

2 Samuel 19:8-43 — The Return Of The King

November 19, 2023

Good morning, CrossWinds Church! If you are new, my name is Kurt. I am one of the pastors. We are grateful to have you. I have two quick announcements before we get to our study.

This morning, we kicked off the use of name tag kiosks. I hope everyone had a chance to print their name tag. At CrossWinds, we encourage you to wear a name tag because our second core value is community. People are important. Relationships are important. Name tags help minimize those super awkward moments when we talk with people after church, but we either don't know their names or can't remember them. Name tags help build relationships. Name tags are also a way we can be welcoming to new folks. While we may know most people's names, visitors don't know the names of anyone. Wearing name tags makes it easier for guests to connect.

To use a name tag kiosk, type your phone into the kiosk. Your family will pop up. Check off who is present and press the "Go" button. Your name tags will come out of the printer.

Another one of our core values is outreach. We believe in reaching our community by serving the community. Good works create goodwill, which opens hearts to hear the good news. On Christmas Eve, to serve our community, we receive a special offering that we give to ministries in our community or missionaries we support. This year, our Christmas Eve offering across both our campuses will be divided into three. We will be divided between ATLAS of the lakes areas, ATLAS of Spencer, and Timber Bay. Both ATLAS ministries work

with the poorest of the poor in our communities and those who are in the roughest spots in life. Timber Bay, is a local ministry led by Todd McQuown. He works with struggling students in a tough spot in life. James 1:27 tells us religion that is pure and undefiled before God is to look after orphans and widows in their distress. ATLAS helps men and women in distress. Timber Bay works with students in need. ATLAS and Timber Bay will be great local ministries we can support to live out James 1:27.

This morning, we will continue our studies in 2 Samuel. Before we start, I want to give you a process update on the teaching schedule for the next few weeks.

This morning is our last study in 2 Samuel until next year. Next week begins our Christmas series. It is called, "What if Jesus had not been born?" We will look at the Christmas story, but we will also look at how the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus changed world history. We will learn how Jesus changed the value of human life, sexuality, education, the treatment of the poor, medicine, and many other areas. The significance of the birth of Jesus and how it changed history will be fascinating. I enjoy the research and can't wait to share it with you. Pastor Jordan and I will rotate between campuses in that series.

We will return to 2 Samuel in the New Year and finish the book. We have five chapters after today.

This morning, we are in 2 Samuel 19:8. For those of you who are new and just joining us, 2 Samuel is the story of the rise and fall of King David. Things were going great for David in the first half of the book, then, in 2 Samuel 11,

David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. After that, things went downhill. A lot of suffering came from that sin. One of the most painful times that came from that sin was the rebellion of his oldest living son, a man named Absalom. He attempted a coup to overthrow his father from the throne and take the life of his father and all of his men. When the coup happened and Absalom was crowned king in Hebron, David, some of his men, and his family fled across the desert. They crossed the Jordan River and ended up exhausted and hungry at Mahanaim.

Soon, Absalom also crossed the Jordan River. With him were all the men of Israel. He had a general draft of the entire nation. He planned to use his massive army to fall on his father and snuff out his life by overwhelming him with sheer numbers.

The good news is that it is in our darkest hour that God does some of his finest work. God set out to save David, His chosen king in those desperate moments. God began working behind the scenes to save David. He moved the hearts of wealthy people in the area to provide food for David and his family. He reunited David with his army. In the battle between the armies of Absalom and David, God was at work using the forest to defeat Absalom's men. 20,000 died that day. That might have been just the number of soldiers who died on Absalom's side. The Bible tells us more people died by the forest than by the sword. God was at work using the forest to fight Absalom's army. Finally, Joab, the general of David's army, killed Absalom. At that point, it was like a chess match. Once the king was dead, the game was over.

The entire nation is shocked as we pick up the story in 2 Samuel 19:8. Nobody expected David to survive. That day's victory for David and his men seemed impossible, yet it happened. Nobody expected Absalom to die. Many turned their back on David and walked away from leadership as their king. Now, what were they to do?

They didn't have a king. Could they ask David to return? They ran him out of the land. If he returned, what would he do to the people who betrayed him? Would he kill them? It would be fair for David to kill everyone who sided with his son. They were guilty of treason. If David didn't seek revenge, would he be able to forgive or always hold a grudge?

Have you been betrayed by people you love? Have you ever felt you could never forgive someone after what they have done to hurt you? If you have faced those moments where it is hard to forgive, you came on the right Sunday as we learn about the unexpected mercy and forgiveness of a deeply hurt king. Let's begin.

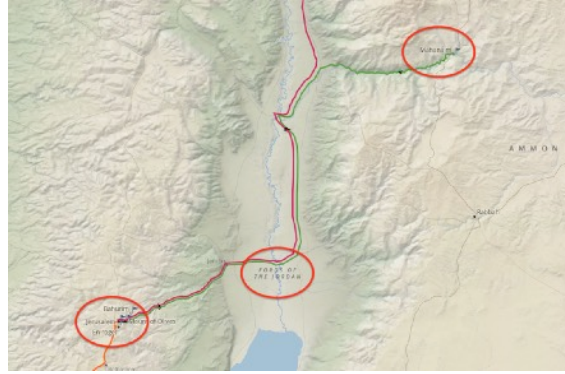
...Now Israel had fled every man to his own home. 2 Samuel 19:8b (ESV)

When everyone realized Absalom was dead, they gave up the coup and headed home. As Joab expected, there was no more fight when Absalom was taken out of the fight.

David pursued unity instead of revenge.

And all the people were arguing throughout all the tribes of Israel, saying, "The king delivered us from the hand of our enemies and saved us from the hand of the Philistines, and now he has fled out of the land from Absalom. But Absalom, whom we anointed over us, is dead in battle. Now therefore why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?" 2 Samuel 19:9–10 (ESV)

As we saw last week, David and his men were at Mahanaim. This was east of the Jordan River. It was considered to be outside of the Promised Land. The nation's people realized that without Absalom, they had no king. The true king who saved them from their enemies in the past was outside of the land and needed to be brought home.



People were deliberating all over Israel about what should be done. This was the political debate in 1,000 B.C. The problem was they anointed Absalom as king at Hebron. Some thought that nullified David's kingship. Others thought David's kingship was valid. Nobody knew what to do.

The people who desired to bring David back and reinstall him as king were upset with the people who were unsure what to do.

This reminds me of a situation all of us face. From time to time, as Christians, we rebel against God. We go our own way. We do our own thing. We dethrone Jesus from the center of our lives and go our own way. God, in his mercy, lets our self-proclaimed rule end in disaster. When the self-proclaimed rule of our lives falls apart, like the people of Israel, we wonder what we should do. We walked away from Jesus. We rejected him. Now that we have gone our own way and done our own thing, will Jesus still take us back? If Jesus takes us back, will he destroy us, or will he love and forgive us? That is a situation we always face when we wander into sin. That is the same situation the nation of

Israel is faced with David. How would David respond to the hurtful and treasonous things they did?

In the next verses, it is apparent that David received word from “all Israel” that the arguing of the people was coming to a head. Instead of rejecting David as their king, most people in the northern kingdom wanted David to return and be the king. The problem was that the southernmost tribe of Judah, David’s own tribe, had not sent word that they wanted David to return. This might be because their rebellion against David was most flagrant. They chose to anoint Absalom as king in Hebron, a city inside of Judah. Since they were lagging behind the rest of the tribes in requesting his return, David took the initiative. He sent them a message.

And King David sent this message to Zadok and Abiathar the priests: “Say to the elders of Judah, ‘Why should you be the last to bring the king back to his house, when the word of all Israel has come to the king? You are my brothers; you are my bone and my flesh. Why then should you be the last to bring back the king?’” 2 Samuel 19:11–12 (ESV)

David used the two priests who served him well as spies during Absalom’s coup. They were reliable. He could trust them to deliver a message to the elders of the tribe of Judah. He urged them to do what all of Israel had already done: request David to return and be the king.

When David first became king, you may remember it was the tribe of Judah who first anointed him as king in 2 Samuel 2. It wasn’t until 2 Samuel 5 that the northern tribes also requested to anoint David as king. From 2 Samuel 2 to 2 Samuel 5, a bloody civil war raged in the nation. David did not want the same thing to happen again but in reverse order. This time, the northern 10 tribes

wanted to anoint him as king first. He didn't want the tribe of Judah to limp along in rebellion for years, and countless blood and bodies be shed.

David appealed to the tribe of Judah, who was slow to ask him to return by saying, "You are my brothers, my bone and my flesh." That means, why should we be separated? We are family. Families are neat to stick together, not fight together.

Ironically, these were the same words the northern tribes used in 2 Samuel 5 after the death of Ish-Bosheth as they asked to unite behind David and have him become their king.

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "Behold, we are your bone and flesh." 2 Samuel 5:1 (ESV)

There is a message for us in this. David humbled himself and didn't try to get even with anyone. Instead, it was more important for him to pursue unity of the nation. Unity is a precious thing, especially in a church or in a family. Sometimes, people will hurt you in a church or a family. They will say terrible things to you. The sharp words people say to you will always be on the edge of your memory. They are hard to forget.

Sometimes, we need to look at things like David did. Unity of the family. Unity of the church. Unity of people is more important than me getting my vengeance, than me getting my pound of flesh after what people did to me or said about me.

...eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. Ephesians 4:3 (ESV)

Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! Psalm 133:1 (ESV)

The first lesson we see is that to pursue unity in the nation, David was humble and forgiving toward those who hurt him. He didn't pursue vengeance. The second lesson we see is that to maintain unity or create unity between people, you have to give a little. You need to compromise a little. You must show people you genuinely care about them and are willing to work with them. That is what David did next.

And say to Amasa, 'Are you not my bone and my flesh? God do so to me and more also, if you are not commander of my army from now on in place of Joab.' ”
2 Samuel 19:13 (ESV)

This was a strong message to the nation that David was seeking unity, not revenge. Who was Amasa? Absalom appointed Amasa as the commander of his army, the army that just fought David. David promised to take Joab out of the position as top military general and put Amasa in his place. This would make the people who sided with Absalom feel like David cared about them. It would do a lot to bring them over.

This may also have been a way of disciplining Joab for killing Absalom, which was a direct violation of David's command. In subsequent chapters, we will see Joab retained command of roughly a third of the army, but Amasa served as the army's supreme commander and was over him in authority. In January, we will see that Joab did not like his demotion, but that is a story for another Sunday.

So far, we have seen David working hard to bring people into the family of God. To do that, he took the initiative with the tribe of Judah to bring them back to the family. He even compromised a bit and put Amasa in charge of the army so people knew his desire was not revenge but restoration.

We can apply this to our lives. With Thanksgiving on the calendar this week, families get together, but not all of those relationships are easy. Like David, we are not to be people who seek our rights or revenge in family disagreements. We are to be people who humble ourselves to restore relationships. We go out of our way to build a relationship with people in the family who are angry and alone. We also compromise to make relationships work whenever we can.

Did all of this humility work? The next verse tells us.

And he swayed the heart of all the men of Judah as one man, so that they sent word to the king, "Return, both you and all your servants." 2 Samuel 19:14 (ESV)

David's reaching out to those afraid of his return and loving compromising with them worked. It restored unity in the family of God that was only days ago in a civil war.

David pursued unity by offering everyone a fresh start.

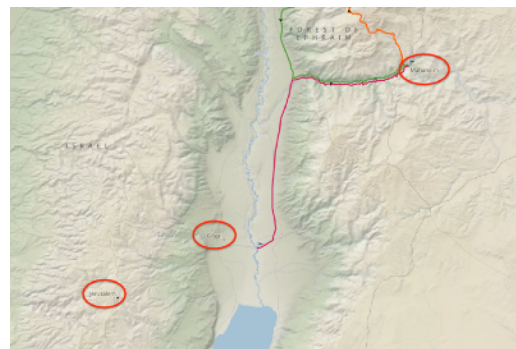
Now, we follow David as he retraces his steps from Mahanaim, across the Jordan River, back to Jerusalem. There is significance in the details of this trip.

So the king came back to the Jordan,... 2 Samuel 19:15a (ESV)

This could have been as many as 50 miles, depending on the route taken. This time, he was not in a rush, like he was when he ran for his life.

...and Judah came to Gilgal to meet the king and to bring the king over the Jordan. 2 Samuel 19:15 (ESV)

The tribe of Judah was the last tribe to talk about bringing David back as king but they were some of the first to welcome



him home at the Jordan River. Today, the Jordan River is small, but at the time, it was much larger.

Why did David want to cross the Jordan River at Gilgal? Maybe it was narrower there. I don't know. I know there is other significance. When Joshua first crossed the Promised Land to bring the Israelites into the Promised Land, it was at Gilgal. At Gilgal, God renewed his covenant with his people. After 40 years of wandering in the wilderness and a new generation growing up, it was at Gilgal that the new generation was given a fresh start from God, and the sin of their past was taken away.

And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you." And so the name of that place is called Gilgal to this day. Joshua 5:9 (ESV)

When David crossed at Gilgal he was saying to the people that just as God took away the sins of their ancestors and gave them a fresh start in this place, he was willing to take away the sins of what they had done and give them a fresh start with him as their king in that day.

Gilgal was also the place the people of God had done under the leadership of Samuel in the time of Saul to make a fresh start with the grace of God.

Then Samuel said to the people, "Come, let us go to Gilgal and there renew the kingdom." 1 Samuel 11:14 (ESV)

Gilgal, as a place, symbolized God's amazing grace to his people. God offers to give a fresh start to his people no matter how far they have wandered. No matter what they had done, even if it was a coup to kill the king, just as David

offered to forgive sinners and give them a fresh start, Jesus offered to forgive us as well and give a fresh start to you and me.

The forgiveness and grace we see in the life of David is a miniature picture of the much greater grace and forgiveness we are offered by Jesus, no matter what we have done. Jesus loves you. He died for you. No matter how many times you have abandoned him. No matter how you have failed him. God offers you a fresh start through Jesus today.

As I was thinking about this, I began wondering how David could extend so much grace to the people who had been so hurtful toward him. Then it occurred to me. David could be so forgiving of others because God was incredibly forgiving toward him. After David's adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of Uriah, God was quick to forgive him when he repented. There were consequences to David's sin, but he did not die for his sin. Forgiving people for rebelling against him was much less than the forgiveness he had already received from God for what he had done.

Hearing of David's unexpected kindness, others came to meet him. If you were with us when we studied 2 Samuel 16, when David left Jerusalem, as he ran for his life, you will remember different people who met David along the way. They kicked him when he was down and took advantage of him in the crisis. One was named Ziba, a con man, and another was Shimei, a potty mouth. As David comes back to Israel, these same people show up again. They expected David to die. They expected him to be overthrown. The last thing they expected was they would be forced to eat their words because David returned as king. As David

returns, they know they made some serious mistakes and were desperate to get out of trouble.

Shimei, the man who pretended to be sorry to get out of a pickle.

As David ran for his life out of Jerusalem, Shimei took the opportunity to speak his thoughts. He cursed David out. This wasn't a quick cursing, but it continued for some time. Shimei even threw dirt and rocks at David. That is not the way you treat a king.

...there came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera, and as he came he cursed continually. And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David, and all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. And Shimei said as he cursed, "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you worthless man! 2 Samuel 16:5–7 (ESV)

Now that David was returning to town as the king, he had to humble himself in a hurry.

And Shimei the son of Gera, the Benjaminite, from Bahurim, hurried to come down with the men of Judah to meet King David. And with him were a thousand men from Benjamin. And Ziba the servant of the house of Saul, with his fifteen sons and his twenty servants, rushed down to the Jordan before the king, and they crossed the ford to bring over the king's household and to do his pleasure... 2 Samuel 19:16–18b (ESV)

Shimei hurried down to see David and meet the king. He wanted to be the first to welcome the king home, hoping to gain his favor. With him, he brought a thousand men from his tribe. Why did he bring so many men? Were they here to carry David's luggage? I don't think so. They were his insurance policy. He wanted forgiveness from the king. If David tried to carry out vengeance, Shimei had a thousand bodyguards protecting him. Please forgive me, but if you won't, hint: I have a thousand soldiers with me.

We begin with listening to Shimei and his groveling.

...And Shimei the son of Gera fell down before the king, as he was about to cross the Jordan, and said to the king, "Let not my lord hold me guilty or remember how your servant did wrong on the day my lord the king left Jerusalem. Do not let the king take it to heart. For your servant knows that I have sinned. Therefore, behold, I have come this day, the first of all the house of Joseph to come down to meet my lord the king." 2 Samuel 19:18b–20 (ESV)

Shimei fell on his face and begged for forgiveness for what he said and did on the day David left Jerusalem. He admitted he sinned. He admitted he did wrong.

Even though we read of Shimei's repentance, I am still left with the impression that he was a snake in the grass. Shimei apologized for what he said, but he didn't have a change of heart. His hatred for David was just as real that day as in 2 Samuel 16. He was just smart to keep his mouth shut now when he wasn't smart enough to keep his mouth shut then. As I said, he has a thousand men from his tribe to back him up as an insurance policy.

What should David do? Should David kill him or accept his insincere apology and offer forgiveness? I think David knew he still hated him in his heart and his apology was only to save his skin.

When David left Jerusalem and Shimei cursed David in 2 Samuel 16, Abishai, the man who was second in command of David's army, offered to take off Shimei's head. Guess who offered to take off Shimei's head again.

Abishai the son of Zeruiah answered, "Shall not Shimei be put to death for this, because he cursed the LORD's anointed?" 2 Samuel 19:21 (ESV)

Have you noticed that when Abishai shows up in the story, he asks if he can kill someone? It was a good thing he was in the military. With that kind of attitude, he would have been a terrible librarian. Abishai pointed out that according to the Old Testament law, Shimei should be put to death for cursing the

king. That is what he deserved. Abishai would be happy to take off his head.

What would David do?

But David said, “What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah, that you should this day be as an adversary to me? Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day? For do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?” And the king said to Shimei, “You shall not die.” And the king gave him his oath. 2 Samuel 19:22–23 (ESV)

David decided to forgive Shimei, at least for now. There are a few reasons. First, David knew he was king. Killing Shimei or letting him live was no threat to him as king. The tribes had already asked David to return and serve as king. That was already decided. At this point, the only reason to kill Shimei would be vengeance for his insult. David could do that, but he didn’t need to do that. It wouldn’t change his kingship either way.

Second, this was a day of joy. It was a time of trying to reunite the nation. What David did on this day would set the tone of his reign for years. If David were gracious toward someone like Shimei, who clearly hated him, that would encourage others to unite around David and seek reconciliation. If David could forgive Shimei, with his cheesy, insincere apology, people would believe David could forgive them and their sins against him too.

How could David forgive Shimei after what he said and did? It goes back to what we learned earlier. When David looked back on how God forgave him of adultery and murder, it helped him forgive people like Shimei, who were guilty of much lesser things.

There is a lesson for us in this. When we choose to forgive people when they sin against us, it doesn’t just heal our relationship with that person, but with others. David’s forgiveness of Shimei helped unify the nation.

When we are with family this Thanksgiving, what do people in your family think about you? Are you known for holding a grudge? Are you known as someone holding onto hurts from the past, or does your family know you as someone who exudes forgiveness? Like David, are you willing to accept apologies you suspect are not genuine because you want to create unity in relationships?

Here are some important verses from the New Testament on forgiveness. They are worth memorizing. Choose one.

Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Ephesians 4:32 (ESV)

...forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Colossians 3:13b (ESV)

...If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him." Luke 17:3b–4 (ESV)

Mephibosheth, the man to whom money didn't matter

Earlier, we learned Shimei was accompanied by a man named Ziba. Ziba was the chief servant of King Saul's estates. When David found a lame grandson of King Saul named Mephibosheth, he set Mephibosheth over King Saul's vast farms. That was David giving Mephibosheth the inheritance that was rightfully his.

When David left Jerusalem as he ran for his life, Ziba came to him with donkeys and supplies for the road. David was grateful for those supplies but he asked what happened to Mephibosheth. Why was he not there? Ziba claimed Mephibosheth stayed behind in Jerusalem, hoping to become the next king in David's absence. That was treasonous. David didn't have a chance to investigate

this in his rush to leave. He made a snap judgment and gave all of King Saul's farms to Ziba, the servant, leaving Mephibosheth penniless. As we saw a few weeks ago, Ziba was a liar and a conman. His lies were about to be discovered. That is why he came to the Jordan River to help David and butter David up before things went south and his get-rich-quick scheme was discovered.

And Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king...2 Samuel 19:24a (ESV)

Remember Mephibosheth was paralyzed in both feet, and he didn't have a motorized wheelchair. Getting to the Jordan River was not easy for a man in his condition.

...He had neither taken care of his feet nor trimmed his beard nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came back in safety. 2 Samuel 19:24b (ESV)

As soon as we see Mephibosheth, we know Ziba's claim that Mephibosheth stayed behind in Jerusalem, hoping to become the next king, was bogus. Mephibosheth had not cut his toenails, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes from the day David left until now. He stunk! He looked disgusting. He was the exact opposite of good-looking Absalom. He looked like a complete mess. Nobody would want him as king.

Later, when David came to Jerusalem, he asked Mephibosheth what happened. That conversation that happened later is recorded now to finish Mephibosheth's story.

And when he came to Jerusalem to meet the king, the king said to him, "Why did you not go with me, Mephibosheth?" He answered, "My lord, O king, my servant deceived me, for your servant said to him, 'I will saddle a donkey for myself, that I may ride on it and go with the king.' For your servant is lame. He has slandered your servant to my lord the king. But my lord the king is like the angel of God; do therefore what seems good to you. For all my father's house were but men

doomed to death before my lord the king, but you set your servant among those who eat at your table. What further right have I, then, to cry to the king?" And the king said to him, "Why speak any more of your affairs? I have decided: you and Ziba shall divide the land." And Mephibosheth said to the king, "Oh, let him take it all, since my lord the king has come safely home." 2 Samuel 19:25–30 (ESV)

David asked, why did you not go with me? You ate at my table every day. You were part of our family. Mephibosheth claimed that Ziba deceived him! He asked Ziba to saddle him a donkey to ride out with the king, but Ziba saddled the donkey, took the supplies, and left, leaving Mephibosheth behind. Mephibosheth was lame, and without transportation, he couldn't go anywhere.

The question was, "Who was telling the truth? Ziba or Mephibosheth?" A decision needed to be made. I love Mephibosheth's attitude. He told David that he was like the angel of God, knowing wrong and right. David, decide what you think is best. You will know what is right and do what is right.

I love Mephibosheth's attitude. Instead of insisting he get what was rightfully his, he looks at how good David has already been to him. All his father's house were men doomed to die, but you gave me a seat at your family table. I have no right to ask for anything more. You have already given me more grace than I deserve

David split Saul's house between Ziba and Mephibosheth, giving each half. David's response sounds abrupt. I love the way Mephibosheth responded to what was an equitable decision but what was not based on the truth that happened. He told David that splitting the estate was fine with him. As far as he was concerned, Ziba could have it all. What mattered to Mephibosheth was that David was safe. Ziba wanted to use the king for money. Mephibosheth cared about the king he loved. Money was completely secondary.

We are reminded of King Solomon in this decision when he was presented with a squabble over one baby claimed by two women, each of whom claimed to be the child's mother. Solomon decided to split the baby in half and give half to each. The true mother asked David to stop and save the baby. It didn't matter who the baby went to as long as the baby lived. She cared more about the baby's life than the joy of having the baby. She was the true mother. Similarly, what mattered more than getting the vast wealth of the estate to Mephibosheth was that King David had returned safely home. He was telling the truth.

What can we learn from this? Far more important than money is having the right relationship with the king. Even though David split King Saul's vast estate, it became apparent over time that Mephibosheth loved David, and Ziba conned David. It didn't matter who had more money. What mattered was who had the right relationship with King David.

The same is true for us today. Around us are some wealthy people. It is easy to think that money brings significance to life. I may need to cheat a bit, like Ziba did, but wealth is what matters. That is not true. Far more important than wealth is a relationship with King Jesus. That is what matters. As Mephibosheth said, as far as he was concerned, Ziba could take all the money as long as the king was safe and he had returned.

Barzillai, the man who cared about the next generation

The third man to meet David as he crossed the Jordan River was Barzillai. We met him last week. He was a wealthy man who lived east of the Jordan. He brought food and supplies to David and his family when they were starving after crossing the Jordan River and arriving in Mahanaim.

Now Barzillai the Gileadite had come down from Rogelim, and he went on with the king to the Jordan, to escort him over the Jordan. 2 Samuel 19:31 (ESV)

Like lame Mephibosheth, it was a chore for Barzillai to make it to the Jordan River. He was an old man.

Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old. He had provided the king with food while he stayed at Mahanaim, for he was a very wealthy man. 2 Samuel 19:32 (ESV)

His great wealth didn't make him proud. It didn't make him isolated. Even though he was very old, he went out of his way to help his king. David greatly appreciated him and how he helped in his time of need.

And the king said to Barzillai, "Come over with me, and I will provide for you with me in Jerusalem." 2 Samuel 19:33 (ESV)

Barzillai, come with me. It will be an all-expense-paid future for you after all the kindness you showed to me.

But Barzillai said to the king, "How many years have I still to live, that I should go up with the king to Jerusalem? I am this day eighty years old. Can I discern what is pleasant and what is not? Can your servant taste what he eats or what he drinks? Can I still listen to the voice of singing men and singing women? Why then should your servant be an added burden to my lord the king? Your servant will go a little way over the Jordan with the king. Why should the king repay me with such a reward? Please let your servant return, that I may die in my own city near the grave of my father and my mother. But here is your servant Chimham. Let him go over with my lord the king, and do for him whatever seems good to you." 2 Samuel 19:34–37 (ESV)

Barzillai claimed at this age, the pleasures of Jerusalem didn't matter. He was so old everything tasted the same. He was so old he could barely hear. He couldn't hear the choir singing in Jerusalem. Since he was old, he was worried he would be a burden. Nobody wants to be a burden to others when they grow old.

What I love about Barzillai is that he cared more about the next generation than himself. He asked David to show kindness to Chimham in his place. Who was Chimham? He was likely either Barzillai's son or grandson.

And the king answered, "Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do for him whatever seems good to you, and all that you desire of me I will do for you." 2 Samuel 19:38 (ESV)

We wonder. Did David keep his word? Did show great kindness to Chinham in Barzillai's place? Later in the Bible, we read these verses.

And they went and stayed at Geruth Chimham near Bethlehem, intending to go to Egypt Jeremiah 41:17 (ESV)

Apparently, outside of Bethlehem, only 2 miles outside Jerusalem, was Chimham's home! The home that David gave him.

In 1 Kings, when David instructed his son Solomon before he handed over the throne, he said this about Chinham in Jerusalem.

But deal loyally with the sons of Barzillai the Gileadite, and let them be among those who eat at your table, for with such loyalty they met me when I fled from Absalom your brother. 1 Kings 2:7 (ESV)

We saw the king who had been forgiven was merciful to sinners. We see the king who was forgiven also loved rewarding those faithful to him. What I love about Barzillai is that more important for him than receiving the grace and kindness of the king was his children and grandchildren experiencing the king's kindness. He was more concerned about the next generation than himself. That should inform all of us at CrossWinds. As we grow older, our hearts should be about passing the good news of Jesus to the next generations, not simply keeping it to ourselves.

Then all the people went over the Jordan, and the king went over. And the king kissed Barzillai and blessed him, and he returned to his own home. The king went on to Gilgal, and Chimham went on with him.... 2 Samuel 19:39–40a (ESV)

Unity is often destroyed by petty things.

David worked hard to forgive people. He worked hard to restore unity among the people of God. He offered a fresh start to the nation. He didn't take revenge. He showed kindness. The problem was that all his sacrifices for unity didn't stick.

...All the people of Judah, and also half the people of Israel, brought the king on his way. 2 Samuel 19:40 (ESV)

Immediately, we see a problem. All the people of Judah brought David across the Jordan River and welcomed him home, but only half of the people of the northern tribes of Israel were there. Something happened where some of the northern tribes did not get the memo and were not present to welcome him back as king.

Then all the men of Israel came to the king and said to the king, "Why have our brothers the men of Judah stolen you away and brought the king and his household over the Jordan, and all David's men with him?" 2 Samuel 19:41 (ESV)

The people in the northern kingdom of Israel started accusing the people in the southern kingdom of Judah of stealing David from them. This doesn't appear to be true. Half of the northern kingdom of Israel was represented when David returned.

All the men of Judah answered the men of Israel, "Because the king is our close relative. Why then are you angry over this matter? Have we eaten at all at the king's expense? Or has he given us any gift?" 2 Samuel 19:42 (ESV)

Well shucks. We are sorry. There were more of us from Judah than from the northern kingdom, possibly because David is our relative. Besides, the king

hasn't given us any tax breaks. We paid for our meals at our own expense. He did not show any favoritism toward us.

And the men of Israel answered the men of Judah, "We have ten shares in the king, and in David also we have more than you. Why then did you despise us? Were we not the first to speak of bringing back our king?" ... 2 Samuel 19:43a (ESV)

The men of Israel claim that since they have ten tribes, and Judah was only one tribe, they should have played a bigger role in bringing King David home. After all, it was the northern kingdom's idea in the first place.

...But the words of the men of Judah were fiercer than the words of the men of Israel. 2 Samuel 19:43b (ESV)

What is apparent is that despite David's effort to humble himself, be forgiving, and reunite the nation, whatever peace he achieved by forgiving people of treason was very fragile. Petty quarrels were tearing the nation apart. People lost sight of what was important. The king was returning. He was forgiving. He was not seeking revenge. There was unity, and the king came home. That is what was important. Instead, they let all of the unity be torn apart by petty things that didn't matter.

Isn't that the way things often work in the church? The important thing is that Jesus loves us. Jesus died on the cross with each of us in his mind. In time, he suffered an eternity of wrath that we deserved for all of time. Jesus didn't simply die for us but he has knit us into a body called the church. Jesus is the main event. He is the reason we are here. Yet, in the church, someone gets snubbed. Their feelings are hurt because they were not asked to do or be part of something they thought they should have. People assume bad motives of others. Sometimes harsh words are spoken. People return evil for evil at the end of the

day, feelings are hurt. Churches are split, and Christians are separated.

Christians divide over petty things rather than staying united around Jesus, the main thing.

What matters is we have Jesus as our king. Like David, Jesus is a forgiving king. He takes our sins away and doesn't hold them over our heads. What matters is the king, not the petty things that divide us in the kingdom.

The Bible says this.

Good sense makes one slow to anger, and it is his glory to overlook an offense. Proverbs 19:11 (ESV)

Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. 1 Peter 4:8 (ESV)

We have a much greater king, whose name is Jesus. He has made us part of a much better kingdom. David was not able to unite his people, but Jesus can.

Applications

1. It is only when we understand how much God forgave us that we can pursue unity with those who hurt us.
2. God wants us to humble ourselves to pursue unity, not pridefully take revenge.
3. As Christians, petty issues often ruin the unity that should come from Jesus.



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