

LOOKING BEYOND THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND SEEING GOD'S HAND

TEXT: II SAMUEL 16:1-13

Introduction:

1. Christians often are perplexed over the will of God.
2. There is an old saying, "Man proposes but God disposes." In fact, this saying is so old no one is quite sure who said it. Some attribute it to Thomas a Kempis, a 15th century German monk who wrote the popular devotional book, *The Imitation of Christ*.
3. Proverbs 16:9 says, "A man's heart deviseth his way: but the LORD directeth his steps."
4. Proverbs 19:21 says, "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand."
5. Jeremiah 10:23 says, "O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
6. A distinction is often made between what God decrees and what God allows. However, it is a rather small distinction. Ephesians 1:11 says God "worketh all things after the counsel of his own will."
7. "Worketh all things."
8. Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."
9. "All things." And we know that all things work together. God is in control over all things.
10. In his famous play, Shakespeare has Hamlet say to Horatio, "There's a divinity that shapes our ends, Rough-hew them how we will."
11. F.B. Meyer said, "His permission and His appointments are equally His will. Job thought so, for though Satan blasted his prosperity he said: 'The Lord hath taken away.' Joseph thought so, for he said: 'It was not you that sent me down here, but God.' David thought so, because he said: 'God hath let Shimei curse; let him curse.' Jesus thought so, because when Judas came into the garden to arrest Him He said: 'The cup that My Father giveth Me to drink, shall I not drink it?' Though it had been brought to His lip by a Judas, it had been mixed by His Father."
12. Meyer gives several Scriptural examples, but the one I would like to preach about this morning is David and Shimei.
13. I have entitled this morning's message, "Looking Beyond the Circumstances, and Seeing God's Hand."

14. It is obvious that Abishai was not looking beyond the circumstances. Abishai did not see God's hand at work. But David clearly did (II Sam. 16:9-12).

I. GOD ALLOWED SHIMEI TO CURSE DAVID

1. As I said, there is a distinction between what God allows and what God decrees. David said, "Let him alone, and let him curse; for the Lord hath bidden him" (16:11). This does not mean God ordered Shimei to curse. It means God allowed it for a specific purpose.
2. The Bible says, "The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD" (Psalm 37:23). It does not say, "The steps of a bad man are ordered by the LORD."
3. Proverbs 4:14-19 says, "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble."
4. Shimei was a wicked man. He was not being led by the LORD. But David was humble enough to understand that God was using Shimei to chasten him.
5. Ever since he was confronted by Nathan the prophet (12:10), David knew he was being chastened by the LORD (16:10-14).
6. Several years had now passed since his sin with Bath-sheba, but David knew God wasn't through chastening him.
7. Shimei was related to King Saul – "of the family of the house of Saul" (16:5). When David became the king of Israel, some of Saul's relatives were bitter. This explains Shimei's rude behaviour (16:5, 6).
8. Shimei called King David "a bloody man" and a "man of Belial" (16:7). Yet God Himself said to David, "Thou hast shed blood abundantly, and hast made great wars: thou shalt not build an house unto my name, because thou hast shed much blood upon the earth in my sight" (I Chron. 22:8).
9. This reminds us that even our enemies are sometimes right in their criticisms. It is unwise to dismiss all criticism, because sometimes even wicked men like Shimei can be right when they criticize us.
10. Matthew Henry said, "The scourge of the tongue is God's rod."

11. It should be noted that it was inappropriate and disrespectful for Shimei to rail on the king in this manner. Exodus 22:28 says, “Thou shalt not revile the gods, nor curse the ruler of thy people.”
12. The apostle Paul quoted this Scripture in Acts 23:5, when he said before the Sanhedrin, “Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.” Shimei was speaking evil of the ruler of his people. He was cursing the king of Israel.
13. Shimei blamed David for the death of King Saul (II Sam. 16:8), which David had nothing to do with. The Philistines killed Saul on the battlefield, and the Bible clearly says it was the judgment of God (cf. I Chron. 10:13, 14).
14. Perhaps Shimei was also blaming David for the deaths of Ish-bosheth and Abner. But Joab killed Abner, and David had nothing to do with it.
15. Second Samuel 3:37 says, “For all the people and all Israel understood that day that it was not of the king to slay Abner the son of Ner.”
16. And Ish-bosheth was killed by two of his own soldiers (II Samuel 4). David had nothing to do with the death of Ish-bosheth.
17. Shimei may have been referring to the death of Uriah the Hittite. David certainly was responsible for Uriah's death. And Uriah's death may have been on David's mind when he patiently and graciously told Abishai, “Let him alone, and let him curse; for the LORD hath bidden him” (16:11).
18. Abishai, David's nephew, wanted to cut off Shimei's head but David would not let him (II Sam. 16:9, 10). David's attitude was one of submission and humility (cf. 15:26). David recognized that he was being chastened by the Lord (16:10-14).
19. David saw beyond the circumstances and saw God's hand at work.

II. DAVID WAS ABLE TO SEE BEYOND SHIMEI, AND SEE GOD AT WORK

1. Note David's words in II Samuel 16:11, “Behold, my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life...”
2. Not just “my throne,” but “my life” (cf. II Sam. 17:1-4).
3. Here is a Biblical principle: God often uses wicked men to chasten His children. But when He is done chastening His wayward children, He then punishes the wicked men.
4. Shimei was but an instrument in the hand of God, and David had enough spiritual discernment to see that.

5. John Gill referred to the "predetermined concourse of divine Providence." Gill said, "so far as it was an action; though, as a sinful action, it was of Shimei, sprung from his own heart, instigated by Satan; but as a correction and chastisement of David, it was by the will, order, and appointment of God, and as such David considered it, and quietly submitted to it."

III. GOD EVENTUALLY JUDGED SHIMEI

1. John Phillips said, "There are very few people in all the Bible, so unpleasant, so vindictive, so hypocritical as Shimei." God allowed this scurvy rascal Shimei to rail against David, and David accepted it as the will of God.
2. But that doesn't mean God did not eventually judge Shimei.
3. The Biblical principle is, God often uses wicked men to chasten His children, and when He is done chastening His wayward children, He then punishes the wicked men.
4. And yet God (and King Solomon) was still gracious and longsuffering with wicked Shimei (I Kings 2:8, 9, 36-46).
5. F.B Meyer said, "I do not say that that man will escape his just doom. God will deal with him. I am not going to worry myself about him. In early days I would have taken infinite pains to avert the evil that men wished to do me, or perhaps to repay them, or to show that the evil was perfectly unwarranted. I confess that I have ceased to worry about it. If you silence one man you will start twenty more. It is ever so much better for peace of mind to accept the will of God, to accept His permission and His appointment, to look up into His face, and say: 'Even so, Father.'"

CONCLUSION:

1. Shimei was warned by David's son, King Solomon (cf. I Kings 2:36, 37).
2. King Solomon said, "For it shall be, that on the day thou goest out, and passest over the brook Kidron, thou shalt know for certain that thou shalt surely die: thy blood shall be upon thine own head" (I Kings 2:37).
3. Perhaps there is someone here today, and perhaps the Lord is giving you some slack, but the minute you cross the line it will be all over for you!
4. Don't be like Shimei! Get things right with God before it is too late.

