

2 Samuel 10 — Resisting the King

May 28, 2023

This summer will be an exciting time at CrossWinds. As Dave — the chairman of our elder board — said in the video, for the last ten years, our focus has been on launching and finding a home for the Spencer Campus. After modernizing the stage and technology, we stopped modernization on the Spirit Lake Campus to give all our attention to the Spencer Campus. Now that the Spencer Campus is launched and they have a home, we want to finish updating this room and add a garage to the side of the gym for storage. This is not just an opportunity to give financially to the \$110,000 goal, but we factored a lot of sweat equity in these projects to keep down the costs. That means that this summer, there will be many opportunities to help. If you are skilled in building, we can use your help on the garage. If you are like me and can only handle a paintbrush if everything around you is covered with a drop cloth, we need your help too. As you can see by looking around you, is a lot to paint.

Why are we updating our facility? It is all about our goal to reach more people with Jesus so hearts and lives will be changed by the good news of what Jesus has done for you and me.

Before we turn to the Bible, let's pray....

Good morning CrossWinds! If you are a visitor this Memorial Day weekend, it is great to have you. My name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. I usually begin with a “Reaching People With Jesus” story. That is a story about how normal people like you and me, on one of our campuses, are working to share the good news of Jesus in our community.

Today, I have a different kind of “Reaching people with Jesus” story. Today is my father’s birthday. He turns 90. I am sure you wonder how my father’s birthday connects to our mission of reaching people with Jesus. Let’s find out.

I am an only child and an unexpected child. God was very gracious and gave me two parents who love Jesus. They both grew up in the church. As a child, they took me to church. Whenever the doors were unlocked, we were there. When I was young, maybe 8 or 9, I remember them being concerned that the church we were in wasn’t teaching the Bible. Our family changed churches. We drove 30 minutes to get to church because they wanted to be in a church where the Word of God was taught, and I would grow up hearing the Bible. They didn’t just attend church, they served in the church. My mother taught children and my father, who was an accountant, counted money after church. I still remember staying late until the money counting was done and then riding with him in the car to drop off the money in the bank night deposit before we came home on Sunday afternoon, only to turn around and head back for the Sunday evening service. My parents were good. They did their best to teach the Bible at home on their own. They faithfully brought me to a church where the Bible was taught. They served in the church and gave me a great model to follow. By doing that, they helped form my faith and grow my faith. For that, I am forever grateful.

How does that connect with us and reaching people with Jesus?

Psalm 127 says these words.

Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate. Psalm 127:3–5 (ESV)

The first two verses of Psalm 127 tell us it is important to give our energy, our time, and our life, to projects in this world that God is behind, projects where God is committed to their success. God isn't committed to the success of every project undertaken in this world, but he is committed to the success of some. Those are the projects God gets behind and where he helps us succeed.

Verses three to five give us an example project God is always behind, a project that we can give our lives and energy to, knowing God will help us succeed. That project is raising our children. David tells us that children are not an inconvenience in life. They are a reward from God in this life. Children are described like arrows. Arrows are shot out of a bow, and they make an impact at a place and time the archer can never be. Mom and Dad, when you give yourself to raising your children to know and love Jesus, you need to know that God is committed to helping you in that work. He is committed to the success of that project in your life. The children you raise for Jesus today will one day shoot out of your home and make an impact for Jesus at a place and time you will never be.

At CrossWinds, when we talk about our mission of reaching people with Jesus, when we raise our children to know Jesus by praying with them at home, by reading them the Bible before bed, by having conversations about Jesus when we drive in the car, by making the time to bring them to the church where they can be in AWANA and youth group, that is a great way to prepare potent arrows that will leave our home and reach the next generation for Jesus. Our

Jesus-loving children will be used by God to change the lives of countless people we will never meet.

So this morning, I thank my father — as today is his birthday — and my mother — who is now home with Jesus — for all they did to share Jesus with me as a child when I grew up in their home. The truth about Jesus they poured into me as a child is the foundation that enables me to be your pastor today. Mom and Dad, the foundation you build into your children about Jesus, you will be shocked how God uses it tomorrow to grow his kingdom in your children's generation.

Background

This morning, we are back in our studies of 2 Samuel. We are in 2 Samuel 10. 2 Samuel 10 is a continuation of 2 Samuel 9 that we studied last week. 2 Samuel 9 was about the kindness of King David. David determined to seek out and find the one remaining heir of King Saul's throne, a son of Jonathan named Mephibosheth. Life was tough for Mephibosheth. He was a cripple. He was somehow cheated out of his inheritance, and he lived in the desert of Lo-Debar, which literally means no place. Mephibosheth's father and grandfather were a king and prince over Israel, but Mephibosheth was in poverty and struggling to survive.

David decided to show him kindness. He restored the inheritance Mephibosheth had somehow lost. David adopted Mephibosheth into his family, giving him a seat at the king's table, next to David's own sons and daughters, for the rest of his life. This was amazing undeserved kindness. The kindness of King David was overwhelming and undeserved.

As we saw last week, there is a parallel here. The kindness King David showed to Mephibosheth is parallel to the much greater kindness the greater son of David, King Jesus, has shown to us. Jesus sought us when we were crippled by sin and could not save ourselves. Jesus showed incredible kindness to us that we do not deserve. Jesus adopted us into the family of God, making us adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. Jesus gave us a vast inheritance that now, as the adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus forever, gives us a seat at God's table. All of God the Father's love and good plans for Jesus His son will cascade from Jesus and fall upon us for all of eternity. This is the vast inheritance that is ours. If you were overwhelmed by David's kindness to Mephibosheth, you should be completely blown away by God's kindness to us through Jesus. That is far greater than anything Mephibosheth experienced in his rags-to-riches story.

Last week, I mentioned how incredibly foolish it would have been if Mephibosheth after having been given the kindness of the king, turned his back on all of it. How foolish it would have been if Mephibosheth turned his back on life in the palace and decided to go back to the desert. How foolish it would be if he turned his back on the vast inheritance the king restored to him and went back to poverty. How silly it would have been to turn his back on his adoption into the king's family and his permanent seat at the king's table to return to the desert and live as a nobody, just hoping and praying he would survive. Turning your back on the kindness of the king is something only a fool would do.

Today, as we look at 2 Samuel 10, we will meet a group of people called the Ammonites. King David will extend kindness to them, but they will turn their

back on the kindness of the king and ultimately be destroyed for resisting the king's kindness instead of embracing it.

The introduction of the Ammonites in this chapter sets us up for the pivotal eleventh chapter, where David commits adultery with Bathsheba. She becomes pregnant, and David kills her husband to cover his sin. At that point, 2 Samuel changes. It moves from talking about the rise of David to the fall of David. Sin always has consequences. As David learns, some of those consequences last a long time.

For all of you looking forward to 2 Samuel 11, I am sorry to disappoint you but we will not get to that chapter next week. Next week, we begin our summer series on speech and how to honor God with our word. We will pick up 2 Samuel 11 in the fall.

Let's turn our attention so 2 Samuel 10, which will set us up for fall.

The Ammonites rejected David's kindness.

After this the king of the Ammonites died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. 2 Samuel 10:1 (ESV)

The king of the Ammonites was Nahash. He played an important role in Israel's history. In the early days of King Saul, he was a cruel tyrant who conquered most of the area east of the Jordan River. The



only city he hadn't conquered east of the Jordan River was the Jewish city of Jabesh-Gilead. We read about this in 1 Samuel 11. Nahash was a real scoundrel. He gouged out the right eye in every man, woman, and child in the cities he conquered. That made it much easier to figure out who were the conquered people and who were the free people. The Ammonites had a long history of hostility toward the Israelites.

In the Old Testament, the death of a king created a period of instability in a nation until the new king solidified his power. The death of an old king was a great opportunity for other nations to take advantage of the weakness of a new king. The death of Nahash gave David an opportunity to exploit the Ammonites. Given their history of hostility toward the Jews, we would expect David to take advantage of this opportunity, but that is not what happened.

And David said, "I will deal loyally with Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father dealt loyally with me." ... 2 Samuel 10:2a (ESV)

This is a complete surprise! The new king of the Ammonites would experience the same type of kindness that David extended to Mephibosheth. It is not apparent in English, but the same Hebrew word is used in both chapters. It is the word *hesed*. It is translated as the word *kindness* in the last chapter and as the word *loyalty* in this chapter. It is the same word. It means the same thing. It describes unfailing, faithful, promise-keeping love.

Jonathan showed unfailing promise-keeping love to David, so David blessed his son Mephibosheth. Nahash also showed unfailing promise-keeping love to David, so David plans to bless his son Hanun. That is not what we expected from this brutal eye-gouging king.

At this point, we need to speculate about what kind of faithful promise-keeping love Nahash, the king of the Ammonites showed David. The Bible doesn't tell the details.

We know from 1 Samuel, that David spent many years on the run from Saul. While David was on the run, many of the enemies of king Saul set themselves up as friends of David. We saw the Moabites helped David when he was on the run. The Philistines also helped David. It is reasonable to assume the Ammonites under King Nahash also helped David when he was on the run from Saul. Nahash was so loving, loyal, and kind to David in those difficult days that David felt compelled to show unfailing love and kindness to Hanun, Nahash's son.

There is a little application for us in this. David showed kindness to his godless neighbors. He didn't hate them. He went out of his way to show love and kindness to them instead of ignoring them. This is a good example for us to follow. As Christians, it is so easy to become immersed in the church bubble where we just know church people. We ignore other people around us, the people who desperately need to hear the good news of Jesus. David went out of his way to extend kindness to neighbors far from God, which is what we are to do as Christians.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. Galatians 6:10 (ESV)

...but always seek to do good to one another and to everyone. 1 Thessalonians 5:15 (ESV)

So David intends to show unfailing love and kindness to Hanun upon the death of his father. Let's see how well that goes.

...So David sent by his servants to console him concerning his father..... 2 Samuel 10:2b (ESV)

David sent his representatives to the state funeral of Nahash in the land of the Ammonites. This is similar to what happened recently with the death of the queen of England. Countries around the world sent their representatives to England to express their sympathies and be part of the state funeral.

...And David's servants came into the land of the Ammonites. 2 Samuel 10:2c (ESV)

So far, so good. David's high-ranking officials arrive at Rabbah, the capital city of the Ammonites. When they came, things didn't go the way David hoped.

But the princes of the Ammonites said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think, because David has sent comforters to you, that he is honoring your father? Has not David sent his servants to you to search the city and to spy it out and to overthrow it?" 2 Samuel 10:3 (ESV)

The princes of the Ammonites were probably the military advisors of the nation. They chose to interpret the kindness of King David as an act of hostility by David. They assumed the worst of David, not the best.

Let's talk about this. In their heart, they could not conceive of David wanting to extend genuine kindness. Since the thoughts of their hearts were wicked and scheming all the time, they assumed David's thoughts were wicked and scheming all the time. They assumed the good counselors came with evil intentions.

The evil thoughts we sow in our hearts become the evil thoughts we assume everyone else is sowing in their hearts. What we accuse people of is often what we are guilty of. Has anybody seen that in the world today? If we always think the worst about other people, we assume they always think the

worst about us, which is absolutely not true. People who always assume the worst motives in others generally have crooked motives in their own hearts that they project on everyone around them.

So I would ask you, in your relationships with other people, do you assume the worst about others' motives, or do you assume the best? Those who assume the worst of others are often revealing the sinfulness of their own heart. Those who assume the best of others reveal the purity of their heart.

Let's make this practical. When you end up in a spat with your spouse, and they say something or do something that gets under your skin, so you assume the worst about their intentions. You use your words to tear them up. You feel justified in doing it because you think your hurtful words are an appropriate response to the evil words or deeds done by your spouse.

Then you have a chance to calm down. Later in the day you talk with your spouse and discover you have it all wrong. You misinterpreted what your spouse said. They didn't mean what they said in a hurtful way, but because of the evil in your own heart, you projected evil motives onto their actions that were not there. When that happens, and you have assumed the worst of your spouse, not the best of your spouse, that comes from the wickedness of your own heart, not the wickedness of their heart. This is what Hanun did to David, and what we sometimes find ourselves doing in our family with those who love us the most.

This also applies in the church. In the church, we have brothers and sisters in Christ. They have the Holy Spirit in them. Their hearts and lives have been drastically changed by Jesus, just like our own. But if we see something

happening in the church, and it isn't the way we would do it, or it isn't the way we like it, we instantly assume our brother or sister in Jesus is doing something with a sinful motive or a bad heart, just because they have done something a little differently than we would.

How dare the music be so loud. The lights are too bright. The cookies at the coffee bar were bought at Walmart. Obviously, the people around here aren't Christians, or all the cookies would be homemade. Where is their love for Jesus? When we do that, we are not showing charity toward our brother or sister in Christ. We are assuming the worst about them, not the best. We are not seeking to understand and accommodate. We are projecting the evil thoughts of our own hearts onto other people. We are assuming the worst about them instead of the best.

This is the same thing Hanun did to David. David planned to show the young king kindness, like the kindness he showed to Mephibosheth, but because Hanun assumed the worst, he rejected the king's kindness.

So Hanun took David's servants and shaved off half the beard of each and cut off their garments in the middle, at their hips, and sent them away. 2 Samuel 10:4 (ESV)

Hanun decided he would teach David a lesson by insulting David's representatives instead of thanking them for coming. He shaved off half their beards. That was not horizontal. That was vertical. Today, this would be like shaving half of someone's head bald and their left eyebrow. This would make anyone look completely ridiculous in public.

For Jewish men, their beard represented their dignity. In Leviticus, we see Jewish men were to have full beards. Every Jewish man looked like they were on

the show Duck Dynasty. To forcibly shave a Jewish man's beard was very humiliating. To shave half of a Jewish man's beard on one side of his face was even more humiliating. Remember these are not ordinary men in David's kingdom, they were powerful men who now were completely humiliated in public.

It gets worse. In that era, men wore long robes. Hanun cut the robes of these men at their belly buttons. This meant they had no pants. These guys, having only half a beard and no pants were kicked out of town and then forced to walk home half-naked as they walked down the street. You can imagine how completely embarrassing it was for these guys. Imagine you had to walk 40 miles home with no pants. These were not just any people, they were high-ranking men in David's kingdom. This would be like President Biden sending people of his cabinet to a state funeral in Russia, but Putin shaving off an eye-brow and half of the head of everyone President Biden sends, then taking away everyone's pants and sending them home. This is the kind of stuff that starts a war. Hanun despised the kindness of the king.

When it was told David, he sent to meet them, [for the men were greatly ashamed](#). And the king said, ["Remain at Jericho until your beards have grown and then return."](#) 2 Samuel 10:5 (ESV)

When David heard what happened, he sent representatives to them. I am sure they were carrying a fresh set of clothes. David told them to stay at Jericho to give these men time for their beards to regrow before they came home and were subject to more public humiliation. Jericho was 14 miles outside of Jerusalem. David was so kind. He didn't want them to suffer any more embarrassment.

Assuming the worst of people and trying to get even leads to hostility.

At this point, we would expect David to gather an army to attack the Ammonites. He didn't. David won every battle he fought in because the Lord was on his side. Instead of trying to get even, David was so kind. He absorbed the insult. He doesn't want to stir up trouble. The land of the Ammonites was outside of the Promised Land. He didn't need to conquer it. He absorbed the insult and kept moving, which is a good bit of wisdom for all of us. I like to tell my kids to be like a duck, let insults roll off your back like water rolls off a duck's back. Don't pay attention to them. The problem is when you let the insults soak into you, not run off of you. Shake off insults and keep moving.

Paul writes about this in Romans.

If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Romans 12:18 (ESV)

In spite of this serious insult, David sought to keep the peace. While David tried to keep the peace, that isn't what the Ammonites were doing.

When the Ammonites saw that they had become a stench to David,... 2 Samuel 10:6a (ESV)

We are not told David saw the Ammonites as a stench. We are just told that this is the way the Ammonites saw it. They expected David to be fuming mad and to be planning for war.

Before we go much further, It is worth noting that they didn't have to assume the worst about David. They didn't need to prepare for a fight. They could have taken steps to put matters right. They could have taken steps to apologize, to humble themselves and seek peace. They chose not to. They chose to assume the worst of David's heart and that he would be unforgiving of

them after what they had done. Once again, they completely misread the intentions of David's heart, which were kindness and unfailing love.

Isn't this the way small problems often turn into big conflicts in our life? Someone assumes the words said or the actions taken were done with bad motives from an evil heart. Someone assumes they will never be forgiven after what they did, so they entrench themselves in bitterness. There is a way out. It involves humbling ourselves. It involves talking. It involves repenting. It involves saying I assumed the wrong motive. I did the wrong thing. Can you forgive me? Too many people are not willing to humble themselves and do the hard work of finding a way out of conflict. Instead of working hard to defuse the conflict, they prepare for war in the conflict. That is what the Ammonites did.

...the Ammonites sent and hired the Syrians of Beth-rehob, and the Syrians of Zobah, 20,000 foot soldiers, and the king of Maacah with 1,000 men, and the men of Tob, 12,000 men. 2 Samuel 10:6b (ESV)

Even though David is not seeking hostility with them, they assume he will so they hire mercenaries from three nations around them to boost their military.

Remember that at this point, David made no move against them. He shook off the insult. When you have

an evil heart that assumes the worst of others you assume people are making evil plans against you, even when there is no evidence that is true. So they hire 33,000 mercenaries.



It didn't take David's intelligence network long to find out what was happening. He didn't need to fly a Chinese spy balloon over the country of Ammon to find out what was happening. His intelligence network told him the Ammonites appear to be preparing for war.

What a great illustration of the way little insults, if not repented of and worked through, can end up leading to a complete mess.

And when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the host of the mighty men. 2 Samuel 10:7 (ESV)

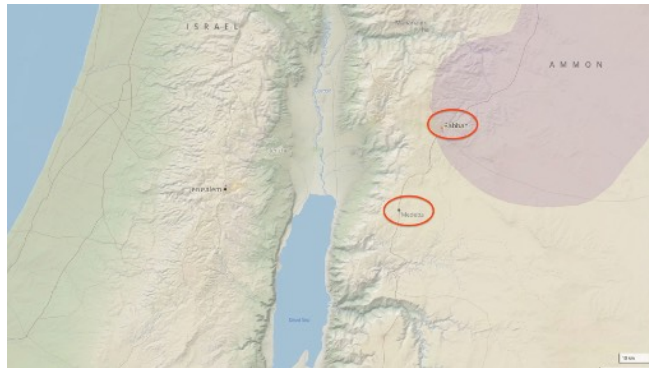
Joab was David's military commander. He was a feisty guy. He murdered Abner, Saul's old military commander, when Joab felt it was possible he might lose his position as head of the army. Joab was still the top military commander in David's army, and that might have been because he was family. He was the son of David's sister. It is always hard to deal with family.

David sent him with his mighty men. We will learn more about the mighty men later in our study. All of them were incredible warriors. We would call them the special ops unit. They were not the kind of guys you wanted to mess with. The point is Joab went with a skilled force, but not a large force. Joab's job was defensive in nature. I don't think David or Joab understood the full-extent of the Ammonite's plans against them or the military force assembled by them.

And the Ammonites came out and drew up in battle array at the entrance of the gate, and the Syrians of Zobah and of Rehob and the men of Tob and Maacah were by themselves in the open country. 2 Samuel 10:8 (ESV)

The Ammonite army, having assembled at their capital of Rabbah, appeared outside the city gate to protect the city. The 33,000 mercenary troops took up position to the south of the city on the open plain near Medeba. The

recruited troops had horses and chariots. Joab and his men, as we learned in 2 Samuel 8, did not have horses or chariots. The mercenary soldiers wanted to be on the plain because that would



allow them to use their horses and chariots with great effectiveness.

When Joab saw that the battle was set against him both in front and in the rear,... 2 Samuel 10:9a (ESV)

Joab and his mighty men came to the edge of Israelite territory. They realized they had not one, but two massive armies assembled against them. Joab knew he was in trouble. It is almost impossible for an army to fight on its front and back at once. Joab needed a plan and he needed it fast.

...he chose some of the best men of Israel and arrayed them against the Syrians. The rest of his men he put in the charge of Abishai his brother, and he arrayed them against the Ammonites. 2 Samuel 10:9b–10 (ESV)

Joab would lead his best troops to the south and confront the 33,000 mercenary soldiers with their horses and chariots in the open country. He sent his brother with the remaining troops against the Ammonites outside of the capital city of Rabbah. Why did Joab choose to fight the mercenaries on the open plain? I think that was because they were the harder opponent with the larger army.

This was Joab's plan.

And he said, "If the Syrians are too strong for me, then you shall help me, but if the Ammonites are too strong for you, then I will come and help you." 2 Samuel 10:11 (ESV)

They were like good Christian brothers. They promised to have one another's back. If you need help, I have your back. If I need help, you have my back. That is the way Christian men should live today. We have one another's backs in hard times.

Be of good courage, and let us be courageous for our people, and for the cities of our God, ... 2 Samuel 10:12a (ESV)

You get the sense that Joab has moved from strategy to give his younger brother Abishai a pep talk before the battle. Things do not look good. I love what Joab says. Yes, we are outnumbered. Abishai, we need to try our absolute hardest. We need to be courageous and not be fearful in spite of these odds. Remember, we are not fighting for ourselves. At this point, we are fighting to defend God's people and our cities. If the Ammonites and their allies beat us today, there is nothing to stop them from attacking our homeland where they will destroy the women and children. Be of good courage and fight.

"...and may the LORD do what seems good to him." 2 Samuel 10:12 (ESV)

Abishai, all we can do in the face of this overwhelming opposition, and the fight we didn't want, is be courageous, do our best, and leave the outcome in God's hands. God will do whatever seems good to him.

This is an important takeaway for us. Many times we find ourselves in difficult situations we didn't want or desire. Maybe our child is sick. Maybe a loved one is battling cancer. Maybe our business is failing. We keep saying, "God, if you are good, you will rescue my business. You will heal my loved one of cancer. You will turn back my straying child." In truth, we should prayerfully ask for those things, and courageously do our best, but God hasn't promised to

always give us a positive outcome. Joab knows this. Looking at the overwhelming military force in front of him, he knows that it could be his last day. He might not survive, but if he doesn't survive, that doesn't mean God is not good. God is still good, but in our defeats and our pain, we just do not see how he is being good.

In our shoes, from our perspective, there are many times in life where it appears that God's goodness is called into question when God lets evil reign with sin, suffering, and death taking their toll. If we could get out of our shoes, and wear God's shoes, where we could see things with a much wider angle lens, we would understand that God is still good, all the time, even if we can't understand what he is doing or understand why he didn't answer our prayers the way we wanted.

For example, think about Jesus when he came into Jerusalem. He was good. He healed the sick, raised the dead, and fed thousands. He never sinned, and yet, Jesus was betrayed by Judas. He was unjustly condemned by the Jewish leaders. He was run through a false Roman court. Jesus was condemned to die on the cross. The one person who had never sinned was being put to death as if he was guilty of a horrible sin. I am sure the apostles were coming unglued as they watched all of it happen. God, if you are good, how can you let these terrible things happen to Jesus? The apostles couldn't see it from their perspective wearing their shoes. God could see if from his vantage point in history. Jesus was betrayed and falsely condemned to death so he could die in our place for our sin to make a way to bring us back to God. In the greatest

injustice that took place in world history, God was being good, good to us, and better than he had ever been.

This is what Joab says. Today we may live or we may die in this battle. Either way that it goes, as long as we have done our best, whatever God decides is the outcome is ok. The outcome will always be that God is good, even if it is not the way we want it to go.

So as Joab says to Abishai, we prepare our best, we try our best, but we leave the results in God's hands, knowing no matter what they may be, God is always good. It is out of tragedy and loss that he brings about some of his best good purposes.

So Joab and the people who were with him drew near to battle against the Syrians, and they fled before him. 2 Samuel 10:13 (ESV)

The biblical writer doesn't give us details about the battle. I am sure Joab did a lot more than simply say, "Boo!" If I read this correctly, the hired Syrians from the north unexpectedly found themselves losing to Joab and his men. The shock of sudden defeat caused them to throw in the towel and head home.

And when the Ammonites saw that the Syrians fled, they likewise fled before Abishai and entered the city.... 2 Samuel 10:14a (ESV)

In a similar way, it is safe to assume Abishai engaged the Ammonites in battle. They also experienced heavy and unexpected losses. When they heard their 33,000 mercenaries gave up, they also threw in the towel and hid in the city.

...Then Joab returned from fighting against the Ammonites and came to Jerusalem. 2 Samuel 10:14 (ESV)

Joab didn't stay and attack the city. That was never his purpose. This was purely a defensive, not offensive war. That is why Joab and his military headed home.

It is our pride that won't let hostilities end.

The one thing any team doesn't like is losing to an underdog. When a sports team in a big high school goes home after they lose to a tiny school, they are itching for a rematch to save their pride and set the record straight. That is what happened with the Syrians, who couldn't get it through their heads that they were losing to a much smaller army of Israelite soldiers on foot without horses and chariots.

But when the Syrians saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they gathered themselves together. 2 Samuel 10:15 (ESV)

This time, they are going to make sure the Israelites paid. They would grind Israel to dust. Of course, unbeknownst to them, this was the first time they fought an army where God was supernaturally at work with them giving them their victory.

And Hadadezer sent and brought out the Syrians who were beyond the Euphrates. They came to Helam, with Shobach the commander of the army of Hadadezer at their head. 2 Samuel 10:16 (ESV)

We met Hadadezer in 2 Samuel 8. He was the king of the Arameans in the area of Zobach. At this time in history, he was a powerful ruler over a large kingdom. He had taken



over a number of other countries to the north. He grabbed the soldiers of those nations and headed south to wipe out Israel once and for all. This time Hadadezer puts his own general in charge, a man named Shobach.

Helam was 40 miles east of the Sea of Galilee. If 33,000 was a big army before, this army was much, much larger. David quickly realized he had a problem on his hands. A problem that was far greater than Joab and his mighty men could handle.

And when it was told David, he gathered all Israel together and crossed the Jordan and came to Helam... 2 Samuel 10:17 (ESV)

This time David led the army to battle himself and brought all of Israel to war with him. This was a life-or-death battle to determine the future of the nation.

...The Syrians arrayed themselves against David and fought with him. And the Syrians fled before Israel, and David killed of the Syrians the men of 700 chariots, and 40,000 horsemen, and wounded Shobach the commander of their army, so that he died there. 2 Samuel 10:17b–18 (ESV)

David and his foot soldiers again decisively defeated a much larger army that used horses and chariots. David took out 700 chariots with horses. David's men took out 40,000 soldiers on horseback. That is a lot of body bags. More men on horseback died in that battle than were part of the last battle. The Hebrew suggests David may have been the one to inflict the fatal wound on Shobach, the commander of Hadadezer's army. Hadadezer's army was defeated not because Israel had the latest in military technology, but because God was fighting against the enemies of His people.

And the LORD gave victory to David wherever he went. 2 Samuel 8:6b (ESV)

Earlier, when the Syrians lost to David, they regrouped to attack David, God's anointed king. As a result, they paid bitterly and lost decisively leaving over

40,000 dead on the field of battle. That changed their attitude about David as God's anointed king.

And when all the kings who were servants of Hadadezer saw that they had been defeated by Israel, they made peace with Israel and became subject to them... 2 Samuel 10:19 (ESV)

Hadadezer and all the northern kings became subject to David. They became servants of David. After getting the tar beat out of them, they decided it was a really bad idea to keep fighting God's king. They made peace with God's king and served him.

What happened to the Ammonites who started all this trouble in the first place? At this point, they are on their own. Nobody was willing to come to their rescue and stir up trouble with David.

...So the Syrians were afraid to save the Ammonites anymore. 2 Samuel 10:19 (ESV)

Everyone should be able to see the complete foolishness of turning your back on the kindness of God's King. It could have been so different if the Ammonites had assumed the best of David instead of the worst. If they had not projected the sinfulness of their own heart on David's heart, things would have been different. When we get to 2 Samuel 12, the Ammonites will be destroyed because they chose to turn their back on the kindness of God's King.

Application

2 Samuel 9 and 10 are about one theme, the kindness of King David. In 2 Samuel 9, the kindness of the king was experienced by Mephibosheth. He accepted the kindness of King David. He was taken from the desert to the palace. He was taken from poverty to riches. He was taken from a nobody in the

desert to becoming an adopted son of the king who always ate at the king's table.

In 2 Samuel 10, the Ammonites rejected the kindness that King David planned to extend to them. They rebelled against God's king. They fought against God's king. It did not go well for them. When we get to 2 Samuel 12, they will be destroyed for rejecting the kindness of God's King.

2 Samuel 10 is also a picture of the Syrians. They started fighting against the kindness of God's king, but after repeated and painful losses, they came to their senses and made peace with God's king and enjoyed the blessing of a right relationship with him.

As I thought about this chapter, I realized the responses to King David's kindness by Mephibosheth, the Ammonites, and the Syrians parallel our responses to the kindness of the much greater descendent of David that is show to us by Jesus Christ.

Today we can be like Mephibosheth. We can embrace the kindness of King Jesus and be taken from being men and women crippled by sin to men and women forgiven of our sins by Jesus. We can embrace the kindness of King Jesus and be given an inheritance in heaven that can never perish, spoil, or fade as all the love and goodness that God the Father has for his son flows onto Jesus and overflows onto us because we are so closely identified with Jesus. Just like Mephibosheth was adopted into David's family and given a seat at the king's table forever, we too can be adopted brothers and sisters of Jesus who eat and the table of God with Jesus our elder brother for all eternity.

We can also respond like the Ammonites. We can despise God's goodness to us through Jesus. We can assume the worst of God's intentions for us in this life, instead of the best. We can spend our life fighting Jesus and living in opposition to Jesus. That is never a winning proposition. Just as fighting King David led to the destruction of the Ammonites in the Old Testament, fighting King Jesus will lead to the eternal destruction of anyone in the New Testament.

The third response is that of the Syrians. Like the Ammonites, they initially resisted God's chosen king. They rebelled against him. Twice they learned the painful lesson that rebelling against God's chosen king is not a winning proposition. They changed. They wised up. They made peace with God's chosen king and enjoyed the blessing of being subject to him instead of opposing him.

Is that you this morning? Have you come into church this morning in rebellion against King Jesus? Do you want to be in charge of your own life? Have you been telling Jesus to stick it? How has fighting King Jesus gone for you in life? Have you experienced crushing defeats where Jesus is trying to get your attention so you turn to him and submit to him? If that is you, my prayer is that today, just like the Syrians, you repent. Before you leave this room you decide to no longer fight King Jesus but to turn to and trust King Jesus. Yes, he loves you. Yes, he wants to be good to you. Yes, he loves you more than you can understand or imagine. Mephibosheth didn't deserve the goodness of the king, and neither do we. God is that good to us through Jesus. Only a fool would turn his back on the kindness of the king. Don't be a fool today, like the Ammonites were thousands of years ago.

This morning, everyone in the room is in one of three positions, Either you are experiencing the kindness of King Jesus, like Mephibosheth, you are a hard-core resister of King Jesus' kindness like the Ammonites, or you are learning only a fool keeps fighting King Jesus, and like the Syrians, you come to your senses, change your mind and submit to King Jesus and experience the kindness of King Jesus.

Which one are you today?



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