

Finishing Well

Lesson #10

God's Provision: Sheltering Trees

March 23, 2022

II Sam. 16:15-19 And Absalom, and all the people the men of Israel, came to Jerusalem, and Ahithophel with him. ¹⁶ And it came to pass, when Hushai the Archite, David's friend, was come unto Absalom, that Hushai said unto Absalom, God save the king, God save the king. ¹⁷ And Absalom said to Hushai, Is this thy kindness to thy friend? why didn't you go with thy friend? ¹⁸ And Hushai said unto Absalom, Nay; but whom the LORD, and this people, and all the men of Israel, choose, his will I be, and with him will I abide.

¹⁹ And again, whom should I serve? should I not serve in the presence of his son? as I have served in thy father's presence, so will I be in thy presence.

1. Hushai is speaking of David. The LORD had never chosen Absalom to be Israel's king.

2. He will be in Absalom's presence, but he will serve the LORD and David.

3. Absalom's pride interpreted Hushai's words to apply to himself.

Mission Accomplished: Hushai was accepted as a defector and established as a counselor.

Ahithophel's Plan: II Sam. 16:20 -17:4

1. Go in to your father's concubines, whom he has left to keep the house, and all Israel will hear that you have made yourself a stench to your father, and the hands of all who are with you will be strengthened." ²² So they pitched a tent for Absalom on the roof.

And Absalom went in to his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel.

II Sam. 3:6-7 When someone slept with their father's concubine they were making a claim to the throne and committing treason.

Recall Nathan's Prophecy: II Sam. 12:11-12 Thus saith the LORD, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

¹² For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

II Sam. 16:23 Now in those days the counsel that Ahithophel gave was as if one consulted the oracle of God; so was all the counsel of Ahithophel esteemed, both by David and by Absalom.

Goal of Prayer: Turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

2. II Sam. 17:1-4: Ahithophel would choose 12,000 men. [Notice me & I]

- He and the men would pursue after David that night while he is weary, tired and weak.
- I will make him afraid. All the people with him will flee. I will kill him only.
- I will bring back all the people with me to you and all will be peaceful.
- Absalom and the elders liked this plan.

Hushai's Plan: II Sam. 17:5-13 Absalom calls for Hushai to hear his counsel.

- Hushai will appeal to Absalom's ego. He sets a trap and Absalom falls right in.

1. Ahithophel's advice is not good at this time.
2. King David's men are mighty warriors. They will not be surprised by nor fear the enemy.
3. They have been driven from their homes and were like a bear robbed of her cubs.
4. David is a man of war and would not sleep with his people. He will hide in a pit or cave.
5. King David is a fighter. If some of Absalom's soldiers were initially killed, the others in Absalom's camp would defect to David's side of the fight out of fear. Military disaster!
6. Recruit men from ALL tribes of Israel to go to battle with Absalom leading the army.
 - Continues to describe a glorious victory

Hushai's grand plan with its vivid mental images gripped the hearts and minds of Absalom and his leaders.

7. 17:14 And Absalom and all the men of Israel said,

The counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel.

Absalom doesn't realize it will take TIME to gather his forces from Dan to Beersheba.

This TIME will give David a chance to cross the Jordan River and "get lost." That's the point!

17:14b For the LORD had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel,

to the intent that the LORD might bring evil upon Absalom.

Ps. 33:10-11The LORD frustrates the plans of the nations and thwarts all their schemes.

¹¹ But the LORD's plans stand firm forever; His intentions can never be shaken.

Hushai's next step: II Sam. 17:15-16

Then said Hushai unto Zadok and to Abiathar the priests, Thus and thus did Ahithophel counsel Absalom and the elders of Israel; and thus and thus have I counseled.

¹⁶ Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him. [Absalom could change his mind.]

1. David and his people were camped at the fords of the Jordan; ~20 miles from Jerusalem.
2. His 2 runners were waiting at En Rogel in the Kidron Valley; less than 1 mile from Jerusalem.
3. Zadok and Abiathar told Hushai's message to an anonymous maidservant who took the message to Jonathan and Ahimaaz at En Rogel.

Problem: A young lad sees the meeting and goes to tell Absalom.

4. The 2 runners go to a house in Bahurim [~1 mi.] which has a well.
5. The woman took a cloth over the well's mouth and put grains of corn on top of the cloth pretending she was drying corn. She was hiding the 2 runners from Absalom's guards.
6. She told the guards the 2 men went over the brook of water.

They looked in vain and returned to Jerusalem.

7. The 2 runners quickly get out of the well and went to warn King David!

Warning: Cross The Jordan Quickly! By the morning light, ALL had crossed over.

Sidenote: II Sam. 17:23 When Ahithophel saw that his counsel was not followed, he... went home to his house,...and put his household in order, and hanged himself, and died.

Consider: He realized Hushai's plan gave David time to consolidate his fighting force. He knew David would regain the throne and kill him for his part in Absalom's conspiracy. *I have been serving the wrong king.*

II Sam. 17:24, 26 Then David came to Mahanaim. And Absalom passed over Jordan, he and all the men of Israel with him. So Israel and Absalom pitched in the land of Gilead.

II Sam. 17:27a And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, ... 2 camps or 2 hosts

- This is where Jacob was met by a band of angels prior to his encounter with Esau.

Gen. 32:1-2 And Jacob went on his way, and the angels of God met him. ² And when Jacob saw them, he said, This is God's host: and he called the name of that place Mahanaim.

1. This vision came at a crisis in Jacob's life. He had just left Laban's house and was traveling with a long caravan, consisting of wives, children, servants and all his wealth turned into cattle.
2. On his journey home, he travels close by the country of Esau whom he fears. His fear grew.
3. Suddenly a bright-harnessed army of angels meets him.
4. In a glow of confident joy, Jacob calls the place Mahanaim, two camps.
 - His camp with helpless women, children and his own frightened and defenseless self.
 - A camp revealing a real spiritual presence around him as a bodyguard making an impregnable wall between him and every foe.
5. He was obeying God by returning home. He could say: "I being in the way, the Lord met me."
6. God's delays are merciful as they help us realize our need of Him. They provide room for the sorrow or burden to work its peaceable fruits.
7. God seems to let us come almost to the edge of the precipice and then, in the nick of time, He stretches out His strong right hand.
8. As in the case of Lazarus, God's delay seemed too late. Yet the miracle after His delay was the occasion for a more glorious display of His power.

Ps. 37:7 Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him:

We have all the armies of heaven with us, if we tread the path which God has marked out for us.

- In our weakness and trembling commit ourselves to Him.

Many centuries after Jacob's experience at Mahanaim, another trembling fugitive found himself there. David was at his lowest point: downcast and humiliated. He like Jacob, was fearful of the vengeance and anger of one who was related to him by blood.

As he wrote in Ps. 142:4 "I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me: refuge failed me; no man cared for my soul."

When King David was fleeing from the face of Absalom his son, the first place where he made a stand, and where he remained during the rebellion, was Mahanaim.

Ps. 4:8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety. [This psalm was written during this time in David's life.]

II Sam. 17:27-29 And it came to pass, when David was come to Mahanaim, ...
 that Shobi the son of Nahash of Rabbah of the children of Ammon,
 and Machir the son of Ammiel of Lodebar, and Barzillai the Gileadite of Rogelim,
²⁸ Brought beds, and basins, and earthen vessels, and wheat, and barley, and flour, and parched
 corn, and beans, and lentils, and parched pulse,
²⁹ And honey, and butter, and sheep, and cheese of kine, for David, and for the people that were
 with him, to eat: for they said, The people is hungry, and weary, and thirsty, in the wilderness.

1. David, literally fleeing for his life, was at his lowest point ever.
2. He had been humiliated, driven from his home and was under deadly attack from the enemy
3. A revolt is underway. Absalom and his army are headed to Mahanaim.

Consider: He desperately needed encouragement.

Ps. 86:17 Show me a token for good; that they which hate me may see it and be ashamed.
 For you Lord have helped me and comforted me.

Key Point: These 3 risked their lives solely to help their king, present gifts and encourage him.
Shobi: This is the only place this name is mentioned. It means "glorious" one.

- I suspect he did look "glorious" to King David.
 - Shobi is the son of "Nahash" which means serpent.

I Sam. 11:1-2 Then Nahash the Ammonite came up, and encamped against Jabeshgilead:
 and All The Men of Jabesh said unto Nahash, Make a covenant with us and we will serve thee.
 Nahash the Ammonite answered them, on this condition will I make a covenant with you,
 that I may thrust out all your right eyes and lay it for a reproach upon all Israel."

- Descendant of the Ammonites which were produced by the incestuous relationship between Lot & his daughters. Terrible background!
- God can pluck his servants from all backgrounds. He took a son of a very cruel man and transformed him into a real friend of King David. God's grace!

I Kings 18:3-4 Ahab called Obadiah, which was the governor of his house. Now Obadiah feared the LORD greatly: For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that Obadiah took an hundred prophets and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.

- God raised up a man in the wicked house of King Ahab to feed & care for His prophets.

Illustration of the truth of Proverbs 16:7:

When a man's ways please the LORD, He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him.

Dan. 1:9 Now God had brought Daniel into favor and tender love with the prince of eunuchs. Otherwise, Daniel could have perhaps been slain for refusing to eat the King's meat.

Machir = Bartered

- Machir's father is Ammiel = "My Kinsman is God."
- Lived in Lodebar = land of no pasture, yet he gave graciously to the fleeing King David.

This is the same man who had harbored the lame grandson of King Saul, Mephibosheth.

He protected and fed him when no one else seemed to care.

Mark 14:8 The woman who anointed Jesus for burial: She has done what she could.

I Cor. 16:15 I beseech you, brethren, you know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints!

Barzillai = "iron-hearted"

Men who will stand strong for the man of God; who do not fear what the enemy can do.

Barzillai is from Gilead which is a rocky region. He is from Rogelim = the place of the "fullers."

Virtues Displayed In His Life:

1. Courageous Loyalty: David desperately needed support and provisions which Barzillai personally brought to the king and his hungry, thirsty followers.

He apparently did not consider the consequences of his actions if Absalom had been successful. If Absalom had become king, Barzillai would have been slain for aiding David.

- "To Barzillai, David was still godly although a fugitive, and his great, loving heart bled for the king as, like a poor panting beast, he hid from his pursuers.

Bountifully he provided David with necessary sustenance as he lay at Mahanaim."

2. His Wide Influence: Barzillai did not squander his wealth on idle pleasures nor hoard it for selfish ends. His position, prestige and purse were beneficially used for others.

Barzillai's loyalty to David continues after the death of Absalom & the end of the rebellion.

II Sam. 19:15 So the king returned and came to Jordan. And Judah came to Gilgal, to go to meet the king, to conduct the king over Jordan.

II Sam. 19:31-36 And Barzillai the Gileadite came down from Rogelim, and went over Jordan with the king, to conduct him over Jordan.

³² Now Barzillai was a very aged man, 80 years: and he had provided the king of sustenance while he lay at Mahanaim; for he was a very great man. [wealthy - a great man in possessions.]

³³ And the king said unto Barzillai, Come thou over with me, and I will feed thee with me in Jerusalem.

³⁴ And Barzillai said unto the king, How long have I to live, that I should go up with the king unto Jerusalem? ³⁵ I am this day 80 years old: and can I discern between good and evil? can thy servant taste what I eat or what I drink? can I hear any more the voice of singing men and singing women? wherefore then should thy servant be yet a burden unto my lord the king?

³⁶ Thy servant will go a little way over Jordan with the king: and why should the king recompense it me with such a reward?

Consider: Barzillai felt his services were trivial and unworthy of any recompense from David.

3. His Beautiful Old Age: Although not spared the infirmities of old age (II Sam. 19:35), he retained his charm. At eighty years of age his heart of love was deep and broad.

Old John Trapp says of Barzillai as he reached an honored age, "He had lost his color but kept his sweet savor with the rose." May grace be ours to grow old gracefully and beautifully!

II Sam. 19:37-39 Let thy servant, I pray thee, turn back again, that I may die in mine own city, and be buried by the grave of my father and of my mother. But behold thy servant Chimham; let him go over with my lord the king; and do to him what shall seem good unto thee.

- Even in his final moments with David, Barzillai sought the welfare of others, this time offering a better life for his own servant.

³⁸ And the king answered, Chimham shall go over with me, and I will do to him that which shall seem good unto thee: and whatsoever thou shalt require of me, that will I do for thee.

³⁹ And all the people went over Jordan. And when the king was come over, the king kissed Barzillai, and blessed him; and he returned unto his own place.

Barzillai offers a powerful example of the legacy one person can have through loving God and serving others during difficult times.

- God seems to allow special honor to be offered to those who give out of their abundance as well as those who give sacrificially.

I Kings 2:7 When David was on his death bed, he charged Solomon to show kindness unto the SONS of Barzillai and let them be of those who eat at the King's table.

Barzillai's kindness, remembered long after his death, was mentioned by the king of Israel.

4. He Anticipated His Death: Barzillai was "not afraid to face the crossing of the bar."

Thus as Alexander Whyte puts it, "Barzillai having shown us how to live, shows us also how to die. Barzillai dies the same devout and noble and magnanimous man he has all his days lived."

If ours is grace to live well, grace will be given to die well.

The king's servants modeled true service by offering to do whatever David needed them to do.

- Ittai expressed friendship by being a companion to King David.
- Zadok & Abiathar became informants and made sure the King had the information he needed to guarantee his welfare. [v. 24-29]
- Hushai met him on the Mt. Of Olives. He was willing to risk his life to defend David in the presence of his enemies. [II Sam. 15:30-37]
- Barzillai, Shobi & Machir provided necessities and more at Mahanaim.

These people proved to be "sheltering trees" for their friend in his hour of need.

May we press toward the prize of the "well done good and faithful servant."

Many believe David wrote Psalms 23 during this event in his life. He deals with some of the difficult things he experienced during his long walk with the Lord.

This message is for mature Christians who have fought battles and carried burdens.

There is a fullness of experience about it, and a tone of subdued, quiet confidence which speaks of a heart mellowed by years, and of a faith made sober by many a trial.

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

³ He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. ⁵ Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Psalm 3: Trusting The LORD During Trials

- Written by David after he fled Jerusalem during Absalom's rebellion.
- David's most traumatic, humiliating experience in his life. His life suddenly unraveled.
- The most painful wound was the treachery and betrayal of Absalom.

Remember: God permitted this dangerous and disgraceful uprising as part of David's chastening because of his sins of adultery and murder.

1. God in His grace forgave David when he confessed his sins.

2. God in His justice allowed David to reap the bitter consequences of those sins.

David and his people had crossed the Jordan River and were camped at Mahanaim.

David's enemies were increasing and many of his previous friends and associates forsook him.

Ps. 3:1-2 David Admits His Troubles: Reveals His Peril

¹Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! Many are they that rise up against me.

² Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God. Selah.

- Many are saying to my soul...Their words were hitting David in his heart...no deliverance

Spurgeon: "If all the trials which come from heaven, all the temptations which ascend from hell, and all the crosses which arise from the earth, could be mixed and pressed together, they would not make a trial so terrible as that which is contained in this verse.

It is the most bitter of all afflictions to be led to fear that there is no help for us in God."

David Affirms His Trust In The Lord - His Initial Prayer

³ But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.

⁴ I cried unto the LORD with my voice, and he heard me out of his holy hill. Selah.

- But You...David shifts his focus from his frightening circumstances to the Lord.
- God you are my shield. I am in disgrace, but you are the source of my glory.
- Absalom turned his father's glory into shame.

God will lift up his head and restore him to his throne.

- His faith was in the PROMISES God had made to him in the covenant [II Sam. 7].
- He KNEW God would not forsake him.

Ps. 34:6 This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.

David Anticipates The Victory: Peace that Results From Prayer

⁵ I laid me down and slept; I awaked; for the LORD sustained me.

⁶ I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that have set themselves against me round about.

This reminds us of Jesus asleep in the storm [Mark 4:39] and Peter asleep in prison. [Acts 12]

Truth: If we trust Him and seek to do His will, God works on our behalf even while we are asleep. [Ps. 121:3-4]

This real-life drama illustrates Phil. 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

And the peace of God, which passes all understanding, shall keep [guard] your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Believing Prayer Depends Completely on God For Deliverance

⁷ Arise, O LORD; save me, O my God: for thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone; thou hast broken the teeth of the ungodly.

Num. 10:35 And it came to pass, when the ark set forward, that Moses said, Rise up, LORD, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee.

⁸ Salvation belongs unto the LORD: thy blessing is upon thy people. Selah.

- 1st thought: The Lord protected us. He will see us through the crisis.
- If I trust Him and seek Him with my whole heart, God will work on my behalf even while I am asleep.
- When we cast ourselves on God alone for deliverance, He gets all the praise and glory when He answers our prayers.

God can use our worst trials to deepen our trust in Him and to produce praises that will encourage His people. When life falls apart, you can experience God's peace by laying hold of Him in believing prayer. When He answers, He gets the glory, you get the joy and God' people get the blessing! What A Savior!