

# The Anatomy of a Rebel

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Well, we're looking at 2 Samuel beginning in chapter 13. Different kind of sermon this morning. We'll look at a lot of narrative centering on the life and rebellion of the man Absalom, and, uh, obviously I can't unpack all that could be unpacked here but I do want to bring out some pertinent points. And may I say to you as I've said about a lot, a lot of the, um, rascals in the Bible whether it be Jezebel or Peter when he was still kind of obnoxious and self-consumed and proud and whoever else it might be, there's a little Absalom in all of us but if you're converted, you have the changed heart, you have the capacity to keep the Absalom repented down. You're not immune from the temptation and the presence of it but you keep it repented down.

Well, unfortunately you and I live in a world of ranting, reviling, rioting, ludicrous, illogical behaviors, speech. Where does this kind of rebellion come from? There's always a reason. There's always a cause. Uh, remember the, uh, now this was before my time but there was a, a movie, was it James Dean? Some of you guys remember a movie star named James Dean? "Rebel Without a Cause," is one of his favorite movies or famous movies. But there's no such thing as a rebel without a cause. I, I remember hearing about a, a guy that, um, he lived in San Francisco and every time there was a protest of any kind, he just walked around with a giant sign that said, "Shame." He just showed up for every one of them, no matter what it was, and, uh, uh, uh, a tv reporter interviewed him one day and said, "Well, what, what's your purpose?" He said, "I don't have one." He just said, "I just figured this just fits all of them." And you know, you and I live in a day – now listen to me – where it's actually a fad, it's a faddish cool thing to protest something. It's a faddish cool thing to be a savior of justice for the country, and if they can't find something wrong, they'll create something that they must defend and deliver, and there's always that notion that, "If we get in charge, we have supreme virtue. We somehow skipped the depravity element in fallen creation and if we were just in charge, if we were running everything, why, we would fix all this stuff." Yeah, Joseph Stalin. And on and on we could go. "Just put us in charge." Man, the Communist, the Marxist radially slaughtered their own people by the millions, tens of millions under the guise, "We gotta take care of everybody." Is that not the most ironic schizophrenic thing you've ever heard?

Rebels always have a cause. As we look at this, I want us to begin, first of all, and we'll unpack the text because I'm using a lot of text as we go through, I want to unfold out of

Absalom's life what I call "The Anatomy of a Rebel," and, I.: there's always a wounded spirit. There's always a wounded spirit. There's something in them where they are hurt. Something has happened and they feel aggrieved. They feel like they've been a victim. Or they've taken up the offense of another, someone they know, someone they love, someone they cared for, at least they believe they've been done wrong. There's always a cause in a rebel's heart and it always begins with a wounded spirit. My dad. My mom, My uncle. My sibling. My brother or my sister. The government. The system. Somebody somewhere hurt this person or someone they care for has been hurt and they take up the offense. Brothers and sisters, this is a side note: never take up the offense of another. Now mommas, you're the world's worst at this. It's because you've got that good genetic ability, capability that men don't have to be a mom and to be a grandmother. Thank God for you but one of the, uh, parallel weaknesses to that is sometimes you can go too far and get militant in taking care of stuff, especially if you're raising little boys. Little boys need to fight it out sometimes and just get through it. Moms, you don't step in and fix it all the time, you'll make little effeminates and we've got plenty of those already.

A wounded spirit. Here's Absalom, now let's just look at a couple of things here. Look at verse 1.

1 Now it was after this that Absalom the son of David had a beautiful sister whose name was Tamar, and Amnon the son of David loved her.

Now Tamar is Absalom's full sister. Amnon is their half-brother. That's what happens in polygamies, lots of different brothers and sisters.

Now look down at verse 11. Tamar is told, or rather it's been set up by Amnon that she would bring Amnon some food because Amnon was supposed to be sick. He was feigning it. He was pretending to be ill, verse 6 says, so his half-sister who's beautiful, Tamar, comes in, verse 11, and

11 When she brought them to him to eat, he took hold of her and said to her, "Come, lie with me, my sister." 12 But she answered him, "No, my brother, do not violate me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this disgraceful thing! 13 As for me, where could I get rid of my reproach? And as for you, you will be like one of the fools in Israel. Now therefore, please speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you." 14 However, he would not listen to her; since he was stronger than she, he violated her and lay with her.

So here we have Absalom's half-brother raping his full sister which was also Amnon's, uh, uh, half-sister. Now as a side note, um, half-brothers and sisters marrying in this day was not that uncommon. Matter of fact, among royalty it was very common, even more incestuous than that because the royal families wanted to keep the royalty within the family. So this was not that strange of a thing but obviously the rape issue was very very serious.

Now look at verses 21 and 22 in, in this chapter.

21 Now when King David heard of all these matters, he was very angry.

Now it stops right there with David. David's the king, he's the father, and he has all authority. It's his responsibility to do something. We're not told all that happened but evidently David did fail in administering justice the way it ought to have been administered when this son of his raped this daughter of his. Now verse, um, 22. "But Absalom," Amnon's half-brother, Tamar's full brother,

22 ... Absalom did not speak to Amnon either good or bad; for Absalom hated Amnon because he had violated his sister Tamar.

Now while it's not spelled out in the text, I agree with the scholars that say from the balance of the whole narrative on Absalom, Absalom already had evil designs in his heart. He was one who was already looking for self-advantage in whatever he could do or find and now one who could be in line for the throne, Amnon his brother, has committed this horrible sin and crime of raping his sister. He's enraged about it but I'm convinced he also sees an opportunity through it for himself. So whatever is going on here, one thing I think is for sure: Absalom is wounded in his spirit about what's happened to his sister and he's wounded in his heart somehow against his father. Something's cooking here.

I remember when I was in high school, um, my mom worked for a businessman in town and he was quite successful, and he took an interest in me and we hung out some and went fishing some, but he was also a drunk, kind of a working drunk, alcoholic, and every time he began drinking, the same story came out. He would begin to talk about his childhood and he would say, "When I was a boy, my friends played baseball. When I was a boy, my friends got to play basketball. When I was a boy, my friends got to play football. But my dad never let me play any sports. He said there was too much work to be done on the farm." He said that story to me over and over and over. A wounded spirit. This man was in his probably close to 60 and he was still wounded over that incident or those incidents in his life.

Can I pause right here? What are you still wounded about? What has happened to you? And like Tamar, it may legitimately be evil, it may be wicked, and we never condone that, but for a child of God, we always step back of the event and we say, "Could God have stopped it? Could God have prevented it?" Of course he could have. Of course he could have. So while God does not ask me to condone or applaud or embrace an evil thing that happened to me, yet God has purposes I may not yet understand or see. It begins with a wounded spirit.

Now another aspect here that we need to see, secondly, it continues on with the sin of pride. The sin of pride. Look at 2 Samuel again, 13, look at verses 23 through 29. Now here's Absalom's plan.

23 Now it came about after two full years that Absalom had sheepshearers in Baal-hazor, which is near Ephraim, and Absalom invited all the king's sons.

That's Amnon, Amnon and all of his, Amnon rather and all of his brothers to come. Verse 24,

24 Absalom came to the king and said, "Behold now, 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, we should not all go, for we will be burdensome to you." Although he urged him, he would not go, but blessed him. 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 when Absalom urged him, he let Amnon and all the king's sons go with him. 28 Absalom commanded his servants, saying, "See now, when Amnon's heart is merry with wine, and when I say to you, 'Strike Amnon,' then put him to death. Do not fear for I myself have not, I myself commanded you? Be courageous and be valiant." 29 The servants of Absalom did to Amnon just as Absalom had commanded. Then all the king's sons arose and each mounted his mule and fled.

The Bible tells us now for two years Absalom has had this churning anger and hatred for Amnon for what he did to his sister. For two years, but here's the point: this was a matter for the king. The authority to punish Amnon lie with King David. It was not Absalom's place to pick it up and take that authority and take that responsibility. His mission was just, his method was unjust. This is the sin of pride, in this case the pride of taking authority to correct a matter when God has not given you that authority.

Now think about that. Taking authority to fix something you know needs to be fixed, or at least you feel like it needs to be fixed, when God hasn't given you that authority. Pride is that foundational sin. It is the root sin of all sin. Our pride insists that we be lord, that we take authority, that we take charge, that we fix it the way we feel is best. Pride, you see, is what made the devil the devil. All other sins are mere fleabites in comparison to pride. Pride is anti-God and it's anti everyone else. Other sins bring people together. People get drunk together. People carouse together. People steal together. People commit immoralities together. But pride puts you at enmity to everyone else. You see, your pride makes, made you hate old So-and-so for being the big noise at the party. Why? Because you wanted to be the big noise at the party. Pride. Pride is self-centered, self-concerned and self-consumed.

Now don't forget this phrase: pride is the complete anti-God state of mind. Absalom did not say, "He's not doing right. It makes me angry but I must repent. He's the king and he's my father. It's his responsibility. I cannot take this on my own and fix it the way I feel is best." That is the sin of pride. So in his pride he justified by passing God and God's king because Absalom, by the way, probably knew a lot about the faults of his father, King David. Have you young people maybe now some of you older people, you used to be

young people, did you justify not honoring your parents because you saw imperfections, you saw failures, you saw sins, you saw inconsistencies? That's pride. God made them your parents. Do you dishonor your employer because you see things that are not fair and not just and not just right? He didn't treat you just right or she doesn't treat you just right all the time, whatever it may be? Did not God tell you to honor and work for your employer like working unto the Lord? You see, it's all pride and every single time it's a strike against God himself. Don't look at the person, look at the God-ordained authority behind the person.

Absalom didn't do that. In pride he concocted a scheme, took it upon himself to get it fixed the way he thought was right and, boy, isn't our country full of that today, and had his half-brother Amnon murdered and probably felt good about it. Why? Because it began with a wounded spirit and he thought, "This is right because he did such a wrong thing, so now my wrong is now right." And by, by the way, it's an old saying but two wrongs never make a right. Two wrongs never make a right.

God hates pride. Proverbs 15:25, "The LORD will tear down the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow." God said, "Give me some time. I don't act immediately sometimes but I'm gonna tear down everything your pride builds." I'd hate to live a life where God has set himself to tear it down.

Proverbs 16:5, "Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Assuredly, he will not go unpunished."

Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling."

Isaiah 2:12, "For the LORD of hosts will have a day of reckoning Against everyone who is proud and lofty And against everyone who is lifted up, That he may be abased."

You know, really there's a, a powerful comparison in the Old Testament. There's Absalom and then there's Joseph. Joseph's brothers left him for dead. Joseph's brothers were wounded in spirit because Joseph's father, or rather, uh, Joseph himself talked about how he would be the leader among his brothers, how he would be honored by his brothers, he saw it in a dream. If God tells you a dream that you're gonna be over your brothers and sisters, don't tell them the dream. So Joseph brags about, maybe he didn't brag but just stated, "Here's what God has in mind." His father loved him more than the others, the Bible says. They're wounded so they sell him off to, uh, a gypsy caravan. You know the story. He ends up in Egypt. He ends up being betrayed viciously and, and maliciously by Potiphar's wife. He ends up in the dungeon but God works a series of events and before you know it, Joseph is exalted to, to Prime Minister of Egypt, the greatest country in the world, and though we don't see it specifically mentioned in the narrative, it's obvious that all the points along the way Joseph had a conviction that a sovereign God has purposes. "I will not get bitter. I will not grow angry. I will not become proud and take things into my own hand. I'll honor my Lord. He has a purpose." Lo and behold a famine hits the earth. Joseph's brothers come to Egypt not knowing that it's Joseph whom they're gonna bow before and receive grain. Joseph recognizes them

and finally he reveals to them, "Hey, it's me, Joseph, your brother." And boy, his brothers thought, "We're doomed now. He'll have us all put to death." And then what did Joseph say? "No, no, fellas, here's what you don't understand, God works in all these things. You, my brothers, meant it for evil but God meant it for my good."

Absalom should have been like Joseph and thought, "Yes, that's an evil. I can't justify it or condone it but the way it's unfolding is God's business and I'll not step in the place of God or God's king and take over." But Absalom didn't do that. He swelled up in pride, took charge, and like Frank Sinatra said, who has no spiritual thing to teach any of us, "I did it my way." Yeah, and you did it the wrong way.

3. A wounded spirit, then it develops into a, the sin of pride in his heart, then that develops into the sin of unforgiveness and bitterness and these are quite simultaneous. I wouldn't be strict about this has to flow in this order necessarily because they're always all there. The sin of unforgiveness and bitterness. I was gonna separate the two but they always go together. The moment you're, you lack forgiveness you begin bitterness. You don't know you're bitter for a while. Matter of fact, one of the insidious things about unforgiveness and bitterness is, is that you're dulled and blinded to the reality that you're bitter. Everybody around you sees it but you often are completely blind to it. You know why? Because all you can see is, "I was hurt." You know that a lot of things are fixed when you get your eyes off yourself and you get your eyes on, "What honors God, what glorifies God, what serves God in this? I don't matter. God's glory matters." You know, I found in life and the Scripture bears this out clearly, if by the grace of God you walk in a God-centeredness where God's glory is the primary thing, he does a lot of great good for you you could've never seen coming.

2 Samuel 14, let's look at verses 28 through 33. 2 Samuel 14:28 through 33.

28 Now Absalom lived two full years in Jerusalem, and did not see the king's face.

Now let's back up. In context, Absalom has been in exile for three years and through the work of Joab, um, David's right hand man, you might say, he's been brought back to Jerusalem but David still didn't want to see him. Absalom murdered his brother Amnon and David's grieved about that, and he doesn't want to see him. So he's been there for two years after the three years of exile and, uh, hadn't seen the king's face. But Absalom, here's what Absalom thought, "I can guarantee you one thing, I'm gonna see the king's face." So here's what he does. Notice the unforgiveness and bitterness that comes out of the narrative.

29 Then Absalom sent for Joab, to send him to the king, but he would not come to him. So he sent again a second time, but he would not come.

You've got to go through Joab to get to the king and Joab will not even give Absalom an audience. Won't meet with him. "Well, so I'll take things into my own hands." Verse 30,

30 Therefore he said to his servants, "See, Joab's field is next to mine, and he has barley there; go and set it on fire." So Absalom's servants set the field on fire. 31 Then Joab arose, came to Absalom at his house and said to him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

That's what I would do, wouldn't you? "Why'd you burn my field down for?" Verse 32,

32 Absalom answered Joab, "Behold, I sent for you, saying, 'Come here, that I may send you to the king, to say, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me still to be there.'" Now therefore, let me see the king's face, and if there is iniquity in me, let him put me to death." 33 So Joab came to the king and told him,

Now why is Joab coming to King David now and saying, "Hey, you might outta meet with Absalom"? Here's what Joab's, Joab is saying, "This guy is crazy. He's crazy. He don't have a conscience. He'll do whatever he has to do to get his way." That's what happens when you're full of unforgiveness and bitterness, you become hard and harsh and illogical in the way you deal with things. You, you form this mentality of privilege. "I'm owed it. I ought to get this. It doesn't matter if everybody else thinks it's not logical or reasonable, I've been hurt and I haven't released it unforgiveness and I'm building up the bitterness and so I believe this is the right thing." He just reeks with it.

So we see here a wounded spirit, pride, "I'm gonna take charge," mingled in now the unforgiveness and the bitterness of his heart. Psalm 73:21-22, "When my heart was embittered And I was pierced within, Then I was senseless and ignorant; I was like a beast before You." When we hear people in our streets today ranting and raging and reviling and they stick a microphone to their mouth and they can't even articulate what the problem is. They're just embittered people often over something that didn't happen to them, it's just something they've been told in a classroom at a university perhaps, and they took up the offense and said, "A-ha! Let's be about this 'just cause.'" And they start acting illogical and senseless and ignorant. He said, "I was like a beast before You." Is that not a perfect photograph of what we see in the world?

That's why I like the statement I heard years ago, "Sin makes you stupid." Sin makes you stupid. You start believing weird, wacky, gross, unbelievable stuff. Irrational behavior, Senseless behavior. Unreasonable behavior. And that's where Absalom is. The sin of pride. The sin of unforgiveness. The sin of bitterness. And did I tell you, we all have a little Absalom in us. Are you a forgiver? You say, are you listening? Every single one of us is either actively forgiving or actively unforgiving or not forgiving. It's not just a one-time thing. You either walk in forgiveness or you walk in unforgiveness, and the moment you step into unforgiveness bitterness begins churning inside.

Hebrews 12:15 says, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled." Now the Greek phrase where we get "see to it" from, see to it that no one comes from, "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God and that no root of bitterness is springing up," that

phrase "see to it" is the idea of an overseer. That's what a pastor's called in the Bible, he oversees the church. He watches over it. What he's saying is, "Watch over your heart." Keep a close watch on your heart and when you see bitterness starting, you back up and say, "Wait a minute, a sovereign God rules in this world and He rules in my life, and whatever He's caused or allowed in my life, He has a purpose." So I'm going to choose to forgive and repent of thinking I'm owed something and I can be about this cause or this crusade or I can take up matters in my own hand and get this straightened out when it's not my responsibility under God to straighten it out. I can back up and keep myself – now listen – keep myself by the energizing capacity of the grace of God in you and say, "I will not walk in that."

"Pastor, you don't know what was done to me." You want to hear my story? You want to hear her story? You want to hear his story? What about her story and what about his story? You don't know what others have gone through. But God's grace enables you to be a forgiver. Now let me give you an insight right here: the first moment of true forgiveness is a raw absolute act of the will. You don't feel like it, it doesn't feel good, it doesn't feel right, you just know it is right because God told you to do it.

Bitterness eats and destroys. "See to it," Hebrews 12:15, "See to it that no root of bitterness springs up and by it many be defiled." Don't neglect to utilize the capacity God's given you as a child of God to exercise forgiveness when you're hurt or when you're wounded. It causes trouble, the verse says. That has the idea to annoy or to crowd in. It starts, it starts taking over everything in your life.

Matthew 18, the Lord Jesus gives the parable of the unforgiving slave and the parable goes like this. A man had a lot of slaves and he called all of his slaves in, brought them all in that he might call in how much they owe him, he might call in the debt, and each one of them owed him a lot. And one slave owed him what would today be about \$30,000 and he said, "I'm gonna put you in prison," and that was a common thing to do, a debtor's prison, "until you pay it back." And the man pled with him and said, "Please, don't do that. I'll find a way to pay it." And the master said, "Okay, I feel sorry for you. I'll tell you what, I'll just forget the whole debt. I'll forgive it all." Then that slave went and found a fellow slave who owed him what would today be about \$20-\$30, and he had that fellow slave who owed him only \$20 or \$30 thrown into prison. Then the master heard about it and said, "You wicked slave. I forgave you \$30,000 and you threw this man in jail for and wouldn't forgive him \$20 bucks?" And the Bible says, "And his lord moved with anger handed him over to the torturers until he should repay all that was owed him." I think the torturers there means the bitterness, the gall, the envy, the jealousy, the anger, the resistance, all the things that bitterness brews within your soul, that begins to torture you. God turns you over to the torturers if you're not a forgiving person.

Brothers and sisters, the Bible is so powerfully pointed about being forgiving. "Forgive us our debts as we also forgive thus, those who are indebted against us." The Bible says it's impossible to be a child of God and embrace and walk in unforgiveness. You've got to throw yourself into this composure, "God in heaven, You're Almighty, You love me more



than I can love myself, You could've stopped this. God, I praise You not for the hurt, not for the evil but that You have my good in mind, I just haven't seen the end yet." All things are not good, all things work together for the good to those who are called of God and called for his purposes.

4. We go from a wounded spirit, heart of pride, obvious unforgiveness and bitterness churning in Absalom's heart, and then we see the open rebellion. David has restored Absalom. David actually welcomed Absalom into his presence. He kissed Absalom when he came back into the king's chamber, but Absalom being full of pride, unforgiveness and bitterness and now he, he exerts this open rebellion. Actually, the open rebellion has already been seen in burning down Joab's barley field just to get his way, but now he's about to take it to a bigger level, a greater level.

Matthew Henry said, "Those are good indeed that are good in their own place." Read that again, "Those are good indeed that are good in their own place, not that pretend how good they would be in other people's places." This is all the good we find in Absalom. Absalom's not good at all but he thinks, "If I can just get to the top, then, boy, I'll do a lot of great good." It all began way back yonder with a wounded spirit that he didn't bring to God, stirred up pride, "I'll take charge and fix this. Boy, I'll fix this." Uh, unforgiveness, he's walking in it, not just struggling with it. If you're in the fight, you're in a good place. Keep fighting it. But no, he's embracing walking in unforgiveness and bitterness.

Now he comes to this level. Look with me at 2 Samuel 14:25, alright? 2 Samuel 14:25 says,

25 Now in all Israel there was no one as handsome as Absalom [he's a good-looking devil], so highly praised; from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head there was no defect in him.

And he had this glorious, beautiful, wavy, long hair. When Absalom walked into the room, the women swooned and the men admired. That's the kind of guy he was. He was full of himself, for sure.

Now look, if you will, at, um, verse, or chapter 15, verses 1 through 5.

1 Now it came about after this that Absalom provided for himself a chariot and horses and fifty men as runners before him.

He gets this fabulous majestic display, this marvelous chariot, these magnificent horses, these distinguished 50 men. It just has the, has the picture of this guy is really something. Verse 2,

2 Absalom used to rise early and stand beside the way to the gate; and when any man had a suit to come to the king for judgment, Absalom would call to him and say, "Well, what city are you from?" And he would say, "Your servant is from one of the tribes of Israel."

Notice his calculation and his manipulation. He's trying to scheme to get men from all areas of Israel on his side. He probably didn't, if he had, if he had several men from one region of the country and another guy came up from that region and had a need, he probably would just ignore him. He's so kind. He's so thoughtful. No, he's a scheming lying devil is what he is. Verse 3, "Then Absalom would say," this is chapter 15, verse 3, "Absalom would say, 'Oh, that one would appoint me.'" I'm sorry, verse 3,

3 Then Absalom would say to him, "See, that your claims are good and right, but no man listens to you on the part of the king."

Well, the king was busy. He couldn't hear everything and Absalom used that to his advantage. I'm telling you, there's gonna be some answering at the judgment bar of God, by the way, for devilish women and vile men and deacons in churches who brought stuff against godly pastors just because the pastor was doing all he could do but he couldn't get to every single little need and they stirred that to use it against him. I see it over and over and over and over and over again. We need more pastors to be like John MacArthur. When John MacArthur was a young man, he took the pastorate there in California and somebody asked him one day, "John, how do you study so much and pray so much and preach like you preach? My people want me to go here and they want me to visit there, and I've gotta be at the hospital and I've gotta counsel this one, and do this marriage and make sure I'm at that funeral." He said, "There's no time to study like I need to study. John MacArthur, what do you do?" And MacArthur said, "I just tell them that's not my job. It's not my job. I love you, I care, I hurt that you're hurt, but my job's getting ready to preach to you on Sunday and I'll meet more needs that way than if I touch every need out there physically and personally."

Well, I'm not here to bring up pastoral stuff, it's just something I deal with all the time. You don't do me that way and I thank God for your graciousness there but Absalom used the fact that the king was a single guy, he couldn't, "Oh, if I were, if I were king in Israel, I would care about you. I would meet your need. I would address your injustices. I'd bring justice for you if I were in charge." Does that ring a bell? Absalom said, "If I can just overthrow this King David monarchy, I can get in charge and I'll guarantee you, I'll take care of all you people." Here's what happens – are you listening to me? When you're hurt, you're very prone to get with somebody else who's hurt and y'all form new little rebellion cause together. That's what's going on here. And if they weren't really hurt, Absalom convinced they're hurting. "No, no, no, you're really hurting because you really need me to be your Messiah right now, fix everything for you."

Verse 4,

4 Moreover, Absalom would say, "Oh that one would appoint me judge in the land, then every man who has any suit or cause could come to me and I would give him justice." 5 And when a man came near to prostrate himself before him, he would put out his hand and take hold of him and kiss him.

Wow, the depth of this man's manipulation.

Look at verses 13 and 14. Absalom set out the plan. He had spies throughout the land. He sent out the call of, "Men of Israel, rise up against David." Verse 13 of the same chapter says,

13 Then a messenger came to David, saying, "The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom."

He did it. He manipulated their emotions and got them on his side. You see, these men weren't principled enough to stand up and say, "What saith the Scriptures? I don't need to listen to my heart. My heart's deceitful. My heart's full of lying. I can't just trust my feelings. What does principle say?" The principle says you honor the king.

Verse 14,

14 David said to all his servants who were with him at Jerusalem, "Arise and let us flee, for otherwise none of us will escape from Absalom.

David's saying, "He's crazy. He's a wild man. He's full of bitterness and gall and revenge. He's functioning out of his hurt and he'll kill all of us." Last part of verse 14,

Go in haste, or he will overtake us quickly and bring down calamity on us and strike the city with the edge its swords."

So here Absalom is in all of his rebellion, driving his father, King David, off of the throne, putting forward this show of humility, "I'll care for you. I'll meet your need. Here give me your hand, I'll kiss your hand." And all this time his heart was as proud as Lucifer himself. That's the open rebellion. It started with a wounded spirit, a proud heart, "I'll take charge. I'll get this right." Yeah, but what if God hadn't given you the authority to do that? Unforgiveness and bitterness begin to be embraced and coddled in your life and soon there's open rebellion. Not everybody who openly rebels tries a coup d'etat on the king. A lot of them are still in churches but they're a rebel. A lot of them are still good wives but they're a rebel. A lot of them look like upstanding husbands and men in the community, but they're still a rebel in their hearts.

5. The last stage and it's always the last stage and it always will come about, that is divine indignation. God always has the last word. 2 Samuel 18, turn there. Look at verses 9 and 10. The men with David are fighting, the men with Absalom are fighting, and David's men begin to win the day against Absalom. What would it feel like if you was fighting your own son for your own life and your own kingdom? Verse 9,

9 Now Absalom happened to meet the servants of David. For Absalom was riding on his mule, and the mule went under the thick branches of a great oak. And his head caught fast in the oak, so that he was left hanging

between heaven and earth, while the mule that was under him kept going.  
10 When a certain man saw it, he told Joab and said, "Behold, I saw  
Absalom hanging in an oak."

It actually is a little bit funny. He got his head stuck in an oak tree. Well, he always had a big head and there he's hanging there. God will not be mocked. Whatsoever a man sows, that he will also reap. How dare you to claim to be a Christian and you hold out unforgiveness and bitterness in your heart against anyone for anything ever. Period. "Well, they hurt my So-and-so. They didn't treat my wife right. They didn't, my husband's not treated, my children." Whatever. It doesn't matter. God is God and God is sovereign and God loves you and he's working out the best for you if you'll just cooperate with him and not rise up in pride and try to do your own thing. Divine indignation.

Look at verse 17. Well, let's see, let's go to verse 14 first.

14 Then Joab said, "I will not waste time here with you." So he took three spears in his hand and thrust them through the heart of Absalom while he was yet alive in the midst of the oak. 15 And ten young men who carried Joab's armor gathered around and struck Absalom and killed him. 16 Then Joab blew the trumpet, and the people returned from pursuing Israel, for Joab restrained the people.

Here's, here's a real monument to a rebel right here. Verse 17,

17 They took Absalom and cast him into a deep pit in the forest and erected over him a very great heap of stones.

That's significant because the punishment for a rebellious son against his father was stoning so there's a giant mound, monument to this rebel over his grave. It's, it's, it's what would happen to a great criminal in the land.

And all Israel fled, each to his tent.

The Lord said that he'll tear down the house of the proud. The Lord said everyone who's proud will not go unpunished. The Lord said pride goes before destruction. The Lord says there'll be a day of reckoning against everyone who is proud and lofty. The divine indignation.

Three practical thoughts to end with. Restoring a rebel. How do you restore a rebel? First, you've got to deal with the sin of pride. That's where it starts, you took charge. You didn't let God be God. You said, "I'll be God in this case. I'll fix this." Now if it's your responsibility to do something and the way you're gonna fix it is biblical, that's not what we're talking about. Absalom took the role of king and he didn't have the role of king. God made David king.

Now think about how David was different than Absalom. Remember David when he started out? God told David through the prophet he would be king of Israel but God had already made Saul king of Israel, and Saul, jealous of David, was trying to kill David, literally actively trying to slay him. On one occasion when Saul was in a predisposed sort of condition, David sneaked up and cut off a piece of his robe to show him, "Saul, I could've killed you but I will not bring my hand against God's anointed. I cannot make myself king. That's God's business." David walked in the truth in dealing with his pride and being humble. Absalom did not do that.

Mark 12:30 reminds us that we're to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, all of our souls, all of our mind, and with all of our strength. Now listen, when you're proud, you don't love God, you love you. When you're proud you say, "It's my way." True humility says, "Nope, this isn't my business. This is God's business." You've gotta repent of the sin of pride. Pride is what made the devil and devil. It's the foundation stone in the rebel's heart.

2. Deal with active sins of unforgiveness and bitterness. Point it out. Speak the truth in love to them. What about you in the balcony? What about you on the floor? What about you in the pulpit? Are you actively dealing with any unforgiveness or bitterness in your heart? Are you dealing with any pride in your heart?

3. Show them that their rebellion is ultimately against God. Absalom would have said, "I, I, I'm rebelling against my father because he's not, he's not qualified to be king anymore." No, you're rebelling against God who made David king. "I, I'm rebelling against Amnon. He did that terrible thing to my sister. It was horrible." David perhaps failed in dealing with it but God allowed it and you're not to rise up against what God causes or allows. It wasn't David that Absalom was mad at, it was David's God that appointed him king. Your mom was not your problem, you're actually saying it's God who made her my mom who's the problem. Your dad was not the problem, what you're actually saying, "No, it's the God who made him my dad that's the problem." Could God not have changed it if he wanted to?

You know what's amazing is the men and the women that God seems to use the most are those who went through very difficult awful home-life situations and they saw God's hand in it and they didn't swell up in pride and they didn't give themselves over to unforgiveness and bitterness and they didn't end up as a life-long rebel, instead they became a life-long righteous warrior for the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Did I tell you that there's a little Absalom in all of us? Are you up-to-date on keeping him repented down out of your life?