

**Message #19****II Samuel 15:1-12**

In almost every church I have ever been as Pastor and as a member prior to becoming Pastor, there has been one or two men or women who wanted power. They are satanically driven. They want to be known and seen as being great.

They crave power and they do sneaky things behind the scenes to get it. They want their name to be known as some key cog in God's work. It can be in God's nation or God's church. They want recognition and they want the title and they want notoriety. God is not promoting them, they are promoting themselves. These kinds of people are not loyal and true. They are devilish and God will ultimately crush them.

I saw the same thing when Mr. Miles was President of GRSBM. There were people there who wanted the power. They were not loyal and true to him. He was the key man of God; they weren't and they didn't like it.

When it comes to the church, there are some people who want you to think they are top dog. They want you to think they are really the ones who are running things. They want you to think they are in the know. They want people to think, I am the real important one, not the Pastor, not the Board Chairman. I have seen it with men and I have seen it with women.

Well this kind of thinking is not new to us. In any dispensation, if you are a faithful man or woman of God, being used by God, there will be someone who will try to usurp your authority and impact. No matter what your position, there will always be some snake in the background who will try to slither in and get the power.

That is exactly what happened to David. II Samuel 15-19 tells the story of a power-driven snake who was David's own son, Absalom. In the end David ends up the winner and the one who tried to usurp his power ended up a major dead loser who was crushed by God.

What we clearly see from this passage is this:

**A POWER-CRAZED PHONY DOES EVERYTHING HE CAN BEHIND THE SCENES TO GET POWER AWAY FROM THE ONE TO WHOM GOD HAS TRULY GIVEN IT; BUT IN THE END HE WILL NOT SUCCEED AND GOD WILL DESTROY HIM.**

The Bible is very clear that God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. Pride goes before destruction. So there will typically be a time for the proud person to exist until God says, time for Me to destroy them. That is a story you will see here.

There are some characteristics these kinds of people have. In fact, in this text God inspires six characteristics that enable us to spot power-crazed phonies.

**CHARACTERISTIC #1** – A power-crazed, treasonous phony does things to look impressive and important. **15:1**

Notice how **verse 1** begins “after this.” Shortly after David had met with Absalom and had been accepted back, and somewhat reinstated, then this happened.

Absalom goes out and gets a chariot and horses and 50 men as runners to go before him. What in the world is this all about? Probably to this point in Jerusalem, no one had ever seen a chariot in the streets.

There is no one to this point who has done anything like this and there is only one reason Absalom is doing this. **He wants to look important and powerful to the people. He wants people to think he is the real key agent of God.** As John Woodhouse said, he wants to make a “grand impression” (*II Samuel*, p. 379). He decided to have a “street parade” to honor himself.

He “provided for himself” a chariot, horses and 50 men who ran before him. **God did not provide this for him, he did it himself.** Why? He wanted to look important to the people. He wants the title. He wants to look impressive.

Most people are impressed with the glitz and the glamour. Most people are impressed if you pull up in a limousine. This was all about impressing people. It is not about being right with God.

It is interesting that when we read God’s word, God presents Israel’s enemies as possessing chariots. This was true of the Egyptians (Ex. 14:9-15:21; Deut. 11:4; Josh. 24:6). This was true of the Canaanites (Josh. 11:4-9; Judg. 4:15; 5:19-22). This was true of the Arameans (II Sam. 8:4; 10:18).

So having chariots was not something the people of God typically had. This is a key point to see. **When Absalom gets himself a chariot, he is actually linking himself with the enemies of God.**

This is one power-crazed maniac.

David must have got wind of this, but it just appears as though David was leaving it to God and God will come to David’s aid. He will destroy Absalom.

**CHARACTERISTIC #2** – A power-crazed, treasonous phony establishes himself with people when He is not authorized to do so. **15:2-3**

Satanic frauds are driven to do things they are not authorized to do. They take it upon themselves to do things that make them look important. They want people to think they are authorized with power they don’t really have. They want titles. In this case, he wanted people to give him the title of being the judge.

One of the responsibilities of the king was to listen to cases and make judgments. He was to administer God's just decisions for the people.

Absalom was not authorized to do this, but he took it upon himself to do it anyway. He would get up early in the morning and go stand on a road that led to the gate of the city and when any person would come with some case for the king to hear, Absalom would speak to the people. **His goal was to intercept these people before they got before the king.**

He had no authorization to do any of this. He would seem to be interested in the people. He would first ask them what town they were from. He would make certain the people were part of the tribes of Israel. Then he would say you're "claims are good and right." He was in no position to do this. But it is all part of the game he is playing. Frankly he is a spiritual loser and dud.

Now he was coming into contact with a lot of people and he was giving them the impression that he was a person in authority, who may be more concerned about them than David.

This guy is a snake. His goal is to replace King David, and in the end God will crush and kill him.

**CHARACTERISTIC #3** – A power-crazed, treasonous phony promotes himself about the power he thinks he should have. **15:4**

Traitors know how to talk. They know how to play the game. In his discussion with people, he would drop verbal hints that he should be appointed judge of the land. He would insinuate that their chance of getting a just decision is slim. He would tell people if he were in charge as judge, he would see to it that justice was given in each case.

Absalom is a shrewd politician. Any politician knows if you want to get in good with the people, promise them things they don't think they have and tell them if you are in office, you will make life better for them. Tell the people what they want to hear and you will build a good audience.

There are people who know how to promote and advance themselves by pretending to be deeply interested in others, when in fact they are only interested in their own agenda.

He could not come out and say I should be king or I should be Pastor or I should be Board Chairman, but what he could do is go behind the scenes and get people to believe that he is Mr. Champion.

**CHARACTERISTIC #4** – A power-crazed, treasonous phony steals the hearts and loyalty away from those who should have it. **15:5-6**

When someone came before Absalom and would start to bow down, he would take hold of him and prevent him from doing so. He would then kiss the person on the cheek. By doing this he was basically saying I am not the king.

There were at least four kinds of kisses in the O.T..

- 1) Romantic kisses between a man and woman (Prov. 7:13; Song of Sol. 1:2);
- 2) Family kiss between children and grandchildren - such as a reunion or departure (Gen. 31:55);
- 3) Greeting kiss of friendship on the cheek - I Sam. 20:41;
- 4) Greeting kiss of a king - II Sam. 19:39.

This was all part of his act. In fact, **verse 6** is clear that Absalom was able to steal the hearts away of the men of Israel.

Great numbers of people saw Absalom do this. They thought, wow, what a wonderful guy. What a great man. He was able to steal the hearts of many people.

**CHARACTERISTIC #5** – A power-crazed, treasonous phony distances himself from God's true leader. **15:7-9**

**Verse 7** says that Absalom did this for “forty years.” The Masoretic Hebrew text says “40 years.” The Greek Septuagint and the Syriac translation and the Latin Vulgate say Absalom did this for “4 years.” There are also two Hebrew manuscripts that say Absalom did this for “40 days.”

Certainly it is possible that Absalom had this desire to be king for 40 years, which was the total amount of time David reigned as King (II Sam. 5:4). It is certainly possible that this was happening as David was nearing his 40<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of being king.

Now we know that Absalom could not have been sitting in the gate talking to people for 40 years because David only reigned in Jerusalem for 33 years (II Sam. 5:5). More than likely, Absalom did this near the gate for 4 years, but he probably had this inner drive to be the king for 40 years.

Absalom devised a very deceitful plan.

According to **verse 7**, he went to King David and asked if he could go to Hebron to pay some vow he had made to the LORD.

Now Hebron was the city in which Absalom had been born (II Sam. 3:2-3).

In **verse 8**, Absalom told David that he had made some vow to the LORD while he was living in Geshur and has said if the LORD will let me go back to Jerusalem, I will serve the LORD.

Do you see this? He is using God as part of his rebellion and sin and charade. He is throwing God into this.

So we must conclude if the LORD does not let Absalom to go to Hebron and then go back to Jerusalem, he won't be able to serve Him.

Now two immediate questions come to mind:

1) Why did you wait so long to fulfill some vow promise because you have been in Jerusalem for years?

2) Why do you have to go to Hebron and not fulfill it here in Jerusalem?

There is a real smell to this and this would immediately lead us to question the motive. But David said in **verse 9**, “Go in peace.” These will be the last words David will ever speak to Absalom. David’s “go in peace” would turn out for Absalom to mean “go to war so God can kill you.”

**CHARACTERISTIC #6** – A power-crazed, treasonous phony secretly does things to get power.  
**15:10-12**

Hebron was located about 20 miles from Jerusalem. It was a city that was protected by walls.

When Absalom got there, he immediately implemented his plan, which was to overthrow David. He carefully planned his overthrow, but what he is really planning is his own execution.

He sent spies throughout all the land to tell the people that when they hear the trumpets blow, they shall say, “Absalom is king in Hebron.” From **verse 11** we learn that Absalom had taken 200 men with him from Jerusalem, who did not know a thing about this. They were totally innocent.

But by having these choice men with him, it was good optics for the people to see because they would have thought that David was in on this.

From **verse 12**, we learn that Absalom scored a major ally with Ahithophel, who was David’s own counselor.

This man had been a close friend to David but he became a traitor. There are some people who will do this to you. They will pretend to be your friend for personal gain or information.

We learn later in this book that the son of Ahithophel was Eliam (II Sam. 23:34). Eliam was the father of Bathsheba (II Sam. 11:3). So Bathsheba was the granddaughter of Ahithophel.

Some have speculated that the reason Ahithophel turned against David was because that episode with Uriah had happened years before.

I doubt that because in the years that followed the episode, Ahithophel had been elevated to a very high position as David’s senior advisor and counselor. Ahithophel had a much greater status than he would have ever had if Bathsheba had remained the wife of Uriah.

What we do learn from **verse 12** is that this conspiracy that Absalom devised to take over being King of Israel was gaining support with the people.

Devilish people do get their followers for a while. They do get a few to support them. But in the end, God will destroy them.

If you are an Absalom type, repent of it and stop it right now. It is a very dangerous thing to pretend to be something you are not and in the end, pretenders will be destroyed by God.