their joy in prosperity, quickly turns into mourning and shame, and they stealthfully return back to the city, looking more like the defeated than the prosperous. It is indeed a pitiful scene, when what should have been a great time of rejoicing, turns into a time of mourning, where the soldiers feel as if they have somehow done something wrong in defending the king, while he covers his face and loudly weeps for his son. And so, Joab feels compelled to address the king, concerning this matter, and rightly so, only there is a weight of unrighteousness attached to his tone, which covers his appeal with a strong flavor of his own lack of compassion and carelessness. And, in Joab's case, unlike David's, the lack of compassion and the carelessness are strung together with personal, present sin.

II. Joab Rebukes David (vs. 5-8)

Now, in order to properly process the fulness of Joab's rebuke, we have to recall the fact that he was the one, who had been the cause of Absalom's death. And while Absalom deserved it, it was entirely unnecessary. Remember, Absalom was helplessly hanging in a tree, when Joab lunged three spears into his chest, and allowed his armor bearers to finish the job of killing him. He could have brought Absalom back alive. He could have obeyed the king's command. But instead, he took matters into his own hand, and destroyed Absalom. Inevitably, this was on Joab's mind, when David was loudly mourning for Absalom. Had Absalom been killed in just the normal heat of battle, Joab would not have had the sinful weight of his own actions to contend with.

And so, when Joab, here approaches David, he is not merely seeking to steer David in the right direction, or to graciously correct him (which would have been fine), but rather, he is also contending with the guilt of his own, unrighteous actions. Every aspect of David's mourning, were as if David were saying (though indirectly, because David probably doesn't know what Joab had done), "Joab, look what you have done! How could you do this, provoking the king to such grief, while breaking the morale of the soldiers?" Now, obviously Joab is not going to bear this kind of guilt; more than likely, he wouldn't change a thing, but inevitably, David's mourning condemns Joab in this sense. And so, when Joab approaches David, he is not merely seeking to defend the sorrowful soldiers; he is certainly not seeking to comfort and graciously help David, but rather, he is trying to defend and justify himself, and that is why his rebuke is strong, harsh and inconsiderate of anyone. To that end, Joab has valid concerns, but he addresses them in the wrong way, because he has his own conscience to deal with, in the matter.

And so, without an ounce of grace, Joab comes out swinging, accusing David of the following:

- 1) Disgracing his servants, who have saved his life, and the lives of his wives, concubines and children.
- 2) Loving his enemies more than his friends, having no respect or concern for anyone, whether they are princes, high officials or general soldiers.
- 3) Would have been well pleased, if all of his men had died, and Absalom had lived.

Like the three spears he had lunged into the chest of Absalom, Joab lunged these three harsh accusations against David. Again, David's mourning did not send the right message, but unlike Joab himself, David certainly had no intentional motive to hurt anybody. Rather than attack David with the worst and strongest interpretation of his mourning, he ought to have graciously presented the implied message, but again, Joab was doing more than confronting David's actions here... he was, in his own conscience, justifying and defending his own actions.

Finally then, again, rather than presenting a concerned appeal, Joab presents David with a fierce and stern ultimatum, certainly unbefitting of a subject of the king. He orders David to go out, to speak words of comfort to his presently grieving soldiers, or else they would all walk away from David, permanently, that night. And to that end, Joab states, that this would be the worst experience that David had ever suffered, in his entire life. In essence, he is saying, "You better get over Absalom really quick (which would stop putting pressure on Joab's conscience), and get out there to speak good and comforting words, to the men who have just risked their lives for you.

Now again, Joab has a legitimate concern, and he rightly ought to compel David to restore the morale of the army, but again, his approach is utterly abhorrent, being laced with his own personal inward dealings, over the matter.

And so, David does rise up and go out to the gate, so as to properly commend and comfort his loyal soldiers, who have done well, in defending the king. The people come before him, and he fulfills his proper duty, to those who ought to have been thanked, commended, and honored. In spite of Joab's harshness (which compels David to replace Joab with Amasa), David fulfills his right and proper duty.

III. Closing Thoughts and Applications

Having worked through the text then, brethren, let us conclude our time, by considering a few closing thoughts and applications:

1) We have seen that it was important for David to be confronted about the morale breaking perception he was giving, in the way that he was mourning for Absalom. However, we have also seen that the *way* in which Joab had confronted David was harsh, inconsiderate and

insubordinate. In taking application for us here, brethren, let us recognize two critical principles, that ought to be carried over to our treatment of one another in the church.

a- The first principle is this: One of the reasons that God has put the church together, is so that we can grow together, as individual parts of a united body. And the very clear implication given by that analogy, and thoroughly, directly reiterated throughout the Scriptures, is that we need to be a body, which is in the business of correcting and rebuking one another.

And so, the first principle simply stated, is that we need to be willing to confront one another in love. If there are patterns of sin or offense in this body; if there are ways in which we are (perhaps even ignorantly) hindering the testimony of Christ in us (and therefore, inevitably, in the body) -- and there are, for all of us -- then we need to be ready to graciously rebuke one another. There is nothing "loving" about leaving someone in their sin. Is it comfortable correcting and rebuking someone? No, it never is. But, it is the loving thing to do. Leaving someone in a state, which is hindering their spiritual progress, and therefore, the spiritual progress of the body by default, is not a loving thing to do. In fact, it is selfish and unloving, driven by a fear of man.

Who would ever covet the task of confronting the king, particularly about his excessive mourning over the death of his son; his flesh and blood? But, it needed to be done, because it was affecting the body as a whole. David's lack of self-control was disheartening and discouraging the men. Though his intentions were certainly not malicious, the picture he was painting was damaging, and he needed to know that. And so, Joab was correct to confront David. And brethren, we must reinstate the rebuke in the life of this church, if we are to grow together. We must both, be willing to acknowledge that none of us are perfect; that we all have remaining sins and faults, so that we can lovingly receive rebuke, while being willing to lovingly administer the rebuke as well, for the benefit of others. The parent/child principle of lovingly correcting and disciplining your children for the sake of their never dying souls; the principle of those who spare the rod, hate their children, meets the broader church as well, but in a brethren to brethren sense. In fact, it says in the Law of Moses, not to hate your brother, by failing to correct him, when he sins against God. [See Galatians 6:1-2]

b- The second principle, simply emphasizes a different part of the first principle. We are called to rebuke one another *in love*. In other words, *how* we approach one another is critical. We ought not to have a self-righteous spirit, when confronting one another. We ought not to look down on one another, and we ought not to come with any personal agenda attached to the duty. Our motive ought to be for the other persons spiritual welfare, for the welfare of the whole body, and ultimately for the glory of Christ, the Head, who is represented by the body, in this world.

In Ephesians 4, the Apostle Paul shows how the thriving church, functions like a well-oiled machine, when every part does its share, unto the growth of the whole body. But, the greatest catalyst of that growth is God's truth. And Paul calls us to use God's truth, in exhorting, correcting, rebuking and encouraging one another, in a specific way. We don't just randomly swing God's truth around, carelessly wielding at fragile souls. Rather, he commands us to "speak the truth to one another *in love*." That is to say that, *how* we speak the truth, is as important as presenting the truth itself. In fact, to present God's truth, in a spirit, which is ungodly, and not complimentary to the truth, will ultimately do harm to the truth, sadly leading people to reject it, not because of the truth itself, but because of the tone, with which it was presented.

Joab rightly confronted David. But he did so, with the wrong motive (which we will address in a moment), and because of this, he spoke harshly and disrespectfully to David, lacking the love and compassion, which God calls us to put on, when we confront one another. It must be done *in love*. It must be seasoned with grace. And, for that to happen, we must begin by checking our own hearts and motives, before confronting someone else, concerning a sin or offense. The beam must be properly removed from our own eyes, before we address the splinter in the eyes of others. And indeed, Joab had a huge beam to contend with! And so, this then leads us to our second and final application.

2) We must rebuke. We must rebuke in love. But, we must prayerfully examine our own hearts, before confronting someone else, in any respect. For one, we need to be prepared to graciously deal with the person, if they don't immediately respond positively. But, more importantly, we need to consider our motives for correcting the individual.

We need to consider *why* we are confronting them. Are we angry or upset about anything? Have *we* sinned in some way, leading us to challenge someone else, merely for the

purpose of justifying or defending ourselves, like Joab. Joab's entire, unrighteous approach, was driven by the wrong that he had done, in killing Absalom, against the king's orders. And again, it is not like Joab could say, "Well, it was in self-defense" or "It happened in the heat of the battle." Absalom was completely defenseless, hanging from a tree.

And so, brethren, let us exercise the biblical, righteous responsibility of rebuking and correcting one another, but let us do so, in love, beginning first, by prayerfully examining our own hearts and motives before approaching someone else. All of this, ought to be done, within the context of Matthew 18, of course (going to that person alone and no one else, if that fails - Go with one or two more, if that fails - Go to the church... etc).

All in all, brethren, our concern is for the spiritual welfare of the individual, for the spiritual welfare of the body, and for the greater glory of our Lord Jesus Christ!

The Gospel: God is a God, who looks at the motives of the heart, and we, in fact, live out of the well-spring of our hearts. Friend, if you are outside of Jesus Christ, then you desperately need God to give you a new heart, which will, in turn, produce godly motives, actions and fruit. You cannot even begin to please God, in any sense, apart from being united to His Son, Jesus Christ, by faith. You need, your sins... all of them, paid for by Him, and you need His Holy Spirit to change, direct and guide you.... etc.

AMEN

Benediction: Ephesians 3:14-21