

## **Returning to Jerusalem, Part II - Shimei**

Call to Worship:

1st Scripture: 2 Samuel 16:5-14

2nd Scripture: 2 Samuel 19:15-23

Hymn #86- *Now Thank We All Our God*

Hymn #615- *Come Ye Thankful People*

Hymn #432- *Jesus! What a Friend for Sinners!*

Doxology (supp #28)- *Give Thanks*

### **Introduction:**

Following the defeat of Absalom and his army, David, by his restorative and gracious approach, has won the support of Judah, who has now (along with the other eleven tribes of Israel) called David to return, to reign in Jerusalem. David and his men traveled down, to just north of the Dead Sea, where the people of Judah, who were waiting on the other side of the Jordan River (at Gilgal), would escort him across the Jordan, into the Promised Land.

Throughout the process of David's return, we will find him interacting with three different individuals. The first of these individuals, Shimei, will be the subject of our consideration for this morning.

### **I. David's Previous Encounter with Shimei** (2 Samuel 16:5-14)

Now, before we work through our text, where David encounters Shimei for the second time, it is important that we simply review the first encounter that David had with Shimei, when David was fleeing Jerusalem, and it was understood that Absalom would now reign in place of his father.

We recall there, that when David and his men had crossed over the Mount of Olives, and had approached the outskirts of the city of Bahurim, that Shimei stood on an incline of the rear side of the mountain, following along, as David and his men made their way to Bahurim. Remember, David and his men were weary; both physically and emotionally exhausted, as they, without warning, had to quickly flee Jerusalem, so as to escape, before Absalom had arrived.

Well, Shimei the son of Gera, who was from the family of the house of Saul, had wrongfully blamed David for all of the evil that had come upon Saul and his family. And there, on the incline of the mountain, he had committed the capital offense of repeatedly cursing King David, while throwing stones at, and kicking up dust toward, David and his men. He saw

David's present plight, as a judgment that had come upon David, for his so-called wicked acts toward Saul, whom David had replaced. And, at that time, Abishai, Joab's brother, asked David to allow him to tear Shimei's head off, but David would not allow it, seeing Shimei as God's providential rebuke toward David. And so, at that first encounter then, Shimei mocked and cursed David, taking advantage of his hardship and unfortunate circumstances, as David was fleeing from Absalom. Again, it is important to note that Shimei's crime there, was a capital offense, according to the Law of God, given to Moses.

## **II. David's Present Encounter with Shimei** (2 Samuel 19:15-23)

Well now, fast forward to the present, where David's army has defeated Absalom's army, and David has been called back by all Israel, to return as their reigning king, and you can see how that will pose a great and fearful problem for Shimei. Shimei had wrongly assumed that God's judgment had fallen upon David, but clearly, David's return, proves that assumption to have been presumptuous. And now, Shimei is terrified for his life! Would he go unpunished for committing such a heinous crime against the rightful king of Israel?

So, what then will he do? Well, he is going to plead for mercy, and that, with an accompanying attempt to offset the great insult, which he has cast upon the king. He is going to be, one of the first to greet and welcome King David back. He is going to do that, with an entourage of one thousand Benjamites. And he is going to plead for mercy, in the presence of everyone. In this way, he will utterly humble himself, while greatly exalting and reverencing the king, with the hope that David might show him mercy, and spare his life.

And so, when Shimei comes before David, he falls down, reverently, bowing before David. And then he pleads, "Do not let my lord impute iniquity to me, or remember what wrong your servant did on the day that my lord the king left Jerusalem, that the king should take it to heart. For I, your servant, know that I have sinned. Therefore here I am, the first to come today of all the house of Joseph to go down to meet my lord the king" (vs. 19-20).

Now, what is profoundly interesting about this plea, brethren, is that Shimei asks David not to "impute" iniquity to him. And the word "impute" here, is the same word, which Paul uses repeatedly in Romans 4, speaking about how God does not impute iniquity (sin/guilt) to the

account of the sinner, who trusts in Christ. It is also the same Hebrew term used, when God speaks of "accounting" Abraham's faith in God, to Abraham, as righteousness. And of course, the idea conveyed by the word, "impute," is to hold to account, to reckon, to charge with. In the case of the sinner, who has faith in Christ, he is not charged with the guilt of his sin, and is instead, charged with the righteousness of Christ; what we might call the double imputation. Christ is charged with our sin, and we are charged with His righteousness.

And so, it is somewhat fascinating, and unusual, to hear someone use this term, when seeking mercy from someone else in Scripture. However, recognizing that David is here the king, and one who was very much in the position to execute judgment upon Shimei, for his crime/sin, we can appreciate Shimei's use of the term. Now, while we cannot attest to the sincerity of Shimei here, clearly, he is attempting to own his guilt before David, and in doing so, he is putting himself completely at the mercy of David. In other words, you can see in his entire plea, that he makes no excuse; there are no strings attached to his plea; he acknowledges his guilt; he confesses the irremovable blemish, and pleads with David, to be willing, on his part, to not hold the sin/crime, against Shimei. It is the language of someone who is in a debt, that he cannot repay, and who is hoping to have that debt graciously forgiven. Notice, the consistent language, all the way through: Do not impute, do not remember the wrong I have done, do not take it to heart, I have sinned, Here I am at your mercy. The only additive to the whole package, is that Shimei states that he has come down to the king, first, out of all Israel, indicating, that he recognizes the severity of his guilt, and desires, if possible, to rectify it, by honoring and pleading with the king for mercy, in the presence of all, especially including those who were present, when he had committed the terrible atrocity.

And of course, before David has a chance to respond, Abishai steps in, much in keeping with the ungracious and uncompassionate heart of his brother Joab, calling for justice. Again, this is not surprising, because the sons of Zeruiah, while fierce and powerful men of war, have hardly a fraction of a notion, of what it means to be gracious or compassionate. It is no wonder then, that Joab, is actually killed, while clinging to the horns of the tabernacle altar. God does not show mercy to those who are unmerciful. Well, needless to say, Abishai, the voice of an accuser, says, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the Lord's anointed?"

And after rebuking Abishai, David spares Shimei, going so far as to vow not to harm him, even though he deserved otherwise. David chooses to be gracious to Shimei, who deserved to be executed, for the terrible and offensive crime, which he had committed against the king.

Now, before we move on to consider a few applications, let me just note, two of the reasons for which, David rebukes Abishai, given in verse 22:

1) David says, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah, that you should be adversaries to me today?" Again, as we have seen in the past, David, once again, disaligns himself with the natural thinking and hearts of Joab and Abishai. David cannot identify with their unmerciful and cruel nature, and he has no problem expressing that.

And, it is further interesting that he labels them as his "adversaries," as they would call him to this type of a response, at this point in time. In fact, the language here could be represented as, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruah, that you should be "satans" to me today?" What David means, is that the way that they operate, would ultimately serve to destroy, all that David is seeking to accomplish. David is thinking restoratively. David is seeking the best interests of the kingdom of God, and the glory of God, and these men are just out for blood. They have no concern for the big picture, because the love of God is not operative in them. They don't get it, which is why David distinguishes himself from them.

Not only are they void of any sense of grace or compassion, but they are so set on bloodshed, that they fail to realize that their desired actions, if followed, would actually serve to contradict all that David was striving to peacefully accomplish. What would the men of Judah, who are present, think, if David executed Shimei for his cursing, when they themselves had actually been directly involved in the great conspiracy that sought to destroy David, altogether? How would they view his alleged grace to them, in the face of such an execution, when they deserved worse, especially when Shimei owned his sin, and sought forgiveness and mercy? But, Abishai and Joab could not see this, because they were lost in their own seeking of vengeance. And they still will not get it, because Joab is going to murder Amasa, in a short time. And so, in that sense, they are "satans/adversaries" to David, and to the entire kingdom, for that matter.

2) Finally, David says, "Shall any man be put to death today in Israel? For do I not know that today I am king over Israel?"

What does David mean by this? Simply that it was not a time for executing, but rather, a time for rejoicing. Bringing more death into the picture, at this point, would greatly hinder the atmosphere of joy and celebration, which ought to have permeated the atmosphere. Why damper the restoration and the grace already shown to many, by putting Shimei to death, at this point, as guilty as he was. There is a time for everything under the sun, and this was not the time to kill. [Note: Even King Saul knew this, when he was first anointed to be king. How he handled the rebels, after he was proven... etc.]

### **III. Closing Thoughts and Applications**

Brethren, having worked through the text, let us now close, by considering a few, relevant concluding thoughts and applications:

1) Take note of the severity of blaspheming the Name of God. If cursing and slandering the king was a severe and capital offense, calling for the death penalty, in the Theocratic nation of Israel, what is the severity of the offense, attached to taking the name of God in vain? And yet, how often it is done today, sadly, even coming from the mouths of Christians!

Friends, God's Name is forever to be hallowed, not merely as a label, but as that, which represents the very being and essence of our infinite and eternal Creator! What a terrible thing, to treat God in some light manner, as if, He is just another one of the gang, by using His name in a casual, relaxed or common fashion. Young people, understand that the very name of God, of Jesus and of the Holy Spirit, is to be respected and honored, even as the One behind the Name is to be feared, honored and respected. And so, when you hear others, prefacing "damn it" or "Christ" or following "Oh my," with the name of God, let it cause you to shutter, and to exercise great care, when you use His name. The Jews were so fearful of taking the Name of God in vain, particularly "YHWH," that they never pronounced it, and instead, spoke of God as, "Ha Shem," or ("The Name"). So careful were they in this regard, that to this day, no one, truly knows how to pronounce "YHWH." And so, let us learn from the care that was to be exercised toward respecting and honoring earthly kings, that, infinitely more so, God ought to be respected. Guard the sanctity of His name. Guard the sanctify of His Person. Pray with our Lord Jesus, "Hallowed be Your Name!"

2) Recognize that when someone seeks your forgiveness, the whole idea of "imputation" is presumed, and it ought to be applied in *how* you forgive others. When you agree to forgive someone, which, remembering that God, in Christ, has forgiven you, ought always to be done, remember what forgiveness is. You are, in essence, saying, that you will not hold the offense/sin to the account of the person. You are dropping it, and agreeing not to bring it back up again. There is such a distorted view of forgiveness in our day, that the substance of the meaning is all but emptied. People say they forgive, while holding onto the offense, continuing to allow it to affect how they treat the offender, bringing it up again and again, as a form of leverage for future disagreements. That is not forgiveness. Imagine if God did that to us?

Forgiveness entails doing everything on your part to erase it altogether. And while it might be impossible to eliminate it from your memory, by your actions, you treat the person as if that were the case. That is why the Apostle Paul, in the thirteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, includes, in his discourse on the definition of love, the whole idea of "love, not keeping a record of wrongs." In essence, what is he saying there? Love forgives, in the truest sense. Love is willing to leave the past behind, even when dealing with new and present issues. Forgiveness says, "I will not hold this iniquity to your account. I will not allow this sin to change how I treat you, from this point on. This sin will no longer impede our relationship. And, when this sin comes to mind, I will do all to ensure that it is not brought up, or held against you in any way," There are no strings attached to forgiveness. Now, it might take longer for the hurt to be healed (depending upon the nature of the offense); but forgiveness can still be granted, at the outset of the healing process.

3) Finally brethren, behold again, a picture of the glory of Christ, here reflected in David's handling of Shimei. Are we not all, naturally, Shimei's in the sight of God? Have we not, every last one of us, cursed God, by our lives, our words and our actions, incurring the just and righteous judgment of God upon us? And does not our Lord, treat us, even better than David here treats Shimei? Does not our Lord Jesus Christ, rather impute His righteousness to our account, while taking our sin, to His own account, and dealing with it, in full, at Calvary? Does He not show grace, even toward us capital offenders, who have broken His law, in every respect imaginable?

What a glorious picture of the sinner before Christ, given here! Was Shimei sincere in his repentance here? Maybe not, but the picture still holds, doesn't it? For those who would desire mercy and grace, from the infinite and eternal God, whom you have offended, see the message here. If you come to God, as Shimei came to David, God will not only pardon you, but He will vow to pardon you, in full, through the shed blood of His Son, Jesus Christ. Notice, Shimei comes without excuse, without anything to offer, to merit David's favor. Again, that is the whole nature of "not imputing," isn't it? We come, acknowledging and confessing our sin before God; we do not deny, but rather, we own our guilt, and we plead with Him to remove it, not on the basis of anything we could ever do, but solely on the basis of the merits He freely gives us in Christ! We plead with God not to impute the guilt of the great and numerous offenses, which we have committed against Him, to our account. We don't hide from them or ignore them. God knows them all. He sees them all. He cannot forget them, anymore than He can forget Himself. But, the good news is, that He freely and entirely pardons, all who come to Him in Christ!

And so, friends; fellow, naturally condemned sinners, if you have not yet come to God, through Christ; if you are still living comfortably in your sins, would you not, this day, be rid of them all, by the free grace of God, given in Christ? Try Him. See, if His mercy doesn't swoop down, and swallow up, every single offense you have ever committed against Him. And behold the incomprehensible love of God toward sinners, who come to Him, in and by Christ Jesus, and in and by Christ Jesus alone. But don't come, putting forth any inkling of merit of your own. Don't wrap your so-called good deeds and good works, your religious commitments, your anything... in a nice pretty bow, determined to merit anything from God. You may as well give Him a basket of dung. Your works; your best works can do nothing, not one iota, to reconcile you to God. Come to Him, owning your sins, the whole, gross lot of them, pleading for His free mercy and grace in Christ, and you will find forgiveness, peace and rest for your souls. Now, don't come as the hypocrite, trying to "get forgiven," so you can go back and live in your sin. No, you give your life over to Him now. You come as a "once slave of sin" to now be a "privileged slave of Christ." And you will never, ever regret it! And though, like Abishai, the devil will accuse you, the grace of the king, will prevail, because the grace that is in Christ Jesus is far greater than the debt incurred by your sin! Now, that is not to diminish your debt of sin. In

fact, as sinful as you think you are, in the sight of God, you are far, far, far worse. It's just to say that, the grace that is in Christ Jesus is that great! So bow the knee to Christ, seek His grace and His mercy, and follow Him!

AMEN!!!

Benediction: Jude 1:24-25