

The Story of 2 Samuel

A 40-Day Guided Journey through 2 Samuel



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church
Week 7: August 15-21

Day 1

August 17



Pray / Thank God for the blessing of being able to study the Bible and learn more about how to live to honor God.

Submission to authority is more than action but is also ultimately about the motives of the heart.

The Israelites recognize their mistake in attempting to replace David with Absalom. David begins his return to Jerusalem, and along the way, many people come to escort him home, among whom are four men mentioned during David's flight from Absalom: Shimei, the cursing relative of Saul (2 Samuel 16:5–13); Ziba, the servant who told David about his master Mephibosheth's plans to stay in Jerusalem and take over as Saul's heir (2 Samuel 16:1–4); Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son (2 Samuel 9:1–13); and Barzillai, who provided food and other provisions for David and his men while in exile (2 Samuel 17:27–29). All four men submit to David's rule and pay homage to him, but they don't all come with the same heart motives.



Read / 2 Samuel 19:9-40



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

Shimei cursed David as he fled from Jerusalem. Now he's near the front of the line when David is heading home. Dale Ralph Davis says, "There is no reason to hold that Shimei had undergone any massive change of heart. He had committed a tactical error called treason and now he must save his skin."¹ We all commit treason against God when we choose to overthrow God's rule and rule ourselves. Do you come to God with a truly repentant heart, or is your approach to God for appearances or an attempt to avoid punishment?

Mephibosheth wasn't focused on justice or revenge on Ziba, whom we learn had wronged him and deceived David into giving him Mephibosheth's land. He overlooks all of that because he is so overjoyed that he can be in the presence of his king again. Because of God our King's love and grace, we can be in his presence. Are there circumstances in your life you can or should let go of so you can fully experience the joy of spending time being in the presence of your King?

Barzillai used what he had been blessed with to bless others. Serving David and his men with what he could was enough reward for him. In what ways can you be generous to bless others with what you have been blessed (money, talent, time) and seek no reward or repayment?

¹. Dale Ralph Davis, *Second Samuel: Out of Every Adversity* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 243.

Day 2

August 18



Pray / Thank God for the grace he offers to forgive sin.

While we should rejoice in God's grace to us despite our rebellious hearts, we often choose to be discontent with his rule in our lives and fight his leadership and each other.

Most tribes choose David as king now that Absalom is dead, but Judah is reluctant. It's no surprise, because the rebellion started there. The Judahite Amasa, David's own nephew, was Absalom's army commander (see 1 Chronicles 2:13–17; 2 Samuel 17:25). David has every right to kill everyone who committed treason.

David knows executions would do nothing toward reuniting a fragile kingdom, so he does the opposite of what Judah fears by placing Amasa as his new army commander. With fears quelled, the tribes are ready to bring David home, but it is soon obvious that the kingdom is far from unified.



Read / 2 Samuel 19:9-15 and 19:41-43



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

David's return to Jerusalem is not marked with punishment for the rebels but instead overflows with grace and forgiveness. David would have been completely justified in punishing those who had supported Absalom, but he chooses to pursue peace, healing, and reunification. In parenting situations, when might it be wise to choose to forego punishing your child and instead offer grace as a means of seeking healing and a stronger relationship?

David hasn't even made it back to Jerusalem, and the northern tribes of Israel are already bickering with Judah because they didn't get enough representation in the processional. An event which should have been cause for joy instead reeks with fighting. The church can be much the same way. Dale Ralph Davis explains, "I used to marvel that a congregation ever survived between petty bickering and flagrant sins. . . . Surely Jesus is building his church or it would have vanished long ago."² How have you seen God at work in the church to bring healing and reconciliation despite humanity's tendencies toward bickering or dissension?

In what areas do you feel discontent toward God and instead need to choose to trust his leadership in your life?

². Dale Ralph Davis, *Second Samuel: Out of Every Adversity* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 242.

Day 3

August 19



Pray / Ask God to help you recognize areas in your life where you may be rebelling against his lordship in your life.

Rebellion in God's kingdom can appear in many forms.

Following the northern tribes' bickering, a man from the tribe of Benjamin named Sheba escalates the issue, claiming David shouldn't be king because essentially he favors Judah and doesn't care about the rest of Israel at all. His accusation starts another rebellion against the authority God has established.

David fears the damage a second rebellion could cause and calls his new commander, Amasa, to quickly summon an army to pursue Sheba. For whatever reason, Amasa doesn't appear within David's appointed timeline, so David appoints his nephew Abishai, Joab's brother, to halt the rebellion instead. Sheba may not be the only one who chooses to subvert authority and live as though he can be his own king.



Read / 2 Samuel 20:1-26



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

Sheba and his followers decide they want to start ruling their own lives. They are tired of having their king treat them less than they think they deserve, so they try to establish new leadership that will better serve their own desires. How is this kind of mentality or action still found in the modern church?

Joab's immense loyalty to David's kingship continues to sharply contrast his personal rebellion to David's commands. Joab says in speech that he submits to David, but his actions say he only does so when it matches his own agenda. Does your submission to God's rule encompass every part of your life, or do you live like Joab, only following God's commands when they align with your life choices?

The Bible says there are two kinds of wisdom: worldly wisdom and godly wisdom. What do you think the defining characteristics are of each, and in which category would you place the wise woman found in 2 Samuel 20:16–22?

Day 4
August 20



Pray / Thank Jesus for the atonement he made for your sins.

A broken covenant requiring death to pay the penalty causes most people to respond with sadness or horror. We miss so much, though, if we don't see that we have also broken a covenant, but God took the punishment to make atonement in our place. That sorrow can bring us to joy.

When they came to the Promised Land, God commanded the Israelites to wipe out all the Canaanites because of their wickedness and idolatry. Gibeonites from a city in Canaan came to the Israelites and said they were from a distant land and would like to have a covenant to not kill them. The Israelites agreed; they cut animals in half and stood in between the cut pieces, swearing an oath in God's name that essentially said, "May the same death come to us if we break this covenant." Although they were deceived, the Israelites still needed to uphold the covenant they had sworn. Breaking a covenant sworn in God's name would have severe consequences requiring blood atonement.



Read / 2 Samuel 214:1-14



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

Saul led God's people into sin, and it had significant consequences on the nation and his family. The mistakes leaders make not only have ramifications for them but also for the people under them. Whom are you in leadership over, and in what ways do you need to be mindful you are leading them in godly wisdom?

This passage is shocking and heartwrenching. "Readers should be aghast. . . . Atonement is never nice but always gruesome. We need to see this, for we easily fall into the trap of regarding atonement as merely a doctrine, . . . a little bit of theology to be analyzed."³ How can you prevent yourself from growing numb to the immensity of Jesus' death on the cross, which was needed to pay the atonement for your sins? If you haven't yet accepted that Jesus' atonement was for you and have questions about how that impacts your life, talk to a trusted Christian friend or small group leader.

This passage shows a stark contrast between Saul the oath breaker (killing Gibeonites) and David the oath keeper (sparing Mephibosheth). Jesus is our ultimate oath keeper. What promises has Jesus made that you can look to for encouragement or hope in whatever you are going through?

³ Dale Ralph Davis, *Second Samuel: Out of Every Adversity* (Fearn, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 1999), 269.

Day 5

August 21



Pray / Ask God to give you the courage to stand up to and fight against anything that threatens to pull you away from a close relationship with God or threatens to negatively impact the way you represent God and his kingdom to others.

Although we do not need to fight giants living in our country, we have spiritual giants—sin, temptation, fear, hard circumstances—that confront us and threaten to destroy our commitment to God or damage how we represent God’s kingdom to the world. God calls us to bravely fight, no matter how formidable the struggle we are faced with. With God’s help, we can find victory, just like the Israelites in their continued battles with the Philistines.



Read / 2 Samuel 21:15–22



Reflect / Choose one of the following questions for reflection

The warriors in this passage sharply contrast the Israelites under Saul's reign when confronted by Goliath (1 Samuel 17). David showed when he killed Goliath that giants were not invincible, and he leads in battle again by example; his men bravely fight with him to victory. What spiritual giants have you fought and had victory over in the past, and how can that give you courage to fight new challenges?

David, the warrior hero against Goliath, is so exhausted he is almost killed by Ishbi-benob. Abishai steps in to rescue David and help defeat him. What battles are you feeling exhausted to fight, and whom can you ask to come alongside you (a counselor, friend, accountability partner, mentor) to help you be victorious?

The writer of 2 Samuel devotes space in his account to recognize these men and the work they did fighting to defend God's kingdom. The battles they fought were important for the survival and prosperity of God's chosen nation. There are many people today who humbly work to defend God's kingdom and spread his truth in the world. Whom can you recognize, and how, for the work that is being done to further God's eternal kingdom?

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