

David: Abused, Slandered, Threatened & Peaceful

II Samuel 15:13-37

As we open to II Samuel 15, we have entered the consequence years of David's¹ life. So even though David is beloved of the Lord, he still has to face the consequences, just like believers in the New Testament, who are also beloved of the Lord, have to face the consequences of our sins.

Every event from II Samuel 11 onward reflects in some way the results of those moments, when David was blinded by his sinful desires, acted rebelliously against God's clear standards. After David sinned in so many ways surrounding his adultery, he tried to hide his sin, and did quite well, for quite a while.

Then, confronted by words from God's prophet, David repents (a change of mind that leads to a change of behavior); David confesses (saying the same things about his sin that God says); and David forsakes his sin (turning in contrition and disgust from what offends God), and then experiences full, complete, and endless forgiveness.

After David is fully restored in his relationship with God, we see for the next twenty or so years, how David has to learn about living by God's grace, with the consequences of his sin. The first wave was from his third-born son Absalom, who murders David's first-born son Amnon, and then after 5 years commits treason against his father David's throne. In the process David is abused, slandered, and threatened. David teaches us divine lessons in how to face and endure personal attacks and abuse. Some of the most precious lessons David writes about in **Psalms 3 and 63**.

- **Psalm 3 A Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom his son.** This is the first of the Psalms with a setting and the first with a Selah.
- **Psalm 63 A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah.** Because v. 11 calls David King this is most likely running from Absalom in II Samuel 15-19.

Now, as we look in II Samuel 15 watch as:

God Gives Lessons on How to Face Consequences

II Samuel 15 records that moment in the life of David when he begins facing the

¹ David is the Hebrew word Daweed which mean beloved.

consequences we outlined last time, from the words of Nathan in II Samuel 12.

Always remember that there is a huge difference between chastisement for sin, which God does (I Corinthians 11, Hebrews 12). It's like spanking, and He spans and spans and spans until we stop sinning. That is what David goes through in Psalm 32, 38, and 51. When his body dries up, when his bones' marrow shrivels, when his whole system is aging, and he is unable to even go on, that is a divine punishment against sin. That's what chastisement is: until we repent, and then we have the sweet joy of forgiveness .

Just like the third law of Newton's laws, saying for every action there is an equal and opposite reaction, in the spiritual world, there is also a one hundred percent accurate law: it's called the Consequence Engine.

David didn't cause these things to happen. He doesn't cause Shimei to sin, Shimei's sins on his own. David didn't cause Absalom to rebel, Absalom rebels on his own. But all of those bad things were precipitated by the bad choices that David made. They are the consequences of David's wrong, bad, and terrible choices.

It's not that David is persisting in his sin, or that David's doing something wrong, God is judging him. It's just the inevitable result of certain decisions that were made. What God is looking for is a correct response from David. God finds a man after His own heart in:

Humbled David

One of the great characteristics of David as a man after God's own heart is his humility. That humility is never more clearly seen than in this moment recorded for us by God. Please stand with me as we read 2 Samuel 15:13-37 (NKJV) and feel the depths of sorrow as David faces painful abuse.

Now a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom. So David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise, and let us flee, or we shall not escape from Absalom. Make haste to depart, lest he overtake us suddenly and bring disaster upon us, and strike the city with the edge of the sword. And the king's servants said to the king, "We are your servants, ready to do whatever my lord the king commands. Then the king went out with all his household after him. But the king left ten women, concubines, to keep the house. And the king went out with all the people after him, and stopped at the outskirts. Then all his servants passed before him; and all the Cherethites, all the Pelethites, and all the Gittites, six hundred men who had followed him from Gath, passed before the king. Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. In fact, you came only yesterday. Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where? Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you." But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the Lord lives, and as my lord the king lives, surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your

servant will be." So David said to Ittai, "Go, and cross over." Then Ittai the Gittite and all his men and all the little ones who were with him crossed over. And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people crossed over. The king himself crossed over the Brook Kidron, and all the people crossed over toward the way of the wilderness. There was Zadok also, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God. And they set down the ark of God, and Abiathar went up until all the people had finished crossing over from the city. Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the Lord, He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place. But if He says thus: 'I have no delight in you,' here I am, let Him do to me as seems good to Him." The king also said to Zadok the priest, "Are you not a seer? Return to the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz your son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. See, I will wait in the plains of the wilderness until word comes from you to inform me." Therefore Zadok and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem. And they remained there. So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. Then someone told David, saying, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom." And David said, "O Lord, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!" Now it happened when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God (Now it's interesting, if you are a Bible marker, right there, there is actually an entire Psalm written in the book of Psalms that David wrote as he was fleeing from Absalom and paused in this period at the top of the mountain. It's Psalm 3, and we'll see it in later days. If you like to mark stuff, it's right there. He came to the top and he worshiped God) – there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head. David said to him, "If you go on with me, then you will become a burden to me. But if you return to the city, and say to Absalom, 'I will be your servant, O king; as I was your father's servant previously, so I will now also be your servant,' then you may defeat the counsel of Ahithophel for me. And do you not have Zadok and Abiathar the priests with you there? Therefore it will be that whatever you hear from the king's house, you shall tell to Zadok and Abithar the priests. Indeed they have there with them their two sons, Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son; and by them you shall send me everything you hear." So Hushai, David's friend, went into the city. And Absalom came into Jerusalem.

Pray

There is probably no more touching, poignant moment in all the incredible life of David than this scene in 2 Samuel 15:13-37.² David is facing the challenge of even going on:

When Life Hurts

In your mind, try to picture the country people and hear their loud wails as they view

² 060820PM DSS-31; 060827AM DSS-32; 060827PM DSS-33; 061112AM DSS-42; 06112PM DSS-43

this somber procession, as a band of loyal commanders is walking in formation in full armor as they protectively surround the King of Israel—now deposed by a rebellious son, driven from his throne, banished from his city.

King David is walking head down, tears dropping silently to the ground. His face is wet; his eyes are swollen and red; his head is covered as he trudges heavily down the slopes of Zion toward the brook called Kidron.

Stepping across the stones as the water swiftly runs across them, the steep upward incline of the path points David's feet toward the Mount of Olives, now green with countless olive trees. Nearby where David walked and wept is a garden called Gethsemane where the Son of David would one day also walk and weep—both of them because of the sins of others.

David, the one who had faced lions and bears and armies and giants, stumbled out of his beloved Jerusalem with eyes blurred by his own tears. He is fleeing for his life. He had left everything: behind him is the Ark of God; behind him is the Tent of God's Presence; behind him is Zion, the City of His Great God; behind him are the trophies of all his battles—the treasures amounting to the largest personal fortune in gold and silver ever amassed by anyone. So, as David walked, he wept and covered his head.

Can't you just feel the depths of sorrow David was suffering?

David's final twenty years from God's perspective, begin with his fall into sin with Bathsheba. It's almost like God puts parentheses or brackets around the event with Bathsheba, covering this period of his life.

When Bad Choices Turn Into Bitter Memories

To face the hatred of pagan Philistines was one thing—but the hatred of your own son is quite another. To have a murderous father-in-law is devastating, but to have a murderous child is beyond words. So David was speechless as his tears ran and the wailing sobs of his friends rose in crescendos about him.

Could it get any worse for David? Such thoughts must have been on his mind as the saddest day of his life unfolded. Because Satan often attacks when we are at our weakest point, life was about to get much worse for David.

David's thoughts raced back and forth from all the battles he had fought to save the Israelites from their enemies. And now he was being betrayed by their children who became the very army that had joined his son to kill him.

David then recalled how he had rescued his own son Absalom so many times. Before he was old enough to even realize it, he had kept young Absalom from Saul's hand. Later he risked his life to attack the raiding bands of the desert peoples and rescue Absalom

from their grasp. David also remembered bringing young and handsome Absalom up to Jerusalem, the City of David, Zion, the City of God. How it had thrilled David's heart to build a home and see his wives and children happy and secure in the home God provided. But nothing would ever be the same again. Tamar was raped by Amnon, so Absalom killed Amnon. And now Absalom was seeking to kill his own father. Nothing was right anymore—nothing could ever make this all go away.

Back and forth flew David's thoughts, his painful questions: Why do the people turn away from me so quickly? Why does my own son hate me? Why does God allow all this?

And then, as David looked around at his mighty men marching like a wall of strength around him, that space once occupied by the bravest of the brave—Uriah—was empty. The same Uriah who went to his death at David's deceitful bidding and murderous plot did so because he was loyal to the death for David, and always had been. David's thoughts raced back over the years and smote him with renewed contrition as he was once more reminded of his sin against the Lord. And now David was suffering the consequences.

Twenty Years of Refining Fires

God forgives the sins, and God forgets the iniquities. That's the truth of the Scripture. But the consequences and loss are recorded in the Bible, God's forever settled in Heaven Word. The consequences David faced are many. In our text we see just one slice of those consequences - it is the great pain of a son's betrayal. All of this is resulting from David's sin and the consequences that sin brings.

If you turn a little bit to the right to 1 Kings 15, and if you haven't underlined this yet in your Bibles, this is a good time if you'd like. Remember that incredible postscript to an incredible life?

Remember the 141 chapters that were written by God about David make him the most recorded life, the most talked about person in the Bible, the most examined single individual life in the Bible is David. 1 Kings 15:5 is the postscript that God wrote about David.

Have you ever stopped and soberly thought about where your life, habits, and secret thoughts are headed? Listen as I read and emphasize that one word God emphasizes for us.

1 Kings 15:5 because David did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and had not turned aside from anything that He commanded him all the days of his life, except in the matter of Uriah the Hittite. NKJV

Now turn back with me to II Samuel 15.

As we review this sad and painful day step by step we can mine some wonderful truths

to live by when we also suffer as David did. Here is the summary of what God captured for us in 2 Samuel 15:13-37 and 16:1-14. Look at how God was glorified in David's painful consequences, by teaching him:

Lessons Only Learned When Facing Troubles

Lesson One: When David was at the bottom— God sent him help.

*Then the king said to Ittai the Gittite, "Why are you also going with us? Return and remain with the king. For you are a foreigner and also an exile from your own place. In fact, you came only yesterday. **Should I make you wander up and down with us today, since I go I know not where?** Return, and take your brethren back. Mercy and truth be with you." But Ittai answered the king and said, "As the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, **surely in whatever place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also your servant will be**" (2 Samuel 15:19-21).*

Lesson Two: When David was at his weakest point— he waited for God's provision.

*Then the king said to Zadok, "Carry the ark of God back into the city. If I find favor in the eyes of the LORD, **He will bring me back and show me both it and His dwelling place**" (2 Samuel 15:25).*

Note that David did not try to defend himself. Because he left his burdens with the Lord, he didn't have to take matters into his own hands. David did not grasp after things, even when they were rightfully his. That is the strength and serenity we can have from the Lord. It is unusual and magnificent to see such strength—for it only comes from the Lord!

David knew that the Lord was with him; he didn't need a box covered with gold to remind him. He had the Lord Himself, so he was willing to leave the Ark of God in the Tent of God's Presence and go out of the city trusting in God and God alone!

Lesson Three: When David was at the lowest moment of his life— he worshiped and offered up a psalm of praise to God.

*So David went up by the Ascent of the Mount of Olives, and **wept as he went up**; and he had his head covered and went barefoot. And all the people who were with him covered their heads and went up, weeping as they went up. Now it happened **when David had come to the top of the mountain, where he worshiped God**—there was Hushai the Archite coming to meet him with his robe torn and dust on his head (2 Samuel 15:30, 32).*

David trusted God's control; he relied upon it and prayed for it. So rather than give in to fear, his faith worshiped the Lord instead. God's servants can, and should, worship even when life is tough, difficult, and almost looking like it is impossible to go on. This same spirit can flow from us if we, like David, will bow in worship when the bitter tears of sorrow and grief fall across our lives.

Lesson Four: When David was least in control of his circumstances—he entrusted his situation to the Lord.

*Then someone told David, saying, "**Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom.**" And David said, "**O LORD, I pray, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness!**" (2 Samuel 15:31).*

People often share reports that can either lead us to fear or prompt us to prayer. David chose to lift his heart in prayer to the Lord at this evil report!

Just as Hebrews 4:15 reminds us, we will always find grace to help in our times of need! David's help comes in II Samuel 16:1-4 with much needed provisions for the journey.

Somewhere in the midst of being lost in his thoughts, mingled with tears, a barefoot David heard trouble coming.

Before he saw him, he heard the hatred of his curses. Coming up from Bahurim, the first village on the downward slope of the Mount of Olives, was the figure of an angry man. As we look at II Samuel 16:5 and onward we get some:

Lessons From God on How To Face Slanderous Abuse

This distant relative of Saul's was bitter to the point of blindness. With the poison of a venomous serpent on his tongue, curses, dust, and rocks flew from the one-man-army named Shimei. With every means possible he tried to attack David while he was the most vulnerable possible.

Isn't that how temptations often come? The devil—in alliance with our flesh, the world around us, and the demons—always tries to get us at our weakest moment. And this was perfect timing: David was physically, emotionally, mentally, and humanly at his weakest and lowest point. But much to Satan's disappointment, David was not at his lowest point spiritually.

David's responses in 2 Samuel 16 are the most beautiful example of how to handle such attacks. Although his suffering was part of the inevitable consequences of his sin, God was still watching to see what choices he would make. Either David would respond in a selfish and thus sinful way, or he would respond in a godly or glorifying way.

The good news is that David responded consistently for God, both before Bathsheba and after Bathsheba. He was still God's man—one who had slipped into sin, repented, and

then “walked the walk” from there on out. For even when he faced the painful consequences of sin, he could still praise God, glorify his Savior, and experience His all-sufficient grace more than ever.

Lesson One: When David was attacked— he realized God had allowed adversaries for His own purposes.

*Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from a family of the house of Saul, whose name was **Shimei** ... coming from there. He **came out cursing** continuously as he came. **And he threw stones at David** and at all the servants of King David (2 Samuel 16:5-6).*

*Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, **“Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over and take off his head!”** But the king said, **“What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, ‘Curse David.’** Who then shall say, **‘Why have you done so?’**” And David said to Abishai and all his servants, **“See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him** (2 Samuel 16:9-11).*

After his brief worship stop, David trudged onward. But then, on top of all else, insult was added to injury as Shimei kicked David when he was down. He sprayed him with curses, dust, and stones. But the man after God’s own heart kept going until he was at last safely across the Jordan River and in the wilderness camp to be made for the night.

David simply entrusted his personal adversaries to the Lord because he knew God “raises up” and “puts down.” Since adversaries are allowed by God, he wanted to respond correctly. For the Lord often allows us to be attacked by various adversaries just to reveal what is really in our hearts.

Lesson Two: When the painful abuse was overwhelming him— David fled to the Lord for hope.

***“It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day”** (2 Samuel 16:12).*

David knew God cared, that He saw his troubles, and could cause all these things to work together for good. Thus, David consistently entrusted his personal sufferings to the Lord.

God worked behind the scenes in the hearts of people to provide just what David needed to continue on. So a servant of the Lord must always entrust his personal needs to the Lord, remembering His great promise:

Hebrews 4:15-16 (NKJV) For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.