

Finishing Well

Lesson #9

King David Crossing The Kidron Valley

March 16, 2022

The Kidron Valley runs along the eastern side of Jerusalem between the Temple Mount and the Mount of Olives. It extends through the Judean desert and runs to the Dead Sea. [~20 miles] The Kidron Valley means turbid, dusky, gloomy, obscure, making black or sad. Valley of Suffering

King David, a type of Jesus Christ, had been king of Israel for many years. Unbeknownst to him, his son Absalom was leading a rebellion against him and had been turning the hearts of the people away from his father in order to overthrow his reign and steal the throne.

Background: 1. Absalom fled to Geshur [~70 miles NE from Jerusalem] after the murder of his half-brother, Amnon. This plotted revenge was 2 years after the rape of his sister by Amnon.

2. Absalom stays in Geshur for 3 years. He desires to return to Jerusalem.

➤ However, he cannot until King David gave permission.

3. David finally gives the "ok" signal for Absalom to return to Jerusalem.

However, there were restrictions placed on him: he had to remain on his own land [basically house arrest] and he could not go to the palace and see his father.

II Sam. 14:28 "And Absalom dwelt 2 full years in Jerusalem; and he saw not the king's face.

4. Joab intervenes for Absalom who can now go before the King after a total of 5 years.

II Sam. 14:33 ...Absalom came before the King, bowed himself on his face to the ground before the king; and the king kissed Absalom. THEN, Absalom puts his conspiracy plan into action.

5. David was about to lose his throne and crown, his concubines, his trusted adviser Ahithophel and ultimately his son Absalom. It would be David's darkest hour.

II Sam. 15:1-6 Absalom's Conspiracy

1. Absalom undermined popular confidence [planned a coup] in the Lord's anointed for 4 years.

- Secured military weapons and supporters 15:1; I Kings 1:5
- Criticized David's administration 15:2-3
- Promised to rule better than David 15:4
- Exercised personal charm & flattery 15:5-6

The fact he had no character wasn't important to most of the people who, like sheep, would follow anybody who told them what they wanted to hear and gave them what they wanted.

Newspaper editor H. L. Mencken's definition of a demagogue:

➤ "One who preaches doctrines he knows to be untrue to men he knows to be idiots."

James Fenimore Cooper: One who advances his own interests by affecting a deep devotion to the interests of the people.

Within 4 years, his magnetism drew a large number of devoted followers.

Even after being reconciled to his father, Absalom seemed to have no desire to develop a relationship with him; he only wanted his inheritance. He only wanted the kingdom, not the king.

II Sam. 15:7-12 Absalom's Final Preparations : His Plan: Lead a military revolution against David. 15:7-8 Absalom said unto the king, I pray thee, let me go and pay my vow, which I have vowed unto the LORD, in Hebron. For thy servant vowed a vow while I abode at Geshur in Syria, saying, If the LORD shall bring me again indeed to Jerusalem, then I will serve the LORD.

Absalom chose Hebron, his birthplace, as the place to announce his rebellion.

His support was probably strongest there. Increased number of followers!

Absalom began to send spies throughout Israel. Planning while offering sacrifices!

He continued to exhibit the same patient scheming and relentless determination which he had already shown when he set out to avenge the rape of his sister in chapter 13.

The leopard had not changed his spots. It becomes clear he had no affection for his father.

He appears to have been a cold, ruthless and above all ambitious man."

Where was David? [980-976 BC] He was building his palace in Jerusalem, constructing a new dwelling place for the ark and making preparations for the temple. [I Kings 5:9-12]

No wonder David was surprised when Absalom's coup began.

David Prepares To Depart From Jerusalem: II Sam. 15:13-23

II Sam. 15:13 And there came a messenger to David, saying, The hearts of the men of Israel are after Absalom.

Not knowing the extent of the rebellion, David prepares to flee Jerusalem with the palace guard including David's personal bodyguard. David was willing to risk his own life and abandon his own throne to protect the citizens of Jerusalem and the city itself.

Picture that desperately sad scene as the aging King David, his family, counselors and loyal followers fled the palace at Jerusalem to escape Absalom's murderous coup.

Heartbroken, eyes downcast, and clothes torn in mourning, they go out through the gate of the very city that David himself had taken in battle. They make their way towards the brook Kidron.

Note: Years later another rejected king, our Lord and Savior, would go over this same brook on the night He was betrayed. [John 18:1]

II Sam. 15:17-18 And the king went forth, and all the people after him, and tarried in a place that was far off. [They went northeast of Jerusalem.]

This 1st major group of those loyal to David, who would accompany him as he fled from Jerusalem were foreigners, Gentiles. They were not recent followers. Their association with David goes back to his days spent hiding out from Saul, in the land of the Philistines.

These were men who "had come with him from Gath."

- Knew him as an ethical leader who cared for his fighting men and their families.
- These foreigners were loyal to David even when his own son & people deserted him.

David stops in surprise when he sees Ittai the Gittite, a foreigner who had just arrived yesterday in Jerusalem, along with his family and servants.

Ittai from Gath came to Jerusalem to be part of David's personal and palace guards.

II Sam. 15:19-20 Then said the king to Ittai the Gittite, Wherefore, goest thou also with us? return to thy place and abide with the king [Absalom]: for thou art a stranger, and also an exile.
²⁰ Whereas thou camest but yesterday, should I this day make thee go up and down with us? seeing I go whither I may, return thou, and take back thy brethren: mercy and truth be with thee.

1. David tests Ittai to make sure he understands what he is committing himself to.
2. David could only offer his company and hardship to Ittai as David wandered the mountains of Israel in rejection.

This is where Ittai the Gittite shines on the pages of Biblical history: II Sam. 15:21
"But Ittai replied to the king, 'As surely as the LORD lives, and as my lord the king lives, wherever my lord the king may be, whether it means life or death, there will your servant be.'"
This Gentile's testimony of fidelity to David is one of the great confessions of faith and faithfulness in the Bible.

3. In the sight of his own people, Ittai declared himself as a supporter of the rejected David.
Consider: Remarkable loyalty! Many of the other inhabitants of Gath must have loathed David for his defeat of their champion. David's own people were in open rebellion against him. It would appear as though GOD is FIRST in his life. He believes that David is the God-ordained king of Israel and he will be true to him regardless of what circumstances arise. Fully committed to King David: whether David was the king in a plush palace in Jerusalem or a deposed ruler in a country town east of the Jordan River.

Ittai, once an enemy of David, allies himself with David in a very clear and public way! Ittai, an exile, was born in a different kingdom but transferred his life into a new kingdom. Ittai had also counted the cost of his action. When questioned by David, Ittai declared he would stay with David "whether in death or life." His life would be utterly different from this point. He had already willfully decided three key issues for his life. He determined -

- who his King was
- where his allegiance belonged, and
- to whom his life belonged.

Ittai illustrates Christians who are willing to lose their lives just to be in the presence of the King. They have nothing if they don't dwell in the King's presence. They have left all, including their goals and ambitions, to follow their King.

Consider: My life should be markedly different once I have publicly declared my allegiance to my Lord Jesus. Certain places and events should no longer interest me.

Question: Am I prepared to accept the fact that sacrifices will have to be made in my life?

Consider: In this dark hour when family members, trusted counselors, and David's nation deserted him, here was a foreigner who declared his loyalty. Ittai put his life and the lives of his men and their families into peril for David. David could hardly speak; he said simply,

II Sam. 15:22 "Go ahead, march on." [passed over; cross over = 9x]

And Ithai the Gittite passed over, and all his men, and all the little ones that were with him. David remained while Ithai and his families went forward; thus putting himself between Ithai's company and any armed pursuit from Jerusalem.

Like Ithai, we are called to be soldiers. With our Lord rejected, we are effectively in enemy territory. Satan, the prince or ruler of this world will resist at every opportunity God's work in this world. He will never miss an opportunity to attack our faith and Christian witness.

II Tim. 2:3-5 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

II Sam. 18:2 Ithai = Loyal & Faithful > Exalted Position In The True King's Army

May we be modern day Ithai's. Let our motto be "As the Lord liveth, surely in what place my lord the king shall be, whether in death or life, even there also will thy servant be" [II Sam.15:21] Ithai's loyalty and devotion to David still challenge us today. Am I willing to make the commitment to follow closely and serve the Lord Jesus faithfully in spite of the circumstances?

Because of Ithai's devotion to David, Ithai will be given a position as a commander of the armies of Israel [II Sam. 18:2]. However, before this honor was given to Ithai, his commitment to be with the king no matter what the cost meant passing through the Kidron Valley [valley of mourning] toward the desert [II Sam 15:22-23].

II Sam. 15:23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness.

➤ King David crosses the Kidron Valley to escape his wicked son Absalom.

II Sam. 15:30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot:

➤ Walking barefoot = the shameful exile on which he is now embarking

Consider: Was David feeling the weight of guilt as his son defied God's will and broke his father's heart?

II Sam. 12:6,10 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity. Nathan the prophet: "The sword shall not depart from your household."

David repented, but he still must face the consequences of forgiven sin.

➤ Bathsheba's baby had died.

➤ Amnon had been murdered.

➤ Absalom will be killed by Joab.

➤ Adonijah will die later.

David tasted once again the pain of forgiven sin.

Wiersbe: David recognized that God's loving hand of discipline was upon him, and he admitted that he deserved every blow. But he also believed that God's gracious hand of power was still at work in his life, that the Lord hadn't forsaken him as He forsook Saul. The Lord was still working out His perfect will, and never did David rise to greater heights of faith and submission than when he was forced to leave Jerusalem and hide in the wilderness

II Sam. 15:30 And David went up by the ascent of mount Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that was with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

1. David leaves barefoot! This seems to convey the idea: As King David wept and passed over the Kidron, it represented that he would not fight for the right to be their king. He won't draw a sword and go to battle against Absalom as evidenced by his barefoot trek into the wilderness.
2. If an insurrection arises that challenges the throne of Israel, David seems to be leaving the decision of the kingship up to them. If the people wanted David as their king, they must choose.
3. The responsibility seems to be thrust fully into their court. Who will be the king of Israel?

Consider: David's response was remarkable!

1. What kind of king responds to a threat by leaving his palace and the walls of a guarded and well-fortified city and heads to the vulnerable spot of the wilderness?
2. What king allows the people to decide and refuses to lord his rulership over them?
3. What sort of king gives the people the choice to choose a rebellious and sinful king?
4. David, a man after God's own heart, was never more like Jesus Christ than when he performed this peculiar act of humility at the brook Kidron!

II Sam. 15:31 And one told David, saying, Ahithophel [David's counselor; Bathsheba's grandfather] is among the conspirators with Absalom.

And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

Ps. 55:12-14, 21 For it was not an enemy that reproached me; then I could have borne it: neither was it he that hated me that did magnify himself against me; then I would have hid myself from him: ¹³ But it was thou, a man mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance.

¹⁴ We took sweet counsel together and walked unto the house of God in company.

²¹The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, but war was in his heart: his words were softer than oil, yet were they drawn swords.

II Sam. 15:31b And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.

II Sam. 15:32 And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head: [Hushai is the answer to David's prayer.]

1. Hushai, deeply grieved and wearing the traditional rent garments and ashes, sought to join David's company.
2. Hushai is called "David's friend." [I Chron. 27:33 = special counselor to the king]
3. Hushai is a key, prominent figure in the account of Absalom's rebellion.

II Sam. 15:34 But if thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel.

1. Hushai is the answer to David's prayer request. He asks Hushai to return and offer his allegiance to Absalom, so he might "defeat the counsels of Ahithophel, David's advisor.
2. King David asked Hushai to place his life in jeopardy to thwart the conspiracy to kill him.
3. Hushai was willing to risk his life for the sake of the king and his kingdom.
 - It is an honor to serve his king and help restore him to the throne.
4. David tells him that Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, are back in Jerusalem.
5. They have their two sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, with them.
6. David tells Hushai: Whatever you hear out of the king's house, you are to tell Zadok and Abiathar. Their 2 sons will come and tell me everything you hear.

Consider: As he had done with Zadok and Abiathar and their two sons, so David did with Hushai: he sent him back to Jerusalem to "serve" Absalom. All five men were taking risks for the sake of the Lord and the kingdom, but they considered it an honor to serve their king and help restore him to the throne.

II Sam. 15:37 So Hushai David's friend came into the city, and Absalom came into Jerusalem.

The LORD meets David's needs: A False Servant

David meets Ziba: Through Ziba's lies, Satan attacked David as a serpent who deceives.

- Ziba was one of Saul's land managers and a custodian of Jonathan's crippled son, Mephibosheth.
- David knew Ziba was an opportunist with evil motives.

II Sam. 16:1-4 And when David was a little past the top of the hill, behold, Ziba the servant of Mephibosheth met him, with a couple of donkeys saddled, and upon them two hundred loaves of bread, and an hundred bunches of raisins, and an hundred of summer fruits, and a bottle of wine. ² And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The donkeys be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink. ³ And the king said, And where is thy master's son? And Ziba said unto the king, Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem: for he said, Today shall the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father. So the king said to Ziba, "Behold, all that belongs to Mephibosheth is yours." And Ziba said, "I prostrate myself; may I find favor in your sight, my lord, the king!"

This encounter met an immediate need of David and his people.

- It also created a problem that wasn't settled until David returned to the throne.
- The gifts were greatly needed and appreciated but was there an underlying motive.

Consider David's state: He is weary and deeply wounded. He accepted Ziba's story [which is later discredited > II Sam. 19:26-27]. He made a rash judgment that gave Ziba the property that rightfully belonged to Mephibosheth.

- God's leaders must constantly be on guard lest they make unwise decisions on the basis of incomplete information.

God Honors David's Submission II Samuel 16:5-14

David met Shimei: Through Shimei's words and stones, Satan came as a lion who devours.

The king was near Bahurim [tribe of Benjamin], where the pro-Saul forces were still strong.

- Shimei was on the hillside opposite David and above him.
- It was easy for him to throw stones and clumps of dirt at David and his people.
- David was exhausted and discouraged. Yet he never rose to greater heights than when he allowed Shimei to go on attacking him. Abishai was only too willing to cross over and kill the man who was attacking the king, but David wouldn't allow it.
- "Get out, get out, you man of blood, you scoundrel!" shouted Shimei, but David didn't retaliate. Shimei blamed David for the death of Saul and his sons. David was officially in the Philistine army when they died. The fact that David was miles away from the battlefield when their deaths occurred didn't seem to matter to Shimei.
- Shimei was breaking the law while giving vent to his hatred of David, for Exodus 22:28 says, "You shall not revile God, nor curse a ruler of your people."
- David's attitude was one of submission because he accepted Shimei's abuse as from the hand of God. David had already announced that he would accept anything the Lord sent to him (15:26), and now he proved it.
- David had faith that God would one day balance the books and take care of people like Absalom and Shimei. When David regained the throne, he pardoned Shimei [19:16-23], and later Solomon restricted him to Jerusalem where he could be watched. When Shimei arrogantly overstepped his bounds, he was arrested and executed [I Kings 2:36-46].

What did all this suffering accomplish for David? It made him more like Jesus Christ! He was rejected by his own people and betrayed by his own familiar friend. He gave up everything for the sake of the people and would have surrendered his own life to save his rebellious son who deserved to die. Like Jesus, David crossed the Kidron and went up Mount Olivet. He was falsely accused and shamefully treated, and yet he submitted to the sovereign will of God.

I Pet. 2:23 "Who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously."

David had lost his throne, but Jehovah God was still on the throne and would keep His promises with His servant. Faithful to His covenant, the Lord remembered David and all the hardships that he endured [Ps. 132:1].

Fast forward several hundred years: The Root of David has come to earth.

He is Emmanuel, God with us, God robed in flesh for the purpose of bringing salvation to His people and to reveal His great glory to humanity! He speaks of His Kingdom.

Surely there is nobody that will dispute Jesus Christ's qualifications to sit on the throne of all Israel. Yet there is an enemy - a spirit of Absalom that rises up against His reign:

A spirit of vanity and rebellion; a spirit that wants fleshly interests and sinfulness to reign.

It is a spirit of murder. Men with seared consciences and hardened hearts, blind to the truth and with stopped ears unable to hear the voice of God. They plot together to kill the Son of God, this Messiah. They gather in the night and plan their treachery!

Jesus Christ humbles Himself by entering Jerusalem on a donkey. He makes of Himself no reputation. He who has the right to have all bow before Him in obeisance will not make anyone do it. He refuses to set Himself up as King. He will not respond to rebellion with the same spirit. He humbles Himself, and He surrenders to the plan.

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, He went out with his disciples across the Kidron Valley, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered.

Jesus chooses the same path as King David of old and passes from the city and crosses the Brook Kidron. The King will not fight for the right to rule. Now it is up to the people to decide.

Do they want the King of rebellion and the imposter to reign over them? Do they want fake religion with little demands? Do they want sin and their own will to rule their lives?

Or do they want the Son of David whom God says belongs there? He will not force them either way - He crosses the brook Kidron and now they must decide. It's now up to the people!

Luke 9:23-24 And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. ²⁴ For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it.