

The King's Familial Consequences

2 Samuel 13:1-39

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Introduction

Like Father, like son. A chip of the old block. The apple didn't fall far from the tree. Sayings like these can be said as a compliment and/or a criticism. When we first venture into adulthood and we hear ourselves say things that our parents often said, we can be startled at first. We can often think of how much we are like our parents and be thankful. Of course there are times when we and our parents wish we weren't so much alike. Today we are going to look at that side of the family coin. The darker side of parental likeness. The side where you follow the leader right off a cliff. --Pray

Lust

Wrong Desires

1 Now Absalom, David's son, had a beautiful sister, whose name was Tamar. And after a time Amnon, David's son, loved her. 2 And Amnon was so tormented that he made himself ill because of his sister Tamar, for she was a virgin, and it seemed impossible to Amnon to do anything to her.

You can get through the first verse of our text today without any great problems. It will be the last one. So, let's take the time here to sort out familial relations. Absalom is David's son and Tamar is his beautiful sister. Their Mom is Maacah. Amnon is David's son with Ahinoam. He is the half brother, of Absalom and Tamar. We have in this first verse nearly all of the main characters we will be dealing with. Again, no great problems here. But, then there's verse two.

We see that Amnon has so focused his attention, his desires, on his beautiful sister, Tamar, that he has made himself sick. He is physically ill with want. What is it that he wants? God makes it clear as the verse ends that he wants to physically be with Tamar. However, she is pure, a virgin and he just can't figure out how to do with her as he would like.

Notice a few things with me. Amnon has made himself ill and he is not bothered by the fact that Tamar is his sister. Think of the sin in your own life. First, sin will have physical effects. Practice sin long enough and you will incur physical consequences. They should serve as a wake up call of sorts. Do they? They don't for Amnon. Second, the obvious red flags disappear in the fog of a sin stuck mind. Amnon needs a community around him to "grab him by the collar" as it were, and say, "NO!" this is your sister! Look at how you are thinking? He does not have this and

worse, he has an enabler.

Look down with me at verses three through six. God's word says this,

Wrong Counsel

3 But Amnon had a friend, whose name was Jonadab, the son of Shimeah, David's brother. And Jonadab was a very crafty man. 4 And he said to him, "O son of the king, why are you so haggard morning after morning? Will you not tell me?" Amnon said to him, "I love Tamar, my brother Absalom's sister." 5 Jonadab said to him, "Lie down on your bed and pretend to be ill. And when your father comes to see you, say to him, 'Let my sister Tamar come and give me bread to eat, and prepare the food in my sight, that I may see it and eat it from her hand.' " 6 So Amnon lay down and pretended to be ill. And when the king came to see him, Amnon said to the king, "Please let my sister Tamar come and make a couple of cakes in my sight, that I may eat from her hand."

Did you catch how Amnon refers to Tamar here? She is "my brother Absalom's sister". Yes, but more to the point she is YOUR sister. See what sin does to the mind? And he couches his lust in words that make it sound good..."I love Tamar". No, you lust after her and want to fulfill your sinful desires. He must, and we must, speak with the terms the Bible uses or we risk leading ourselves into danger by covering a thorny path with fake rose petals. It looks nice, but it is a painful path to walk.

Also, take a look at Jonadab. He is a cousin to our main characters and our English translators have labeled him "crafty". The word here is normally used to talk about a skilled craftsmen. He is skilled at one thing, counseling. Problem being, his counsel is bad and typically bent to set himself in a good light. Look "oh son of the king" I'm here to help you get what you want. Kids, you want some good Bible advice to take home with you tonight? Do not pick friends that will help you get whatever you want. Pick friends that will tell you the truth no matter what you want.

In verse six we see that our cousins have colluded and they have attempted to enlist no less than the king in their evil plot. Will he see what is happening with lust filled Amnon? Will he send his precious daughter into the lion's den?

God's word says this in verses seven through fourteen,

Outrageous Behavior

7 Then David sent home to Tamar, saying, "Go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare food for him." 8 So Tamar went to her brother Amnon's house, where he was lying down. And she took dough and kneaded it and made cakes in his sight and baked the cakes. 9 And she took the pan and emptied it out before him, but he refused to eat. And Amnon said, "Send out everyone from me." So everyone went out from him. 10 Then Amnon said to Tamar, "Bring the food into the chamber, that I may eat from your hand." And Tamar took the cakes she had made

and brought them into the chamber to Amnon her brother. 11 But when she brought them near him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." 12 She answered him, "No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing. 13 As for me, where could I carry my shame? And as for you, you would be as one of the outrageous fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you." 14 But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her.

King David was unable to see all that was happening with his son Amnon and sends Tamar into the Lion's den. Amnon watches her carefully as she prepares his food. All the while building up into a sinful rage. Being the coward that he is he has everyone leave the room until only he and his pure, unsuspecting sister are left. Come closer says the spider to the fly, leaving her no room for escape. She calls out his wrong behavior in five ways. 1) She simply tells him, "No", you must stop. 2) She calls on his identity as a Jew. The kind of thing he wishes to do is not done in all of Israel. None of our people commit acts like this. You must stop. 3) She calls on her reputation. You know I will be an outcast. You must stop. 4) She calls on his reputation. Do you want to be an outrageous fool? You must stop. 5) And finally, she calls on their father, the King...out of desperation or perhaps some other reason and all to no avail. Amnon has put national identity, others reputation, his own reputation and the authority of the King and thrown them all out for the momentary pleasure of sin. He uses the very strength God gave him to protect others to violate his own sister. Do some of these details sound like something David did in chapter eleven?

It only gets worse. God's word says this in verses fifteen through nineteen,

Great Hatred

15 Then Amnon hated her with very great hatred, so that the hatred with which he hated her was greater than the love with which he had loved her. And Amnon said to her, "Get up! Go!" 16 But she said to him, "No, my brother, for this wrong in sending me away is greater than the other that you did to me." But he would not listen to her. 17 He called the young man who served him and said, "Put this woman out of my presence and bolt the door after her." 18 Now she was wearing a long robe with sleeves, for thus were the virgin daughters of the king dressed. So his servant put her out and bolted the door after her. 19 And Tamar put ashes on her head and tore the long robe that she wore. And she laid her hand on her head and went away, crying aloud as she went.

Perhaps now seeing what an outrageous fool he has been, his lust turns to a more powerful anger. Our coward now puts the icing on his self-centered cake. After using her for what she was good for he will cast her away like the trash he views her to be. He has physically abused her and will now send her out with his voice ringing in her head. Get up! Go! She answer with the law of God on her lips, for it says *"If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed, and seizes her and lies with her, and they are found, 29 then the man who lay with her shall give to the*

father of the young woman fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife, because he has violated her. He may not divorce her all his days.” But he will not listen and instead of expending the energy it would take to lead her to the door he has a servant throw her out and bolt the door behind her.

Our pure and beautiful Tamar is in great distress. Like Bathsheba, she has been used to fulfill a man’s sinful desire. The clothes that reflected the purity of the wearer will now reflect the violence done to the wearer. They will be torn and soiled as she has been. The public will know she is no longer one of the “virgin daughters of the king”. It will be made known by her appearance, her actions and her tears.

With all that has happened you would might expect an equal or greater reaction to these deeds from her father, David, and her brother, Absalom.

God’s word says this in verses twenty through twenty-two,

Cool Response

20 And her brother Absalom said to her, “Has Amnon your brother been with you? Now hold your peace, my sister. He is your brother; do not take this to heart.” So Tamar lived, a desolate woman, in her brother Absalom’s house. 21 When King David heard of all these things, he was very angry. 22 But Absalom spoke to Amnon neither good nor bad, for Absalom hated Amnon, because he had violated his sister Tamar.

What?! Absalom tells her not to “take this to heart” and her father was “very angry”. That’s it. That’s it! The King’s response to this great wrong done to his daughter is that he was “very angry”. Surely both of his sons have seen their father repay what would seem like small things with great violence in the past and now, faced with the horrible mistreatment of his daughter he is “very angry”. David is not treating the matter as he should. Again, the law would require Amnon to marry Tamar and live out his days with her. We see nothing of the sort here. In fact the only one who does anything for her is her brother Absalom. Though his response, “He is your brother; do not take this heart is less than satisfying at least he comes to rescue her from her shame by giving her a place to live away from her brother Amnon.

However, along with his kindness to Tamar, Absalom is holding deep within his heart a hatred for Amnon. What will he do with his hate? Will he let it build like Amnon’s lust until it gives birth? Or will he turn to God and allow him to meet out justice in the situation?

We’ll find out as we move on to verses twenty-three to twenty-seven. God’s word says this,

Murder

Deceit

23 After two full years Absalom had sheepshearers at Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons. 24 And Absalom came to the king and said, "Behold, your servant has sheepshearers. Please let the king and his servants go with your servant." 25 But the king said to Absalom, "No, my son, let us not all go, lest we be burdensome to you." He pressed him, but he would not go but gave him his blessing. 26 Then Absalom said, "If not, please let my brother Amnon go with us." And the king said to him, "Why should he go with you?" 27 But Absalom pressed him until he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him.

There are two striking pieces of information here. First, Absalom has waited for two years to get his revenge on Amnon. If we had been left at the end of our last section we may have sided with Absalom in his hatred for his brother, but now we must see it for what it is. It is a long boiling bitterness that has moved the trajectory of Absalom's life. He is the king's son with all of the duties and privileges therein and he has let his hatred, his desire for revenge, consume him every bit as much as Amnon allowed his desire, his lust, to consume him. He is no better, only different.

Second, we see that the King is involved again. Absalom has to seek the King's permission to leave. Remember, this hatred has been boiling for two years. And the King hasn't noticed?! How much time does he spend with his children. How much of an influence is he? If he had even the slightest clue of Absalom's anger, don't you think it would have set off alarms in his head when Absalom specifically requested Amnon's presence at the sheepshearing?

Sadly the King has not noticed and Absalom has no Nathan to confront him with his sin. His anger will be allowed full vent as they arrive at the celebration.

God's word say this in verses twenty-eight and twenty-nine,

Death

28 Then Absalom commanded his servants, "Mark when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then kill him. Do not fear; have I not commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant." 29 So the servants of Absalom did to Amnon as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose, and each mounted his mule and fled.

This scene is every bit as disturbing as the scene with Amnon and Tamar. Picture it, brothers have been invited to celebrate together. Fond memories of childhood are shared around the table. Stories of war and victories. Stories of Kingdoms defeated and surely of the King, their father and their various Mom's. Solomon sits at the table as well. The one who will be given

David's seat as the King. Does Absalom have any idea what is coming as he sits, watching and waiting for his brother, his father's son, to cross that line from celebration to inebriation. When will his defenses be down so much so that he will be an easy dispatch for the servants of Absalom? When the time is right their master whispers, "Strike Amnon". They move quickly and skillfully to end this celebration with bloodshed.

What is going on in the minds of the other brothers? Suddenly, without warning, your brothers servants have come up behind your other brother and murdered him. Who's next? What's the agenda here? Is this an order from Absalom, or have his servants gone rogue? They don't know, but they are waiting around for answers either. I can imagine the long ride back home, always glancing to the sides and rear to see if the assassins are following. Madness has come to our family and we need to get home now!

News of such things travels fast in these parts. As the brothers are traveling home David has already gotten word that something terrible has taken place.

God's word says this in verses thirty through thirty-three,

Grief

30 While they were on the way, news came to David, "Absalom has struck down all the king's sons, and not one of them is left." 31 Then the king arose and tore his garments and lay on the earth. And all his servants who were standing by tore their garments. 32 But Jonadab the son of Shimeah, David's brother, said, "Let not my lord suppose that they have killed all the young men, the king's sons, for Amnon alone is dead. For by the command of Absalom this has been determined from the day he violated his sister Tamar. 33 Now therefore let not my lord the king so take it to heart as to suppose that all the king's sons are dead, for Amnon alone is dead."

Jonadab the crafty is back! How does he know what has happened at the sheepshearing? Who told him that Amnon alone would die that day? How does he know "this [had] been determined from the day he violated his sister Tamar"? Why in the world didn't he tell someone!? He seems to have the King's ear...and everyone else's! Alas, the Bible is not giving us these answers, but we do see the love of a father for his children. David is beside himself with grief and Jonadab is there to offer whatever comfort can be found in that only one of his children is dead.

Lust and now murder. David's son's have come up with a near perfect rendition of their father's sins. They have deceived and manipulated others to get what they desired just as their father had done only a few short years before. Can you hear these words from chapter twelve echoing in the back of your mind.

7 Thus says the LORD, the God of Israel,...10 Now therefore the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.' 11 Thus says the LORD, 'Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own

house. And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. 12 For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel and before the sun.’ ”

We are almost to the end of our journey this evening. Look down at God’s word in verses thirty-four to thirty-nine. God’s word says this,

Treason

Absalom Flees

34 But Absalom fled. And the young man who kept the watch lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, many people were coming from the road behind him by the side of the mountain. 35 And Jonadab said to the king, “Behold, the king’s sons have come; as your servant said, so it has come about.” 36 And as soon as he had finished speaking, behold, the king’s sons came and lifted up their voice and wept. And the king also and all his servants wept very bitterly. 37 But Absalom fled and went to Talmai the son of Ammihud, king of Geshur. And David mourned for his son day after day. 38 So Absalom fled and went to Geshur, and was there three years. 39 And the spirit of the king longed to go out to Absalom, because he was comforted about Amnon, since he was dead.

Yes, Jonadab the crafty is back and attempting to make himself look good, “the king’s sons have come; as your servant said, so it has come about”. I dislike him more every time he speaks, but that is not the point of our passage.

Yes, the son’s who have been terrorized by their brother and have come back to their father and wept in his presence from the experience. Their father has wept and will continue to weep a while as well.

But we see what God wants us to see in the repetition of our last few verse. Absalom fled. Absalom fled. Absalom fled. He has fled *to* his Grandfather’s house, but more importantly he has fled *from* his brothers and he has fled *from* his Father David’s house. There is a dark storm brewing in the house of David and God’s promises are coming true in the most alarming way. Indeed God is “[*raising*] up evil against [*him*] out of [*his*] own house”.

Conclusions

Well, this is a truly awful story we have heard. Many times we look around our world today and think this must be the worst that things have ever been, but I challenge you today to read your Bible! For in it you will see that what is going on in our world today is no different from what has always gone on in a sinful fallen world. And just as in David’s day, God is over all of it and it serves his purpose, for his glory.

Rest, oh child of God, your king has not lost control and he does not sit back manipulated and unknowing. For David was only a type of Christ. He is only a vision of something better to come and He has! Your King, Jesus the Christ, has come and He was, is, and always will be what David could never amount to. He is The just and merciful King come to conquer sin and death and raise his people up on the last day to be glorified with Him in Heaven. Hope is not lost as it seems at the end of our passage. Jesus our perfect King has come!

You might say yes, yes Jesus is the Christ that King David foreshadowed. But what of the rest of the characters in our story. What of the rapists and murderers and the like. Pastor *“do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, 10 nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.”* And I think we are safe to add murderers to that list as well. Yes, yes I know these things, but these are not out of reach for the great King Jesus, for *“...such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.”* No one! No one! Is out of reach for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Absalom may have fled from his father’s house but you will never be able to flee from yours so come, come and *“dwell in the house of the Lord forever”*. Bow your heart before the King of the Universe. Flee from sin to King Jesus and be made right with God!