

Message #18**II Samuel 14:1-33**

When a police officer pulls a car over for speeding, the officer has to make a decision. Do I give justice and write a ticket or do I lean to mercy and give a warning and give forgiveness. They do that every single time.

This is another real humdinger of a story from the life of King David. David is in his 50's when this happens. He is a parent and he has been watching his family fall apart. His baby was dead; his daughter had been raped by his son; his son had been killed by another son and he had not seen the son for years.

Now as parents we sometimes find ourselves having to deal with children who have done things not exactly right. In those cases, we are like police officers. We have to decide does this require justice or do we extend mercy? It's complicated. The difficulty, as a parent, is in being too indulgent versus not being too indulgent; being too lenient as opposed to not being lenient.

There are times when parents need to be tough and not budge one inch to the whims of the child. There are times when parents need to be tender and offer to help and assist. The problem here is that Absalom has not repented of anything and David had not extended to him the opportunity to resolve it. Frankly, David had been hard on Absalom. He hadn't even talked to him in years. Even when he gets back into Jerusalem, he won't talk to him for two years (v. 28).

What we see here is a story from the life of David that presents this thesis:

EVEN THOUGH ABSALOM DID NOT REPENT OF KILLING AMNON, THERE WAS A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ABSALOM AND DAVID.

Here we go. There are at least 12 saga realities brought out here:

SAGA REALITY #1 – Joab saw that David's heart was inclined toward Absalom. **14:1**

Joab was the son of David's sister, Zeruah (I Chron. 2:15-16). So Joab was David's nephew. He had been a very loyal soldier to David. He stayed at his side in some of the lowest moments. He fought for him and with him and defeated enemies all the way until David became king. He fought enemies for David after he was king.

Joab knew how David thought and what made him tick. He knew that David's heart was inclined toward Absalom. David knew that he had killed Amnon because he had raped his sister and David's daughter. Joab also knew that having Absalom simmering over this breach in the relationship in another country was not good. So he came up with a plan.

SAGA REALITY #2 – Joab contacts a wise woman to go before David. **14:2-3**

What Joab decided to do was to contact a very wise woman to go talk to David. She was from Tekoa. Tekoa was located about ten miles south of Jerusalem.

We do not know the name of this woman. She was known to have a great deal of wisdom and she apparently was also known as a great actress. What Joab wants her to do is to go before David and put on a show. He wants her to dress up and pretend to be a mourner who cries at the right time, mourns at the right time and speaks at the right time.

This woman was well known as being a very wise and smart woman. She not only was smart, but she knew how to effectively communicate in high level, tense situations.

Joab knew what he wanted her to say and he told her exactly what to say. Joab scripted this whole thing and probably made her memorize the script.

But he also knew that by her saying it, David would be more likely to listen. Sometimes two people can say the same thing, but one person is more effective when he/she says it.

SAGA REALITY #3 – The wise woman from Tekoa speaks to King David. **14:4-7**

Joab knew that King David could be moved by stories. We may recall that Nathan went before David and told him a “ewe lamb” story and it brought him to repentance. This woman from Tekoa was about to tell David another story that would again move him.

Often a king would appear to hear cases as a judge and we suspect this was one of those times. There are four initial messages that she presented to King David.

Message #1 - She appeals to David for help. **14:4-5**

When she went before David she put her face to the ground and prostrated herself and asked him for help. When she went before David, she did not storm in like some loud-mouthed woman, she humbled herself and fell down and asked the king for help.

She had a reverence for David as the King and as a man of God. In fact, later, she will say that David is “my lord the king” and she will say he is like “an angel of God” (v. 17).

Message #2 - She tells David she is a widow and her husband is dead. **14:5b**

Widows were to be cared for and she knew David knew that. So she identifies herself as an Israelite widow with a dead husband and two sons.

Message #3 - She tells David that she had two sons who fought and one died. **14:6**

In her story a fight broke out between her two sons out in a field and there was no one to break it up so one of the sons killed the other son. It is like the Cain and Abel story in Gen. 4:8-16.

Message #4 - She tells David the whole family wants to execute the living brother. **14:7**

She told David that vengeance-seeking family members demanded that she hand over the son so they could kill him. They want justice. But she said if he is killed, her husband will have no remembrance of name or descendant.

Now keep in mind that Joab is having her tell this story so there are a couple of things to see here:

- 1) Apparently many in the family and kingdom were against Absalom.
- 2) Joab thought that Absalom was the heir apparent to being next king—it was Solomon.

SAGA REALITY #4 – David tells the woman to go home and he will consider this case for her and her son. **14:8**

That was not good enough for this woman. She wanted David to issue a decision right then and there.

SAGA REALITY #5 – The wise woman said let me have the guilt and penalty of your decision. **14:9**

This woman is quite an actress. She is risking her own life requesting that the guilt be put on her. She is pressing David to make a decision on the spot.

SAGA REALITY #6 – David said bring anyone who speaks to you about this before me. **14:10**

SAGA REALITY #7 – The wise woman asks David to please issue a decree that guarantees no one will destroy my son. **14:11a**

SAGA REALITY #8 – David issues a decree that not one hair of her son will be touched. **14:11b**

This was the equivalent of issuing a Presidential Pardon.

It is fascinating that David brings up her son's hair. It will be the head of Absalom and many suspect his hair that will lead to his execution.

One thing we do certainly see here is that one judicial edict of the King can eliminate the potential of death. One moment of believing on Jesus Christ will bring the judicial edict of justification that guarantees life.

So far this story has gone exactly the way Joab wanted it to go. If David was willing to issue an edict to protect a son guilty of murder, who he didn't even know, then he certainly could forgive a son he loved.

SAGA REALITY #9 – The wise woman appeals to David to speak one more time. **14:12-17**

Now the wise woman again asks David if she can speak and he agrees to let her speak (**14:12**). She wants to begin to reveal the real purpose of her meeting. She presents three more messages:

Message #1 - The king is hurting the people of God by not bringing back the banished son.
14:13

She had told a story of one small family, but David's story concerned the whole family of God. By David not permitting Absalom to be in Jerusalem, he was hurting the people of God.

Message #2 - God devises ways in that people who have done wrong may live. **14:14**

The woman says we are all under the death penalty from God and time is fleeting and yet God devises ways that one under the death penalty doesn't die but may live. Why can't you do the same? Although she doesn't say it, the truth is David was alive and allowed to live.

Message #3 - The woman was afraid to speak to the king with her story about her son because it is a story for the king. **14:15-17**

The woman said I came with a fictitious story because I was hoping that you would bring back your son. We were hoping that you would listen to my story and not destroy me and my son. Please, you are the king and like an angel of God, ministering for God, please find it in your heart to bring your son back home and let him live.

SAGA REALITY #10 – King David asks the woman to not be afraid to answer his questions.
14:18-20

It was a touching speech. It was a moving scene played out by an incredible actress. But David sensed she did not script this. He was smart enough to know someone else was behind this and the one he thought was behind it was Joab. Joab did not want credit for this. He didn't even want David to know he was behind it. But God was giving David a sense about this.

So David asked whether or not Joab was behind this. Joab knew David and David knew Joab. This had his signature all over it. The woman said yes, it was Joab who contacted me and told me what to say.

SAGA REALITY #11 – King David tells Joab to get Absalom and bring him home to his house. **14:21-24**

David now addresses Joab directly and orders him to go get Absalom and bring him home to Jerusalem. **Verse 22** makes it clear that Joab was deeply touched by this and also he apparently had discussed this with David before. Joab made the 80 mile trip to Geshur to tell Absalom that he needed to come back home. **Verse 24** makes it clear that it was not full forgiveness and final forgiveness. He could live in his own house, but not see David.

SAGA REALITY #12 – Absalom lives life in Jerusalem. **14:25-33**

David allowed Absalom to live in Jerusalem, but he was not ready to fellowship with him. He did not see the king's face for two years.

Fact #1 - Absalom was the most handsome man in all Israel. **14:25**

Absalom was a good-looking man. That certainly would make him popular with many people.

Fact #2 - Absalom cut his hair once a year. **14:26**

He was not living as some Nazarite vow, but he got a haircut once a year. The standard weight of a shekel is 11.5 grams. He had so much hair that it weighed 200 shekels which is about 5 pounds. The average weight of hair cut in a year off most people's heads is 2.5 pounds. So Absalom's hair was double the normal.

Fact #3 - Absalom had three sons and one daughter. **14:27**

He named his daughter Tamar and she was beautiful. He always loved his sister and he memorialized her by naming his daughter after her.

Fact #4 - Absalom lived two years in Jerusalem without seeing the king. **14:28**

Even though Absalom lived in Jerusalem, he lived in exile from the king. Even though many assumed that he was next in line to become king, David would not even let him see his face or eat at his royal table. He was completely shunned by David.

Fact #5 - Absalom sends for Joab because he wants to see King David. **14:29-32**

On three different occasions, Absalom sent for Joab and he didn't show up so Absalom's servants set Joab's barley field on fire. That got his attention.

Fact #6 - Absalom finally gets to see the king. **14:33**

David kissed Absalom, thus restoring him to full fellowship.

Warren Wiersbe made three interesting observations about Absalom:

1. There is no record Absalom repented of his murder.
2. There is no record that he ever asked his father's forgiveness.
3. There is no record he went to the Tabernacle to offer forgiveness offerings
(*Be Restored*, p. 111).

Absalom will turn out to be a nightmare for David. **The fact is there cannot ever be a real reconciliation without real repentance.**